Exploring Teacher Identity:
Teachers’ Transformative Experiences of Re-Constructing and
Re-Connecting Personal and Professional Selves

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
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Abstract  
This research explored the complexity of language teacher identity from a holistic perspective involving two features: the integration of teachers’ personal and professional experiences, and the application of conscious/rational and intuitive/tacit thought processes.  

The study examined four ESL teachers’ beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations about the influences of their important personal, educational, and professional experiences on the development of their teacher identity. It also investigated the overall impact of an autobiographical reflective process combined with a guided visualization activity on the reconstruction of participants’ perceptions of teacher identity.  

The interdisciplinary theoretical orientation was grounded in theories and concepts from psychology and educational research, e.g., Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955, 1963), the complementary nature of reason and intuition, and the concept of “perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1978, 2000). The methodology was heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994) and
methods included reflexive autobiographical journaling, guided visualization, and in-depth interviews.

The results confirm that teacher identity is deeply embedded in one’s personal biography. Participants’ beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations nurtured in the family environment strongly influenced their school experiences, career choice, instructional practice, teaching philosophy, and teacher identity. The use of the guided visualization technique, integrated with rational reflection, considerably enhanced the depth and breadth of participants’ self-understanding and personal/professional growth, which is an important methodological contribution of the study for teacher development.

The results strongly suggest that it is essential to explore teachers’ personal life experiences in order to gain a holistic understanding of the dominant influences on the development of teacher identity. The study presents a model for designing a longitudinal professional development program offered in a series of workshops to raise teachers’ awareness of the implicit influences on teacher identity and instructional practice through the application of both conscious/rational and intuitive/tacit methods to access their beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations of their life experiences.
Dedicated

to

*Devon Woods*

with heartfelt gratitude

for his inspirational question “Who are you?” more than a decade ago that initiated the process of my self-discovery in unimagined ways.

My dissertation captures the answer.
Knowing more about yourself is not always easy, and just like deciding on integrity, it is a choice you must be willing to make. Once again, accepting responsibility for your life and relinquishing the stance of victimhood will free your thought patterns and untie the knots of powerless thinking. The more you know about who you are and the more you are willing to see your life as a significant and purposeful expression of consciousness, the greater the unfoldment will be.

Marciniak (2004)
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Chapter 1

Introduction:
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Introduction

This doctoral research is a study on language teacher identity. It explores the nature and evolution of the interconnectedness between beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations originating in educational, professional, and personal experiences that, in turn, shape the development of teacher identity. The research is situated in the field of Second Language Education. It aims to contribute to the growing body of research on language teacher identity in a holistic and integrative fashion. Freeman (1995) claims that “it is imperative to examine how participants [i.e., teachers] construe their worlds […] how [they] make sense of their environment and their experience” (p. 581). Goodson also argues for the inclusion of the broader perspective of teachers’ lives in educational research because life experiences and background are key ingredients of the person that we are, of our sense of self. To the degree that we invest our ‘self’ in our teaching, experience and background therefore shape our practice. (Goodson & Walker, 1991, p. 144)

I investigated how four language teachers’ perspectives of their teacher identity transformed as they explored, re-constructed, and re-connected their personal and professional selves through a reflective autobiographical process. This chapter starts with a preview of the more detailed literature review (found in Chapters 4 and 5) to contextualize my doctoral research in the field of general and second language educational research. Then, I outline the rationale and the purpose of my doctoral research along with the research questions. Next, I summarize the significance of my study and provide a synopsis of my research methodology. Finally, I offer a roadmap to the organization of my dissertation.
Why Study Teacher Identity from a Holistic Perspective?

Research on teacher self and teacher identity is fairly recent, spanning only about the last two decades in educational research. The body of literature on teacher identity is growing with a variety of research interests. These include the inner landscapes of teachers’ lives (Palmer, 1998), the creative or artistic selves of teachers (Buttignol, 1998), the various influences on identity formation, e.g., language, learning, understanding and technology (Smith, 2006), and the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of teacher selves (Beattie, Thornton, Dobson & Hegge, 2005, 2007; Miller, 2000, 2006). Researchers have employed diverse research methodologies and theoretical approaches to address the issues related to teacher identity while pursuing different agendas and perspectives.

Similarly, in second language teacher education the development of teacher identity is a new and emerging research field (among others, Choi, 2007; Cross, 2006; Gao, 2010; Li, 2007a, 2007b; Mantero, 2007; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnson, 2005; Williams, 2007; Zacharias, 2010). This research can be traced back to two relatively independent lines of thinking on language teacher identity. One line of thinking is associated with the explorations of teacher knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes in applied linguistics that has placed the teacher in the center of research attention (Varghese et al., 2005). The second line of research focuses on the socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of language teacher identity, e.g., race, gender, and social status, which have also played a role in the development of teacher identity. According to this latter view, marginalization, the position of non-native-speaker teachers, the status of language teaching as a profession, and the teacher-student relation have emerged as essential research interests (Varghese et al., 2005). The roots of teacher identity research originate in a variety of research interests in applied linguistics and general educational research, such as teacher knowledge/teacher cognition, teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflective practice. These research areas can be considered precursors of teacher identity research because they have investigated important aspects that influence the development of teacher identity.

Aspects of Teacher Identity Research: From a Single Aspect to a Whole Person

I have identified three major aspects in educational research with regard to the explorations of teacher identity. I employ them in this section to provide a preview of the
extensive review of the literature presented in depth in Chapters 4 and 5. The first aspect pertains to the antecedents of teacher identity research, e.g., research on teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflection. The second major aspect of teacher identity research involves an attempt to define teacher identity, focusing on the various conceptualizations and definitions of professional identity and professional roles. The third aspect investigates the relationships between teacher identity and teacher cognition, professional development, language learning experiences, and the role of emotions, respectively.

Teacher knowledge, also termed teacher cognition (e.g., Borg, 2003, 2006; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Clandinin, 2000; Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Connelly, Clandinin & He, 1997; Day, 1991; Grossman & Richert, 1988; Shulman, 1986; Shulman & Sykes, 1986; Tamir, 1988; Woods, 1996), was one of the first research areas that charted the constituents of teacher knowledge, attempting to organize and extend the categories of the knowledge base for teachers in teacher education. Teachers’ personal practical knowledge (e.g., Beattie, 1995; Britzman, 1986, 1992; Brookfield, 1995; Clandinin, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Connelly et al., 1997; Johnson & Golombek, 2002, Golombek, 1998), their values, beliefs and personal metaphors (e.g., Britzman, 1986, 1992; Bullough, 1991; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Richardson, 1996), and their decision-making and planning processes (e.g., Borg, 2003, 2006; Woods, 1996, 2003, 2006) are some of the most frequent educational research themes that have explored, among many other factors, the role of personal experiences in teacher’s professional lives. In my understanding, teachers’ personal practical knowledge is considered an essential element of professional knowledge that plays a vital role in teachers’ self-perceptions. Since knowledge has been highly valued in Western culture and education, teachers’ perceptions of who they are as professionals have been molded mostly through the lens of what they know.

The expansion of research focus to include teacher beliefs signaled the emergence of a more inclusive research perspective that has taken teachers’ beliefs and prior experiences into account, in addition to teacher cognition. Research on teacher beliefs (e.g., Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Kagan, 1992; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richards & Lockhardt, 1994; Richardson, 1996; Tatro, 1998; Woods, 1996, 2003, 2006) explores the connections between teachers’ personal and professional experiences. Richards and Lockhardt (1994) claim that teachers’ belief systems are rooted in various sources, such as their own experiences as language
learners, their experience of what works best, established practice, personality factors, educationally-based or research-based principles, and principles derived from an instructional approach or method.

Professional development and reflective practice can be viewed as complementary processes offering various conceptual frameworks, tools, techniques, and methods for the exploration of teacher identity. The notion of professional development (among others, Bartels, 2005; Bartlett, 1990; Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Clarke, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Dubetz, 2005; Golombek, 1998; Hargreaves, Earl, Moore & Manning, 2001; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Kitchen, 2005a, 2005b; Knight, 2002; Kosnik & Beck, 2009; Lange, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; McKeon, 1998; Nunan, 1989; Porlan, Martin del Pozo & Martin Toscano, 2002; Reynolds, Ross & Rakow, 2002; and Tedick, 2005) is an important component of improving teaching practices that emphasizes the significance of on-going self-development and critical self-awareness, which facilitate professional growth. Professional development provides a useful framework for exploring teacher identity and the relationships between teachers’ personal and professional lives. Researchers have contributed to the literature with a preference for and emphasis on methodologies, such as autobiography, reflexive inquiry, and life history research to explore the impact of personal life experiences on teaching practice (among others, Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001; Clarke, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 1998, 2000, 2001; Francis, 1995; Gibson, 1997; Golombek, 1998; Goodson & Walker, 1991; Hargreaves et al., 2001; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Kitchen, 2005a, 2005b; Knight, 2002; Levin, 2001; Palmer, 1998; Palmer & Christison, 2007; Simon-Maeda, 2004).

Reflection plays an integral role in teacher learning, both in teacher education and professional development, that can facilitate the examination of the personal and professional dimensions of teachers’ lives (among others, Bartlett, 1990; Brookfield, 1995; Clarke, 1994; Gaudart, 1991; Gibson, 1997; Kamhi-Stein & Galvan, 1997; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Meijer, Korthagen & Vasalos, 2009; Richards, 1991; Wallace, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1996a, 1996b).

The second major aspect of teacher identity research centers on the conceptualizations and definitions of “teacher identity” in educational research. The majority of researchers – both in general and second language education – have investigated teacher identity specifically from the professional aspects, i.e., the construction and development of teachers’ professional identity,
teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles and the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of their roles and their self-image (e.g., Atay & Ece, 2009; Beane & Lipka, 1984; Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Ben-Peretz, Mendelson & Kron, 2003; Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1992, 1994; Brown, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Day & Kington, 2008; Kincheloe, 2003; Korthagen, 2004; Lasky, 2005; Lipka & Brinthaupt, 1999; Maguire, 2008; Ronfeldt, 2008; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Smith, 2007; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002).

I found that there are multiple conceptualizations and definitions of teacher identity, depending on the conceptual framework that researchers adopt. These conceptualizations can vary from the general to the specific. For example, teacher identity has been understood as a useful “research frame” and a “pedagogical tool” for professional development (Olsen, 2008), a “lived experience of participation” (Wenger, 1998), and as being “multifaceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered” (Cooper & Olson, 1996). MacLure (1993) and Maguire (2008) define teacher identity as being a “continuing site of struggle” and a “continuing site of contestation, struggle and reworking”. Others have developed more specific definitions of teacher identity, e.g., being a “subject matter, pedagogical and didactical expert” (Beijaard et al., 2000). The research literature on teacher identity reveals that the concept of “professional identity” has been used and conceptualized in different ways in teacher education.

The concept of teacher identity seems to remain fuzzy, and at times perplexing because of the wide range of definitions and conceptualizations. Researchers provide either vague generalizations instead of clear definitions, or – in most cases – there are no explicit definitions of teacher identity at all. As a consequence, the concept of teacher identity seems to be taken for granted. Olsen (2008) argues that the problem with defining teacher identity stems partly from the various ways the notion of “identity” has been used in psychology.

Of all the reviewed teacher identity definitions, Palmer (1998) is notable for his approach to the concept of identity from a larger conceptual framework; that is, from a holistic perspective. In fact, the question of “Who is the self that teaches?” posed in his volume, among other things, inspired me to embark on my doctoral research that inquires into the same issue. Palmer (1998) interprets teacher identity in a holistic fashion and goes beyond focusing only on the professional aspects of being a teacher. The author highlights the integrity between the intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of teacher identity that can lead to a new
“wholeness”. This wholeness, however, does not mean perfection, rather “it means becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who I am” (Palmer, 1998, p. 13). For the purpose of my doctoral research, I argue that Palmer’s (1998) definition seems the most relevant because of its inclusive and holistic nature as well as its clarity of definition.

The third major aspect of teacher identity research explores the relationships between teacher identity and several related components that contribute to its development, e.g., teacher knowledge, professional development, language learning, and the role of emotions. Teacher knowledge, or teacher cognition, has been highly valued and considered as an important component of a teacher’s makeup. Teacher identity research, however, reveals some conflicting views on the relationship between identity and knowledge. Some researchers view knowledge holistically, i.e., they attempt to explain identity as part of knowledge without setting clear boundaries between them, e.g., Olsen (2003) claims that “each is part of the other” (p. 4). Others, however, view knowledge as “external to the individual and fixed” (Smith, 2007, p. 379). Johnston, Pawan and Mahan-Taylor (2005) portray teacher knowledge as linked to teacher identity and professional development, claiming that “teacher knowledge is seen in relation to teachers’ lives and the contexts in which they work” (p. 54).

The exploration of teachers’ professional selves as an integral part of on-going professional development has been emphasized by a number of authors (e.g., Borko, 2004; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Diamond, 1991; Freeman, 1990; Freeman & Johnson, 2005; Kincheloe, 2003; Lange, 1990; Mok, 2002; Palmer & Christison, 2007; Tedick, 2005; Tarone & Allwright, 2005). In the area of second language education, the relationship between professional development and teacher identity has been scrutinized by exploring teachers’ personal experiences. For example, Bailey et al., (2001) offer valuable insights into the importance of using personal experiences as a source of continuing professional development. In the early 1990s, due to the emerging interest in the personal dimensions of teachers’ lives, educational research applied several methodologies, e.g., life history research (among others, Cole & Knowles, 1998, 2001; Goodson & Walker, 1991; Levin, 2001; Simon-Maeda, 2004) and various forms of narrative and reflexive inquiry (e.g., Allender, 2001; Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Conle, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005; Huber & Whelan, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002;
Mishler, 1999; Olson, 2000; Soreide, 2006; Watson, 2006) to explore the relationships between teachers’ personal lives and their impact on teaching practice.

Learning and functioning in a second/foreign language in the case of non-native English teachers are considered an important factor in the development of language teacher identity, as opposed to teacher identity in other subject areas. The issue of native and non-native speakers and teachers of English has widely been discussed in the literature (among others, Cook, 1999; Davies, 1995; Freeman, 2004; Hawkins, 2004; Kramsch, 1997; Lee, 2003; Liu, 1999; Llurda, 2004; Medgyes, 1983, 1994; Pavlenko, 2003; Poynor, 2005; Rampton, 1990; Widdowson, 1994).

A relatively new emerging area of research on teacher identity is connected to the investigation of the role of emotions in teaching and teacher identity development (e.g., Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2001; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Johnston, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2005; Mok, 2002; O’Connor, 2008; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Zembylas, 2003, 2005). This research focus is viewed in the literature as a separate research field.

The overall insight is that identity is a complex notion made up of several interconnected parts, each affecting one’s overall perception of teacher identity to a more or less noticeable extent. Based on my interpretations of the literature, teacher identity has been viewed and defined as identification with one or many things. For example, some researchers have defined identity as knowledge or as beliefs. Others have explained it through language learning and language teaching. More recently, researchers have explained teacher identity through the role of emotions and personal values. I argue that it is important to consider all these components together if we want to understand identity from a holistic perspective.

In summary, I identified specific research interests in the area of teacher identity. Researchers appear to prioritize the professional aspects of identity by emphasizing knowledge, professional development, and language learning over the impact of personal life experiences on the development of teacher identity. Although life history and narrative inquiry do address the personal dimensions of teaching and teachers’ lives, they seem to pay less attention to exploring the in-depth relationships and connections between personal and professional lives from a psychological perspective. Thus, I identified a gap in the research literature concerning the approach of integrating both aspects of teacher identity (i.e., the professional and the personal) from a holistic stance. Another underdeveloped link is the lack of research concerning the exploration of teacher identity from a humanistic/holistic perspective by means of alternative
methods that rely on reason and intuition as complementary and interconnected thought processes. This lack requires a new methodological approach that is outlined in Chapter 6. These missing aspects of teacher identity research identified in educational research can be considered as the academic rationale and justification for my doctoral research that aims to fill these gaps. Next, I present my personal rationale and the purpose of my doctoral research.

**Personal Rationale**

The rationale for investigating teacher identity from a holistic perspective emerged in part from my own personal experience with reconstructing my understandings of who I am both as a person and a professional. This personal experience contributed to developing my academic interest in teacher identity. My inquisitiveness about understanding how other people think and how their beliefs and perceptions shape *who they think they are* has been an important character trait of mine for a long time. It was also instrumental in my embarking on the exploration of teacher identity. My own process of self-discovery has led to a clearer understanding of how my beliefs, character traits, personal challenges, and my interpretations and perceptions of my life experiences – and ultimately the *re-interpretation or re-construction* of those perceptions in retrospect with a greater level of awareness – all contributed to shaping my identity as a teacher. These realizations made me aware of the importance of teachers’ self-understanding from a holistic, integrative perspective that includes not only the professional aspects of being a teacher (i.e., teacher knowledge, skills, instructional strategies, life-long learning, and professional development) but also an awareness of the personal dimensions (i.e., the impact of personal life experiences, the interconnectedness of beliefs, perceptions, emotions) that may shape teacher identity.

I was aware of the fact that my own experiences meant a great deal to me but may or may not resonate with others the same way, or at all. My understanding made sense to me and helped me to view myself differently as a professional that resulted in manifesting and enacting a more enhanced awareness of myself. Everybody creates their own reality based on their interpretations, beliefs, and experiences. *Self-understanding is, then, idiosyncratic*. However, I believe that *the process* itself applied to gaining greater self-understanding *may be generalized and transferable*. Hence, understanding ourselves is an important first step in the process of
understanding others. Therefore, based on my own experiences, I wanted to explore (i) other teachers’ perspectives and beliefs of themselves as individuals and professionals; (ii) how and to what extent these perspectives changed as they reflected on their own influential life experiences, major turning points, and important people in their lives; and (iii) the impact of the process of reconstructing interpretations on their self-understanding and teacher identity.

The exploration of the personal self along with the professional self in second language education is seen as particularly relevant for teachers because of the important role interpersonal relationships plays in teaching. This argument is captured poignantly in the following way: “human beings who lack an awareness of their own personal reality cannot exist in a ‘we-relation’ with other human beings […] which is at the foundation of all possible communication” (Greene, 1978, p. 29). In other words, relating to others begins with self-knowing and self-understanding, which are essential qualities of teachers who educate, teach, and shape future generations.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of my doctoral research was to explore the complexity of teacher identity from a holistic perspective. This perspective influenced every aspect of my study, in particular the selection of my research methodology and methods. My definition of a holistic perspective involves two features that characterize my study:

- the integration of personal and professional experiences; and
- the application of conscious/rational and intuitive/tacit thought processes viewed as complementary and interconnected.

The former influenced the “content” of my research (i.e., the “what” aspect). The latter determined the “methods” of my research (i.e., the “how” aspect). At the outset, the immediate purpose of my doctoral research was to explore the process of re-constructing and re-connecting teachers’ personal and professional selves. My research participants probed into three areas of their experiences: (i) educational (e.g., schooling and professional education), (ii) professional (e.g. teaching practice), and (iii) personal (e.g., childhood, family, friends and significant other people); and then
examined their understandings of the *significance and the meaning of the relationships* between their above-mentioned experiences and the beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations inherent in them, with regard to teacher identity.

The objective of exploring the research participants’ re-construction and re-interpretation of their teacher identity was, then, twofold. First, the study explored *how* the research process – employing reflexive autobiographical journaling, a guided visualization technique, and in-depth interviews – brought about any “perspective transformation” by increasing the participants’ *awareness* of the overt and hidden interconnectedness of their underlying beliefs and “the implicit assumptions that frame how [they] think and act” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 2). Second, the research also examined how the participants’ perceived *perspective change* about their experiences may have coincided with a deeper *integration* of perceptions, interpretations, and beliefs about teacher identity. Hence, this research was an exploratory study about teacher identity observing the process of exploration and “perspective transformation” (Diamond, 1991; Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 2000).

**Perspective Transformation in my Research**

The notion of “perspective transformation” used by Diamond (1991) draws on Mezirow’s (1978) earlier concept that defines “meaning perspective” as “an integrated psychological structure with dimensions of thought, feeling and will” (p. 108). Put differently, a meaning perspective is a “personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our relationships” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 101). The process of perspective transformation requires that “we become critically aware of the fact that we are caught in our own history and are reliving it and of the cultural and psychological assumptions which structure the way we see ourselves and others” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 109, italics added). More recently, Mezirow (2000) further elucidates that critical awareness of the contexts of beliefs and assumptions about oneself could bring about change in the tacit structure of these beliefs and assumptions, which he calls “learned transformation”, or “transformative learning”, or “perspective transformation”. I use the latter term in my dissertation.

I assume that the integration of perspectives and beliefs about various segments of teacher identity occurs as a process. First, participants become aware of how they feel, what they think, say, and do through a reflective, introspective process applying reason and intuition in an
interconnected manner. Then, they can re-construct and re-connect these aspects by bringing them into a harmonious alignment with one another at a greater level of awareness than at the outset of the inquiry process. Consequently, this is a dynamic integrative process that leads towards new spiraling cycles of interpretation and reconstruction at greater levels of awareness. The importance and relevance of this integrative process to teacher education lies in the assumption that one can relate to others more empathically and effectively in a holistic fashion if one is cognizant of the interconnectedness of one’s own life experiences with the beliefs, assumptions, and interpretations rooted in them. In short, knowing oneself helps in relating to others and it enhances empathy.

I present my research questions and elaborate on the meaning of each key word in accord with my methodology of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). Thus, my research questions that guided the research process were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do language teachers experience and interpret the influence of important personal, educational, and professional experiences on their perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs about their teacher identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do language teachers experience and interpret the changes in their perceptions and understandings of their teacher identity as they re-interpret and integrate the relationships between their experiences and their teacher identity?</td>
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The two verbs “experience” and “interpret” refer to two types of awareness that I was interested in investigating. According to my definition, the verb “experience” refers to the wholeness of the entire research process from the participants’ internal frame of reference. This includes the less rational and more emotional, intuitive, and spiritual aspects of the participants’ experiences to the extent that they became aware of them and were able and willing to talk about them. The verb “interpret” signifies the more rational and deliberate cognitive process by which the participants re-constructed and re-interpreted the meaning of their experiences and the impact of their re-constructed interpretations on their identity. Thus, these two verbs are meant to indicate the complementary and interconnected nature of both rational and intuitive processes used in reflection and interpretation.
The word “important” refers to the significance of experiences that each participant deemed essential to recall, reflect on, and disclose during the data collection period.

The word “changes” denotes both the process and the result of re-interpreting and re-evaluating the participants’ views and understandings of their teacher identity as they articulated them. I assumed that changes had been occurring in my participants’ perspectives before my inquiry and they would continue to occur after it. My purpose was to see how the research process brought about any changes in the participant’s self-perceptions that I call “perspective transformation”.

The concept of “teacher identity” or “identity” plays a crucial role in my research and requires an elaborate definition. In my understanding based on the review of the literature (see Chapters 4 and 5), “identity” is an elusive, intangible, and highly idiosyncratic abstraction that cannot be accessed or observed directly. Nonetheless, one’s identity may be expressed in the form of beliefs, assumptions, values, and actions as well as in the various ways one perceives and interprets oneself and the world. Put differently, one’s self-perspective and self-perception may be the most telling forms and modes of manifesting and revealing one’s identity at any point in time. This is why I was interested in exploring teachers’ beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations of their identity.

Significance of the Study

The significance of my research lies in the application of a holistic perspective, as I defined it above, which entails (i) the integration of teachers’ personal and professional selves through a reflective process of re-constructing perceptions, beliefs, and perspectives of themselves and (ii) the application of conscious/rational and intuitive/tacit thought processes considered as complementary and interconnected.

Another significance of my research lies in the process of merging a relatively uncommon theoretical orientation (Chapter 3) with a rarely used research methodology (i.e., heuristic research, see Chapter 6) in educational research. The combination of the theoretical framework and methodology has, nevertheless, a potential for providing a broader interpretive framework than some of the more frequently used research methodologies. My interdisciplinary
approach that bridges psychology and educational research also enhanced the examination of teacher identity from a broad, holistic perspective.

Furthermore, in my doctoral research I saw myself having two roles that were both important. On the one hand, my role as a researcher was to enable my participants to reflect on, interpret, re-connect, and re-construct their understandings of their own experiences, and to facilitate their finding relationships between their interpretations of their experiences and their professional practice. On the other hand, my role also included witnessing, observing, interpreting, and documenting the way both my participants and I went through this process.

Finally, I argue that my research also contributes meaningfully to the body of educational research by highlighting the importance of expanding the scope of professional development by designing a special type of course or professional development program that integrates the personal and professional selves in a holistic fashion. In my view, special attention should be paid to the implicit interconnectedness between personal and professional selves as well as experiences, beliefs, and interpretations that influence teaching and “being”. This transformative process may lead, then, to more conscious teaching and “being” with greater self-awareness in and out of the classroom. Put differently, this process may enable teachers to integrate and express all levels of their identity as a whole human being.

Methodology

The chosen research methodology of my doctoral research is “heuristic research” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990, 1994), also called “heuristic inquiry” (Patton, 2002). Heuristic research is defined as “a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience” that illuminates “a focused problem, question, or theme” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40, italics added).

The development of teacher identity was explored through the application of the following research methods: reflexive autobiographical journaling, guided visualization, and in-depth interviews. All three research methods were interconnected. The autobiographical journaling and the guided visualization technique were conceived of as preparation tools for the participants for the in-depth interviews with the researcher. Consequently, journaling was guided
by specific activities and questions provided by the researcher to keep the participants’ focus of reflection on a particular theme discussed in the interviews (see Appendix B).

The emerging data collected from my participants were interpreted and analyzed initially within the methodological framework of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). At the final stage of data analysis and interpretation I moved away from strictly following the guidelines of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). I applied some analytical and interpretive procedures from general qualitative research recommended by Wolcott (1994) and Patton (2002) and merged them with heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). I elaborate on my research methodology and research design in more detail in Chapter 6.

**Organization of my Dissertation**

I conclude this chapter by providing a preview of the overall structure of my dissertation to guide the reader in the reading process.

**Chapter 2, My Heuristic Self-Exploration**, presents an autobiographical portrayal about me, the researcher in order to situate my own experiences in the context of my doctoral dissertation. This chapter is a narrative depiction of my educational, professional, and personal experiences that captures major events and turning points in my personal and professional life spanning a period of four decades. In accord with my methodology, the researcher must have had a direct personal experience with the phenomenon being investigated. This chapter shows my concrete autobiographical connections to my research. I place myself on par with my research participants, which makes this study transformative for all participants involved.

**Chapter 3, My Theoretical Orientation to Researching Teacher Identity**, outlines my conceptual and theoretical orientation that served as the epistemological foundation for conducting my research on teacher identity. My theoretical orientation is grounded in several important theories and concepts from psychology and teacher education that reflects an interdisciplinary theoretical approach. This chapter is organized into three sections, each presenting a theory, a concept, or a group of concepts that influenced my conceptualization about teacher identity. The first section presents an overview of George Kelly’s (1955, 1963) *Personal*
Construct Theory. The second discusses the complementary nature of reason and intuition as interrelated modes of thought, while the last section explains the concept of “perspective transformation” and its relevance to my research.

Due to the multi-faceted nature of self and identity, I reviewed the relevant literature in two areas: the social sciences and teacher education. Initially, this appeared to be an enormously overwhelming task because of the plethora of academic articles published on the topic. I was interested in exploring the literature of psychology on the concept of self and identity because numerous concepts and theories developed in psychology have informed the conceptualizations of teacher self and teacher identity. Therefore, I decided to split the review of the literature into two chapters to give equal importance to the review of both disciplines.

Thus, Chapter 4, Social Science Perspectives on Self and Identity, focuses on the social science perspectives on self and identity in general that provide an underlying foundation and a general perspective for contextualizing my doctoral research. The chapter is divided into two major sections. Part One provides an overview of the approaches to self and identity in psychology and sociology that are considered to be prevailing in the “mainstream” of these disciplines. Part Two presents some seldom-traveled paths in the exploration of self and identity in psychology, which appear to be viewed as “non-mainstream”. The authors’ work reviewed in this section approach identity and self from a broader, more holistic perspective, which was highly relevant to my doctoral research. I identified a gap in the mainstream literature concerning the lack of focus on the unseen, elusive, intuitive and unconscious aspects of being human. Scholars with a holistic perspective emphasize that there is more to the self and identity than just the outer, observable characteristics. Thus, they advocate the inclusion and exploration of the more tacit part of the psyche as well.

Chapter 5, Educational Research Perspectives on Teacher Identity, presents an in-depth review of the concept of “teacher identity” in teacher education generally and second language teacher education in particular. This chapter is also divided into two major sections. Part One examines various research themes that preceded and led to teacher identity research, e.g., teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflective practice.
Part Two analyzes the literature focused on the concept of teacher identity. I present the frequently used methodologies and theoretical frameworks for investigating teacher identity. Then, I explore various conceptualizations and definitions of teacher identity. Finally, I examine the relationships between identity and related components, such as knowledge, professional development, language, and emotions. I found specific research interests on teacher identity. Researchers seem to prioritize professional identity over the interconnections between personal and professional lives. I identified a gap concerning an integrated view of teacher identity from a holistic perspective that employs both rational and intuitive thought processes.

Chapter 6, Research Methods and Design, provides a comprehensive elaboration on my chosen methodology and research design. I situate my inquiry within a specific methodological framework that complements my theoretical orientation, presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 6 is organized into two major sections. Part One describes the process of finding the most appropriate methodology for my doctoral research. I justify my employing heuristic research as the methodological basis of my inquiry into teacher identity. Then, I review the main features of heuristic research as a methodology and outline its underlying concepts and processes. Part Two illuminates my engagement and negotiations with the research design. I discuss the development of my research questions, introduce the research participants, and elaborate on the process of data collection. I explain and justify the various research methods employed in my study. I describe my working with conscious and intuitive thought processes during the entire doctoral thesis journey. Finally, I provide a description of the data analysis and interpretation.

Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D consist of Cassie’s, Karen’s, Mary’s and Janet’s experiences presented in the form of a narrative portrayal that retained each participant’s own voice. The portrayals offer a first-person narrative account of the participants’ experiences and interpretations of important educational, professional, and personal experiences that they found important in the development of their teacher identity. The length of each portrayal developed organically to an average of 20 pages representing “thick description” (Geertz, 1983) with the purpose of letting the “data speak for themselves” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 10). Each portrayal is organized in five parts that attempt to capture the diversity of influences on the development of
teacher identity. Thus, Part One presents important experiences from schooling and professional education, including language learning and teaching experiences. Part Two shows major personal experiences that influenced the development of the participants’ teacher identity. Part Three captures the participants’ interpretations of their intuitive experiences through a guided visualization activity. Part Four offers a synthesis of the participants’ previously discussed experiences and their interpretations of the re-construction and integration of their teacher identity. Part Five is a short corroboration of each participant’s experience and interpretation of the research process in retrospect. Finally, the “Researcher’s Analytical Summary” presents my analysis of each participant’s portrayal based on the two research questions:

1. How do language teachers experience and interpret the influence of important personal, educational and professional experiences on their perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs about their teacher identity?
2. How do language teachers experience and interpret the changes in their perceptions and understandings of their teacher identity as they re-interpret and integrate the relationships between their experiences and their teacher identity?

An important visual feature of these chapters is the creative presentation style: I selected a font type for each participant that I felt best reflected their identity visually. I used various font sizes and bolding to highlight important themes, phrases, and insights. I also utilized some of the outstanding bolded phrases as subtitles for various sections in the portrayals. I borrowed the idea of this kind of artistic presentation style from a doctoral dissertation that made an impact on me in the early stages of my own doctoral thesis journey.

Chapter 8, Results: Predominant Influences on the Development of Teacher Identity, offers an in-depth discussion of the results representative of all participants. One of the results was that the participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their school experiences were heavily influenced by their beliefs (expressed in personality traits) nurtured in the family environment. Another result shows the strong influence of childhood experiences on the participants’ career choice, instructional practice, and the development of their teacher identity. The integrated use of the guided visualization technique and rational reflection greatly enhanced self-understanding and personal/professional growth, which has important methodological
implications for teachers’ professional development. The chapter consists of three parts. First, I discuss my interpretations of the results based on each participant’s analysis summarized in the aforementioned “Researcher’s Analytical Summaries” of Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D. Then, I spell out the contributions, implications, limitations of my research, and my recommendations for future research. This chapter and the dissertation end with my “creative synthesis” written in a narrative form. It comprises my musings about my personal transformation and the lessons I learned during the whole research project. Finally, I show the intricate interconnectedness of personality traits, attitudes, issues, and personal challenges between my participants and myself as a researcher. It was a profound realization that each of them reflected a part of me and a part of my own perspective transformation and personal growth.
Chapter 2

My Heuristic Self-Exploration:

The Journey to Finding and Trusting my Self

Introduction

This chapter is a personal account about me, the researcher, as well as one of the participants of my doctoral research. My own personal and professional self-exploration began several years ago and inspired me to embark on the examination of teacher identity in my doctorate at OISE/University of Toronto. The bulk of this autobiographical portrayal was written a few years ago. I revised parts of those earlier writings to reflect the changes in my perspective since then. I also added new pieces of information about recent events and developments in my life. I used excerpts from my professional autobiography written in the winter of 2004 as a course assignment in my initial doctoral program at McGill University. I also drew on some term papers written at OISE/University of Toronto as part of my course work in 2007-2008, and some passages from my inspirational story that was published in 2009.

This chapter narrates my educational, professional, and personal experiences capturing major events, turning points, and important people spanning four decades in my life. I begin with my important educational experiences in elementary school, high school, and university, including my language learning experiences and my first trip to Germany at the age of 12. I describe some key experiences in my becoming a teacher in Hungary and how tour-guiding prepared me for teaching. I explore my parents’ influence on my self-development, which in turn affected my professional life. Then, I portray my immigration to Canada and the challenges in my personal and professional life I had to overcome in the past decade. I capture my insights about the lessons I learned from my experiences and I show their relevance to my teaching. My portrayal comes to a close with picturing key events that occurred chronologically prior to writing up the actual chapters of this dissertation. The changes of the past one year (i.e., the
period of data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and the dissertation write-up) are
synopsized in the section called “Creative Synthesis: Reaching New Wholeness” of Chapter 8.

My story, in its current form, came about in a seven year period. I used a combination of
more or less conscious and intuitive methods and processes that raised my self-awareness and
helped me verbalize my insights and realizations about myself, e.g., reflection and diary writing,
reading books on personal growth, participating in self-discovery workshops, doing yoga,
playing the piano, using guided visualization and meditation, consulting with holistic
practitioners, and doing a so-called “tuning fork therapy” for one year.

I fashioned my story in a creative and artistic format to highlight the content visually. I
selected a special font type that characterizes my personality in general. Most sentences
begin in a new line in order to signal new thoughts that also serve to guide the reader visually. I
bolded important phrases and sentences and I used different font sizes to draw attention to
significant thoughts, feelings, qualities, and events. The portrayal is divided into several sections
that are indicated by subtitles. I employ the same principles in presenting the research
participants’ portrayals in Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D.


Emese’s Portrayal

Background Information on the Researcher

Early Childhood and Primary School Experiences

I was a quiet, serious, and shy little girl in primary school. I used to play “pretend-I-am-an-adult” as a little girl. I emulated my Mother being a pharmacist counseling my dolls about what remedy to take as I had seen her do it in the pharmacy. When I learned to read and write, my favourite game was to play “teacher”.

I liked my grade 1 and 2 teacher very much. I always admired her for being knowledgeable. I always took my job at school very seriously. I was a hard-working girl throughout my schooling.

I was about five years old when my first extra-curricular activity began. My Mother registered my sister and me in the children’s group of a folk-dance ensemble in the town. We had dance rehearsal once a week. I didn’t know anybody in the group since we lived in the nearby village. I was shy to make friends.

One of the highlights of my primary school years was participating in a movie shooting in Budapest as a member of the folk dance group. Another major event of my life as a young dancer was a spectacular dance show at the National Opera House in Budapest broadcast internationally on the occasion of the International Children’s Year in 1979.

I was seven years old when my Mother took me by the hand and introduced me to an elderly lady, originally born in Austria, in the nearby town. That’s how my German private lessons started, twice a week for seven years. I liked the German lessons very much because I felt that learning was easy. At the beginning I had to memorize the vocabulary and do my homework. As time went by, I picked up vocabulary during the lessons and I was happy to see that I had a good memory and made progress. In grade 5, I decided to take up another extra-curricular activity at the local music school.

I was keen on learning to play the piano. My piano teacher was blind and I was apprehensive of him because of his visual impairment.

I was busy with school and private German classes for eight years of primary school. I had an after-school activity every day:

- German twice a week;
- dance rehearsal once a week; and
- piano lessons twice a week.

I was always conscientious in my preparation for school as well. I became interested in several subjects, e.g., History, Geography, Literature, and German.

I didn’t like primary school.

\[1\] In those days, one teacher taught a class for two years in the first two grades of elementary school.
My classmates used to make fun of me because of my out-of-school commitments and because I was interested in a lot of things they had no idea about. They looked down on me because of my Mother being a professional (she was a pharmacist). I felt uncomfortable about this and I tried to hide my interests from my classmates in school. I wanted to be accepted in class, but the refusals were very hard on me emotionally.

I didn’t have many close friends, either.

I felt different from others at school.

I had no idea how to deal with being excluded from the class. Gradually my shyness and the feeling of being ostracized by my classmates led to the development of my inferiority feelings.

My First Language Learning Adventure in West Germany
I gradually excelled at German, which was of course relative taking into account the fact that I had had exposure to German only twice a week for seven years. I had gotten to know a German girl who became my pen friend and we visited each other several times.

My trip to Bavaria at the age of 12 was my first independent travel abroad – my very first trip to the WEST. This was a major event because it was the overture to my unfolding “globetrotter” life later on. I had gone through an intense culture shock not only due to the language barrier but also due to the big differences in socio-economic standards and way of living between West Germany and Hungary at the time.

I had learned so much about German culture, people, customs, and about a different way of life, differences in hobbies and social activities. My vocabulary had increased immensely during my stay. I cried so much at night because I hadn’t understood people talking to me.

I felt very nervous when I had to speak in German. I always wanted to make sure that everything was grammatically correct. Focus on form was a priority. I came away with this belief from my first language teacher. I loved her very much and I appreciated the way she taught me. She made me love the language and learning was so much fun. She taught me grammar without referring to explicit rules or grammatical structures. She simply made me notice the appropriate form by correcting me in writing and speech.

High School and Language Learning Experiences
My high school years made a deep impact on me. It was my decision to go to a “special” high school, which was a German-Hungarian Bilingual “Gymnasium”. My parents allowed me to make my own decision about selecting the high school after visiting three of them. This school was mainly for ethnic Germans to foster their heritage language and culture. Indeed, the majority of the students came from ethnic German families. In this respect, I was again the odd-one-out because of my Hungarian origin and no German background. It was only my interest in learning German that connected me to the school.
At the age of 14, I moved away from home and I lived in residence during the week away from my family. I became a “weekend daughter and sister” in my family from then on. This was an important turning point in my life in terms of my own personal development and becoming independent and self-reliant.

In high school studying continued to be my top priority. It over-shadowed all other activities and areas of my life at the time.

The first year of high school was especially challenging because of the heavy workload in general topped with studying several subjects in German (e.g., German Literature and Grammar; History and Geography).

It took me a lot of time to learn the new vocabulary each day, then study the particular history lesson in Hungarian, and finally memorize the outline of the same lesson in German.

In high school I had a very scarce social life.

I was very shy, introverted and I needed a couple of years to make close friends with some classmates.

My teachers considered me an exceptionally mature student with clear plans for the future.

I tried to do my best to excel in class.

I was indeed one of the best students in class.

Studying and my interest in a lot of things (e.g., history, geography, tourism, and foreign languages) broadened my horizon and propelled me into discovering new things and learning more about the world.

Despite being among the best students in class, I felt constantly inferior to others.

I worried a lot about my accomplishments at school.

I desperately wanted to live up to my parents’ and my teachers’ expectations.

The overtly competitive classroom environment and school culture in Hungary in the early 1980s made me feel even worse about myself.

I didn’t get much acknowledgement about my good school work from my teachers. Being good at school was taken for granted and kind of expected.

I never liked competing with my classmates for better grades but I had no other choice. I had to play the game with them; otherwise I would have been excluded again.

I used to complain about this to my Mother who always encouraged me saying “Don’t be bothered with others. Focus on achieving your goals according to your own standards.”

The feeling of competition was especially hard on me with my roommates.

The two girls came from the same ethnic German village.

I was again the odd-one-out.

They always teased me about being “different” from them, having “other” ideas about things, and having a “distinct” approach to life in general.

They took competition very seriously.

I was 15 years old when I started learning English by taking, again, private lessons outside of high school because English was not offered in my school.

I had 90-minute lessons once a week for 3 years, in a small group with three other students. We had a retired teacher who used to live in Great Britain.
I started learning English in 1984 and at that time it was difficult to find authentic resources for learning English: no satellite programs, hardly any good authentic books, no audiotapes or TV programs and a relatively small number of good English teachers since English wasn’t the most popular foreign language at the time.

My teacher used a traditional grammar-translation method, which was extremely boring for me and I didn’t like it at all. We did a lot of grammar drills, reading and translating texts. I don’t recall if we ever had any spontaneous conversations in English.

For the first 3 years of my English studies I hadn’t had a chance to listen to native speakers. That’s why I had tremendous problems with listening comprehension for quite a long time. After all these years of private tutoring, I had no idea about the English language – let alone using the language effectively, making myself understood, and developing a communicative competence.

However, I started to develop an idea about language teaching and learning through my exposure to learning German at high school. That was at least an authentic point of comparison for me.

At the German high school we were expected to communicate in German as often as possible, even though I wouldn’t call that particular teaching method “purely” communicative. We had oral and written tests and presentations in History, Geography as well as German Literature and the common everyday “communication” classes. This, however, never happened in my English private classes.

High School Teachers as Role Models

I had a mixed baggage of encouraging and discouraging teachers. I considered one of my German teachers the manifestation of a GOOD language teacher.

She was my first German teacher at high school.

She was very strict and demanding.

We had vocabulary tests in every class.

Usually most of us failed the tests or we just barely passed.

We had to write longer compositions and brief summaries of literary texts and newspaper articles every week. We quite often had short oral presentations of these summaries in class. Even though she was tough, I liked her because she didn’t look down upon us, she did not act superior – as most other teachers did at the time.

A couple of years later I took private lessons with her in preparation for my university entrance exam in German. She was again very demanding.

I had spent whole weekends with only completing my homework for her class.

But it was well worth it.

I am grateful to her for being demanding in a positive and motivating sense because I had learned to use the German grammar, I enhanced my vocabulary greatly and my overall command of the German language improved a lot.

I respected her for all the work and effort she had put into teaching me.

She greatly influenced my teaching style during the time I had taught in Hungary.

My Geography teacher influenced my views about teaching in a different way.

He was a very easy-going person. He couldn’t be pigeon-holed and he purposefully pushed the boundaries of traditional social conventions at school.

I liked the qualities he represented.

He was intelligent, knowledgeable, and well-informed in a variety of areas.

He was rather humble, he didn’t boast about his knowledge at all.
He had a good sense of humour, and he was obviously an odd-one-out in the teaching staff. He taught me tourism and tour-guiding as well.

I chose tour-guiding as my elective course because I always liked history, geography, architecture, art history, and traveling and I wanted to become a tour guide. I liked this teacher because I admired his intelligence, humour, and his relaxed way of being in class, which I had always strived for. However, it took me several decades to actualize these traits in my own professional life.

In grade 12, I had a young native German-speaking teacher. He was rigid, distanced, and pedantic and felt quite embarrassed in a class of all girls. But he was funny and good-looking as well. His comment to me that “You’ll have trouble with oral exams at university because of your stage fright” in the midst of my final exams at high school haunted me for years afterwards. It damaged my self-esteem and diminished my self-confidence.

Undergraduate Studies in Hungary
In 1988-89 – just one year before the Berlin Wall came down – I studied at a university in East Germany. The uncertain outlook for proper education in English due to the lack of professionally well-trained and competent English professors at that time forced me to return to Hungary and resume my undergrad studies. My English competence had diminished to the very basics within a year.

I was one of the best students in the German-major cohort. However, my English was poor, limited to the very basics. I could hardly understand lectures, let alone taking notes in English.

I had huge problems with listening comprehension and my vocabulary was very limited. I struggled a lot with my English studies. I made an enormous effort to catch up with my fellow-students in the group.

I felt inadequate because I couldn’t reconcile the discrepancy between my excellence in German and my poor performance in English. My command of English was not enough to do well in other content courses, like English Literature and Linguistics.

Under these circumstances one of my required courses was an English literature course. The professor had completely unrealistic expectations of first year students. He expected us to be familiar with English and American literature and contemporary American literature right off the bat in a FIRST-YEAR course.

His approach to literature was based on a Freudian perspective. Most students, including me, had no idea about Freud’s work on psychoanalysis and how to apply these ideas in literary analysis. I found the approach ‘interesting’ on an abstract level, but I did not concur with it. I found it ridiculous and disgusting at the time. I had trouble with writing analyses of short stories and novels from this particular perspective.

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2 Freud’s ideas developed in psychoanalysis, in particular repressed childhood memories connected to sexual drives, symbols of sexuality and Oedipal fantasies, were used as the framework for literary analysis.
The professor was very **authoritarian** in the classroom making students feel incredibly uneasy about their command of English and ignorance of the subject matter.

He singled out students who seemed to be lost and most frustrated.

**I was one of his targets in class.**
**I was terrified** whenever I had to go to class.
I didn’t dare to look up.
I tried to avoid eye contact with him and I prayed not to be called upon in class.
Of course, he did call upon me and asked questions that I couldn’t answer because of my poor English in the first place.
His look pierced right through me and his remarks **gradually destroyed my self-confidence.**
**I deferred my studies at university** just before the end of the term to avoid the likely failure in the course.

One year later, **the same thing happened again** because I was assigned to his class once again. In those days, students had **no choice** about course selection or instructors.
I left no stone unturned to get into another course; **all my efforts were in vain.**

**I was petrified and I hated him** while trying to do my best to adopt his literary approach.
To my surprise, I did pass the first term. However, **intimidation started again.**
He became even more sarcastic and daunting and I couldn’t cope with the situation.
**I deferred again** to avoid a very likely failure in the course.
**This time it was for good.**
I switched to the **teacher training college**, where I was granted admission.

**I felt devastated by my failure at university.**

I couldn’t accept the fact that I wasn’t good enough to pursue studies at a university.
**I felt ashamed of being “just” a college student.**
I was convinced that I had the intellectual competence and capabilities to study at university.
I felt like I had to “sacrifice” my university studies because of him.

**For more than a decade** after this experience I **suffered from an immense lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.**
**I felt inferior** to my friends from the university.
**I didn’t feel proud of myself even though I was one of the best students in my group.**
I was holed up and **deeply buried in my self-pity and rage about my failure.**
Of course, **I blamed the professor** for my anxiety, anger, and depression for a very long time.

Almost 13 years later, in 2002, I came to interpret various events of my life from a different angle. **It started to dawn on me that I needed this negative experience.**
Even though it was a painful memory for over a decade, **it made me strong and determined** to improve my English and to **prove** at least **to myself** that I indeed was capable of studying English.
One of my professors in graduate school in Canada captured the point very aptly:
“**You are not studying about English anymore but studying in English, which is even more challenging.**”

To some extent, my decision about **immigrating to Canada** and **resuming studies in graduate school** was **closely connected** to this “seemingly” negative experience with my professor in Hungary that I wasn’t aware of at the time.
**I wanted to satisfy my desire for a university degree and restore my self-confidence.**
After graduating from the M.A. program in Canada, I realized that I should be grateful to this professor for this negative experience because it was clearly a major turning point in my life that pushed me to strive for achieving greater goals.

**Being a Tour-Guide and Language Teaching**

I was 18 years old when I started to work as a local tour-guide in my hometown in two languages; mostly in German and occasionally in English.

My interest and appreciation for culture, history, geography, the arts and art history, music, cuisine, and different cultures and places were the driving force in my becoming a tour-guide.

The peak of my career as a tour-guide was in 2000-2001 when I worked as a program director for a North-American travel agency specialized in river cruises in Europe. It was beautiful but quite challenging to travel through nine countries on the Danube, the Rhine, and the Main. The tourists kept me always on my toes and I had to be up-to-date, well-informed, and knowledgeable about every aspect of the tour and about the places we visited in each country.

Certain facets of tour-guiding enhanced my thinking about teaching and the importance of interpersonal relationships with my students. Being a tour-guide for 14 years taught me a lot of skills and strategies that I could leverage in my teaching later on. I developed my ability to establish interpersonal relationships with people. I learned how to overcome stage fright and become an effective presenter in front of an audience.

I learned various presentation strategies (e.g., presenting without relying on notes) and also how to improvise on the spot when needed. Tourism and tour-guiding made me aware of the diversity of cultures, taught me to become resilient, versatile, interested in and knowledgeable about a variety of themes and issues. Therefore, I consider this job as a good preparation for my future teaching career.

**Learning to Teach in Hungary**

My first job was at a high school as administrative staff. Occasionally I had to substitute for the German teacher. I was 18 years old and inexperienced – having only the “apprenticeship of observation” in my baggage. My ideas about teaching were quite naïve and narrow-minded.

At that time I didn’t consider methodology and education courses indispensable for a teacher. I valued, however, subject matter knowledge much more than methodological competence. I naively believed that my command of German attained at the bilingual high school was enough to teach at the secondary level. My teaching style evolved from my perceptions of my favourite teachers’ behaviour. I wanted to be rigorous, emotionally distanced from students, and I focused on the transmission of the subject matter above all.

These were my beliefs about foreign language teaching at the time in Hungary.

A few years later at the teacher training college I was pushed to cast doubt on all these naïve ideas about teaching and learning.

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3 Lortie (1975)
Having taken teacher education and methodology courses I realized that there was structure and rationale for classroom teaching and the choice of methodology in the organization of materials, activities and tasks. The art of teaching wasn’t a random activity based exclusively on content knowledge as I had believed before. Gradually the hidden features of mastering teaching began to unfold in my mind and teaching started to reveal itself as a complex activity.

I learned about the importance of lesson planning, which was an eye-opener for me. All of a sudden, I could see intentionality, objectives and structure in a lesson.

In Hungary, I had never learned how to develop teaching materials from authentic sources. The only option for language teachers was the selection of “this” or “that” textbook – or, at best “both” or “a little bit of all” textbooks. In this respect, language teachers’ creativity was rather limited to the selection of ready-made, custom-tailored, age-specific, or skill-based language textbooks.

I had two major jobs that stand out as significant in my professional development. They were intensive English language courses for particular purposes offered by various institutions in Hungary.

A six-month course for unemployed people was my first serious job with full responsibility. I struggled with teaching. I felt tremendous pressure on me due to the responsibility for all my students having to pass the test at the end of the course. Sometimes it was almost unbearable and I panicked. I was aware of the fact that there was a lot at stake for each individual in the course, including financial consequences in case of failure. My struggle was not directly linked to teaching, methodology, or classroom management but rather to bearing the pressure of responsibility for each student’s performance.

I felt personally responsible for everyone in my class. I considered their failure to be mine.

I desperately wanted to prove (mostly to myself, which I wasn’t completely aware of at that time) that I was a good teacher and that my students would succeed in meeting the course requirements. My life seemed to depend upon my students’ success at the final language test. I tried to do my best in order to provide them with the required knowledge and to teach them everything that I considered essential for passing the test.

I wanted my students to become proficient language users not only successful test takers. I strived for teaching them how to communicate and enabling them to open their minds to different cultures, people, and ways of thinking.

Despite my good intentions I had my shadow side as a teacher because of the pressure of the job. There were times when I panicked when my students didn’t perform according to the course standards and my expectations. I gave them pep talks on several occasions about taking studying more seriously. I was authoritative and intimidating. I could hardly bear the pressure of the task (and that of my low self-confidence) and I wanted to alleviate it by projecting it on to my students.
My second significant job was a ten-month intensive English course for the officers of the Hungarian Armed Forces.

I worked together with another language teacher.
We designed the overall curriculum and the general guidelines for teaching and learning outcomes in accordance with the requirements set by the language school that had hired us.

We team-taught the course.
It was a good learning experience for me to work together with another teacher.

I felt much more secure and comfortable teaching this course for several reasons. First, I had already gained experience with curriculum development. Second, I had substantial resources of materials from before. Third, I had had some experience dealing with students, issues and possible learning problems in class. Finally, the shared workload and professional objectives in team-teaching eased the pressure of responsibility.

I felt more relaxed in class. I still had a number of occasions filled with insecurity about myself as a teacher and doubts about my professional expertise and language competence.

In retrospect, I appreciate my colleague’s role in supporting me emotionally and assuring me about my competence in teaching. She expressed her admiration and respect for my professionalism and my content knowledge several times. She also asked for my advice about professional issues and teaching-related problems.

Yet, I was unable to acknowledge and accept her respect because of my own deeply ingrained beliefs in my low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence.

I couldn’t see myself as a successful language teacher.

I always compared my teaching with hers and I felt inferior to her.

It is indeed quite profound to realize – many years later – that her admiration and respect for my qualities in teaching and my professionalism were meant to be a mirror for me about my own qualities that I was blind to see in myself.

My Parents’ Contribution to My Personal Development
My Mother put an emphasis on our receiving good education. She encouraged and supported me to go for my visions and dreams. She kept reminding me about my goals and to do my best to achieve them. She has been dedicated to her profession and that I clearly inherited from her. She also taught me to be versatile and to become well-educated.

Most of my life, I desperately wanted to live up to my Father’s expectations so that I could gain his love and appreciation of me. The first three decades of my life were all about this.

He was parsimonious with appraisal whenever I got a good grade at school. My dominant feeling of being “not good enough” for three decades was directly related to my perception of how my Father related to me in general. He seemed to be unable to express his feelings and emotions for me for quite a long time.
Very recently, I realized that this was my self-made illusion about him because I expected to see the expression of his love and acknowledgement the way I would have preferred.

The past ten years of my intense spiritual self-exploration helped me to bring this flawed, dysfunctional belief to light so that I could pull it apart, re-construct, and re-interpret it from a new angle, and finally reconcile with it.

As a result of a painful reflective process and with a lot of help from others, I came to realize that my Father had always been expressing his love for me in his own way, no matter how subtle it was. I realized that the problem did not lie in him, but rather it had to do with my conflicting perception of him.

In retrospect, I can appreciate my Father’s values and beliefs and my Mother’s dedication. Perseverance, dedication, versatility, commitment, independence, and self-reliance are the most salient characteristics that contributed to who I am today.

My Immigration to Canada

My decision to immigrate to Canada was not made easily. Many of my friends did not understand my decision because from their point of view I appeared to have a ‘good’ life:

- a university degree,
- well-paid jobs as a language teacher and tour guide,
- a hard-earned social status in the community,
- a place to live,
- a car,
- strong family support and
- a wide circle of friends and acquaintances.

However, there was “something” missing in my life that I could not put into words to myself, let alone to others, at the time. This inexplicable, mysterious “something” drove me away from home to a new country where I did not know anyone.

I had to depend solely on myself to face and resolve difficult and trying challenges for several years. It took me many years to realize what that “something” really was, and why it guided me through a series of challenging and difficult situations in a completely unfamiliar environment.

As luck would have it, three weeks after my arrival in Canada I was granted admission to a one-year TESL program at a university.

That is how my academic career in Canada began.

For the first three years I struggled everyday with:

- adapting to a new educational and professional environment at the university as a student;
- keeping my head above water in daily life; and
- balancing my studies and my emotional and physical survival.

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4 Parts of this section have been adapted from a published story of mine (Bukor, 2009)
5 TESL = Teaching English as a Second Language
**Questioning** my beliefs about every single aspect of my life was clearly my biggest challenge:

- **Who I was**;
- **Where I came from**;
- **Where I am going**;
- **Where I belong**;
- **What my life purpose was**;
- **What my personal and professional goals were**.

In the first five years of my stay in Canada I went through **an intense period of personal and professional transformation in every possible aspect of my life**:

adjusting to

- a different country,
- different social conventions,
- different people,
- different interpersonal communications on the personal and professional levels,
- a different professional milieu at the university for me as a student and later as a teacher, and
- different teaching approaches and different ways of thinking.

As I see it now, **the initial period** of my adaptation and acculturation, coupled with a profound process of self-questioning and self-reflection in a new environment, directly **triggered my intense spiritual quest**.

Everywhere I turned, I encountered **situations that pushed me to the limits** by constantly raising questions and doubts about my prior views about the world and my role in it. Becoming aware of the deeply buried reasons for the issues in my personal and professional life was a quite painful, but very powerful and uplifting experience that helped me re-connect and re-construct my personal and professional selves as parts of my identity.

I remember having had clashes in the way of articulating my ideas in graduate courses in the M.A. program. I struggled with the way of expressing my views on issues, problems, and connections between ideas, from an intellectual viewpoint.

It was **an arduous process** for me to **learn to write in the academic format** required at university, which didn’t coincide with my prior ways of thinking and writing. During the process of writing my Research Essay in the Master’s program, I constantly felt pressure to modify my thinking in order to comply with the required academic writing style.

I received my M.A. degree in 2002, and I began to teach in a credit EAP6 program at a university. **Because of the quality of my Research Essay**, my M.A. supervisor **invited me to collaborate in writing a book** that he had been working on. This opportunity **took me absolutely by surprise** because I **had quite misjudged my intellectual abilities** at the time.

I was rather **blind** to see my potential talents and couldn’t appreciate or acknowledge the actual results of my efforts.

I was still **fraught with self-doubt and insecurity** and believed that I was not “good enough” intellectually and professionally.

**It has taken many years** – the co-authoring of a book, my promotion to instructor at university, and working on my doctorate – **to convince myself of my capabilities**.

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6 EAP = English for Academic Purposes
Writing my professional autobiography as part of my earlier doctoral studies in 2004 was an essential and integral part of my self-discovery process.

I explored my beliefs as a teacher and the relationships between my personal and professional experiences. This reflective writing process was, however, only one aspect of my personal transformation.

**Changes in My Professional Life**
My professional life has undergone some important changes over the years.
I have opened up to collaboration with colleagues (e.g., team-teaching, joint classroom research projects, and joint-collaboration on a curriculum project) as opposed to working alone previously.

My teaching practice has witnessed noteworthy changes in terms of course design, material development, instructional strategies, student evaluation and assessment, and interpersonal communication with students and colleagues.

When I taught as an instructor at the university (2004 – 2007), I designed my courses based on the principles of sustained content-based instruction.
I saw the benefits and values of this instructional approach in simulating an academic course with the study of one general theme through a term.

**My teaching philosophy** has also reflected the changes in my beliefs about teaching and learning.
One of my strong beliefs about teaching is connected to the notion of evolution and growth in thinking based on personal experiences.
I recognize the fact that learning and teaching are interrelated and by being a teacher I am continuously learning from my students as well.
My experiences as a learner and as a teacher in two different countries have shaped my philosophy about teaching.

Throughout my initial years of education in Hungary I learned to appreciate the importance of knowledge and I regarded the teacher as an authority in the classroom.

In Canada, on the other hand, some theories and pragmatic views about language learning and teaching have influenced my thinking about the goal of teaching and learning. These notions, among others, emphasize the significance of becoming an independent and effective learner, the assessment of students' needs, and the implications of student motivation and empowerment on the part of the teacher.

I have always been fascinated by humanistic teaching and learning approaches. My desire to help students develop independent study skills and learning strategies led me to design a course component geared toward teaching the principles of goal-directed learning, i.e., the “vision strategy”, based on the principles outlined by Robert Fritz (1989).

I incorporated this strategy into my courses.
My purpose with the “vision strategy” was to teach my students to set goals for themselves and take actions in order to make progress. This, of course, was in addition to all other course objectives. It also meant extra work for me on top of the heavy workload of giving feedback and marking written assignments.

I felt passionate about this because I could enable my students to see and realize their potentials and to become independent and successful learners in their own ways.
One of my students’ confessions about the impact of this strategy speaks for itself. He said that “I learned a lot in this course. I’ve realized that I can have dreams but I will never achieve them without taking actions and evaluating my progress. If I fail this course, I would not blame you for being a strict teacher. I could only blame myself for not having done enough to achieve my goal. I learned my lesson for a lifetime.”

The success of the vision strategy among my students and the positive academic results that it had brought about in many of them made me acknowledge an important change in me in terms of my social interactions with students. I was clearly not an authoritarian and intimidating teacher anymore that I used to be in Hungary.

My experiences with some students had a profound emotional impact on me. I was proud of myself for being able to strike a chord deep inside them, which motivated them to act upon their dreams and objectives. I was happy for my students for having accomplished what deeply mattered to them.

**Overcoming Challenges in My Personal Life**

In the throes of managing my new life professionally and intellectually, hardly any time was left for developing a new personal and social life.

I was compelled to keep my focus on establishing myself professionally and financially. My beliefs about the importance of financial security and professional development seemed to override my desire for developing a circle of friends and having an active social life.

Besides, my shyness and reticence certainly were not conducive to making friends, no matter how much I always yearned for social activity. For most of my life, I have had a paradoxical attitude in this area: I desperately wanted to make friends, and yet, I seemed unable to take steps to approach others.

Over the years, I have used numerous strategies and tools that have facilitated my personal and spiritual development. Reading a lot of books on spiritual development was one of my first steps in finding my Self. In the first three or four years, I was highly devoted to finding answers to burning questions about who I am and what my life purpose was.

I have begun to practice yoga to tame a mind that raced crazily all the time. I have attended various meditation courses, self-discovery workshops. I sought help and guidance from holistic practitioners and spiritually-oriented professionals both in Canada and Hungary.

I have learned to apply various techniques to curb the dominance of my rational mind, to get in touch with my Inner Voice, and to pay attention to the Interconnectedness of Everything.

This self-imposed, intense, and rigorous self-exploration, which has often been emotionally challenging and painful, but necessary, has made me face many of my issues originating from childhood.

Gradually, I came to realize that all techniques, workshops, sessions, books, and conversations with various people have been instrumental in helping me understand how every single experience of mine has contributed to realizing who I am, what my life purpose is, and why I am here in Canada.
This process has opened up a channel to my intuition that is beginning to shape my life in more fulfilling and emotionally rewarding ways.

Recently, I bought a piano and have begun to play music that used to be an important part of my life in Hungary. I realize that playing the piano came to my life in childhood as a “possibility” to develop my intuitive, artistic, and dare I say, my feminine side in those days when I needed it the most.

I could not do anything with it at the time because I was unable to overcome the strong control of my rational mind that had kept the primary focus on intellectual things and my studies in foreign languages.

Many years later in my adult life, my much needed spiritual growth has enabled me to make a connection to my intuition and my femininity, which in turn has helped me to see my personal and professional life in a new light.

I have come to a point in my life where I am not afraid to give rational thinking and intuition equal importance.

I know by experience that balancing mind and emotions can make me whole as a person.

I consider playing the piano a “means” at my disposal at present – as opposed to having been a “possibility” in my childhood – to discover what is in store for me in the artistic, feminine, intuitive realm of my life after having neglected this area for a very long time.

The huge geographical distance between me and my family, as well as the sole reliance on myself to get by in my new life in Canada, have made me re-evaluate things in my life.

Over the years, life situations have pushed me to re-examine and reconsider my views, assumptions and beliefs about such important concepts as self-confidence, self-esteem, trust, love, respect, patience, friendship, and personal and professional relationships.

The fact that there was no one to count on, except for myself, in making important decisions has taught me to develop a new perspective on life.

My lot has relentlessly forced me to adopt and embrace a new mind-set with my Self (i.e., a whole person with rational, emotional, and intuitive sides) being its focal point.

The constant emphasis on myself has pushed me to appreciate and acknowledge my academic, intellectual and professional achievements, my capabilities and talents, the results of my efforts, my strengths and weaknesses, and my positive and negative attitudes.

In the past ten years, I have had to learn to celebrate every major milestone in my professional life by myself without having my family around:

• the conferring of my master’s degree,
• my appointment as an instructor at university,
• my becoming a Canadian citizen,
• successful conference presentations nationally and internationally,
• admittance to a Ph.D. program,
• my first journalistic publications in Hungarian in my hometown as well as
• my first non-academic publication in English in Canada.
After several years, it started to dawn on me that all the struggles in my professional life in two different geographical locations were connected to one single issue, which remained hidden from me for almost three decades:

**OVERCOMING LOW SELF-ESTEEM**

From a deeper psychological and spiritual perspective, however, every single experience in my personal and professional life has exemplified various ways of dealing with self-acceptance. I ran away from the protective shield of my family to face and overcome this issue on the personal level; and relying solely on myself in a foreign environment proved to be the only way for this to be resolved successfully.

Ten years later, I have also discerned at long last that I needed to go through all those excruciating and difficult experiences because they have made me who I am today. Everything has been orchestrated perfectly so that I can learn about myself in life.

One of these lessons has been about the importance of maintaining harmony between my thoughts, feelings, actions, and intuitions.

When all these things are aligned, everything I do flows naturally, smoothly, and effortlessly. I am happy and confident as a person and a teacher. When elated, I tend to be more creative, supportive, and receptive than otherwise.

When I feel imbalanced, however, my self-confidence usually withers. I tend to struggle with everything and I usually blame others and the circumstances for my mistakes.

I am convinced that not only my teaching practice has changed for the better but my whole being has undergone an important transformation in the first ten years of my life in Canada.

In other words, the personal transformation within has begun to manifest without.

That “something” that drove me away from home ten years ago was nothing less than my intuitive, unconscious desire to find my real Self, and to learn to love, respect, acknowledge and express both my Self and myself in harmonious, loving and rewarding ways in every moment of my life.

**I have learned to trust the process and my Self.**

As a result, I have become much more patient with myself and others.
Conclusion

This autobiographical narrative was an important heuristic tool for me to uncover and explore my beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations about my life experiences. It allowed me to examine the impact of my personal growth and perspective transformation on my teaching philosophy and teaching practice. Thus, the process made it clear to me that there was an intimate connection between my personal and professional experiences, and changes in one area of my life did make an impact on other aspects of life. Reflection and writing allowed me to view my life to date as a whole from a bigger perspective. This subtle, but important, change in my perspective made me connect events in my life that may have occurred chronologically at different points in time. This self-discovery process for more than seven years gave me the impetus to design my doctoral research on teacher identity to explore other teachers’ transformations and the results the process may bring about. According to my research methodology, the researcher must have a direct personal experience with the phenomenon being investigated. There must be concrete autobiographical connections with the research topic. Therefore, my introspective, self-reflective autobiographical process prepared me a great deal to work with other teachers as research participants.

I do not wish to draw definite conclusions about the impact of my self-exploration on my teacher identity at this point in my dissertation because I deliberately save it for the last chapter. The purpose of this chapter was to provide a backdrop about me as a researcher in order to show where I come from, how my beliefs have changed over time, what my personal, educational, and professional experiences have been that deeply molded and shaped who I am as a teacher, a professional, a novice researcher, and above all, a human being today.

Next, Chapter 3 introduces my conceptual and theoretical orientation that guided my research on teacher identity from an epistemological point of view. Chapters 4 and 5 provide the review of the literature in the social sciences and educational research, respectively.
Chapter 3

My Theoretical Orientation to Researching Teacher Identity

Introduction

This chapter presents my theoretical orientation to studying teacher identity. According to Kilbourn (2004), the theoretical perspective of a study can be called the “theoretical orientation” or the “framework” or the “backing”. I decided to use the term “theoretical orientation” in my dissertation. He further adds that

the theoretical perspective is particularly important when it comes to interpreting the data in a qualitative study. A fundamental assumption for any academic research is that the phenomena (data) that we wish to understand are filtered through a point of view (a theoretical perspective). (Kilbourn, 2004, p. 88)

The researcher’s theoretical orientation is part of what is called the epistemology, which, in turn, fits into a bigger framework called “paradigm”. Guba and Lincoln (1994) define the term paradigm as “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (p. 105). They also point out that paradigms are “human constructions, that is, they are all inventions of the human mind and hence subject to human error” (p. 108). Paradigms consist of three elements: epistemology, ontology and methodology. Epistemology refers to the researcher’s knowledge base, i.e., how people know the world including their assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge of reality. It also provides the prerequisite of and the justification for utilizing certain methodologies and methods in scientific research. Ontology deals with the form and nature of reality and existence, i.e., what counts as ‘reality’ for the researcher. Methodology seeks answers to the question of how people gain knowledge about the world. Thus, epistemologies serve as the conceptual and theoretical background knowledge for conducting research.
In line with the above introduction, this chapter focuses on outlining my conceptual and theoretical orientation that has served as the epistemological foundation for conducting my research on teacher identity. My doctoral research is grounded in several important theories and concepts taken from the literature. Due to the multi-faceted nature of identity, I have drawn on theories from both psychology and teacher education. This chapter is organized into three sections, each presenting a theory, a concept or a group of concepts that influenced my conceptualization about teacher identity. The first section presents an overview of George Kelly’s (1955, 1963) *Personal Construct Theory*. The second describes the complementary and interconnected nature of reason and intuition (i.e., two modes of thought) as developed and explained by a number of researchers. The last section discusses the concept of “perspective transformation” and its relevance to my research.

**Personal Construct Theory**

One of the major theoretical foundations underlying my research is George Kelly’s (1955, 1963) *Personal Construct Theory*. It presents a systematic and detailed description of the ways individuals create their reality based on their interconnected construct systems. The basic theory is summed up as one fundamental postulate that is further elaborated by means of eleven corollaries. The theory itself and several related concepts (e.g., Kelly’s view of the universe; “man-the-scientist”; “personal construct”; and the “psychological re-construction of life”) influenced my conceptualization of teacher identity epistemologically and had an effect on my beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge of reality. The theory and its concepts: (i) informed my theoretical and pragmatic approach to finding the appropriate research methodology and to developing the research design; (ii) guided my relationship with the research participants during the entire research process; and finally, (iii) shaped my understanding and interpretations during the data analysis process. Thus, this theory and its concepts served as a sound theoretical and epistemological foundation for my research on teacher identity.

Kelly’s view of the universe – one of the related concepts – is composed of three important propositions: (i) the universe is real; (ii) everything is interlocked in it; and (iii) it is measured along the dimension of time. In my understanding, the above propositions can be helpful in exploring and understanding smaller units of the universe, such as “individual
universes” that also reveal these traits. Concepts can be transferable and in this sense a “universe” can refer to an individual’s world that is real, interconnected, measured in time, and it is created based on one’s lived experiences. By the same token, an individual’s beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations of one’s lived experiences are interlocked. In other words, everything is connected to everything exerting a mutual effect on one another. The analogy is also pertinent to the time factor, as I see it. An individual’s life can make (more) sense if it is put in a bigger perspective of time (i.e., one’s life span) so that we can gain a holistic view of it. Hence, sequencing one’s life events chronologically allows us to seek relationships and connections among them and in turn, it facilitates reflection and interpretation. In this light, time is an important factor when we talk about the various ways of re-constructing one’s life and one’s identity. Kelly’s view of the universe offered an important conceptual and epistemological basis for my research design (e.g., developing the autobiographical journaling activities and the sets of interview questions) that is discussed in Chapter 6 in detail.

The notion of “man-the-scientist” is another essential concept relevant to my research, by which Kelly (1955, 1963) referred to all of mankind in an abstract sense, rather than only to a particular group of men who have become scientists in a concrete sense. This notion highlights the “scientist-like” characteristics of individuals, e.g. inquisitiveness, curiosity, open-mindedness, search for the truth and self-growth – rather than the biological features of being human. This concept directed my thinking during the process of developing my criteria for the selection of research participants. The theory also proposes that individuals are actively engaged in making sense of and extending their experience. Kelly (1963) states that “man creates his own ways of seeing the world in which he lives; the world does not create them for him. […] [However,] man can enslave himself with his own ideas and then win his freedom again by reconstructing his life” (pp. 12, 21, emphasis added). Put differently, what an individual perceives may not exist, but his perception does, claims Kelly (1963), and for an individual his perception is real. He adds that “his fictitious perception will often turn out to be a grossly distorted construction of something which actually does exist” (Kelly, 1963, p. 8, emphasis added). This was an essential point that I took away for my own research because it reminded me of the power and influence of the participants’ perceptions and beliefs of themselves regardless of how they may have been perceived by others, or for that matter by me, the researcher.
The term “personal construct” needs to be defined prior to presenting the theory and its corollaries in detail. In Kelly’s (1955, 1963) theory the concept of “personal construct” refers to a set of mental models or mental representations that each individual has made about their world. The notion is described in the following way:

Man looks at the world through transparent patterns or templates which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed. This fit is not always very good. Yet without such patterns the world appears to be such an undifferentiated homogeneity that man is unable to make any sense out of it. Even a poor fit is more helpful to him than nothing at all. (Kelly, 1963, p. 9)

The term “construct” is particularly well-chosen because it carries two meanings of equal importance. One meaning is retrospective: a construct represents how the person classifies (i.e., has constructed) his or her experience. The other meaning is forward-looking: a construct represents the person’s predisposition to perceive (or construe) in the future. Thus, “man as a scientist” ultimately creates his own constructs through which he views the world of events and seeks to predict and control the course of events in his world. It follows then that the constructs are intended to help him in his efforts to predict things.

As mentioned above, the basic theory of personal construct is presented as one fundamental postulate and it is then further explicated through eleven corollaries. The following section presents a brief synopsis of Personal Construct Theory and its corollaries.

The fundamental postulate is the following:

“A person’s processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events” (Kelly, 1963, p. 46).

To make sense of the above postulate, we can dissect the terms used in it following Kelly’s own method to interpret each word in a statement. It is clear that the postulate refers to an individual and it deals with processes rather than a static substance. These processes are conceptualized in a psychological manner. The term “channelized” refers to a person’s processes that occur through a network of psychological pathways, which is flexible and often alterable. The term “ways” refers to a person’s processes that can both facilitate but also restrict a person’s range of actions. The emphasis is on how an individual person chooses to operate. Each person may have a different way of operating in order to realize his or her objectives. This network of
psychological pathways, called “constructs”, can also influence the way an individual anticipates future events.

Eleven corollaries follow from the fundamental postulate that are presented in bold below with a brief interpretation of each:

**Construction Corollary:** “A person anticipates events by construing their replications” (Kelly, 1963, p. 50).

We anticipate a future event based on our interpretations of past events. We do not anticipate their exact replication but we may anticipate some recurring aspects of past events in the future.

**Individuality Corollary:** “Persons differ from each other in their construction of events” (Kelly, 1963, p. 55).

People are different in the ways they anticipate events. There are different approaches by different people to anticipate the same event.

**Organization Corollary:** “Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationship between constructs” (Kelly, 1963, p. 56).

Kelly explained that different constructs may lead to incompatible predictions. This happens when an individual experiences a personal conflict that is painful to face. Kelly claims that each individual finds different ways to transcend contradictions. People are not only different in how they construe events; they are also different in how they organize their constructions of events. In other words, each person deals differently with solving contradicting constructs. Sometimes, we may need to revamp our construct system and we need to make a decision what to do, e.g., to replace some aspects of the old system or preserve the integrity of the old system altogether. The theory emphasizes the importance of self-consistency. Therefore, some people may decide to preserve the old system altogether when they anticipate events – this happens when they resist changes. Personal growth happens when they are able to replace some conflicting and dysfunctional aspects of their construct system and can thereby rise above the contradiction.
Dichotomy Corollary: “A person’s construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs” (Kelly, 1963, p. 59).

People can live with a certain degree of inconsistency within their construct system without any harm. However, distortions or dichotomies can become so inappropriate that they cause personal distress.

Choice Corollary: “A person chooses for himself that alternative in a dichotomized construct through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system” (Kelly, 1963, p. 64).

Whenever a person has to make a choice, he will choose in favor of the alternative that seems to enhance his anticipations. As we have seen, a person’s construct system consists of dichotomous elements and from the choice corollary it follows that an individual places relative value on one or the other element of a dichotomy depending on his preference at the moment.

Range Corollary: “A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only” (Kelly, 1963, p. 68).

One particular construct can be applied to anticipate a limited range of events only.

Experience Corollary: “A person’s construction system varies as he successively construes the replications of events” (Kelly, 1963, p. 72).

Kelly explained that it is not what happens around a person that makes him experienced, but rather the successive construing and re-construing of what happens, as it happens, that enhances his life experience. In other words, it is one’s interpretations of events rather than the actual event in and of itself that affect one’s life experience. Thus, one’s perceptions and interpretations of what happens play a crucial role in the quality of one’s life experience.

Modulation Corollary: “The variation in a person’s construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose range of convenience the variants lie” (Kelly, 1963, p. 77).

An individual learns certain things not from the nature of stimuli that affect him but he learns only what his framework is designed to permit him to see in the stimuli. The permeability of constructs means that new elements can be admitted to one’s construct system provided they are within an acceptable range of convenience. Put differently, new elements can enter one’s construct system if they do not threaten self-integrity. Thus, an individual’s framework may permit him to notice the new element. By the same token, if the new element lies outside the
range of convenience, an individual’s framework does not permit him to see this new element, resulting in the individual ignoring it and so resisting the change. I consider this an important aspect of self-development and self-growth.

**Fragmentation Corollary:** “A person may successively employ a variety of construction subsystems which are inferentially incompatible with each other” (Kelly, 1963, p. 83).

Simply put, this means that what an individual thinks today may not be inferred directly from what he thought yesterday.

**Commonality Corollary:** “To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person” (Kelly, 1963, p. 90).

Two individuals’ psychological processes are alike to the extent that they interpret one event in a similar fashion.

**Sociality Corollary:** “To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person” (Kelly, 1963, p. 95).

Kelly (1963) explained that in order to play a constructive role in relation to another person, it is crucial not only to see eye to eye with him but we must also have an acceptance of him and his way of seeing things. In other words, “in order for people to get along harmoniously with each other, each must have some understanding of the other” (p. 99).

Finally, the notion of “psychological re-construction of life” influenced my theoretical orientation to teacher identity. The notion of “psychological re-construction of life” in Kelly’s theory is rooted in the assumption that “all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement. We take the stand that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world” (Kelly, 1963, p. 15) – this psychological position is called “constructive alternativism”. In other words, Kelly maintained that an individual can interpret one particular event differently on two separate occasions that may result in re-constructing the earlier perception or interpretation of an event, or different individuals have the option of construing the same event in different ways. This idea shows clear connections to several corollaries, e.g., the organization, the experience, and the modulation corollaries. In my interpretation, the psychological re-construction of life can result in personal growth when an individual can replace a dysfunctional, conflicting aspect in his construct system.
(i.e., organization corollary) through the successive re-construction of what happens (i.e., experience corollary). However, we should note that this happens if the new alternative to the dysfunctional, conflicting aspect lies within the range of convenience of one’s construct system (i.e., modulation corollary) that allows the individual to notice the alternative. I found this a promising and fascinating idea for my research because it supported the importance of examining one’s life along a time line so that relationships among life events could be discovered, which allowed for new interpretations and the re-construction of perceptions and interpretations to occur. One of my research purposes was the facilitation of the emergence of a reconstructed teacher identity that could lead to the research participants’ personal and professional growth.

In summary, Kelly’s (1955, 1963) Personal Construct Theory maintains that our construct systems make our world more predictable since they reflect our constant efforts to make sense of the world. Construct systems can grow and change; in other words, they are not static but they are constantly confirmed or challenged in every moment we are conscious. Consequently, construct systems influence our expectations and perceptions. Kelly (1955) further explained that some constructs, or some aspects of our construct system, are more important than others. This means that some constructs are easy to change while others are more resistant to change. A person’s construct system represents the truth as they understand and experience it, therefore construct systems are idiosyncratic. According to Kelly (1955), the extent to which one person can understand another – or oneself – is an indicator of that person’s empathy. In my view, the extent of our understanding of another person depends on our ability to infer empathically how they interpret and make sense of their experiences. This was a valuable point for my own research because it reminded me of the importance of respecting the idiosyncratic interpretative processes of my research participants. Remembering this caveat was helpful during the data analysis and interpretation process. This theory made an impact on my own thinking in several ways. It helped me better understand the complexity and the intricate interconnectedness of construct systems that influence our beliefs and interpretations. It influenced my views as a researcher in selecting my methodology and designing my research. It also shaped my conceptual understandings and interpretations about the workings of construct systems and their influence on an individual’s perceptions and interpretations that are fundamental pillars of my inquiry on teacher identity.
Two Complementary and Interconnected Modes of Thought: Reason and Intuition

My doctoral research focuses on the exploration of teacher identity from a holistic perspective. As a reminder of my definition presented in Chapter 1, a holistic perspective involves two features in my research: (i) the integration of the personal and professional aspects of teacher identity and (ii) the application of conscious/rational and intuitive/tacit thought processes viewed as complementary and interconnected. The former signals the importance of viewing teacher identity from a “whole person” perspective that acknowledges the numerous roles an individual teacher plays besides being a professional. Life experiences stemming from these roles provide the raw material for individual reflection (i.e., the successive re-construing of life events). The latter feature played an essential role in the development of my theoretical orientation since a holistic perspective acknowledges and builds on the two interconnected modes of thinking known to be available to individuals. These two modes of thought can be employed in reflection in different ways; thus, they can be thought of as the method of reflection.

The literature shows a number of variations in the notion that people use different modes of thought. The authors employed a variety of terms and presented numerous interpretations on the two complementary modes of thought, which greatly influenced my thinking and understanding in general, and my theoretical orientation to my research on teacher identity in particular. I reviewed several interpretations and found that most authors acknowledged the complexly interconnected nature between the two modes of thought, even though they were described in a dichotomous manner. In my understanding, the dichotomy is useful only for the sake of description and interpretation. I view the two modes of thinking not as dichotomous but as complementary and intertwined. This section presents an overview of important authors’ work with a focus on describing the relationship between reason and intuition. I conclude this section with my definition of intuition that was applied in my research.

In his classic volume Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, Jerome Bruner (1986) described two modes of thought that he called paradigmatic and narrative. Hogarth (2001) viewed this as the classic distinction between analytical and intuitive modes of thinking. According to Bruner (1986), these two modes of thought – although complementary – are irreducible one to the other. Put differently, “efforts to reduce one mode to the other or to ignore one at the expense of the other inevitably fail to capture the rich diversity of thought” (Bruner, 1986, p. 11). The paradigmatic mode presents well-formed logical arguments, employs categorization and
conceptualization, and it is driven by principled hypotheses (Bruner, 1986). The author added that this mode of thought is primarily applied in science that aims to explore the world through “context independence” (i.e., a world that is constant and unaffected by human intentions) and thus, it has an outward orientation. On the other hand, he claimed that in the narrative mode of thought well-constructed narratives (stories) appeal to people because they can capture people’s attention and involve their emotions. Arguments within the paradigmatic mode may be convincing, but “only in a sharp, unidirectional sense” (Bruner, 1986, p. 29). A well-constructed narrative form of explanation can be a much more powerful means of persuasion than logical argument. In particular, the narrative gains much of its power through “context sensitivity” because it appeals to the implicit knowledge of the audience, maintained Bruner (1986) and added that “it is conceivable that our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own sense of self and our sense of others in the social world around us” (p. 69). Narratives are frequently used in the humanities and they have an inward orientation toward a perspective and the world.

Rudolf Arnheim (1985) made a distinction between intellect and intuition claiming that intuition is “one of the two fundamental and indispensable branches of cognition. The two sustain all operations of productive learning in all disciplines of knowledge, and they are crippled without one another’s help” (p. 77). By cognition he understood “the acquisition of knowledge in the most comprehensive sense of the term” (Arnheim, 1985, p. 78). The author referred to a lay perspective that associates the intellect with the left hemisphere of the brain whereas intuition is linked to the right side of the brain. Arnheim (1985) explained that intellect and intuition are interconnected and they are also complexly connected to thinking and perception. He defined intuition as “one property of perception, namely, its ability to apprehend directly the effects of interaction taking place in a field or gestalt situation” (Arnheim, 1985, p. 78), and he added that intuition is much less understood because “we know it mostly by its achievements whereas its mode of operation tends to elude awareness” (p. 79). The author further elaborated on the concept of intuition as follows:

All knowledge of the environment and all orientation within the environment begin with the intuitive exploration of the perceptually given. […] Thus, intuition is the basis of it [cognition] all; and it deserve all the respect we can offer. Intuition […] supplies us with the overall structure of a situation and determines the place and function of every component within the whole. […] In consequence,
the two approaches to cognition must cooperate from the beginning and forever. (Arnheim, 1985, pp. 82-83)

In his volume *Educating Intuition*, Hogarth (2001) uses the analogy of an iceberg for thinking about the differences between the *deliberate* and the *tacit* systems. The deliberate system lies above the surface of the water and it can be seen and assessed. The tacit system lies, however, below the surface and it is invisible. According to Hogarth (2001), the process of intuition itself can be characterized by a lack of awareness of how the outcomes have been achieved. In contrast to analysis or logical thinking, intuition cannot be defended or justified by a step-by-step process. The author cautions the reader in the following way:

These statements, however, should not be taken to imply that logic or analysis is always right and that, if it disagrees, intuition is always wrong. What is meant is simply that nonintuitive processes are *deliberate* and can be *specified* after the fact. Logic and analysis can be made transparent. Intuition cannot. (Hogarth, 2001, p. 7)

As a result of the above discussion, Hogarth (2001) proposed the following definition of intuition:

The essence of intuition or intuitive responses is that *they are reached with little apparent effort, and typically without conscious awareness. They involve little or no conscious deliberation.* (p. 14)

Another elaboration on the difference between reason and intuition is presented as follows:

One main contrast between intuition and reason is that pure reason is considered to be independent of feelings and impressions, machine-like and not ‘clouded’ by emotions whereas intuition is dependent on our feelings at all stages from the initial perception where feeling impressions of the information are created: through the intuitive processing where feelings may change, to the final intuition which has its accompanying feeling of certainty. (Bastick, 1982, pp. 58-59)

The personal nature of *knowledge* and *knowing* is emphasized in Michael Polanyi’s work that I found highly relevant and applied to my own research. Polanyi (1969a) elaborated on two kinds of knowledge – called *explicit* and *implicit/tacit* knowledge – in his work entitled *The Study of Man*. Explicit knowledge is formulated; it can be articulated in language or symbols and expressed in writing. Implicit or tacit knowledge, on the other hand, is inarticulate, pre-verbal, and mostly seen in the act of *doing* things. Polanyi (1969a) claimed that there is a logical difference between the two types of knowledge and thus, *they cannot be tested the same way*. 
Explicit knowledge is acquired through observation and formulation of rules. It is possible to reflect on something that is explicitly stated; however, we cannot reflect the same way on our tacit awareness of an experience. We can test inarticulate or implicit knowledge only by using it and as we use it we may be able to correct our ideas about it. Polanyi (1969a) argued that “it is not the functions of articulate logical operations, but the tacit powers of the mind that are decisive” (p. 19, emphasis added).

Polanyi’s (1994) seminal work entitled *Personal Knowledge* emphasized the importance of two kinds of awareness that he called *focal* and *subsidiary* awareness. They are mutually exclusive because we may get confused when we switch our awareness from the focal awareness to the particulars. For example, an individual’s focal awareness is on playing a musical piece on the piano (i.e., the intellectual knowing ‘what’), whereas the pianist’s subsidiary awareness includes the movement of her fingers on the keyboard (i.e., the practical knowing ‘how’). According to the author, his term “knowing” covers both aspects of this awareness. Polanyi’s (1983) famous proposition “we can know more than we can tell” (p. 4) captures brilliantly the interconnectedness of the two kinds of awareness. As he claims, this seems to be an obvious fact but it is not easy to say exactly what it means. For example, we know a person’s face and can recognize it among thousands of faces. However, we cannot say how we do this because most of this type of knowledge that we rely on cannot be put into words. The basic structure of “tacit knowing” always involves two kinds of things or in Polanyi’s (1983) words these are “the two terms of tacit knowing” (p. 9). By focusing on a subject (first term) with our attention, the fact of drawing our attention to something will evoke a second term, which remains tacit.

This is how we come to know these particulars, without becoming able to identify them. Such is the *functional relation* between the two terms of tacit knowing: *we know the first term only by relying on our awareness of it for attending to the second.* (Polanyi, 1983, p. 10)

Polanyi (1969a) defined “tacit knowing” as *understanding*, i.e., comprehending or making sense of experience. He asserted that understanding “carries with it the metaphysical implications of a groping for reality behind the screen of appearances” (p. 20). In other words, understanding goes beyond the mere observation and description of experience to explain the facts of nature. He argued that “the process of understanding leads beyond what a strict empiricism regards as the domain of legitimate knowledge” (p. 21). Understanding of words and
symbols is also a tacit process, he claimed. Words can convey information but they cannot communicate an understanding of themselves; put differently, words do not mean anything in themselves. It is always the person who says something who can mean something by using them. Therefore, the sender of a message has to rely on the intelligence of another for the comprehension of his message. This means that there is always an intention behind every utterance and we always know tacitly what we mean to say a little before we say it. In this light, Polanyi (1969a) “expanded the function of understanding into that of knowing what we intend, what we mean, or what we do” (p. 22). There is an unavoidable personal participation in the process of using our tacit knowing as we mean, understand, and do something. As Polanyi (1969a) put it, “the participation of the knower in shaping his knowledge is now recognized as the true guide and master of our cognitive powers” (p. 26). The process of understanding as described by Polanyi (1969a) is another essential pillar of my theoretical orientation because a vital part of the research process was that participants came to an understanding of the interconnectedness of personal and professional life experiences in shaping their identity.

Another important aspect of understanding is “a grasping of disjointed parts into a comprehensible whole” (Polanyi, 1969a, p. 28) that I regarded as highly relevant to the exploration of teacher identity. The author elaborated on this notion in the following way:

We cannot comprehend a whole without seeing its parts, but we can see the parts without comprehending the whole. […] Once comprehension is achieved, we are not likely to lose sight again of the whole; yet comprehension is not completely irreversible. […] One can see a whole only by seeing its parts, but it changes altogether the manner in which we are aware of the particulars. We become aware of them now in terms of the whole on which we have fixed our attention. (Polanyi, 1969a, pp. 29-30)

I believe that this is an important statement in terms of viewing one’s life experiences (i.e., “seeing the parts”) in a bigger framework (i.e., one’s life “as a whole”). In other words, human life is not only the chronology of isolated events, but more importantly, it is one’s interpretation and understanding of those experiences from the perspective of the wholeness of one’s life. Understanding one’s life as a coherent whole at any given point in time may bring about an awareness shift that, in turn, may also shed a new light on each particular experience from a higher perspective of the coherent whole. This kind of perception, in my view, may facilitate the understanding of seeming paradoxes in one’s life because ‘conflicting’ experiences may be understood differently if viewed from the perspective of one’s life as a whole, at any
given point in time. Consequently, it would be desirable for an individual to reflect on their life experiences in order to gain an understanding of their life as a whole. This understanding of the whole, in turn, may put the particulars in a different light.

Carl Gustav Jung’s entire work focuses on the nature of the unconscious as he makes a distinction between two realms of the human psyche: consciousness and the unconscious. Consciousness is understood as being cognizant of the contents of one’s mind that are created through thinking in words and in logical patterns. According to Jung, the investigation of consciousness will result in a series of observations leading to a “psychology of the ego” with its range of individual variations. On the other hand, the unconscious depicts an extremely fluid state of affairs: everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my sense, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness: all this is the content of the unconscious. These contents are more or less capable, so to speak, of consciousness, or were once conscious and may become conscious again the next moment. (Jung, 1959, p. 55)

According to Jung (1959), conscious behaviour rests upon the personal unconscious, which stores all forgotten impressions, reactions, and partially realized or wholly repressed emotions, critically rejected thoughts and feelings. The unconscious is the product of the individuals’ personal existence and biography. To support this claim, I want to draw on the latest findings of “new biology” that attempts to synthesize cutting-edge research in cell biology and quantum physics. Bruce H. Lipton (2008) explained that in early childhood (from birth to age six) infants’ brain waves operate at the lowest EEG frequency called “delta waves”. The child begins to spend more time at a higher level of EEG waves called “theta waves” between the age of two and six. These frequencies (i.e., delta and theta waves) put the brain into a “more suggestible, programmable state” (Lipton, 2008, 133). That explains why infants and young children can download a huge load of information that is stored in the subconscious. In other words, through observation, the parents’ fundamental behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes get “hardwired” in the children’s subconscious minds. Lipton (2008) is a renowned cell biologist who provided the following definition of the subconscious:

7Based on Lipton’s (2008) definition, his concept of the “subconscious” seems identical with Jung’s “unconscious”
In reality, the subconscious is an emotionless database of stored programs, whose function is strictly concerned with reading environmental signals and engaging in hardwired behavioral programs, no questions asked, no judgments made. The subconscious mind is a programmable “hard drive” into which our life experiences are downloaded. [...] The subconscious mind, one of the most powerful information processors known, specifically observes both the surrounding world and the body’s internal awareness, reads the environmental cues, and immediately engages previously acquired (learned) behaviors – all without the help, supervision, or even awareness of the conscious mind. (pp. 135-136)

Jung approached the unconscious on its own terms, in other words, with an empathic rather than an analytical approach. He claimed that techniques of association can help bring the forgotten aspects into consciousness:

If they [forgotten impressions, thoughts, etc.] can be lifted into consciousness, and thus made available, his mode of experiencing will thereby gain correspondingly in breadth and depth. [...] This increase in the modes of experience and of comprehension represents psychological growth. Jung considers that this growth potential is inherent in every human psyche, and that whereas the first half of life is normally devoted to learning and to adapting to life’s demands in terms of the natively given primary attitudes, the second half finds its fulfillment through the assimilation of the hitherto unconscious potential. Evidently, this equals a greater degree of “wholeness” and of maturity of judgement and experience. (Jung, 1959, p. xvi, italics added)

Jung referred to the role of intuition in the process of bringing the unconscious aspects up to consciousness again by maintaining that “the primary function of intuition [...] is simply to transmit images, or perceptions of relations between things. [...] These images have the value of specific insights which have a decisive influence on action whenever intuition is given priority” (Jung, 1988, p. 221 quoted in Korthagen, 2005, p. 376).

Jung associated the two realms of consciousness with two types of thinking: directed and non-directed thinking. Consciousness can be associated with logically directed thinking or “reality-thinking”. This type of thinking employs language and verbal concepts for the purpose of communication with others. It is exhausting and causes fatigue; therefore, it is used for short periods of time only. It produces innovations and adaptation; it copies reality and attempts to act upon it. This type of thinking is a more recent acquisition in human evolution. Jung associated his notion of the unconscious with non-directed thinking that is spontaneous, imaginative, largely non-verbal, and non-logical. He described it as “merely associative thinking” that leads away...
from reality into fantasies of the past or future; it sets free subjective tendencies; it is unproductive; it does not tire us and it is effortless. Non-directed or “associative” thinking is more archaic, more “natural”. Jung (1959) concluded that

Since the logically directed and spontaneous mental and psychic activities mutually exclude each other to a considerable degree, no live relationship can be established with the unconscious through directed pathways of thought. However, this is not to deny the value nor the place of the thinking function, which in its turn is needed to comprehend this relationship analytically and intellectually – but only after the relationship has been experienced. If it has not been given a chance to come to life, then, after all, nothing is there which might be analyzed. (p. xviii-xix, italics added)

In my understanding, the exploration of the personal unconscious – as defined by Jung (1959) – by means of techniques of association is a valuable process that facilitates personal growth because it allows the individual to gain a broader understanding of his biography and the underlying drives, forces, and beliefs that have shaped his identity and conscious life experiences. Jung emphasizes the importance of discovering, “making friends” with, and re-integrating the “shadow” part of our personal unconscious. Jung (1959) further stated that “by raising the personal unconscious to consciousness, the analysis makes the subject aware of things which he is generally aware of in others, but never in himself” (p. 128, italics added). This is the theoretical foundation of the intuitive process that I aimed to facilitate in my research with the guided visualization technique as a data collection method.

In summary, the reviewed authors described the two fundamental modes of thought from different perspectives using a variety of terms. The first mode of thought was called intellect, consciousness, and reason and they were described as paradigmatic, deliberate, rational, logical, explicit, and directed. The second mode of thought was referred to as intuition, tacit knowing, and the unconscious, which showed a range of interpretations, and characterized as narrative, implicit, tacit, pre-verbal, imaginative, spontaneous, non-verbal, non-logical, and non-directed. The reviewed researchers presented fascinating descriptions of the two modes of thinking. Likewise, they provided convincing theoretical lines of reasoning about the complementary and interconnected nature of these two modes of thinking that prompted me to incorporate both ways of knowing in my doctoral research, in accordance with my holistic approach. I considered the above theoretical explications of the two modes of thought as the
rationale for my chosen methods of reflection for research participants and they supported my goal to attempt to access both ways of knowing by using different elicitation strategies.

As a result of the review, it is important to conclude this section with “my” definition of intuition that establishes how I use this term in my dissertation. The word intuition comes from the Latin and stands for “looking, regarding, or knowing from within” (Hodgkinson et al., 2008, p. 2). In my understanding, the unconscious (Jung, 1958, 1959), implicit/tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1969a), intuition (Arnheim, 1985), and explicit knowledge (Polanyi, 1969a) can be viewed as various degrees of awareness on a continuum ranging from the ineffable, unspecifiable, tacit, inarticulate, and pre-verbal on one side of this continuum to the observable, logical, deliberate, directed, and explicit, on the other. For the purpose of my research, I define intuition as a bridge or a messenger that mediates between these two extreme points of awareness, what have been called the unconscious, implicit/tacit knowledge, and explicit knowledge. (Moustakas (1990) defined intuition as a “bridge” and it will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.) Therefore, I consider intuition as a “transformation device” or a “means of communication” between the more unconscious/implicit/tacit ranges of awareness and the more conscious/explicit ranges of awareness. Intuition can reveal itself in various forms, e.g., recurring spontaneous thoughts, insights, epiphanies, emotions, gut feelings, bodily sensations, perceptions, and spontaneous actions that are difficult to explain from a rational perspective. These are the forms of intuition that I primarily focused on in my research and this is how I employed the term “intuition” in my dissertation.

**Perspective Transformation**

The concept of “perspective transformation” is the third major cornerstone of my theoretical orientation, which is described primarily by two researchers. Jack Mezirow (1978, 1981, 2000) introduced the term in the area of transformative learning in adulthood and Patrick Diamond (1991) applied it later to teacher education. Mezirow (1978) coined the term “meaning perspective” and defined it as a personal paradigm for understanding ourselves and our relationships. The author explains that a transformation of a meaning perspective can occur when an old perspective can no longer deal successfully with problems and issues in a new
situation; hence the term “perspective transformation”. A new meaning perspective has the following features:

A new meaning perspective has dimensions of thought, feeling and will. It involves seeing one’s self and one’s roles and relationships in a consistent, coherent way, a way which will dictate action priorities. Meaning perspectives are more than a way of seeing; they are proposals to experience one’s life which involve a decision to take action. Feelings and events are interpreted existentially, not intellectually as by an observer. […]

As we move forward to new perspectives, we can never return to those in our past. Indeed, we are continually reconstructing the reality of the past by reinterpreting it from each successive vantage point as we move from one perspective to the next. Maturity holds the promise that becoming older may indeed mean becoming wiser because wisdom can mean interpreting reality from a higher perspective. One can arrive at that vantage point only by living through the full range of challenges encountered in the different seasons of one’s life and through the successive transformations experienced in responding to them. (Mezirow, 1978, pp. 105-106)

The above excerpt shows clear connections and similarities between Mezirow’s concept of perspective transformation and Kelly’s *Personal Construct Theory*, in particular with the organization, the experience, and the modulation corollaries. Mezirow (2000) expounded on his earlier theoretical findings on adult learning and emphasized the distinction in the maturation process between childhood and adulthood. Maturity in childhood is viewed as a “formative” process, whereas maturity in adulthood is regarded as a “trans-formative” process “involving alienation from those roles [in childhood], reframing new perspectives, and rearranging life with a greater degree of self-determination” (Mezirow, 2000). Thus, the first vital step in the process of transforming our meaning perspectives about ourselves is “that we become critically aware of the fact that we are caught in our own history and are reliving it and of the cultural and psychological assumptions which structure the way we see ourselves and others” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 109, emphasis added). In my understanding, gaining awareness of our life history is a critical first step in personal and professional development, which guided my doctoral research on teacher identity. In addition to awareness, “time” also plays a central role in perspective transformation in two ways. First, time provides an overall interpretive framework and continuity within which one can view one’s life experiences. Second, time is also necessary for in-depth introspection and reflection to happen and for the re-construction and emergence of one’s new perspective of oneself to occur. The notion of perspective transformation forms an important
aspect of my research on teacher identity as I aimed to explore how my research participants reconstructed their perceptions and interpretations of themselves as teachers and individuals.

Diamond’s (1991) concept of “perspective transformation” draws on Mezirow’s early research (1978, 1981) on transformative learning in adulthood and it applies Kelly’s theory in the area of teacher education. In Diamond’s (1991) interpretation, the notion of perspective transformation refers to a cognitive form of personalistic teacher education ranking teacher personality as important as specific knowledge and skills. The author claims that “each individual forms a microcosm of the known world and, as a private universe, it has its own processes of growth and decay” (Diamond, 1991, p. 14). Perspective transformation is a process of becoming critically aware of how one’s own mental structures (i.e., constructs) both enable and constrain the way teachers see themselves and their relationships. It helps teachers to gain access both to their own and alternative meaning perspectives from which to interpret reality. The objective of this process is to aim at understanding oneself beyond simply gaining knowledge. This model draws on the epistemological empowerment of teachers, which is the least known paradigm in adult education, claims Diamond (1991).

Conclusion

This chapter offered a theoretical orientation to researching teacher identity by presenting a variety of relevant theories and concepts. In the introduction, I defined the term “theoretical orientation” by situating it within the larger framework of paradigms and epistemologies. Then, I presented a synopsis of Kelly’s (1955, 1963) Personal Construct Theory and showed its relevance to my doctoral research. I then discussed the two complementary modes of thought by providing a selection of various interpretations. I also presented my definition of intuition as it is used in my dissertation. Finally, I described the concept of perspective transformation by presenting Mezirow’s (1978, 1981, 2000) and Diamond’s (1991) definitions and interpretations.

I present the first part of the literature review in Chapter 4 “Social Science Perspectives on Self and Identity” focusing on a variety of approaches to the concept of self and identity in the social sciences. Then, Chapter 5 “Educational Research Perspectives on Teacher Identity” provides the second part of the comprehensive review of the literature by examining the most important research themes specifically on teacher identity.
Chapter 4

Social Science Perspectives on Self and Identity

Introduction

The concepts of self and identity have been receiving increasing attention in educational research in the past two decades. Numerous concepts and theories originating from the social sciences have informed educational research and have influenced the conceptualizations of teacher self or teacher identity. As I immersed myself in exploring the relevant literature, it became evident to me that my dissertation should include a multi-disciplinary review of that literature. Due to the complexity of the concept of teacher identity and the holistic approach of my doctoral research (outlined in Chapters 1 and 3), I found it important to explore both the prevailing social science and the educational approaches to researching self and identity in order to situate my doctoral study in a broad perspective. The literature in each of these fields is exceptionally rich in concepts, theories, and approaches that are pertinent to my research topic. Therefore, I decided to present a comprehensive review of the literature in two chapters. Chapter 4 focuses on the social science perspectives on self and identity in general, which provides an underlying foundation and a general perspective for contextualizing my doctoral research. Chapter 5 will present a review of the main educational research approaches focusing specifically on teacher identity.

This chapter is divided into two major sections. Part One provides an overview of the approaches to self and identity in psychology and sociology that prevail in the mainstream of these disciplines. First, some critical issues that have influenced the conceptualizations about the self are presented. Then, a short historical overview traces the evolution of understandings about the concept of self. Finally, various identity concepts, such as ego identity, personal identity and social identity, are outlined.
Part Two of the literature review showcases some lesser-known or seldom-traveled paths in the exploration of self and identity in psychology, which appear to be regarded as non-mainstream. This section examines relevant works by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Carl Gustav Jung, Ken Wilber, and some other contemporary scholars. They approach identity and self from a broader, more holistic perspective, which has been highly relevant to my doctoral research.

Part One: Approaches to Self and Identity in the Social Sciences

Two prominent social science fields – psychology and sociology – have dedicated much attention and unwavering effort to investigating the development of the concepts of self and identity. However, they have developed diverse research perspectives and research methods even though the self seems to have been a unifying construct within psychology, sociology and other social sciences since the 1970s. In sociology, the focus tends to be on the outer observable characteristics of self/identity and the role of external factors on identity construction. It emphasizes features of self/identity in behaviour and speech in social contexts and in response to external forces. There is almost no interest in the inner life of individuals, the subjective perspectives. In psychology, the literature is remarkably rich in presenting various perspectives and aspects of self and identity. However, according to Cote and Levine (2002), it is fragmented and a coherent theoretical foundation has not yet been articulated.

The literature in psychology and sociology provides very general definitions of the concepts of self and identity and occasionally the conceptualizations about them are “highly abstract. […] To make matters more complicated, in some works the term “self” seems to correspond, albeit imprecisely, to the psychoanalytic conception of the ego” (Cote & Levine, 2002, p. 70). Moreover, the conceptualizations of self and identity seem to have been used almost interchangeably in both disciplines. Upon scrutinizing the literature, I found several, conflicting conceptualizations for each concept (i.e., self and identity). To perplex readers and researchers even more, sometimes a definition of self-concept in one discipline corresponds to a definition of identity in another discipline. Thus, the self seems to be a generic umbrella term for multiple conflicting conceptualizations originating from various schools of thought both in psychology and sociology. For example, the concept of self has been defined in the following ways:
The Self is a key construct in several schools of psychology, broadly referring to the cognitive and affective representation of one’s identity. (www.wikipedia.org)

In sociology, the self refers to an individual person from the perspective of that person. It is the individual’s conception of himself or herself, and the underlying capacity of the person’s mind or intellect which formed that conception (one’s “true self”). What an individual thinks of him or herself is at least temporarily directly influenced by interactions with others. (www.wikipedia.org)

In Jungian theory, the Self is one of the archetypes. It signifies the coherent whole, unified consciousness and unconscious of a person. The Self, according to Jung, is realized as the product of individuation, which in Jungian view is the process of integrating one’s personality. […] What distinguishes Jungian psychology is the idea that there are two centers of personality. The ego is the center of consciousness, whereas the Self is the center of the total personality, which includes consciousness, the unconscious, and the ego. The Self is both the whole and the center. (www.wikipedia.org)

The term identity covers much of what has been called the self by a variety of workers, be it in the form of a self-concept. (Mead, 1934)

The meaning of self therefore seems to be perplexing. There is no single universally accepted definition of self and furthermore, many definitions refer to clearly different phenomena. In order to gain some clarity and develop an understanding of self and identity in the maze of conflicting definitions, it is important to examine some basic theoretical assumptions that have informed and shaped researchers’ conceptualizations. A brief exploration of fundamental epistemological frameworks, worldviews, or theoretical orientations within which researchers operate may shed light on the inconsistencies in the conceptualizations of self. The subsequent section presents some of these critical issues in the social science field as discussed by Gergen (1971).

**Critical Issues in the Development of Self-Conception**

There are numerous schools of thought in the social science field with important but conflicting theoretical assumptions and views that may lead to contradictory interpretations and definitions of the concepts of self and identity. Gergen (1971) identified several critical issues – that have divided theorists into numerous camps – with regard to the complex problem of
defining the concept of self: Self as Fact vs. Fiction, Self as Knower vs. Known, Self as Structure
vs. Process, Self as One vs. Many, and Self-Consistency vs. Inconsistency.

**Self as Fact vs. Fiction**

For centuries, theorists have been inclined to view the self as if it had substance and they
developed a perspective in which the self was positioned as a physical entity. Representatives of
this position (e.g., Jung) felt that this entity – taken as a fact – was made up of experiences of
one’s personal existence or processes of thinking. The opposing camp of scientists contends that
it is much more useful to think of the self as a hypothetical construct rather than as a physical
object or entity. Viewed from this perspective, the self seems like a “fiction” and thus, the notion
of self is used as if it referred to a fact. Gergen (1971) noted, however, that our language does not
make a distinction between the way we talk about a real object and the way we use hypothetical
concepts. As a result, he says, we tend to believe in the hypothetical as “real”, thus blurring the
boundaries between “fact” and “fiction”.

**Self as Knower vs. Known**

A number of theorists (e.g., Erikson) have equated the self with the process of active
experience. For them, the content of the experience is of little importance in contrast to the
process of experiencing or knowing itself. The opposing camp of theorists argues that the self is
not the process of experiencing or knowing but that which is known. In other words, every
experience has content; it is an experience of something. William James proposed a solution to
this conundrum by stating that there were no two separate phenomena – the knower and the
known – but one, which he called the “stream of consciousness” having its own content (e.g.,
images, thoughts, emotions and sensations) that could be viewed in separate ways. An individual
can decide to observe the content of his stream of consciousness. This was termed the self as
known or the ‘me’. On the other hand, an individual can also decide to explore his stream of
consciousness by searching for principles and laws that govern its operation at any point in time.
This can be viewed as self as knower or the ‘I’. However, the ‘I’ and the ‘me’ are not separate
entities but they are “to be considered discriminated aspects of the same phenomenon” (Gergen,
1971, p. 16).
**Self as Structure vs. Process**

Others have argued that there is a distinction between the self as a psychological structure versus a psychological process. The term “structure” refers to a stable entity (hypothetical) as if it were a *thing*, having structural properties that give it stability over time (Gergen, 1971). In contrast, the focus on the self as a psychological process would entail discussing the principles of operation or the forces at play. Gergen (1971) noted that this distinction between structure and process “both serve as useful models for discussing the cognition of self” (p. 19). This structural approach has led to an age-old dilemma about one or multiple concepts of self.

**Self as One vs. Many**

Should the self be viewed as being one single, global entity, or as being fragmented, disconnected, and multiple? There has been plenty of research to support both positions. Some scientists have argued that an individual usually thinks of himself as having one basic concept of who he is. On the other hand, there are also strong arguments for the proposition of an individual having multiple concepts of self that may or may not be connected with one another.

**Self-Consistency vs. Inconsistency**

Finally, provided that a person may have several concepts of self, there is a debate about the relationships among multiple concepts of self. The question arises naturally whether the various concepts remain fragmented or they aim toward harmony and consistency over time. Research findings support the proposition that an individual can acquire varying conceptions of self in different life situations at various points in time. Gergen (1971) concluded that inconsistency in concepts of self may be perfectly natural and widespread. At the same time there may be a generalized tendency to reduce inconsistency. The extent of this tendency will largely depend on the individual’s awareness of the inconsistency, the functional value of the concepts at stake, and the amount of training he has had in avoiding inconsistency. (p. 22)

The following section offers a historical survey of the development of the concept of self, which is then followed by a concise outline of the most important identity concepts in the social sciences.
Historical Overview: Concepts of Self

A person’s concern with who he is has ancient roots indeed, and takes many forms. (Gergen, 1971, p. 1)

The beginnings of the discussion about the self and identity can be traced back to early Greek philosophical writings, in particular to those of Plato and Aristotle. Plato believed that reality is divided into two regions: one is called the “world of the senses” and the other is the “world of ideas”. According to Plato, man is a “dual creature”. On the one hand, man has a body that “flows” and it is bound to the world of the senses, i.e., everything tangible in nature flows and nothing is permanent. He further contended that “all our senses are based in the body and are consequently unreliable” (Gaarder, 1996, p. 88) since man cannot have true knowledge of anything that is in constant state of change. On the other hand, man has an immortal soul that is non-physical and therefore it can access and survey the “world of ideas” by using reason. Jostein Gaarder’s classic novel about the history of philosophy entitled Sophie’s World presents the following simple, yet profound elaboration of Plato’s ideas:

Plato also believed that the soul existed before it inhabited the body. […] But as soon as the soul wakes up in a human body, it has forgotten all the perfect ideas. Then something starts to happen. In fact, a wondrous process begins. As the human being discovers the various forms in the natural world, a vague recollection stirs his soul. He sees a horse – but an imperfect horse. (A gingerbread horse!) The sight of it is sufficient to awaken in the soul a faint recollection of the perfect “horse”, which the soul once saw in the world of ideas, and this stirs the soul with a yearning to return to its true realm. Plato calls this yearning eros – which means love. The soul, then, experiences a “longing to return to its true origin”. From now on, the body and the whole sensory world is experienced as imperfect and insignificant. The soul yearns to fly home on the wings of love to the world of ideas. It longs to be freed from the chains of the body. […] Plato believed … that all natural phenomena are merely shadows of the eternal forms or ideas. But most people are content with a life among shadows. They give no thought to what is casting the shadows. They think shadows are all there are, never realizing even that they are, in fact, shadows. And thus they pay no heed to the immortality of their own soul. (Gaarder, 1996, pp. 88-89)

Aristotle, who was Plato’s student, also made a basic distinction between the physical and the nonphysical aspects of the human being. One central concept of the nonphysical existence was soul. Aristotle believed that the highest degree of reality was that which we perceive with our senses, whereas for Plato the highest degree of reality was that which we think
with our reason. Plato maintained that all phenomena that we see in the natural world were purely reflections of things that existed in the higher reality of the “world of ideas” – and thereby in the human soul. Aristotle disagreed with his master’s view by claiming exactly the opposite – that all things that are reflected in the human soul were purely reflections of natural objects. In other words, for Aristotle, nature was the real world (Gaarder, 1996). These two opposing philosophies about the nature of reality and the human being’s place in it can be regarded as the origins of different dualistic\(^8\) approaches to self and identity that has led to establishing numerous schools of thought in philosophy and psychology in the Western world, which will be presented in more detail in this chapter.

According to Gergen (1971), the meaning of the term “soul” was never very precise in early philosophical thought and it was often used to refer to the “core of the nonphysical or psychic” (p. 5). This notion has much in common with what later theorists meant by “self”. Gergen (1971) further argued that as the concept of soul became the property of theology with the growing dominance and power of Christianity over the centuries, its relevance to scientific thinking became increasingly remote. However, Aristotle’s basic distinction between the physical and non-physical aspects of being human, outlined above, continued to prevail and was further refined and elucidated by the French philosopher René Descartes, one of the first major figures of rationalism. Descartes is often regarded as the first modern thinker who provided a philosophical framework for the natural sciences. His famous philosophical statement “Cogito, ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am) became a foundational element of Western philosophy and his discussion about the relationship between mind and body challenged thinkers for centuries. During the Age of Enlightenment, whose origins can be traced back to Descartes’ work, “the soul or spirit, as the central ingredient of being human, was largely replaced by individual reason” (Gergen, 2009). The rationalistic conception of human nature and self took roots during that era, only four centuries ago. According to Gergen (1971), Descartes’ notion of \(I\), the thinking, knowing, cognizing entity became one direct forerunner of the concept of self in psychology. In other words, the concept of self gradually developed into a rationalistic conception and the notion of soul, the non-physical aspect of being human, was pushed to the

\(^8\) A view of human beings as constituted of two irreducible elements (as matter and spirit). (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com))
background in the sciences. However, it continued to be used primarily in theology and
philosophy.

In modern times, the foundations of the concept of self go back to the traditions of self-
psychology (e.g., William James, Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead) that studied
the development of self within the social world. In his major work The Principles of Psychology,
William James (1890) made a distinction between two aspects of self: the self as knower or
subject (“I”) and the self as known or object (“me”). James explained that “in its widest sense a
man’s Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers,
but his clothes and his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his
lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account” (1890, I, p. 291), and what makes all these things
his are the emotions they evoke in him. In other words, the boundary between self and not-self is
one’s emotional attitude about an object, person, or thought.

In the early 20th century, the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley developed the theory that
“one’s ideas of self are significantly affected by what he imagines others think of him. [..] The
result, said Cooley, was a “looking-glass” self, one that reflected the imagined appraisals of
others” (Gergen, 1971, p. 41). George Herbert Mead developed this theory further by explaining
that a child observes the behaviors of significant others around him and he begins to imitate these
behaviors and then adopts these orientations toward himself. Thus, Gergen (1971) maintained
that “in Mead’s terms he ‘takes the role of the other’. Over time he comes to think of himself in
terms of others’ behavior toward him” (p. 41).

The modernist approaches to researching identity and self in sociology can be traced back
to the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism founded in the 1950s by the sociologist
George Herbert Mead (Williams, 2007). This school of thought is noted for its investigations of
social reality “from a nominalist perspective” (Cote & Levine, 2002, p. 33), which refers to a
philosophical position that views social reality as the product of human consciousness.
Accordingly, human beings construct social reality “through assigning names and meaning to
objects for the purpose of communicating with each other” (Williams, 2007, pp. 307-308).
George Herbert Mead contended that identities evolve through the process of creating meaning
as people interact with one another and their environment, in which process language and other
semiotic systems play an important role. One of the best-known scholars from this school is
Erving Goffman whose well-known work entitled The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life has
influenced researchers’ perceptions in ways of exploring identity in social settings. He stipulated two notions: the *self* (how we see ourselves) and *face* (how we want to be seen for others), that play a central role in formal and informal social interactions.

Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory also contributed to the conceptualizations of self in psychology. Freud’s concept of *ego* made a great impact on psychology. His notion of *ego* had much in common with the notion of self as it was viewed by numerous other scientists (among others, Erik Erikson, Karen Horney, Erich Fromm) who have espoused the Freudian perspective.

The post-modern concept of self can be traced back to Kenneth Gergen’s (1991) work entitled *The Saturated Self*. According to this volume, there is an “increasingly pervasive doubt in the modernist views of objective truth, rational foundations of knowledge, and the grand narrative of progress” (Gergen, 1991, p. 86) and the author attributed our present day crisis both within and outside the academic world to the result of social saturation. We are living in changing times in which technologies play an ever-increasing role that lead to the emergence of many voices, to the multiplicity of selves, to the “construction” of selves to fit social situations and roles. In Gergen’s (1991) interpretation the modernist era regarded the individual as

> An isolated, machinelike entity – reliable, predictable, and authentic, propelled by a core mechanism embedded not too deeply within the interior. But today’s increasing cacophony of competing voices creates a pervasive challenge to the assumption of “things (including people) in themselves”. If each voice portrays the individual a little differently, then the very idea of an “isolated self,” independent of the voices themselves, begins to teeter. (p. 140)

Gergen claims that as the belief in the essential self frays, the awareness expands the ways in which personal identity can be created and re-created in relationships. He presents a fundamental character transformation from “life in the modern” to “life in the post-modern” world as the gradual change from the self as being “an essence in itself” to the self as being “relational”. The individual goes through this transformation unsystematically, occurring at irregular intervals and at various periods of one’s life.

According to his conceptualization, in the post-modern period there are three developmental stages that people experience: the “strategic manipulator”, the “pastiche personality”, and the “relational self”. In the first stage of strategic manipulation the individual’s commitment to the modernist self (i.e., “self as essence in itself”) begins to weaken. The individual “increasingly and distressingly finds himself or herself playing roles to achieve social
gains” (Gergen, 1991, p. 147). The sense of self at this stage depends on a specific cultural context. The next stage is that of the “pastiche personality” described as “a social chameleon, constantly borrowing bits and pieces of identity from whatever sources are available and constructing them as useful or desirable in a given situation“(Gergen, 1991, p. 150). At this second stage the modernist beliefs in the “essential self” are severely undermined and the individual experiences a form of liberation from the “essence of self”. He learns to enjoy countless forms of self-expression in multiple contexts. The final stage of self transformation is the “relational self” that refers to a sense of self that has indeed diminished as being an “I” or an “individual”. The individual finds meaning of his or her own sense of self in relationships with others. It is the multiple networks of relationships and how an individual is seen in them that provides a distressed and disillusioned modernist who has lost “the moorings of the substantial self” (Gergen, 1991, p. 156) with a sense of relational self.

Identity Concepts in the Social Sciences

Many of us, much of the time, are able to take identity for granted. We seem to know who we are, we have a good enough working sense of who others in our lives are, and they appear to relate to us in the same way. There are occasions, however, when identity becomes an issue… (Jenkins, 2008, p. 1)

Although there are some common roots in the formulations of identity, psychology and sociology have taken diverging paths in describing and defining the notion of identity. The essential distinctions can be attributed to the following aspects: the locus of identity, the nature of life course, and the nature and source of identity.

One of the main differences can be found in the locus of identity. Psychologists view identity as being within the individual, in other words, it is regarded as part of the psyche. Information is obtained from individuals by asking how they think about certain matters and the identity elements are accessed consciously. Thus, the focus is essentially on mental processes. Sociologists, however, claim that identity is both internal and external to the individual and it comes about through interactions with others.

Assumptions also diverge about the nature of the life course. Psychology distinguishes distinct developmental stages (e.g., childhood, adolescence and adulthood) from the individual’s
perspective, whereas sociology talks about a “life course” and identity maintenance as a social process.

There is also a discrepancy in the concerns about the nature and source of identity. Psychology tends to use the “inner core” metaphor to describe identity whose source is within the individual. An individual can find him/herself by matching their talents and potentials with available social roles. On the other hand, sociology uses the “mirror” metaphor to describe identity. The self emerges as a mirror of social processes in which we participate, and “who we think we are” is based on the feedback from others.

As noted in the introduction, there are several overlapping conceptualizations about self and identity both in psychology and sociology and the two concepts appear to be used in a similar fashion. Therefore, it is quite difficult to treat both concepts separately. Although differences exist, they are more differences in emphasis and theoretical perspective than in kind.

As a very basic starting point, identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know ‘who’s who’ (and hence ‘what’s what’). This involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on: a multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities (cf. Ashton et al, 2004). It is a process – identification – not a ‘thing’. It is not something that one can have, or not; it is something that one does. (Jenkins, 2008, p. 5)

The subsequent sections discuss various conceptualizations or types of identity, namely ego identity, personal identity, and social identity, as presented in the social sciences.

Ego Identity

Erikson’s (1959) theory of personality proposed that the formation of ego identity happens throughout the entire life cycle that is divided up into eight (culturally universal) psychological stages. Each stage of human development is conceived of as being a potential “crisis” because of a radical change in perspective. There are three important components of mental health that each individual needs to master: a sense of basic trust, autonomous will, and initiative. The author summarized these critical stages in the following way:

One might say that personality at the first stage crystallizes around the conviction “I am what I am given,” and that of the second, “I am what I will”. The third can be characterized by “I am what I can imagine I will be”. We must now approach
the fourth: “I am what I learn”. The child now wants to be shown how to get busy with something and how to be busy with others. (Erikson, 1959, p. 82)

One of the fundamental postulates of this theory is that human beings are prone to evolve through social interactions with the environment that stimulate ego development. At the stage of puberty, young people are concerned with consolidating their social roles. Erikson claims that integration takes place at this stage in the form of ego identity, which is more than the sum of childhood identifications. He further claims that

The sense of ego identity, then, is the accrued confidence that one’s ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity (one’s ego in the psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others. […]

The emerging ego identity, then, bridges the early childhood stages, when the body and the parent images were given their specific meanings, and the later stages, when a variety of social roles becomes available and increasingly coercive. A lasting ego identity cannot begin to exist without the trust of the first oral stage; it cannot be completed without a promise of fulfillment which from the dominant image of adulthood reaches down into the baby’s beginnings and which creates at every step an accruing sense of ego strength. (Erikson, 1959, pp. 89, 91)

The ego evolves and gets structured on the basis of the types of challenges associated with each developmental stage marked by a “conflict” or “crisis”, which can be resolved either with a positive or a negative result for ego development. The challenges at each stage must be “meaningful” to the ego. In my understanding, a “meaningful” challenge to the ego can be explained with the modulation corollary in Kelly’s Theory of Personal Constructs (see Chapter 3). Accordingly, the arising challenge at each developmental stage should appear as non-threatening to the ego’s integrity and it should be within the ego’s range of convenience in order for it to be noticed and dealt with in a purposeful manner. Otherwise, if the challenge is too threatening, the person will have difficulty making sense of it with his/her existing cognitive schema and cannot develop more elaborate cognitive schema as a result of the experience. The favourable outcome of a challenge is often called a “virtue”, which – in Eriksonian terms – refers to “potency” or “potential”. Each individual must learn how to hold both extremes of a particular virtue at each developmental stage; put differently, each individual has to experience both sides of the same coin in order to grow psychologically. The movement through increasingly advanced
levels of competence constitutes psychological development according to Erikson’s theory. Erikson’s (1959) definition of ego identity is summed up in the following way:

The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one’s selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one’s sameness and continuity. What I propose to call ego identity concerns more than the mere fact of existence, as conveyed by personal identity it is the ego quality of this existence. Ego identity, then, in its subjective aspect, is the awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego’s synthesizing methods and that these methods are effective in safeguarding the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others. (p. 23)

Ego identity, thus, is the identity of the “ego”, and the “ego” is the personality agency responsible for behavioral, cognitive, and emotional control.

**Personal Identity**

Personal identity theory is mainly a “micro-sociological theory” that attempts to describe and explain individuals’ role-related behaviors in terms of the relationships between self and society (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995). Even though personal identity theory examines the impact of the social environment on the individual, it does so from the perspective of the individual as he or she plays out various roles. Thus, personal identity theory traces its origin to psychology and has the following overall characteristics:

1) it represents a social psychological model of self in that social factors are seen to define self; 2) the social nature of self is conceived as derived from the role positions that people occupy in the social world; 3) in an enduring sense, these role identities are proposed to vary in regard to their salience; and 4) although identity theorists acknowledge that reciprocal links exist between self and society, they have been most interested in individualistic outcomes of identity-related processes. (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 259)

Personal identity theory deals with how people categorize themselves as they act out a particular role and how they can incorporate the meaning and the expectations associated with that role into their identity. Consequently, “having a particular role identity means acting to fulfill the expectations of the role, coordinating and negotiating interaction with other role partners, and manipulating the environment to control the resources for which the role has responsibility” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 226). Thus, personal identity may be viewed as
“identification” with specific roles that are played out in a social setting by an individual from the individual’s perspective.

Social Identity

According to Hogg et al. (1995), social identity theory is a “social psychological” theory that explains group processes and intergroup relations, originally developed by Henry Tajfel (1959) in Britain. Thus, social identity theory is rooted in sociology with an emphasis on the influence of group processes and group dynamics on the individual. Social identity, thus, is defined the following way:

The basic idea is that a social category (e.g., nationality, political affiliation, sports team) into which one falls, and to which one feels one belongs, provides a definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the category – a self-definition that is part of the self-concept. People have a repertoire of such discrete category memberships that vary in relative overall importance in the self-concept. Each of these memberships is represented in the individual’s mind as a social identity that both describes and prescribes one’s attributes as a member of that group – that is, what one should think and feel, and how one should behave. (Hogg et al., 1995, pp. 259-260, emphasis added)

Social identity theory deals with how people see themselves as members of a group as compared to another group. Therefore, social identity is defined as “a person’s knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). According to the authors, “having a particular social identity means being at one with a certain group, being like others in the group, and seeing things from the group’s perspective” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 226). Social identity and self-categorization have the following important features:

1) they are general theories of the social group, not constrained by group size, dispersion, and so forth; 2) they incorporate the role of both the immediate and the more enduring intergroup context in group behavior; 3) they account for the range of group behaviors (e.g., conformity, stereotyping, discrimination, ethnocentrism) in terms of a limited number of theoretically integrated generative principles; 4) they are basically sociocognitive; and 5) they do not construct group processes from interpersonal processes. (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 262)

Both theories (i.e., personal and social identity) emphasize the multifaceted and dynamic self that mediates relationships between social structure and individual behavior. They also agree in the fact that the self is reflexive; in other words, it can take itself as an object and it can
categorize, classify, or name itself. Thus, these two distinct theories describing personal and social identity may be linked to establish a more fully integrated view of the self, suggest Stets and Burke (2000).

In summary, the literature presents a multidimensional, tripartite distinction among ego, personal, and social identity in psychology and sociology. This distinction implies that identity and self can be differentiated. “Self” refers to a person’s internalized behavioral repertoires and it can be an object of social experience. “Self-concept” refers to a person’s subjective experience of this behaviour. An “identity” is understood as the sum total of second-order reflections on first-order reflective experience of self-concept (Cote & Levine, 2002).

Conclusion

Part One of this chapter offered a concise review of the most important concepts and theories of self and identity in the so-called mainstream of the social sciences. First, I presented some essential theoretical orientations to conceptualizing self and identity that have influenced researchers’ perspectives in defining the concepts of self and identity. This was an informative process for me as a researcher in terms of appreciating and understanding the importance of identifying one’s own theoretical orientation that underlies one’s conceptualization and guides explicitly or implicitly the research process. In this respect, this section justified my views about the theoretical orientation playing an important role in my doctoral research as outlined in Chapter 3.

Then, the historical overview about the evolution of thinking on the concept of self and identity provided me with essential background knowledge that I considered important for my doctoral research. This review offered me a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the origins of the concept of self and identity. In particular, the discussion about Plato’s and Aristotle’s conceptualizations of self and reality was helpful because it made me realize the significance of the impact of their philosophies on all other Western schools of thought in the following centuries. As I see it, the early seeds of idealism and rationality were sown by these two outstanding philosophers. Thus, Part One of this chapter presented the evolution of conceptualizations of self and identity based on the Aristotelian view of rationality that was further developed and expanded by the Cartesian dualism, which, in turn, has provided a
philosophical framework for the natural sciences for more than three centuries. As Gergen (1971) claimed, the notion of “I” developed by Descartes focusing on the thinking, knowing, cognizing entity served as the precursor of the concept of self in mainstream psychology. It is obvious from the presentation above that in defining the self and identity sociology predominantly investigated the impact of social contexts, social interactions and external factors on the individual.

In my view, the various identity concepts (i.e., ego, personal, and social identity) outlined in Part One seemed to reveal characteristics of rationality, behaviorism as well as an influence of Freudian psychology (e.g., Erikson’s theory of ego identity), although not all of them stated their theoretical orientation explicitly. These identity concepts reminded me of a thought I read in a non-academic book that said “your identity has been based on what you could gather outside of yourself” (Marciniak, 1992, p. 127). I found the overview informative and educational, but limited and incomplete. It left me dissatisfied intellectually and it prompted further review of the literature. These theories and conceptualizations addressed neither the non-physical, intuitive, tacit aspects of identity, nor the nature of consciousness from a holistic or humanistic point of view that was a crucial part of the theoretical orientation and the methodology of my doctoral research. I was interested to know more about the conceptualizations of self and identity that combine the rational with the intuitive aspects of being human. Thus, Part Two of this chapter aims to fill this gap by offering a survey of the literature that examines the concepts of self and identity from a holistic and humanistic perspective.

Part Two: Seldom-Used Approaches to Self and Identity in Psychology

As presented in Chapters 1 and 3, my doctoral research approaches identity from a broad, holistic perspective that encompasses both the rational and the intuitive aspects of teacher identity. In concert with my research purpose (Chapter 1), my theoretical orientation (Chapter 3) and my methodology (Chapter 6), I wanted to know more about the intuitive aspects of being human.
In order to fill the gap identified in **Part One**, it was essential to review relevant works of scholars in psychology that advocated a holistic perspective in their conceptualizations of self and identity. Accordingly, a holistic approach examines *self* and *identity* from a wider point of view than a primarily rationalistic or cognitive approach does (as seen in **Part One**) because it embraces the intuitive, tacit, unconscious aspects of the human psyche *in addition to* the rational and conscious aspects, and regards them as complementary. In other words, a holistic perspective situates self and identity within a more inclusive and expansive concept of consciousness that seems to fragment itself. Consciousness from a holistic viewpoint is understood as the totality of the different states of awareness that includes the subconscious or unconscious parts of the psyche beside the ego consciousness (i.e., being aware of the conscious contents of one’s mind). As consciousness breaks itself down into smaller and smaller fragments of itself, each one reveals various characteristics (Wilber, 1979). Each fragment of consciousness influences identity formation in slightly different ways. The characteristics of a particular fragment of consciousness may indicate the position or stage of an individual’s personal evolution at any point in his life.

**Part Two** of this chapter presents a concise overview about the unseen and elusive aspects of the human psyche and the soul that mainstream psychology has ignored and pushed into the background since the Age of Enlightenment. First, the concept of the “spectrum of consciousness” (Wilber, 1979) is described. This concept provides an overarching conceptual framework that helped me put all other previously discussed schools of thought into mutual perspective. Then, Jung’s work on the unconscious is discussed in connection with a holistic concept of identity that draws on the ideas presented in Chapter 3. Next, a dynamic, relational view of identity is offered, which is followed by the presentation of the notion of the “transcendent self” coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1993). These authors further informed my research about the implicit, tacit, or intuitive aspects of identity. They supported my holistic perspective and justified parts of my theoretical orientation, in particular the significance and complementary nature of the two modes of thought in a holistic view on identity.
The Spectrum of Consciousness

Our waking consciousness is “but one special type of consciousness [...] surrounded by a vast ocean of unsuspected and uncharted consciousness”. (William James quoted in Wilber, 1979, p. 2)

Ken Wilber’s (1979) book entitled No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth explained how human beings alienate from themselves, from the world, and from others by creating boundaries in their experiences. His framework is called the “spectrum of consciousness” that integrates different psychological approaches to personal growth in order to explain the process of alienation and fragmentation. The three major approaches in Western psychology applied in his framework are the following: the orthodox egoic (including cognitive behaviourism and Freudian ego psychology), the humanistic (such as Biogenetics and Gestalt), and the transpersonal (such as psychosynthesis, Jungian psychology, and the mystical traditions in general). Wilber asserts that in searching for who we are, we first list all kinds of facts about ourselves that we have come to know through our experiences with others. We understand that all of these facts, both good and bad, worthy and worthless, make up our identity. Then, he makes the following very important observation:

Yet there is an even more basic process underlying the whole procedure of establishing an identity. [...] When you are describing or explaining or even just inwardly feeling your “self”, what you are actually doing, whether you know it or not, is drawing a mental line or boundary across the whole field of your experience, and everything on the inside of that boundary you are feeling or calling your “self”, while everything outside that boundary you feel to be “not-self”. Your self identity, in other words, depends entirely upon where you draw that boundary line. (Wilber, 1979, p. 4)

Wilber’s conceptualization about identity formation places the primary emphasis on the individual’s mental activity (including both conscious and unconscious aspects) and his mental decision where to draw a line between self and non-self. In so doing, he regards the individual as being in charge of himself, his sense of self, and identity. This idea appealed to me because of the emphasis on the internal factors instead of the external ones as seen in Part One of this chapter earlier.

In his conceptualization of the spectrum of consciousness, the author distinguishes several boundary lines drawn at various levels of consciousness that determine our identity (see Figure 1 below). According to Wilber (1979), an important characteristic of this fragmentation
process is that these boundary lines can and frequently do shift and they can also be re-drawn. In other words, the boundaries being fluid and malleable, an individual may slide up and down on this spectrum dynamically, finding herself at various levels of consciousness that corresponds with her “degree” of awareness at any point in time. The highest (or deepest) level of awareness is what he calls “unity consciousness”, which “is the nature and condition of all sentient beings” (Wilber, 1979). This is the level of awareness without any boundary line at all where an individual’s sense of identity “expands far beyond the narrow confines of his mind and body and embraces the entire cosmos” (Wilber, 1979, p. 3). It is important to note here that Wilber (1979) does not talk about the levels of consciousness in any hierarchical manner. Nevertheless, the hierarchical representation of the fragmentation of consciousness (see Figure 1) may be helpful to visualize the various levels and their relationships to one another.

The first boundary line called the “skin-boundary” draws a mental line between what is considered the “self” (i.e., the total organism) and everything else in the environment as “non-self” (see “Total Organism Level” in Figure 1). The level of the total organism, then, includes the mind and the body as one unit versus everything else that is considered the environment.

The second common and well-established boundary line is called the “ego level” (see Figure 1). This is drawn within the first boundary when the individual identifies with just one facet of the total organism. This facet is known under various terms, such as the psyche, the ego, or the personality. The common dilemma of this boundary line entails the following questions: “Do you feel you are a body” versus “Do you feel you have a body?” Thus, at this level the fragmentation happens between the mind and the body. As we have seen in the historical overview of Part One, the mind-body split and the resulting dualism has been a fundamental perspective of Western civilization since the Age of Enlightenment. Interestingly, Wilber (1979) noted that this split between mind and body is not present in newborn babies at birth but it develops over time as the child “acculturates” into the social world. By the time this boundary line is finalized the body becomes a foreign territory. The boundary is drawn between the mind and the body and the person identifies squarely with the mind. Thus, an individual’s identity is established as being primarily the ego, the self-image. Wilber (1979) put it in the following way:

In short, what the individual feels to be his self-identity does not directly encompass the organism-as-whole, but only a facet of that organism, namely, his ego. That is to say, he identifies with a more or less accurate mental self-image,
along with the intellectual and emotional processes associated with that self-image. (p. 7)

A third boundary line is drawn *within the ego level* (see in Figure 1) that is called the “persona level”. This boundary is created when an individual refuses to admit that some facets of his own psyche are *his*. In other words, the individual narrows his self/not-self boundary to *only certain aspects* of his ego mind, which is called the “persona” in psychology. The rest of the ego mind usually becomes foreign and scary and thus, it is repressed, alienated, or projected out. These unwanted aspects are called the “shadow”. As is clearly shown in the figure below, by the time the individual identifies himself with the persona, all other aspects rejected and projected out are much greater than the ones he claims to be his.

Figure 1: The Spectrum of Consciousness (adapted from Wilber, 1979)

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Total Organism</td>
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<td><strong>Ego Level</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Persona Level</strong></td>
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Thus, the author elucidates that consciousness reduces itself from the universe to a facet of the universe called “the organism”; from the organism to a facet of the organism called “the ego”; from the ego to a facet of the ego called “the persona” – such are some of the major bands of the spectrum of consciousness. (Wilber, 1979, p. 9)
However, in my understanding, personal growth in adulthood may happen precisely in reverse order. Individuals may begin their self-discovery process at the persona level by identifying the repressed and projected aspects of their ego mind called the “shadow”. Through a gradual and candid reflective process they may “reclaim” ownership over the alienated aspects of their mind. At the ego level the “reclaiming” process is about harmonizing the relationship between the ego mind and the body, whereas harmonizing occurs between the total organism (i.e., mind and body) and the environment at the total organism level. What I call the “reclaiming process” in this context shows similarities with the concept of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1978; Diamond, 1991) as outlined in Chapter 3.

Finally, the “transpersonal bands” refer to the level of consciousness where an individual can go beyond the individual as being “detached from one’s personal mind, body, emotions, thoughts, and feelings” (Wilber, 1979, p. 128). At this level the person’s identity does not quite expand to the Whole but at least it expands beyond the “skin-boundary line”.

Wilber (1979) goes on to say that each boundary line is also a “battle line” because it dichotomizes the facets of consciousness thereby creating an enemy that is different on each level. The author defines personal growth as “enlarging and expanding of one’s horizons, a growth of one’s boundaries, outwardly in perspective and inwardly in depth” (Wilber, 1979, p. 13). This idea of personal growth is aligned with the process of perspective transformation (presented in Chapter 3) that is part of my theoretical orientation. Wilber’s idea also supported my research purpose with the autobiographical journaling and the self-discovery process that my research participants went through during the data collection period. The author’s conceptualization of self-identity can be summed up as follows:

All that is required, primarily, is but one understanding: whatever you can see cannot be the Seer. Everything you know about yourself is precisely not your Self, the Knower, the inner I-ness that can neither be perceived, defined, or made an object of any sort. Bondage is nothing but the mis-identification of the Seer with all these things which can be seen. And liberation begins with the simple reversal of this mistake. (Wilber, 1979, p. 137)

Wilber’s spectrum of consciousness helped me expand my understanding of self and identity and it provided me with a useful comprehensive framework for examining the reviewed literature from an all-encompassing, holistic perspective. This framework was also valuable for me to make sense of the conflicting conceptualizations and definitions that have been presented.
in Part One of this chapter. In this light, then, the body of literature reviewed in Part One is likely to fall mainly in the persona level (i.e., persona vs. shadow) and the ego level (i.e., ego mind vs. body) of consciousness. Wilber (1979) associates the total organism level of consciousness with humanistic psychology (among others, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, George Kelly, and Clark Moustakas). This classification is worth noting here because I have drawn on some relevant perspectives and approaches of this school of psychology (i.e., humanistic psychology) in my theoretical orientation in Chapter 3 (e.g., George Kelly’s work) and my methodology in Chapter 6 (e.g., Clark Moustakas’ work). Finally, Wilber (1979) associates Jung’s work with the “transpersonal bands” level of consciousness.

The Undiscovered Self

Carl Gustav Jung’s entire work focuses on the nature of the unconscious that “has laid the groundwork for a psychology of the spirit” (Jung, 1959). I already discussed Jung’s ideas in Chapter 3 as part of my theoretical orientation, in which I focused on his definitions of the two realms of the human psyche (consciousness and the unconscious) and mainly the two types of thinking (directed and non-directed thinking) associated with them. Here, I want to refer back to these ideas emphasizing the significance and relevance of Jung’s work in relation to a holistic concept of identity. I consider Jung’s work foundational in the investigation of the nature of the unconscious; therefore, the literature review would not be complete without mentioning his contributions.

As presented in Chapter 3, Jung makes a distinction between two realms of the human psyche: consciousness and the unconscious, which is a crucial theoretical premise to grasp the significance of his work. According to Jung (1959), the investigation of consciousness will result in a series of observations leading to a psychology of the ego. Thus, the ego is associated with “conscious-ness”, i.e., being conscious of the contents of one’s mind that are created through directed thinking, or thinking in words, in logical sequences. On the other hand, Jung’s notion of the unconscious can be associated with spontaneous, imaginative, and largely non-verbal and non-logical thinking. Jung further claims that the two kinds of thinking (directed and logical vs.

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9 Jung’s use of “consciousness” seems to differ from that of Wilber (1979). Jung refers to the conscious content of the mind as “consciousness”, whereas Wilber’s use of “consciousness” is more inclusive.
non-directed and spontaneous, discussed in more detail in Chapter 3) that are linked to the two realms of the psyche (consciousness vs. the unconscious) mutually exclude each other and “no live relationship can be established with the unconscious through directed pathways of thought” (Jung, 1959). This means that the contents of the unconscious cannot be accessed directly with rational, logical thinking. This is an important point to remember when it comes to selecting appropriate methods to access the contents of the two different realms of the mind. As a result, Jung maintains that it is necessary to approach the unconscious on its own terms; that is, with an empathic rather than an analytical approach. Jung saw the value and the place of rational, logical thinking in comprehending analytically and intellectually the relationship between the unconscious and consciousness only after the relationship has been experienced. If one does not have a chance to have an experience of the unconscious, then, “nothing is there which might be analyzed” (Jung, 1959). In my view, this means that it is essential first to allow oneself to experience the content of the unconscious intuitively and empathically. Having had an intuitive experience of one’s unconscious, an individual can apply rational and analytical thinking afterwards to make sense of the experience and to reflect on the relationship and relevance of the experience to one’s life. This was an important argument that informed the selection of appropriate research methods in my inquiry. Jung’s ideas influenced my choice of research methods, in particular my decision to employ an intuitive, empathic visualization technique as one of the means to explore teacher identity.

Jung (1958) criticized psychology, in his work entitled The Undiscovered Self, for dealing mainly with the conscious contents of the mind that are observed and measured by collective standards, and for relegating the individual psyche to being a “random” phenomenon while ignoring the unconscious altogether. Furthermore, Jung (1958) claimed that “this was not the result of carelessness or of lack of knowledge, but of downright resistance to the mere possibility of there being a second psychic authority besides the ego” (p. 86). Thus, in Jung’s terminology the “undiscovered self” refers to the individual unconscious that awaits discovery and deeper examination in order for personal growth to occur. I interpreted his criticism as justification for the necessity of employing a holistic approach to exploring teacher identity in my research in order to gain self-understanding as a whole person.

In this volume, Jung also criticized psychology for using the concept of “self-knowledge” primarily to denote knowledge of oneself from a narrow ego perspective; in other words,
knowing oneself by being cognizant of the contents of one’s conscious mind. He verbalized this in the following way:

Most people confuse “self-knowledge” with knowledge of their conscious ego personalities. Anyone who has an ego-consciousness at all takes it for granted that he knows himself. But the ego knows only its own contents, not the unconscious and its contents. People measure their self-knowledge by what the average person in their social environment knows of himself, but not by the real psychic facts which are for the most part hidden from them. […] What is commonly called as “self-knowledge” is therefore a very limited knowledge, most of it dependent on social factors, of what goes on in the human psyche. (Jung, 1958, pp. 6-7)

Jung (1958) further claimed that self-knowledge – from a narrow perspective – is based on getting to know the individual facts, which are used to formulate theories that claim to have universal validity. However, “any theory based on experience is necessarily statistical” (p. 8), which means that it attempts to formulate an “ideal average” that eliminates the extremes and exceptions and replaces them by “an abstract mean”. Jung argued that this mean is valid; however, it may not necessarily occur in reality. In other words, although the mean may reflect an aspect of reality, it can be quite misleading. In Jung’s view, these are important considerations that must be borne in mind whenever one relies on theory as a guide to self-knowledge. Jung (1958) argued that “there is and can be no self-knowledge based on theoretical assumptions, for the object of self-knowledge is an individual – a relative exception and an irregular phenomenon. Hence, it is not the universal and the regular that characterize the individual, but rather the unique” (p. 9).

Consequently, “self-knowledge” from a Jungian viewpoint should encompass the contents of both aspects of the human psyche: the conscious mind and the personal unconscious. As a reminder from Chapter 3, Jung (1959) maintained that conscious behaviour rests upon the personal unconscious, which stores all forgotten impressions, reactions, and partially realized or wholly repressed emotions, critically rejected thoughts and feelings. The unconscious is the product of the individuals’ personal existence and biography. Thus, by bringing the unconscious contents up into conscious awareness, Jung claims, an individual’s life experience will greatly be enhanced and can facilitate personal growth. These are also relevant claims for a holistic perspective of identity since the integration of both aspects of the mind is vital for personal development.
He further underlines the importance of making a distinction between self-knowledge and self-understanding, the idea that Polanyi (1969a) also emphasized, as presented in Chapter 3. Jung (1958) contended that there is a common experience that

the devaluation of the psyche and other resistances to psychological enlightenment are based on large measure on fear – on panic fear of the discoveries that might be made in the realm of the unconscious. These fears are found not only among persons who are frightened by the picture Freud painted of the unconscious; they also troubled the originator of psychoanalysis himself. [...] It is this fear of the unconscious psyche which not only impedes self-knowledge but is the gravest obstacle to a wider understanding and knowledge of psychology. Often, the fear is so great that one dares not admit it even to oneself. (pp. 48-49)

This statement clarifies the reason for resistance, both individually and collectively, to dealing with the contents of the unconscious. However, to gain more complete and holistic self-knowledge, it is paramount to overcome this obstacle of fear in order to discover the contents of the unconscious mind that may lead to deeper self-understanding. The author concludes that

to this question there is a positive answer only when the individual is willing to fulfill the demands of rigorous self-examination and self-knowledge. If he follows through his intention, he will not only discover some important truths about himself, but will also have gained a psychological advantage: he will have succeeded in deeming himself worthy of serious attention and sympathetic interest. (Jung, 1958, p. 89, emphasis added)

These claims further justified and supported my research design in terms of offering research participants the possibility of going beyond the narrow confines of ego self-knowledge by enabling them to explore the intuitive contents of their psyche through the use of the guided visualization activity.

A Dynamic and Relational View of Identity

Traditional concepts of self have universally been considered to build on a repertoire of “perceived facts about oneself, including such things as one’s traits, values, social roles, interests, physical characteristics, and personal history”, whereas an innovative formulation of self-concept highlights the relational and dynamic nature of an individual’s self-concept conceived “as that individual’s summary formulation of his or her status” (Bergner & Holmes,
Bergner and Holmes’ (2000) conceptualization differs considerably from traditional perspectives in that the self is viewed as having a status relationship to itself and to others around itself. The concept of status in their definition refers to the place or position in the total system of things and its relationships to others in the environment. In this sense, the authors advocate that a status would denote a relational or positional relationship to the grand scheme of things in the environment as well as to oneself, instead of just having a static list of countless facts about the individual.

According to the authors’ view, an individual’s self-concept can constrain their behavioural possibilities in a number of ways. This means that our deep-seated beliefs restrain our perceptions of our relationship to ourselves and to others and they hamper our actions and behaviour. In line with this argument, it is important to understand the reasons for new thinking, new practices and new behaviour and “to eradicate the earlier, no-longer-functional habits, and gradually consolidate a mode of behaviour that is appropriate” (Gardner, 2006, p. 24) in new situations. The self-concept influences how it is deemed appropriate to act and therefore, “to have a self-concept is, in the end, not just to have a certain appraisal of oneself – it is to live in a certain world” (Bergner & Holmes, 2000, p. 38). As I see it, our sense of self highly influences how we perceive ourselves and the world around us. It is further contended that “status takes precedence over fact” (p. 39). In my understanding this means that beliefs have overriding power over the actual facts after the beliefs have been formed and therefore they can “blindfold” us from seeing reality as it is. Ultimately, we see reality through the lenses and filters of our own belief system. For example, if one does not feel competent or confident in a certain area, no matter how much evidence of accomplishment and positive results are presented to that person, the individual will not be able to see himself as competent and confident (i.e., accept the “evidence”) because of the constraining belief. A good example of this point is my personal experience about overcoming low self-esteem described in Chapter 2. This example reveals how important it is to become aware of one’s constraining beliefs and re-construct them in a new light from a fresh perspective, which was one of the goals in my research.

The researchers give further examples of how early childhood experiences and the assertions of significant others/parents play a role in our developing a self-concept. We usually take them for granted and without questioning we assign those characteristics coming from others to ourselves (see the “looking-glass” self discussed on p. 63 of Part One). The authors
suggest that “change is fundamentally about enabling clients to move out of the limiting, self-assigned statuses … and assigning themselves new statuses” (p. 40). The concept of status relationship to oneself and to others and its relational and dynamic nature presented a vital perspective for my own doctoral research because it supported my objective to highlight the relationships and interconnectedness among beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations that influence the development of teacher identity. This concept also informed the process of developing several activities of the autobiographical journaling for the research participants (e.g., the analysis of parental influence on the development of teacher identity).

The Transcendent Self

To know and understand ourselves is the greatest achievement of humanity that involves an understanding of our evolutionary past, claims Csikszentmihalyi (1993). He goes on to say that only if we understand what we are made of, what motives drive us, what goals we strive for, and how we became to be human as a species can we create a meaningful future. For millennia, many cultures have explored the recurring theme that “reality as it appears to us is a deceptive illusion” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 55). Reality presents itself through a series of veils – illusions or “the veils of the Maya” as the Hindu called it – and only by lifting these layers can we catch a glimpse of what life is all about. The author presents three layers or veils that can be the source of distortion in every human being: the world of the genes, the world of culture, and the world of the Self.

The first layer that can interfere with a truthful understanding of reality is the world of the genes. The genetic instructions stored in the genes have accumulated and developed over millions of years of evolution. Generally, it is our instincts, drives and visceral needs that tell us what “best strategy” to follow for survival that our ancestors were able to develop. However, evolutionary biologists have argued that

*the individual person, as far as the genes are concerned, is only a vehicle for their own reproduction and further dissemination. […] Genes are not our little helpers; it is we who are their servants.* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 65, emphasis added)

The second veil distorting an individual’s understanding of reality is the world of culture. It is important to consider the impact and influence of culture and language that an
individual is born into. The author contends that excessive acculturation may lead to a distorted view of reality since one perceives reality through the veils of a particular culture. He expressed this idea as follows:

Excessive acculturation leads one to see reality only through the veils of culture. A person who invests psychic energy exclusively in goals prescribed by society is forfeiting the possibility of choice. [...] It’s dangerous to take too seriously the picture of the world painted by one’s culture. First, to do so limits the scope of any individual’s potential. [...] Second, excessive identification with a particular worldview inevitably leads to blindness to other cultures, and eventually to hostility toward the “other”. [...] Finally, to accept the cultural worldview unquestioningly is dangerous simply because it blinds us to larger realities. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, pp. 72-74)

The final distortion – the world of the Self – begins in the mind and manifests itself as the illusion of selfhood. This illusion is connected to man’s realization of the mind’s autonomy, which means that “individuals were able to conceive of themselves as independent agents with their own self-interest” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 77). Personal freedom, however, led to another veil, the illusions of the ego. As the ego becomes increasingly identified with symbols outside of the self, it becomes more vulnerable. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1993), the current symbols outside of the self are mainly material things, various kinships and relationships. The sudden loss of any of these possessions results in a “shrinkage of our personality, a partial conversion of ourselves to nothingness” (p. 79). Thus, the ego keeps us on our guard against anything that might threaten the symbols it relies on. The author goes on to say that

our view of the world becomes polarized into “good” and “bad”; to the first belong those things that support the image of the self, to the second those that threaten it. This is how the third veil of Maya works: it distorts reality so as to make it congruent with the needs of the ego. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 79)

Since a person without an ego is unlikely to happen, a “new type of ego” needs to be developed that is secure enough to forego desires beyond what is necessary; that relies on possessions that are not scarce; instead of competing, it will be satisfied with what is unique about itself and its experiences; and it cares about humanity as a whole (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). To construct such a “new type of ego”, the first step needs to be made toward clearing the mind of the illusions and reducing entropy in consciousness in order to increase order instead of
disorder. The author adds that this process of releasing the illusions of the mind will allow for the birthing of a “transcendent Self” that is best described as an individual who

- finds it essential to learn to enjoy life, to find “flow” in activities;
- seeks out complexity through continuing curiosity, interest and desire to find new challenges and to develop new skills and abilities;
- has mastery of wisdom and spirituality, in other words, the ability to see beyond the appearance of things; and
- invests psychic energy in a harmonious future, not just for personal advantage but for the collective well-being of all life.

These ideas appealed to me because of an “ideal” viewpoint of or approach toward the concept of identity that brings the various aspects of oneself into harmony with both oneself and one’s environment. This transcendent Self may be attained in a variety of ways. However, integrating the conscious and the intuitive aspects of one’s self is crucial in this process, as I see it. Ultimately, the concept of the transcendent Self further inspired me to conduct my research from a holistic perspective. The author summed up the concept of transcendent Self in the following way:

People who lead a satisfying life, who are in tune with their past and with their future – in short, people whom we would call “happy” – are generally individuals who have lived their lives according to rules they themselves created. They eat according to their own schedules, sleep when they are sleepy, work because they enjoy doing it, choose their friends and relationships for good reasons. They understand their motives and their limitations. They have carved out a small freedom of choice. Typically they are not people who want much for themselves. They may be ambitious dreamers, great builders and doers, but their goals are not selfish in any of the three senses of serving the goals of the genes, the culture, or the ego. They do what they do because they enjoy meeting the challenges of life, because they enjoy life itself. They feel that they are part of the universal order, and identify themselves with harmonious growth. It is this kind of self that will make survival into the third millennium possible. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 82)
Conclusion

In summary, Part One of this chapter presented an overview of the concepts of self and identity in the mainstream of the social sciences. Psychology and sociology approach the concept of self and identity by focusing on the inner or the outer characteristics of the self, respectively. First, essential theoretical orientations were outlined that influenced the conceptualizations of self and identity. Then, a historical overview traced the evolution of the concepts of self and identity that provided me with essential background knowledge for my research. Next, prevailing conceptualizations of identity in the social sciences were presented. Three major types of identity were distinguished: ego identity, personal identity, and social identity – nevertheless, all focusing on the external, observable and measurable characteristics of the self. From the reviewed work it could be claimed that the notion of “self” seems to be a unifying concept in both disciplines. However, there is as yet, no clear definition about self and identity and there are clearly conflicting conceptualizations.

In my understanding, the conceptualizations of self and identity in the mainstream of the social sciences seemed to reveal characteristics of Aristotelian rationality and Cartesian dualism with an emphasis on rationality, cognition, behaviorism, and the influence of the Freudian perspective (i.e., the concept of ego and the identification of self with the ego) on approaching the various aspects of identity. I identified a gap in the mainstream literature concerning the lack of focus on the unseen, elusive, intuitive, and unconscious aspects of being human.

Part Two of this chapter offered an overview of the work of scholars who advocate a holistic perspective on the concepts of self and identity. First, Wilber’s (1979) conceptualization about the “spectrum of consciousness” was outlined. It provided me with an overarching framework for reconciling the conflicting conceptualizations in an elegant way by expanding the horizon from which to view and understand the objectives of the various schools of thought in the social sciences. In my understanding, his framework sheds light on the seeming paradoxes by showing that they are all valid in their own right but at different levels of consciousness. The work of Jung, Wilber, and Csikszentmihalyi are important contributions to the explorations of self and identity from a holistic/humanistic perspective because of the inclusion and exploration of the unconscious part of the psyche. They emphasize that there is more to the self and identity than just the outer, observable characteristics of the ego. Bergner and Holmes (2000) take this view one step further by pinpointing the relational, interconnected nature of identity. In other
words, it is in the *relationships to* our selves and *to* others that we can discover who we really are.

In my view, the conceptualizations in **Part Two** may reveal connections with idealism in terms of revealing resemblance with Plato’s ideas about man being a “dual creature” that has a connection to both the “world of senses” and the “world of ideas”.

The social science concepts, theories and approaches examined in this chapter provided me with a broad, interdisciplinary perspective on conceptualizing and carrying out my doctoral research focused on language teacher identity. The review of the literature in the two major parts of this chapter underscored the importance of bringing together *both* sides of the human mind: reason/intellect and feelings/intuitions to the exploration of identity from a holistic or “whole person” standpoint. In my view, it is imperative to bridge the gap between the two major schools of thought presented in **Part One** and **Part Two** of this chapter. This could be done by replacing the restricted view of the world based on “either – or” with a more inclusive and holistic perspective grounded in “both – and”. In other words, it is essential to widen our horizons in order to gain a holistic understanding of self and identity. The following excerpt gives emphasis to my observation and position based on the review of the literature in this chapter:

One believes that the conscious mind and the intellect have all the answers, but to this school this means that the conscious mind is analytical above all, and that it can find all the answers through reason alone. The other school believes that the answers are in feelings and emotion. Both are wrong. Intellect and feeling together make up your existence, but the fallacy is particularly in the belief that the aware mind must be analytical above all, as opposed to, for example, the understanding or assimilation of intuitive psychic knowledge. Neither school understands the flexibility and the possibilities that are inherent within the conscious mind, and mankind has barely begun to use its potentials. (Roberts, 1974/1994, pp. 171-172)

Chapter 5 continues the review of relevant literature by examining specifically the concept of teacher identity within the area of general education and language teacher education. Chapter 6 presents my chosen methodology and research design. Then, Chapter 7, divided into four parts, presents the research participants’ portrayals followed by the researcher’s analytical summary.
Chapter 5

Educational Research Perspectives on Teacher Identity

Introduction

Although research that specifically uses the term teacher identity is relatively recent, it did not arise without an intellectual path leading to it. Educational research has dedicated much effort and attention to the exploration of several research topics under different labels, e.g., teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflective practice. They can be considered the antecedents of teacher identity research. Therefore, they are important to review in order to highlight the historical evolution of research interests. They also provide a framework for situating my doctoral research topic within the larger field of educational research. My rationale for reviewing the literature both in general teacher education and language teacher education was based on the fact that language teacher education has drawn on research findings, theories, and concepts developed in general educational research. Thus, I also reviewed authors from general educational research when I considered the findings and ideas particularly relevant and complementary to language teacher education.

This chapter consists of two major parts. Part One reviews educational research by examining various research topics that preceded and led to teacher identity research, e.g., teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflective practice. I present a synopsis of the evolution of each research topic whose findings and conceptualizations have contributed to researching teacher identity from a holistic perspective – that is, from a more encompassing, inclusive, and complex as opposed to an isolated and fragmented viewpoint. Each topic (i.e., teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflective practice) has rich research literature in itself and therefore my review cannot be exhaustive.

Part Two of this chapter provides an analytical review of research focused specifically on the concept of teacher identity. First, the frequently used methodologies and theoretical frameworks in investigating teacher identity are presented. Then, the concept of teacher identity
is scrutinized by focusing on various conceptualizations and definitions. Finally, the relationships between identity and related components, such as knowledge, professional development, language, and emotions, are analyzed.

**Part One: Antecedents of Teacher Identity Research**

**Historical Overview**

A brief walk through the evolution of teacher education indicates the historical origins of the themes, trends, and issues setting research agendas and it also traces the path leading to researching teacher self and identity. Teacher education in terms of its institutional setup and theoretical orientations provides a venue and a framework for teacher learning that may influence the development of teacher identity.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the “Rationalist Model” (Day, 1991) or the “Applied Science Model” (Wallace, 1991) was prevalent in teacher education programs, which was considered “one-way”. Scientific knowledge and research findings were passed on to student teachers by experts; then, student teachers were expected to put this knowledge into practice (Wallace, 1991). In the 1960s, a great deal changed due to the emergence of the “mentalist” trend that originated in cognitive psychology. However, the full implications of these changes were not apparent in teacher education until much later (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). In the 1970s, various aspects of consciousness (i.e., cognitive aspects of teaching) were investigated, e.g., teachers’ thoughts, judgements, and decision-making as cognitive processes informing behaviours. In the 1980s, there was a proliferation of humanistic approaches in teacher education due to the renaissance of the works of Rogers, Kelly, and Maslow, which were published in the 1950s as a reaction against the dominant positivistic and behaviouristic approaches in psychology at the time. The core feature of humanistic theory is a “whole-person” perspective with an emphasis on self-agency and personal change that are enabled but not directed by others (Roberts, 1998). Humanistic theory recognizes the autonomy and individual needs of the person and it highlights that learning must be internally determined rather than externally controlled as in behaviourism.
In the 1980s and 1990s, the “Reflective Model” (Wallace, 1991) or the “Integrative Model” (Day, 1991) entered increasingly into vogue in Europe and North America and reshaped the priorities of teacher education programs by focusing on social constructivist and reflective approaches to teaching and teacher education. During this period the themes of awareness, reflection, and identity emerged in language teacher education. Researchers started to highlight the complex ways in which teachers think about their work in the classroom by putting emphasis, among other things, on teachers’ prior experiences as students (e.g., Lortie, 1975), their personal practical knowledge (e.g., Beattie, 1995; Britzman, 1986, 1992; Brookfield, 1995; Clandinin, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Connelly et al., 1997; Johnson & Golombek, 2002), their values, beliefs, and personal metaphors (e.g., Britzman, 1986, 1992; Bullough, 1991; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Richardson, 1996), and their decision-making and planning processes (e.g., Bailey, 1996; Borg, 2003, 2006; Freeman, 1996c; Nunan, 1996; Woods, 1996, 2003, 2006). Freeman and Johnson (1998) claim that “the bulk of this research argues that what teachers know about teaching is largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come” (p. 400). Researchers have examined not only teachers’ mental processes but also teachers’ interpretations of their actions, of students’ behaviour, and what teachers think students think or believe (Freeman, 1996b). In my view, the origins of teacher identity research can be traced back to the investigations of teacher cognition, teacher beliefs, various forms and strategies of professional development, and reflective teaching.

**Part One** of this chapter presents a concise review of research carried out in each of these areas respectively in order to trace the development of the path culminating in researching teacher self and teacher identity to the present day.

**Teacher Knowledge and Teacher Beliefs**

In several waves since the 1950s, researchers have debated what constitutes teacher knowledge that enables teachers to function effectively in the classroom. Since the mid-1980s the body of literature on the knowledge base of teacher education has grown considerably in general education and in second language teacher education (e.g., Bartels, 2005; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Davis & Sumara, 1997; Day, 1991; Fradd & Lee, 1998; Freeman, 1991, 1996a,
The contents of teacher knowledge have traditionally been divided up into subject matter knowledge/content knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the subject being taught) and pedagogical knowledge (i.e., generic knowledge of how to teach). In the education field, Lee Shulman (1986) made an important distinction between pedagogical knowledge and content or subject matter knowledge. He argued for the importance of content knowledge, claiming that in education fields, there had been a focus on “how to teach” in the abstract rather than on how to teach a particular subject matter. According to Shulman (1986), content knowledge includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (the way the subject matter should be organized for teaching and learning), and curricular knowledge (instructional materials and programs designed for the teaching of particular subjects or topics).

Shulman (1986) shifted the emphasis of what teachers have to know away from general pedagogical knowledge towards content knowledge, which led to the development of the concept of “pedagogical content knowledge”. Pedagogical content knowledge embodies the ways of representing and formulating the subject matter that make it comprehensible to others, e.g., the most useful forms of representations of various ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations.

There are three forms of teacher knowledge: propositional knowledge, case knowledge, and strategic knowledge (Shulman, 1986). There are fundamentally three types of propositional knowledge: principles, maxims, and norms. Case knowledge comprises the knowledge of specific, well-documented, and richly described events. Strategic knowledge is built upon relevant propositions and the wisdom of practice and it comes into play when teachers face particular situations in the classroom. According to Shulman (1986), the professional holds knowledge, not only of how but of what and why: “the teacher is not only a master of procedure but also of content and rationale, and capable of explaining why something is done” (p. 13).

Tamir (1988) attempted to organize and extend the categories of the knowledge base for teachers suggested by Shulman (1986) and Shulman and Sykes (1986) into a general framework, which can be used as a basis for teacher education. In Tamir’s work there are three basic differences in comparison to Shulman and Shulman and Sykes’ suggested framework. First, Tamir (1988) made a sharper distinction between general pedagogical and subject matter specific
pedagogical knowledge. Second, his framework distinguishes more clearly between knowledge and skills. Third, he prefers to use the term “subject matter knowledge” that covers “both substantive (content) and the syntactic (process) components of a given discipline” (Tamir, 1988, p. 101) instead of Shulman’s more general “content knowledge”.

Grossman and Richert (1988) subdivided pedagogical content knowledge into several components: content knowledge (understanding the specific content to be taught, its major concepts, and their relationships to the larger field); knowledge of student understanding of the subject matter (students’ conceptions and misconceptions of particular subject matter, knowledge of their prior background with the content, and knowledge of students’ interests within a particular field); curriculum knowledge (knowledge of materials and resources available for teaching); and an awareness of the ways of conceptualizing a subject matter for teaching.

Day (1991) distinguished four categories of knowledge that - in his view - shape the knowledge base of a teacher education program in general and language teacher education in particular: content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and support knowledge. Content knowledge refers to the subject matter knowledge (i.e. the English language) and literary and cultural aspects of the English language. Pedagogic knowledge is knowledge of general teaching strategies and techniques, beliefs, and practices, such as classroom management, motivation, and decision-making. Pedagogic content knowledge includes the specific knowledge of how to teach the subject matter in a variety of ways so that students can benefit from it and they have a learning outcome. Support knowledge refers to “the knowledge of various disciplines that inform our approach to the teaching and learning of English, e.g. psycholinguistics, linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and research methods” (Day, 1991, p. 40).

Calderhead and Robson (1991) emphasized student teachers’ prior experiences and how their existing knowledge influences how they learn and what they extract from teacher education courses. They refer to Lortie’s (1975) concept of the “apprenticeship of observation”, “which leads to the development of a body of values, commitments, orientations and practices” (Calderhead & Robson, 1991, p. 1). This concept emphasizes the role of school experience as a powerful socializing factor.

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin in the 1990s took the developments on teacher knowledge further by developing the notion of “personal practical knowledge” as a way in which
the various aspects of knowledge are integrated into a teacher’s cognitive system. Clandinin (2000) introduced a new teacher education program based on the concept of “teacher knowledge” with a new set of terms designed by Connelly et al. (1997). This notion looks at teachers as “curriculum makers” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999) with a focus on teachers and their beliefs, knowledge, and attitude in reconstruing teaching and curriculum. According to this view, teachers hold knowledge that is created from their previous experience, it is learned in context, and it is expressed in practice. This is a form of knowledge, which is rooted in teachers’ everyday lives, acquired through living, and expressed in context.

In the early 1990s, research focus shifted to teacher beliefs through the emerging influence of constructivism on teacher education, with Piaget and Bruner as founders of this school of thought, and through social constructivism and socio-cultural theory of mental activity rooted in the work of Lev Vygotsky (among others, e.g., Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Smith, 2001; Vygostky, 1986; Williams & Burden, 1997). The literature on teacher beliefs is fairly rich (among others, Arnheim, 1985; Hativa, 2000; Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Kagan, 1992; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richards & Lockhardt, 1994; Richardson, 1996; Tatoo, 1998; Woods, 1996, 2003, 2006). Already in the 1980s researchers (e.g., Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987) pointed out that there was little attention paid to teachers’ thinking, specifically to their beliefs and decision-making. These areas had been neglected when various categories of teacher knowledge had been set up. A theoretically-grounded model of belief systems was established by elaborating on the structures, features, uses, and functions of beliefs (Nespor, 1987). He claims that there are at least four characteristics of beliefs (existential presumption, alternativity, affective and evaluative aspects, and episodic storage) that can serve to distinguish beliefs from knowledge.

In second language education Richards and Lockhardt (1994) explored teachers’ beliefs based on the assumption that “what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe” (p. 29). They claim that teachers’ belief systems are rooted in various sources, such as their own experiences as language learners, experience of what works best, established practice, personality factors, educationally-based or research-based principles, and principles derived from an instructional approach or method.
Woods (1996) explored language teachers’ beliefs and decision-making through the lenses of the planning process of teaching and he highlighted the different degrees of consciousness in decision-making on the part of the teacher:

One way to look at the issue of consciousness in decision-making is to treat it not as a binary feature, but rather as matter of degree. In this view, teachers could be said to be *more or less* ‘conscious’ of their decisions. (p. 121)

Woods (1996) further maintained that the distinction between what one knows and what one believes is unclear. He also claimed that the terms “knowledge”, “assumptions”, and “beliefs” do not refer to distinct concepts, but rather to points of a spectrum of meaning.

We use the term ‘knowledge’ to refer to things we ‘know’ – conventionally accepted facts. [...] The term ‘assumption’ normally refers to the (temporary) acceptance of a ‘fact’ (state, process or relationship), which we cannot say we know, and which has not been demonstrated, but which we are taking as true for the time being. [...] Beliefs refer to an acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, one that is not demonstrable, and for which there is accepted disagreement. We can take these terms to represent concepts which are situated on a spectrum ranging from knowledge to belief, and which in their use, may overlap with each other. (Woods, 1996, p. 195)

Borg (2003, 2006) provided an overview of research on language teacher cognition noting that “least understood is the manner in which the cognitions of language teachers function as a system” (Borg, 2006, p. 272). However, in my understanding Woods (1996) did present teacher cognition as a complex system of beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge (BAK) and how BAK plays a role in teachers’ planning, decision-making, and interpretive processes. Woods further elaborates on the notion of “interactive cognition” as a complex system made up of the relationships between teacher and learner cognitions (D. Woods, personal communication).

As reviewed above, the various types of teacher knowledge play an important role in becoming an effective teacher. Teacher knowledge or teacher cognition is considered a fundamental part of a teacher’s professional expertise, in particular in Western culture and teacher education that have continuously placed great emphasis on cognition and cognitive skills. Educational experiences, or the “apprenticeship of observation” in Lortie’s (1975) term, during the entire period of schooling and professional education provide fertile ground for the development of future teachers’ beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. What teachers know and how they know what they know shape their perceptions and interpretations of
who they are as professionals. Teacher knowledge or teacher cognition can be viewed as being explicit, analytical, and declarative. On the other hand, beliefs are often thought of as being implicit, tacit, and intuitive developed experientially by “doing” things.

Thus, in my understanding, research on teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs has largely contributed to establishing a body of literature that can be regarded as the precursor of research on the professional facets of teacher identity. The reviewed body of literature provided me with a solid theoretical foundation about the aspects of teacher knowledge and the impact of schooling and teacher education programs on the development of professional beliefs. The research findings of this body of work supported my research design in terms of justifying the importance of probing into the research participants’ educational experiences throughout their schooling and professional teacher education. The concepts, ideas, and research findings presented above also informed the process of my developing activities for the research participants’ autobiographical journaling (e.g., educational experiences as a student, professional experiences as a teacher, and professional beliefs about teaching and learning).

**Professional Development**

A number of researchers have discussed the issue of teachers’ professional development from various vantage points both in general and language teacher education (among others, Bartels, 2005; Bartlett, 1990; Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Clarke, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Dubetz, 2005; Golombek, 1998; Hargreaves et al., 2001; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Kitchen, 2005a, 2005b; Knight, 2002; Kosnik & Beck, 2009; Lange, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; McKeon, 1998; Nunan, 1989; Porlan et al., 2002; Reynolds et al., 2002; and Tedick, 2005). The notion of professional development is viewed as an important component to improve teaching practices and the idea that teacher learning is a continuous life-long process is gaining acceptance. Several terms – for example, *in-service teacher education, staff development, teacher development, professional development, professional growth, and teacher change* – have been used to describe teacher’s professional growth, ultimately referring to the same concept.

The literature provides several models of professional development that can be drawn on in the study of the development of teacher self and identity. Freeman (1990) presented his argument in his article “Teacher’s Knowledge: The Grammar of Experience” that “experience is
probably the major source of what teachers know” (p. 14) and he continued that teachers go through a number of stages of professional development through experiences in their careers. The phases, according to Freeman, are the following: the experience of imitation, the experience of control, the experience of competence, the experience of humanness, and the experience of balance. The former three phases highlight the professional perspective whereas the latter two seem to connect to the evolution of self and teacher identity from a broader, more personal perspective.

Clarke and Hollingsworth’s (2002) model of teacher professional growth regarded growth as an ongoing, life-long process of teacher learning. The authors’ “interconnected model” recognizes the complexity of professional growth and the idiosyncratic and individual nature of teachers’ professional growth. The model consists of two domains: the teacher’s professional world of practice and the external domain (including sources of information, stimulus, or support), which lies outside the teacher’s personal world. The professional domain includes the personal domain (teacher knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes), the domain of practice (professional experimentation), and the domain of consequence (salient outcomes). Change in the domains can occur through reflection and enactment. This statement informed the formulation of one of my research questions about the research participants’ perspective transformation as a result of in-depth reflection and autobiographical journaling.

It is important to explore the process of how we come to terms with ourselves and with the world in general by analyzing the influences we encounter along the path of becoming who we are as teachers (Smith, 2006). Frank Smith (2006) provided the following explanation of the influences on identity formation:

Personal identity is not something that we find by looking at ourselves in the mirror, nor is it given to us by the efforts and opinions of others. Identity is constructed from the way others influence the way we behave and see ourselves. We learn from the company we keep, and the greatest learning is generated by our perception of the way other people see us. We expect to be like our friends and other close acquaintances – and expect to be different from those with whom we don’t affiliate. (p. 91)

The above models of teacher development, in light of the evolution of teacher identity, present a gradual progression and shift in focus from the professional to the more personal dimensions of teacher development. Clarke and Hollingsworth’s (2002) “interconnected model”
focused on teacher growth primarily in the professional field. Freeman (1990), more than a decade earlier, went in fact further by addressing aspects of influences on teacher development in addition to the professional ones, e.g., the experience of humanness leading up to the experience of balance. The notions of self and critical self-awareness within the microcosm of an individual teacher are core ideas in Diamond’s (1991) work, which helps to transform teachers’ perspectives on themselves and their work in the classroom (as outlined in Chapter 3). The notions of self and identity take a prominent place in Palmer’s (1998) work by highlighting the integration of teacher identity through joining thinking and feeling, the personal and the professional aspects of being a teacher. Smith (2006) described the process of identity formation through the exploration of both personal and professional influences on our lives.

The literature has discussed a great variety of strategies that facilitate teachers’ professional development, among others – without striving for completeness – reflection and reflective practice (Clarke, 1995; Francis, 1995; Hyatt & Beigy, 1999; Jay & Johnson, 2002); reflective journals and diaries (e.g., Bailey, 1990; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Numrich, 1996; Porter et al., 1990); metaphor analysis (Bullough & Stokes, 1994, Martinez et al., 2001; Sumsion, 2002); self-characterization and the repertory grid technique (e.g., Diamond, 1991; Donaghue, 2003); and developing a teaching philosophy (Brookfield, 1990; Walkington et al., 2001). Many of these strategies also facilitate the exploration of teacher self and issues of teacher identity.

**Reflective Practice**

Reflection is a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choices. (Ross, 1989, p. 22)

Reflection has a central place in teacher learning and professional development because it connects experience to analysis and it plays an important role throughout a teacher’s career. The ability and skill of reflective thinking and teaching takes time to develop, and it evolves and grows over time. The concept of reflection itself is abstract and subject to multiple ways of personal interpretation. However, reflection has become an integral part of teacher learning in teacher preparation and professional development programs (among others, Bartlett, 1990; Brookfield, 1995; Clarke, 1994; Gaudart, 1991; Gibson, 1997; Kamhi-Stein & Galvan, 1997;
Korthagen, 2004; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Meijer et al., 2009; Richards, 1991; Wallace, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1996a, 1996b). The manner of reflection depends upon the particular circumstances and upon the individual teachers involved. Reflection also largely relies on intuition and critical thinking both of which are difficult to express and define in overt terms.

Reflection has been defined in three categories in order to make it more attainable for teachers. These categories have been distinguished based on how reflection contributes to teaching practice: reflection as directing practice, reflection as informing practice, and reflection as transforming practice. Research on teaching has put an emphasis on reflection as transforming practice (Clarke, 1995), which is an important argument for my doctoral research on teacher identity. The literature has dealt with the issue of teaching reflection and it reveals a great variety of interpretations of what reflection is and how to teach it. Among the diversity of perspectives on teaching reflection there seems to be one underlying common thread: “the complexity of reflection makes it difficult to teach” (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 74).

Dewey (1933) determined the phases of reflective thinking as comprising a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates and then an act of searching, hunting, inquiring to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity. Reflection is also acknowledged to be a holistic act which is influenced by several factors and regarding it merely as a mechanistic technique would be detrimental to the process itself. It is, however, understood that reflection is not an innate or automatic process and beginning teachers cannot be expected to acquire the ability to reflect without being provided with some explicit knowledge and structure (Jay & Johnson, 2002).

According to Dewey, reflection is a special form of problem solving “as an active and deliberate cognitive process, involving sequences of interconnected ideas which take account of underlying beliefs and knowledge” (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p. 34). There are four key issues to be considered regarding reflection: (i) whether reflection is limited to thought process about action, or is more inextricably bound up in action; (ii) time frames within which reflection takes place (immediate and short term, or extended and systematic); (iii) whether or not it is problem-centred; and (iv) how consciously one takes account of wider historic, cultural, and political values, or beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought.
Donald Schön (1983) divided the notion of reflection into three concepts. The more traditional meaning of reflection, he termed reflection-on-action. This is the thinking following an event in order to understand it more deeply (as described by Dewey). Then, he added the terms reflection-in-action, referring to a more immediate type of reflection as the events are occurring, or in immediate response to those events, and reflection-for-action, thinking about what has happened in preparation for a future event.

Dick Allwright described the concept of “exploratory teaching” in the “Epilogue” of the book entitled Focus on the Language Classroom (Allwright & Bailey, 1991), which has further been developed since then. In the meantime, the notion has also been renamed as “Exploratory Practice” (EP) signaling a shift in focus on practitioner research on language teaching (as opposed to the earlier proposition with a focus, then, on the perspective of the “academic” researcher). EP focuses on developing our understandings of the quality of life in the language classroom instead of “improving” instructional efficiency of classroom teaching through employing new techniques. This is one of the basic principles of Exploratory Practice summed up as follows: “Try to understand first, before you try to change anything, in case you discover that change is not necessary, or perhaps not desirable (or perhaps not actually possible)” (Allwright, 2001). The author proposes that “research should aim at the development of situational understanding” (Allwright, 2003, p. 116) advocating working with “puzzles” rather than solving “problems”. This is a different perspective that is connected to the principle outlined above about aiming for understanding rather than simply changing one’s practice in a “problem-solving” mode.

So, how can EP be adopted in language teaching on a practical level? Allwright (2003) claims that a preliminary distinction should be made between “taking action for understanding” and “working with emerging understandings”. The former focuses on the process of understanding by bringing puzzling events, issues of the classroom life into consciousness; thinking about them with colleagues; looking and listening more closely to what is going on in the classroom; and planning for understanding by adopting various procedures. The latter, on the other hand, prioritizes the content of the process via expressing and appraising insights; unraveling and refining common notions of change; dialoguing about potential personal or collective actions; and sharing personal understandings of the processes as a way to support others in the community of practice (Allwright, 2003).
Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) advocate an approach to reflection that highlights “the balanced focus on thinking, feeling, wanting, and acting” (p. 50) as opposed to other views on reflection that have a strong focus on rational analysis. Their “ALACT\textsuperscript{10} model” of reflection focuses explicitly on the “development of an awareness of less rational sources of teacher behaviour” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 50), such as implicit influences of former role models, images, values, and feelings and emotions. This model of reflection complements Korthagen’s (2004) “onion model” that describes the various levels (e.g., environment, behaviour, competencies, beliefs, identity, and mission) that can influence a teacher’s behaviour. According to Korthagen (2004), the outermost levels (i.e., environment and behaviour) of the “onion model” can be observed directly, and they can influence the inner levels (i.e., competencies, beliefs, identity, and mission). However, he notes that there is a “reverse” influence as well, i.e., the inner levels determine how a teacher functions on the outer levels. The two deepest levels of the “onion model” (identity and mission) can be explored through “core reflection” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005), which, they claim, is not only a cognitive process. Core reflection involves “thinking” (i.e., reflecting), “wanting” (i.e., desire to change), and “feeling” (e.g., frustration or empowerment) that help an individual to arrive at new “actions”. This cycle is achieved by a conscious, structured reflection process. This approach to reflection has particular relevance to my research because of the aim for raising awareness of the implicit sources of influences on teacher behavior and balancing “thinking, feeling, wanting, and acting” by means of a structured reflection.

The relevance of reflection to my doctoral research lies in the fact that it is a useful method for exploring beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations of teacher identity. Reflection as a deliberate, rational, and conscious form of interpretation and contemplation forms an essential part of my research methodology, which is discussed further in Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{10} ALACT = Action, Looking back on the action, Awareness of essential aspects, Creating alternative methods of action, Trial (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 49)
Conclusion

Part One of this chapter offered a review of the most influential research themes that can be regarded as the antecedents of teacher identity research. First, I presented a brief historical overview of the dominant models of teacher education programs. I have argued that the theoretical orientations of teacher education programs shape teacher learning and indirectly they also influence the development of teacher identity. Then, I reviewed the rich body of literature on teacher cognition and teacher beliefs. I have claimed that teacher knowledge is considered an essential element of professional knowledge that plays a role in teachers’ self-perceptions. Knowledge has been highly valued in Western culture and education. Therefore, I argue that teachers’ perceptions of who they are as professionals have been molded primarily through the lens of what they know. In my view, the shift in research focus from teacher knowledge to teacher beliefs signaled the emergence of a new, more inclusive research perspective that has taken teachers’ beliefs and prior experiences into account. Finally, I reviewed the literature on professional development and reflective practice underscoring the importance of on-going self-development and critical self-awareness that facilitate professional growth. Professional development and reflective practice are vital processes in the exploration of teacher identity because they offer teachers various conceptual frameworks, tools, techniques, and methods to examine and explore professional and personal facets of their identity.

The literature review of Part One has been an informative process for me as a researcher in terms of appreciating and understanding the importance of knowledge and beliefs as constituents of teacher identity. In this respect, these sections justified my rationale for developing my research design that involved the exploration of educational and professional experiences of my research participants as outlined in Chapter 6. The review also presented important background knowledge about the precursors of teacher identity research. Thus, Part Two of this chapter reviews the most recent aspects of teacher identity research in educational research, and more specifically in language teacher education. As a reminder, my rationale for reviewing the literature both in general teacher education and language teacher education continues to be the same as presented in the introduction of this chapter above. Therefore, I included the work of researchers from general educational research when I considered the findings and ideas particularly pertinent and applicable to the development of language teacher identity.
Part Two: Teacher Identity in Educational Research and Second Language Education

Teacher ‘identities’ refer to the different views that individuals have about themselves as teachers in general, and how this view changes over time and in different contexts. (Dworet, 1996, p. 67)

Research on teacher self and identity is fairly recent both in general educational research and second language teacher education, spanning only about two decades. The body of literature on teacher identity is growing with a variety of research methodologies, theoretical perspectives, and research topics, among others, the inner landscapes of teachers’ lives (Palmer, 1998), the various influences (e.g., language, learning, understanding and technology) on identity formation (Smith, 2006), the creative or artistic selves of teachers (Buttignol, 1998), and the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of teacher selves (Beattie et al., 2005, 2007; Miller, 2000, 2006).

In second language teacher education the development of teacher identity is also a fairly new and emerging research field (e.g., Cross, 2006; Li, 2007a, 2007b; Mantero, 2007; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghese et al., 2005; Williams, 2007). This research can be traced back to two relatively independent lines of thinking. According to Varghese et al. (2005), one line of thinking on language teacher identity is connected to research in applied linguistics that has placed the teacher in the center of research attention through the explorations of teacher knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes (see the section on “Teacher Knowledge and Teacher Beliefs” in Part One on pp. 89-94 above). Another, separate line of research has begun to explore the socio-cultural and socio-political dimensions of teaching.

Part Two of this chapter is divided into two major sections: the frequently used methodologies and conceptual frameworks in exploring teacher selves and teacher identity; and teacher identity research clustered around several related themes. First, three prevailing research methodologies and conceptual frameworks are examined. Then, numerous definitions and conceptualizations of teacher’s professional identity are reviewed to show the diversity of research interests about teacher identity. Next, the relationships between teacher knowledge and identity as well as professional development and its relationship to teacher identity are discussed. Finally, the issue of second and foreign language learning is dissected with regard to teacher identity. It is followed by a review of the literature on the role of emotions in teaching and teacher identity.
Research Methodologies and Conceptual Frameworks

Reviewing the literature on teacher identity, I found that researchers have employed a variety of research methodologies and theoretical frameworks as a means of examining teacher identity. Consequently, different aspects of teacher identity could be explored from different angles depending on the applied research methodology/conceptual framework. This section presents the three most frequently utilized approaches to researching teacher identity: life history and narrative inquiry, discourse analysis, and socio-cultural and constructivist approaches.

Life History Research and Narrative Inquiry

If we want to support each other’s inner lives, we must remember a simple truth: the human soul doesn’t want to be fixed, it wants to be seen and heard. If we want to see and hear a person’s soul, there is another truth we must remember: the soul is like a wild animal – tough, resilient, and yet shy. When we go crashing through the woods shouting for it to come out so we can help it, the soul will stay in hiding. But if we are willing to sit quietly and wait for a while, the soul may show itself. (Palmer, 1998, p. 151)

In the early 1990s, due to the interest in the personal dimensions of teachers’ lives, life history research (among others, Cole & Knowles, 1998, 2001; Goodson & Walker, 1991; Levin, 2001; Simon-Maeda, 2004) and various forms of narrative and reflexive inquiry (e.g., Allender, 2001; Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000; Cole & Knowles, 2000, Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Conle, 1996, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2004, 2005; Huber & Whelan, 1999; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Mishler, 1999; Olson, 2000; Soreide, 2006; Watson, 2006) became widely accepted in educational research and professional development. They have provided a means and a lens for teachers to explore the relationships between their personal lives and the impact of personal life experiences on their teaching practice. Ivor Goodson argued for the importance of researching teachers’ voices and the importance of including the broader perspective of teachers’ lives in educational research in order to understand teachers’ classroom practice as well as including teachers as researchers in the educational research process (Goodson & Walker, 1991). MacLure (1993) coined the term “biographical attitude” to describe this interest in the “informal and person-oriented genres, such as biography, autobiography, life history, narrative and anecdote” (p. 311).
Cole and Knowles (2000) explained that life history accounts refer to stories of life and experience that have influenced personal/professional understandings and practices of teaching and learning. These stories can serve as important tools and signposts for us to raise our awareness about ourselves as persons and professionals. Thus, life history inquiry focuses on researching the self and the impact of personal experiences on the self and on teachers’ professional lives. The primary goal of this method is to achieve self-knowledge. Life history research can be viewed as a form of professional development by exploring the personal side of the teacher self, which has been summarized in the following way:

Evidence of a fundamental personal dimension of teaching is found in life-history research, in case studies of personal professional knowledge, and of professional development and in attempts to characterize teaching as moral or creative. (Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 712)

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin established narrative inquiry in educational research in the 1980s and 1990s, which can be characterized as an open-ended, experiential, and quest-like research methodology. In educational research it has been used as a tool for representing data since it proved to be a good research tool for participant observation and autobiographical studies. In the area of professional development, narrative inquiry has become intertwined as a method and a methodology to present the interpretations of research participants. Another important feature of narrative inquiry is the quest for meaning that actions and events have for the protagonist.

Clandinin and Connelly (1994) argued that experience is intertwined with life and education, and stories can come closest to articulating experiences to others. The study of experience begins with the researcher’s intentionality since he/she determines where the study begins and ends. Other features of personal experience methods are situation and temporality. The methods for studying experience can go into four different directions: inward and outward, backward and forward. Inward and outward dimensions refer to the internal and external conditions of experiences, whereas the backward and forward directions deal with temporal durations and directions (i.e., past, present, and future). The main interest of personal experience methods lies in the growth and transformation in the lives of researchers and research participants. The method is characterized by having a reflexive relationship between retelling
and reliving the stories told. The researcher begins with a self-inquiry into his/her own world to generate their narratives that would serve as a springboard for further inquiry.

The review of these methodological approaches to researching teacher identity has been informative and educational and it facilitated my understanding of the differences between various methodologies and approaches during the initial phases of my doctoral studies. Thus, the review process proved to be instrumental in my decision on the methodology as I discuss it further in Chapter 6.

**Discourse Analysis**

Recently, discourse analysis – based on discourse theory – has been adopted as a theoretical framework in the exploration of teacher identity (among others, Alsup, 2006; Clarke, 2008; Mantero, 2004; Soreide, 2006). Clarke (2008) asserted that discourse is one of the most widely used terms in educational research and “it is also a term that is often used in different ways though often left undefined” (p. 15). Among others, discourse can refer to “extended stretches of language beyond sentence level” and to “linguistically embodied systems of meaning, knowledge and belief” (Clarke, 2008, p. 15). Besides systems of meaning, the term can also denote the discourse of a field, or the discourse of a community, or multiple communities that are overlapping, complementary, and interconnected. The author presented the following two working definitions of the term “discourse”:

‘a relational ensemble of signifying sequences’ (Torfing, 1999:91) [and]
‘a pattern of thinking, speaking, behaving, and interacting that is socially, culturally, and historically constructed and sanctioned by a specific group or groups of people’ (Miller Marsh, 2003:9). (Clarke, 2008, p. 16)

Alsup (2006) conducted a study on teacher identity with pre-service secondary school English teachers. She coined the term “borderland discourse” that is defined as a transformative discourse in which there is evidence of integration or negotiation of personal and professional selves. The author provides a more elaborate definition of this term:

Borderland discourse, as a transformative type of teacher identity discourse, reflects a view of teacher identity that is holistic – inclusive of the intellectual, the corporeal, and the affective aspects of human selfhood. Within borderland discourse there is evidence of contact between disparate personal and professional subjectivities, which can lead to the eventual integration of these multiple subject positions. (Alsup, 2006, p. 6)
Alsup (2006) found that unresolved tension “between discordant subjectivities and associated ideologies lessened the chance of the participants developing a satisfying professional identity or a sense of fulfillment as a teacher” (p. 55). The tensions discovered in participants’ narratives have been about the professional and practical sides of being a teacher; problematizing the professional but not the personal (or vice versa); or having tension in both the personal and professional areas. The identified tensions and conflicting issues should be subject to critical reflection so that teachers can explore how they affect their current educational philosophies and pedagogical choices.

In my understanding, discourse analysis focuses on analyzing the participants’ verbalizations primarily as texts. This methodology seems to be distanced and impersonal and does not allow for the exploration of beliefs, perceptions, intuitions and interpretations of research participants to the extent and in such depth as I intended to do in my doctoral research.

**Socio-Cultural and Constructivist Perspectives**

Social constructivist and socio-cultural perspectives – based on what has been called “socio-cultural theory” – have also been employed as a theoretical framework by several researchers (e.g., Coldron & Smith, 1999; Cross, 2006; Cross & Gearon, 2004; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Hedgcock, 2002; Johnson, 2009; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Norton Peirce, 1995) both in general teacher education and language teacher education. The term “socio-cultural” appears frequently in the educational research jargon that is associated with the statement that “truth is only relative to the thoughts, practices, values and ideology of any one particular people, time or place: the social and cultural milieu within which the foci of our studies occur” (Cross & Gearon, 2004, pp. 5-6). According to the authors, socio-cultural theory has been identified with a specific body of literature that draws on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1986).

The central idea of socio-cultural theory is that the development of human higher mental functions depends on interaction with others and the world around us; in other words, “individual consciousness is built from outside through interactions with others” (Vygotsky, 1986). Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995) note that the main goal of socio-cultural theory is “to understand how people organize and use their minds for carrying out the business of living” (p. 108). Vygotsky’s main interest was in the higher levels of mental activity, such as voluntary attention, logical memory, rational thought, and the planning, executing, and monitoring of mental processes. He
argued that these mental processes could not be studied in predetermined and controlled experiments but rather they should be monitored in their formation over time. He further claimed that there is partial similarity between physical tools and psychological tools (such as symbols, signs, language, and mnemonic techniques). However, the difference between these two types of tools is that physical tools are externally oriented toward the object of activity whereas “psychological tools are internally directed at organizing and controlling our mental activity in ways that would not be possible in their absence” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995, p. 109). According to Vygotsky, these two stimuli are connected in mediated memory, and people are able to have greater control over what and how they want to remember. The Russian social psychologist presented these ideas in the following way:

If one decomposes a higher mental function into its constituent parts, one finds nothing but the natural lower skills. [...] All the “building blocks” of higher behavior seem absolutely materialistic and can be apprehended by ordinary empirical methods. The latter assumption does not imply, however, that a higher function can be reduced to lower ones. Decomposition shows us only the material with which the higher functions are built, but says nothing about their construction. The constructive principle of the higher functions lies outside the individual – in psychological tools and interpersonal relations. Referring to psychological tools as instruments for the construction of higher functions, Vygotsky wrote, “In the instrumental act, humans master themselves from the outside – through psychological tools”. (Vygostky, 1986, italics added)

I wish to highlight here that the Vygostkian perspective puts an emphasis on factors “outside the individual”, such as “psychological tools” and “interpersonal relations”, claiming that human consciousness is built from outside through interactions with others, which is evident from the above discussion. This proposition bears a resemblance to the Aristotelian view of the world (see Chapter 4), which states that the highest degree of reality is that which we perceive with our senses. It also shows obvious kinship with a sociological or social psychological view of identity (see Chapter 4).

In second language education the socio-cultural and socio-political research perspective has shown that race, gender, and social status, among other things, have also played an important role in the development of teacher identity. In concert with this view of teacher identity four important areas of interest have emerged in language teacher identity: marginalization, the position of non-native speaker teachers, the status of language teaching as a profession, and the teacher-student relation (Varghese et al., 2005). The literature has uncovered that many teachers
experience professional and social marginalization in schools. The position and status of non-native speakers have been scrutinized recently since they constitute the majority of ESL/EFL teachers worldwide. Various emerging issues about language teaching, teacher education, and teacher preparation have been examined. There are diverse theoretical approaches employed to address the issues related to teacher identity in language teacher education as well (Varghese et al., 2005).

As we can see, depending on the theoretical framework and the research methodology employed by researchers, the research emphasis and the findings may shift even though each framework puts “teacher identity” in its focal point. Therefore, it is important for future researchers to pay heed to Day and Leitch’s (2001) conclusion as a caveat to avoid confusion and conflicting interpretations of teacher identity: “different means […] in the process of understanding practice produce significant and qualitatively different results” (p. 414).

Teacher Identity: Concepts, Definitions and Related Components

The concept of teacher identity has been receiving increasing attention in educational research. This is also signalled by the fact that Teacher Education Quarterly dedicated a special issue (2008, volume 35) to the topic with articles drawing mostly on socio-cultural theory. Another academic journal, Pedagogy, Culture and Society (2008, volume 16) also dedicated a special issue to teacher identity, primarily from educational policy perspectives. Tsui and Tolefson (2007) explored the relationships between language policies, cultures, and national cultural identity in diverse socio-political contexts in Asia.

Having reviewed the educational research literature on teacher identity, I encountered the same trouble with the concept of teacher identity as with that of identity and self in the social sciences (see Chapter 4). In other words, the literature is replete with conflicting conceptualizations and researchers provide either only vague generalizations instead of clear definitions, or – in most cases – there are no explicit definitions of teacher identity at all. As a consequence, the concept of teacher identity seems to be taken for granted. Olsen (2008) argues that the problem with defining teacher identity stems partly from the various ways the term “identity” has been used in psychology. This claim supports my observations in this area as presented in Chapter 4. Olsen (2008) summarized that “identity” denoted an “individualized self-
image” in the area of psychoanalysis at the beginning of the 20th century. Later on, social psychologists (including Erikson and Vygostky) framed identity as a “more situated, dynamic process of individuals developing conceptions of themselves as rational beings” (Olsen, 2008, p. 4). I wish to note here that Olsen’s view seems to focus only on the Freudian view of identity since Erikson clearly espoused Freud’s conceptualization of ego identity (see Chapter 4). Hence, Olsen’s view may also be limited in terms of ignoring the holistic/humanistic conceptualizations of identity in psychology. The author presents the following synopsis about the term “teacher identity”:

Teacher identity is a useful research frame because it treats teachers as whole persons in and across social contexts who continually reconstruct their views of themselves in relation to others, workplace characteristics, professional purposes, and cultures of teaching. It is also a pedagogical tool that can be used by teacher educators and professional development specialists to make visible various holistic, situated framings of teacher development in practice. (Olsen, 2008, p. 5)

This section of the chapter is organized around various themes that have emerged during the process of reviewing the literature of both general education and second language education. The majority of researchers have explored teacher identity specifically from the professional aspects, i.e., teachers’ professional identity and teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles in the classroom. Therefore, the first section showcases different conceptualizations and definitions of teachers’ professional identity. Then, I shift the focus onto the relationships of teacher identity and other aspects, such as teacher knowledge, professional development, language learning, and emotions. Accordingly, the relationship between teacher identity and teacher knowledge is presented, which is followed by the connections between teacher identity and professional development. Since my doctoral research focuses on language teachers, I found it important to review relevant research carried out about the impact of second/foreign language learning on the development of language teachers’ identity. Second and/or foreign language learning plays an important role in the development of teacher identity, particularly from the viewpoint of non-native English speaking language teachers. Finally, a synopsis of the growing body of research on emotions in teaching and their relationships to teacher identity is outlined.
Professional Identity and Professional Roles

A large part of current research interest on teacher identity is centered on the construction and development of teachers’ professional identity, teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles, and the relationships between teachers’ perceptions of their roles and their self-image (e.g., Andrzejewski, 2008; Atay & Ece, 2009; Beane & Lipka, 1984; Beijaard et al., 2000, 2004; Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Brinthaupt & Lipka, 1992, 1994; Brown, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Day & Kington, 2008; Kincheloe, 2003; Korthagen, 2004; Lasky, 2005; Lipka & Brinthaupt, 1999; MacDonald, 2006; Maguire, 2008; Ronfeldt, 2008; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Smith, 2007; Travers, 2000; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). There is also evidence for the use of a variety of terms beside “professional identity” in the literature, such as “occupational identity”, “work-based identity”, or “situational identity”. It has been argued that there are close relationships among professional identity, classroom practice, teacher knowledge, beliefs and attitudes. Professional identity is more likely to be regarded not as fixed or unitary but rather multiple, fragmented, and prone to change (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Smith, 2007), which is expressed in classroom practice: “teachers’ professional identities are manifested in their classroom practice” (Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 715). Cooper and Olson (1996) emphasized that professional identity is multifaceted and they view identity as a multi-dimensional, multi-layered, and dynamic process. They present historical, sociological, psychological, and cultural influences that shape the development of teacher identity.

In his examination of the “communities of practice”, Wenger (1998) found a clear connection between identity and practice emphasizing that identity is produced “as a lived experience of participation in specific communities” (quoted in Smith, 2007, p. 381). From a socio-cultural perspective Lasky (2005) claimed that “teacher professional identity is how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others” (p. 901). Kelchtermans (1993) described the professional self as “a conception about themselves as a teacher and a system of knowledge and beliefs concerning ‘teaching’ as a professional activity” (p. 447) and that it is “formulated in terms of the general principles that govern the teachers’ professional behavior” (p. 449).

Teacher’s professional identity has been described in terms of “the teacher as a subject matter expert, the teacher as a pedagogical expert, and the teacher as a didactical expert” (Beijaard et al., 2000, p. 750). Beijaard et al. (2000) found several influencing factors in the development of teachers’ professional identity, e.g., the teaching context, teaching experiences,
and the biography of the teacher. These researchers concluded that most teachers who participated in their research study saw themselves “as a combination of subject matter experts, didactical experts and pedagogical experts” (p. 761). The results also revealed that teachers’ perceptions of themselves change over time during their teaching career. Roberts (1998) conceptualized that “a teaching identity develops through exchange between our personal theories and self-concept on one hand, and the demands of our social and occupational context on the other” (p. 22).

Several studies have explored teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles in the classroom, which seem to be regarded as a sub-theme of professional identity, and how these self-perceptions are connected to self-image. Ben-Peretz et al. (2003) used metaphoric pictures of occupations to uncover teachers’ professional selves from a personal knowledge perspective. They found that teachers’ professional self-image is shaped by their practical experiences and the way they defined themselves is a result of dynamic interactions with others, students, parents and principals. Another important finding has revealed a significant difference between beginning and experienced teachers in terms of their perceptions of their professional identities (Ben-Peretz et al., 2003). Day and Kington’s (2008) longitudinal study on teacher identity concluded that teacher identities are constructed not only from technical and emotional aspects of teaching and teachers’ personal lives, but also from interactions between personal experiences and the social, cultural, and institutional environment. The authors have found that identities are neither stable nor fragmented, but they can be more or less stable depending on the individual teacher’s capacity to manage his or her identity in various social settings. They define teacher professional identity in the following way:

Professional identity should not be confused with role. Identity is the way we make sense of ourselves to ourselves and the image of ourselves that we present to others. It is culturally embedded. There is an unavoidable interrelationship, also, between the professional and the personal. (Day & Kington, 2008, p. 9)

MacLure (1993) explored how teacher identity is claimed and talked about and otherwise used by teachers. Her study was interested in the impact of introduced policy changes on teachers’ lives in secondary schools. The study concludes that...identity is a continuing site of struggle for teachers, […], [it] should not be seen as a stable entity – something that people have but something that they use, to justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relationship to other people, and
to the contexts in which they operate. In other words, identity is a form of argument [that is] both practical and theoretical [and] moral. (MacLure, 1993, p. 312)

Likewise, researchers have found that many teachers reported feelings of tension between the identities they constructed over time and their professional values. Maguire (2008) came to a similar conclusion than MacLure (1993) in her study about teachers defining their teacher identities as “a continuing site of contestation, struggle and reworking” (p. 45).

Beijaard et al. (2004) claimed that professional identity has emerged as a separate research area in educational research “in which researchers conceptualize professional identity differently, investigate varying topics within the framework of teachers’ professional identity, and pursue a diversity of goals” (p. 108). The authors identify three prevailing categories: teachers’ professional identity formation; “identification of characteristics of teachers’ professional identity as perceived by the teachers themselves or as identified by the researchers from the data they collected” (p. 109); and teacher professional identity represented in stories told or written by teachers. Mishler (1999) talking about craft artists in his volume explained the process of adult identity formation employing narrative analysis and life history interviews. He claimed that personal narratives and life histories are socially situated actions, identity performances and fusions of form and content. Mishler (1999) defined identity “as a collective term referring to the dynamic organization of sub-identities that might conflict with or align with each other” (p.8). He maintained that

Our identities are defined and expressed through the way we position ourselves vis-à-vis others along several dimensions that constitute our networks of relationships. (Mishler, 1999, p. 16)

Parker Palmer (1998) in his classic book entitled The Courage to Teach encouraged teachers to take a journey toward reconnecting with themselves, their vocation, and their students by exploring their inner lives. He pointed out that the “what” (subject matter), the “how” (methodology), and the “why” (educational philosophies and rationale) of education have been in focus for a long time in various configurations in educational research. However, the “who”, the personhood of the teacher, has been pushed into the background since it has been claimed to be “too personal” to talk about in public. Palmer (1998) claimed that the inner landscape of the
teaching self must be charted fully by embarking on three paths – intellectual, emotional and spiritual – and none of them can be ignored. He supported this claim by saying that

Reduce teaching to intellect, and it becomes a cold abstraction; reduce it to emotions, and it becomes narcissistic; reduce it to the spiritual, and it loses its anchor to the world. Intellect, emotion, and spirit depend on one another for wholeness. They are interwoven in the human self and in education at its best. […]

By intellectual I mean the way we think about teaching and learning – the form and content of our concepts of how people know and learn, of the nature of our students and our subjects. By emotional I mean the way we and our students feel as we teach and learn – feelings that can either enlarge or diminish the exchange between us. By spiritual I mean the diverse ways we answer the heart’s longing to be connected with the largeness of life – a longing that animates love and work, especially the work called teaching. (Palmer, 1998, pp. 4-5)

In this sense, then, Palmer approaches the concept of teacher identity from a holistic perspective since he goes beyond focusing only on the professional aspects of being a teacher. In fact, the question of “Who is the self that teaches?” is at the heart of his book. This question, among many other things, inspired me to embark on my doctoral research that inquires into the same issue. Palmer (1998) further maintained that good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. The author’s definitions of identity and integrity are put in the following way:

By identity I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self: my genetic makeup, the nature of the man and woman who gave me life, the culture in which I was raised, people who have sustained me and people who have done me harm, the good and ill I have done to others and to myself, the experience of love and suffering – and much, much more. In the midst of that complex field, identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make who I am, converging in the irreducible mystery of being human.

By integrity I mean whatever wholeness I am able to find within that nexus as its vectors form and re-form the pattern of my life. Integrity requires that I discern what is integral to my selfhood, what fits and what does not – and that I choose life-giving ways of relating to the forces that converge within me: Do I welcome them or fear them, embrace them or reject them, move with them or against them? By choosing integrity, I become more whole, but wholeness does not mean perfection. It means becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who I am. […] Identity and integrity can never be fully named or known by anyone, including the person who bears them. (Palmer, 1998, pp. 13-14)
As we can see, Palmer’s definition of teacher identity can be viewed as the most inclusive and holistic among all others reviewed in this section. I argue that Palmer’s definition serves as a good signpost for my doctoral research considering its holistic approach and its clarity of definition. The research literature on teacher identity reveals that the concept of professional identity has been used and conceptualized in different ways in teacher education. Despite the wide range of definitions and conceptualizations, the concept of teacher identity seems to remain vague, and at times perplexing.

**Teacher Identity and Teacher Knowledge**

As discussed above in **Part One** of this chapter, teacher knowledge has been researched extensively over the past several decades. Teacher knowledge, or teacher cognition, has been highly valued and considered as an important component of a teacher’s makeup. Teacher identity research, however, reveals some conflicting views on the relationship between knowledge and identity. Some researchers view knowledge holistically without setting clear boundaries between knowledge and identity, e.g., Olsen (2003) claimed that “each is part of the other” (p. 4). In concert with this claim, then, I argue that the in-depth research on teacher knowledge and beliefs (discussed in detail in **Part One** of this chapter) has been an essential precursor of research on teacher identity since they are inextricably connected with who we are as teachers. On the other hand, other researchers view knowledge as “external to the individual and fixed” (Smith, 2007, p. 379).

The interaction between the development of teacher knowledge and professional identity has been investigated particularly with pre-service teachers. Smith (2007) concluded that pre-service teachers’ professional identity formation is complementary and connected to the development of teacher knowledge in teacher education programs. According to Kincheloe (2003), “mainstream teacher education provides little insight into the forces that shape identity and consciousness. Becoming educated, becoming a critical teacher-as-researcher/teacher-as-scholar necessitates personal transformation based on an understanding and critique of these forces…” (p. 47). Smith (2007) also argued along the same lines claiming that teacher education programs should focus both on pre-service teachers’ identity work and knowledge growth. Alsup (2006) claimed that pre-service teachers would more likely leave the profession if the discrepancy between the personal and the professional aspects of their identities were too big.
Johnston et al. (2005) portrayed teacher knowledge linked to teacher identity and professional development. In their words, “teacher knowledge is seen in relation to teachers’ lives and the contexts in which they work” (Johnston et al., 2005, p. 54).

**Teacher Identity and Professional Development**

A number of authors (e.g., Borko, 2004; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Diamond, 1991; Freeman, 1990; Freeman & Johnson, 2005; Lange, 1990; Tedick, 2005; Tarone & Allwright, 2005) have emphasized the importance of the exploration of teachers’ professional selves as an integral part of on-going professional development arguing that “the way one teaches […] is tied to the ways teachers see themselves” (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 47). Therefore, the various ways of, and approaches to, professional development, as discussed in Part One of this chapter, provide teachers with important tools to explore several aspects of their teacher identity.

Teachers are actively engaged in the process of creating themselves as teachers from the beginning of and during their careers (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Mok (2002) argued that self-agency may have a significant impact on speeding up the process of teachers’ self-growth. According to Williams (2007), researching the concepts of teacher identity can lead researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence a teacher’s decisions and attitude in teaching.

In second language education, the relationship between professional development and teacher identity has been scrutinized by exploring teachers’ personal experiences. Bailey et al. (2001) offered valuable insights into the importance of using personal experiences as a source of continuing professional development. The authors provide diverse approaches and techniques (e.g., teaching journals, case studies and/or histories, language learning experiences, the use of video, action research, teacher collaboration and teaching portfolios) to professional development, which is viewed in this context as a very personal and narrative style. The authors consider self-awareness, self-observation, and reflective teaching as important cornerstones of professional development.

Palmer and Christison (2007) provided a practical book for teachers to explore the “heart of teaching”, i.e., finding harmony between their professional and personal lives. This book is authored by language teacher educators who provide numerous examples of language teachers’ work experiences. The authors use the term “internal and external worlds of teaching”. The
“internal world of teaching” refers to self-understanding and goals, perspective, values, emotions, and executive processes. The “external world of teaching” refers to formal training; that is, developing a knowledge base and a set of instructional strategies necessary to meet basic classroom and professional obligations. According to them, the exploration of these two worlds may lead to finding the “heart of teaching”.

**Teacher Identity and Language Learning**

Learning a foreign language is seen as an extension of self and personhood and of the range of meanings of which the individual is capable. (Riley, 2006, p. 296)

The process of learning and functioning in a second or foreign language in case of non-native English teachers is considered an important factor in the development of language teacher identity, as opposed to teacher identity in general. The issue of native and non-native speakers and teachers of English has been widely discussed in the literature (among others Cook, 1999; Davies, 1995; Freeman, 2004; Hawkins, 2004; Kramsch, 1997; Lee, 2003; Liu, 1999; Llurda, 2004; Medgyes, 1983, 1994; Pavlenko, 2003; Poynor, 2005; Rampton, 1990; Widdowson, 1994).

Several researchers have attempted to clarify the differences between native and non-native speakers and teachers (for example, Davies, 1995; Liu, 1999; Rampton, 1990). Davies (1995) suggested six criteria that describe a native speaker: childhood language acquisition, intuitions about the grammar, intuitions about the standard language, the capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, creativity with the language, and the capacity to interpret and translate into the L1. Liu (1999) drew attention to a number of influential factors to be considered, such as precedence in language learning, competence in the learned language, cultural affiliation and social identity, and language environment. Competence in the target language is culture-related and relative to the people with whom one interacts. Cultural affiliation and social identity are important dimensions of determining who is a native speaker of a particular language. According to Liu (1999), a native speaker of a language is “someone who binds the language with social identity, cultural affiliation, language competence, and confidence” (p. 94). Kramsch (1997) argued that, more important than questions of birth and competence, is recognition and acceptance as a native speaker by a particular speech community. In other words, social perceptions, which can include such factors as ethnicity, physical features

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1 L1 = first language
and other perceptually relevant factors, may be important in our determination of who is or is not a native speaker.

There are important advantages and disadvantages in being a non-native speaker of English (Medgyes, 1994) that influence the development of teacher identity. Advantages of non-native teachers are credited for providing a good model for students, teaching language-learning strategies, anticipating and preventing language difficulties, empathy, and benefits from L1. As Cook (1999) put it, non-native teachers present a more achievable model for language learners and he argues that the notion of competence in more than one language, termed as “multicompetence”, is more important than being a so-called native speaker of the target language. He advocates that L2\textsuperscript{12} users should be viewed as multicompetent language users rather than deficient native speakers. Disadvantages of non-native English-speaking teachers are among others, linguistic deficit, “inferiority complex”, “schizophrenia”, and foreign language anxiety. Linguistic deficit refers to linguistic competence, which is seen as the most prevailing shortcoming of non-native teachers. Self-esteem and self-image are closely related to the issue of linguistic competence (Reves & Medgyes, 1994), and the authors conclude that awareness of the differences between native and non-native English-speaking teachers affects the non-natives’ general self-image and attitude to work. The terms “inferiority complex” and “schizophrenia” are meant in a symbolic way. They refer to the fact that non-native teachers of English have to play roles when they teach. For example, in spite of their linguistic deficiency they have to appear competent and well-informed about the language and its cultures in the classroom in front of their students. Li (2007a) also addressed this issue as a non-native instructor claiming that “I doubt whether my knowledge in ESL teaching is broad and deep enough, and more importantly, my English is good enough to deserve my students’ respect” (p. 33). Seidlhofer (1999) argued that non-native teachers are constantly confronted with the dichotomy between their non-nativeness and the challenge of authenticity in language teaching. Medgyes (1983) referred to this state of being as having “split personalities”. As a result of constant improvement of their language competence, non-native teachers have confidence as a teacher in the classroom but insecurity as a speaker in the real world.

Kramsch (1993) introduced the notion of a “third place” in language learning that entails “a process of socialization into a given speech community and the acquisition of literacy as a

\textsuperscript{12} L2 = second language
means of expressing personal meanings” (p. 233). Foreign language learning comprises the realization of difference between one’s personal self and one’s social self as well as one’s own culture and that of the target language. This realization of difference may be connected to the feelings of being “betwixt and between, no longer at home in [one’s] original culture, nor really belonging to the host culture” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 234). According to the author, language learners strive to find their own place within the target speech community. By learning a new language, language learners enter the territory of the “no-one’s land”, which might be between and beyond the culture they have grown up with and the new culture they have been introduced to. In fact, this “no-one’s land” may become precisely their own “third place”, which is at the intersection of the native culture and the new culture, where they create their own meanings and they can develop their own identity.

Teacher Identity and Emotions

Emotion is the least investigated aspect of research on teaching, yet it is probably the aspect most often mentioned as being important and deserving more attention. (Zembylas, 2005)

Another emerging area of research on teacher identity is connected to the investigation of the role of emotions in teaching and teacher identity development (e.g., Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2001; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Johnston, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2005; Mok, 2002; O’Connor, 2008; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Zembylas, 2003, 2005). Mok (2002) argued that the pursuit of personal values can play an important role in personal and professional growth and he further states that “personally defined values are related to physical and psychological feelings of well-being, reactions to roles, and conceptions of self” (p. 116). This area of educational research is growing and is viewed as a separate research field. Although my review cannot be exhaustive, I wish to acknowledge, nevertheless, the richness of this emerging research field by highlighting some selected works that I found relevant to the development of teacher identity.

It is essential to define what we mean by the term “emotions” before discussing the role they play in teaching and the development of teacher identity. Antonio Damasio (2003) pointed out that in common usage the word emotion tends to encompass the notion of feeling. However, he argues for making a distinction between them in order to understand the “complex chain of
events that begins with emotion and ends up in feeling” (Damasio, 2003, p. 27). Accordingly, Damasio (2003) explained that emotions are actions or movements that are public. In other words, emotions are visible to others as they occur, e.g., in the form of facial expressions. Feelings, on the other hand, are always hidden and unseen to anyone other than their rightful owner since they occur in the mind. The author claims that emotions “play out in the theater of the body”, whereas feelings “play out in the theater of the mind” and he goes on saying that emotions seem to precede feelings. Emotions are the foundation for feelings, which are “mental events that form the bedrock of our minds” (Damasio, 2003, p. 28). There are two consequences of a feeling occurring in the body: “the appearance of thoughts with themes consonant with the emotion; and a mode of thinking, a style of mental processing” (Damasio, 2003, p. 84). Hence, this statement proposes a strong relationship among emotions, feelings, thoughts and thinking.

Damasio’s (2003) contention is supported by Goleman’s (2005) view that “in a very real sense we have two minds, one that thinks and one that feels” (p. 8). He further explains that

These two minds, the emotional and the rational, operate in tight harmony for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world. Ordinarily there is a balance between emotional and rational minds, with emotion feeding into and informing the operations of the rational mind, and the rational mind refining and sometimes vetoing the inputs of the emotions. […] In many or most moments these minds are exquisitely coordinated; feelings are essential to thought, thought to feeling. (Goleman, 2005, p. 9, italics added)

In other words, both Damasio (a neuroscientist) and Goleman (a psychologist) suggest that emotions occurring first contribute to the operations of the rational mind. This is a significant claim that underscores the importance of emotions and feelings and highlights the fact that research on emotions should be taken seriously. These propositions informed my own research design in terms of the importance of differentiating between research participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions about their teacher identity as presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

According to Goleman (2005), the emotional mind – through immediate perception – is far quicker than the rational mind. Actions springing from the emotional mind carry a strong sense of certainty and simplified way of looking at things. The emotional mind can read an emotional reality in an instant that leads to intuitive snapshot judgements. Gladwell (2005) referred to the part of the brain that can make these kinds of instant snapshot decisions as “the adaptive unconscious”, which is “not to be confused with the unconscious described by Sigmund
Freud” (p. 11). Instead, it can be thought of “as a giant computer that quickly and quietly processes a lot of data we need in order to keep functioning as human beings” (Gladwell, 2005, p.11). From my point of view, Goleman’s “emotional mind” appears to coincide with Gladwell’s “adaptive unconscious” as they both describe the same phenomenon.

According to Goleman (2005), there is a second kind of emotional reaction, which is much slower since it simmers and brews first in our thoughts before it leads to feeling. Therefore, this kind of emotional reaction, claims Goleman (2005), is more deliberate and we are aware of the thoughts that lead to it. The logic of the emotional mind is associative and it takes its beliefs to be absolutely true and discounts any evidence to the contrary. On the other hand, the rational mind takes its beliefs tentative; new evidence can disconfirm one belief and replace it with a new one. As a result, it can be seen that emotions are indispensable for rational decisions; “the emotions, then, matter for rationality” (Goleman, 2005, p. 28).

Emotions have been considered as a useful lens to explore teacher change and teacher identity, as the special issue of Teaching and Teacher Education (2005, volume 21) describe them. It is noted that the role of emotions in teacher identity has received little attention to date. Despite the boom of research on emotions in psychology since the early 1980s “little of this work has informed current research on teachers” (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 328). It was not until the 1990s that emotions as a topic gained recognition in educational research with the publication of several articles by Andy Hargreaves (1994, 1998, 2000, 2001). On the other hand, there is a deep prejudice and suspicion imbedded in Western (i.e., North American) culture against emotions. When the word “emotional” is used to describe a person, it usually means being “irrational” (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Zembylas (2005) added that “the traditional dichotomy of reason and emotion is perpetuated in educational research, privileging research of teachers’ cognitive thinking and teacher beliefs” (p. 6).

Nias (1996) claimed that teachers invest their “selves” in the activity of teaching and teaching involves human interaction, hence, it has an emotional dimension. Other researchers argue that emotion and cognition are inextricably intertwined and are, therefore, difficult to separate. According to van Veen and Lasky (2005), cognition and emotion are also inseparable from the social and cultural forces “which help to form them and which are in turn shaped by them” and they further state that “a systematic understanding and conceptualization of teachers’ emotions in relation to their work and identity is still missing, […] few of the contributors [of the
Cambridge Journal of Education special issue, 1996] defined emotion, or made explicit the theoretical framework used in their research” (p. 896).

According to empirical research findings, emotions may influence teacher cognition and teacher motivation (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). The authors claim that teachers’ negative emotions are “a central component of management and discipline because they focus attention so powerfully” (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 336). Furthermore, emotions can affect memory when retrieving information. Research on memory suggests that emotional stimuli are often remembered better than unemotional stimuli (Mogg & Bradley, 1999). Teachers’ emotions may also influence their categorizing, thinking, and problem-solving abilities. An important research finding on teachers’ emotions is connected to the fact that students are aware of and influenced by teachers’ emotions. Teachers’ negative emotions (e.g., anger) result in lower student motivation, whereas teachers’ positive emotions (e.g., caring) seem to have positive effects on students by raising the level of student motivation and engagement.

Day and Leitch (2001) summarized the emerging assumptions in connection with emotions in teaching as follows: (i) emotional intelligence is at the heart of good professional practice (Goleman, 1995); (ii) emotions are indispensable to rational decision-making (Damasio, 1994); and (iii) emotional and cognitive health are affected by personal biography, social context, and external (policy) factors. They further claim that feelings and emotions play an essential role in the development of learning, mental constructs, and the meanings we create.

Conclusion

This chapter offered a review of the existing literature on teacher identity research from a broad perspective. Part One outlined educational research on teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs, professional development, and reflective practice. I argued that these research areas could be considered the antecedents of teacher identity research because they investigated important aspects that may influence the development of teacher identity. In my understanding, teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs are essential components of professional knowledge and expertise that can influence teachers’ perceptions of who they are. Professional development and reflective practice can be viewed as vital complementary processes offering various conceptual frameworks, tools, techniques, and methods that can be applied in the exploration of teacher
identity. I found the overview informative and educational since it offered important background knowledge about the precursors of teacher identity research. The reviewed material also provided justification and theoretical backup for my research design in terms of the exploration of research participants’ educational and professional experiences as outlined in Chapter 6. Part Two of this chapter reviewed the growing body of literature on the concept of teacher identity. I examined frequently used methodologies, such as life history research and narrative inquiry, as well as theoretical frameworks, e.g., discourse analysis, socio-cultural and constructivist perspectives. The review broadened my conceptual understanding of the differences in distinct conceptualizations of teacher identity that can be attributed to various theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Research on teacher identity – both in general and second language education – has mainly focused on the aspects of professional identity and teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles. I found that there are multiple conceptualizations and definitions of teacher identity, depending on the conceptual framework that researchers adopt. These conceptualizations can vary from the general to the specific. For example, teacher identity has been understood as a useful “research frame” and a “pedagogical tool” for professional development (Olsen, 2008), as “lived experience of participation” (Wenger, 1998), and as being “multifaceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered” (Cooper & Olson, 1996). MacLure (1993) and Maguire (2008) defined teacher identity as being a “continuing site of struggle” and a “continuing site of contestation, struggle and reworking”. Others have developed more specific definitions of teacher identity, e.g., being a “subject matter, pedagogical and didactical expert” (Beijaard et al., 2000). I found that of all teacher identity definitions, Palmer (1998) put the concept of identity into a larger conceptual framework. He has interpreted teacher identity in a holistic fashion by highlighting the integrity among the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of teacher identity, which is an “evolving nexus where all the forces converge”. For my doctoral research Palmer’s (1998) definition seems the most relevant because of its inclusive and holistic nature.

I considered it important to review the relationships between identity and several related components that contribute to its development, e.g., teacher knowledge, professional development, language learning, and the role of emotions. As I see it, identity is a complex notion made up of several interconnected parts, each affecting one’s overall perception of teacher
identity in a *more or less* important way. Based on the reviewed material, teacher identity has been viewed and defined as identification with *one or many* things (e.g., knowledge, beliefs, language learning, emotions, etc). Some researchers have defined identity as knowledge, or as beliefs. Others have explained it through language learning and language teaching, e.g., the issue of being a native or non-native speaker of the target language being taught, and the influence of non-native teachers’ language learning experiences on teaching. More recently, researchers have described teacher identity through the role of emotions and personal values. I argue that it is crucial to view *all these components together* if we want to understand identity from a holistic perspective.

I identified some fragmentation of research interests in the area of teacher identity. Researchers appear to prioritize professional identity by emphasizing knowledge, professional development, and language learning. Although life history and narrative inquiry address the personal dimensions of teaching and teachers’ lives, they do not focus on the in-depth relationships and connections between personal and professional lives, which was important for my research. Thus, I identified a gap in the research literature about the integration of *both* aspects of teacher identity (i.e., the professional and the personal) from a holistic stance. Another missing link is the lack of research on teacher identity that integrates *both* sides of the human mind, i.e., reason and intuition from a humanistic, holistic perspective. This lack requires a new methodological perspective that is outlined in Chapter 6.

In summary, then, for my doctoral research it is important to apply some aspects of holistic, humanistic approaches in psychology (reviewed in Part Two of Chapter 4) to research on teacher identity in order to bridge the identified gap in educational research. Chapter 6 presents the theoretical aspects of my chosen research methodology as well as my research design. Then, Chapter 7, divided into four parts, presents the research participants’ portrayals followed by the researcher’s analytical summary.
Chapter 6

Research Methods and Design

Introduction

When it comes to defining the research methodology of a particular study, the issue of clarity and consistency in using the appropriate language becomes paramount. However, the terminology used in the literature seems confusing. I found that the literature has used “methodology” and “methods” interchangeably, albeit incorrectly since they stand for two different aspects of the research process. A number of terms are used to refer to the methodology of a particular study, for example, “methodological approaches” and “research methodologies” (Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, 1990), “strategies of inquiry” and “methodology” (Handbook of Qualitative Research, 1994), “modes of inquiry” (Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, 1996), “orientations” (Cumming, 1994), “theoretical traditions and orientations” (Patton, 2002) and – to make matters more confusing – “research methods” (Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement, 1988; Handbook of Research on Teaching, 1986, 3rd edition).

Schwandt (1997) defined “methodology” as the theory of how inquiry should proceed. Thus, the term “methodology” describes the theoretical assumptions, guiding principles, and strategies that inform the research process. On the other hand, the term “methods” refers to the pragmatic procedures, strategies, tools, and techniques for collecting and analyzing data (see Table 2 below). As I see it, the researcher’s theoretical orientation or epistemological stance (see Chapter 3) coherently influences the choice of methodology, which, in turn, also determines the selection of appropriate methods and techniques. Thus, in this chapter, the term “methodology” refers to the theoretical assumptions and guiding principles of my study and the term “methods” denotes the procedures and techniques I employed for data collection and analysis.

In concert with the above introduction, the purpose of this chapter is to situate my inquiry within a specific methodology that is organically aligned with my theoretical framework
presented in Chapter 3, and to present the methods used for data collection and analysis. Thus, the chapter is divided into two major sections.

**Part One** first describes the process of identifying the most appropriate methodology for my doctoral research. Then, I present an overview of heuristic research as my methodology. Finally, I describe the underlying concepts and processes that define heuristic research.

**Part Two** illuminates my engagement and negotiations with the research design. It discusses the development of my research questions, introduces the research participants, and shows the process of data collection by explaining and justifying the various research methods employed in my inquiry. Finally, it provides a description of the process of data analysis and interpretation.

Some parts of this chapter were re-constructed from an unpublished essay on qualitative research methodologies and methods written in my doctoral program at McGill University (Bukor, 2003), my Doctoral Research Proposal (Bukor, 2008a) and my Ethics Review Protocol (Bukor, 2008b) written at OISE/University of Toronto. I also included some excerpts from my personal diary and professional reflections to illustrate the evolution of my thinking about my research topic, research questions, methodology, and research design.

Figure 2: Paradigms, Methodologies and Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigms and Perspectives (Theoretical Frameworks)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g., Positivism, Constructivism &amp; Interpretive Inquiry, Critical Theory, Postmodernism, Hermeneutics, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodologies (Guiding Principles and Strategies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g., Ethnography, Phenomenology, Narrative Inquiry, Participatory Action Research, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods (Tools and Techniques)</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.g., interviewing, participant observation, document analysis, focus groups, alternative methods, etc.</td>
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Part One: The Path to Finding my Research Methodology

Part One of this chapter describes the lengthy – almost seven-year long – process that I went through to find the best research methodology suitable for the in-depth pursuit of my research topic on teacher identity that also satisfied my own intellectual and professional curiosity and rigour in this endeavor. In heuristic research Moustakas (1990) outlines six phases that heuristic researchers go through, which are as follows: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. I am going to use the first three phases of heuristic research (initial engagement, immersion, and incubation) to describe the process of identifying my research topic and selecting the most suitable methodology. The latter three stages (illumination, explication, and creative synthesis) are provided in Part Two of this chapter as I describe the research design and the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Finding my Research Topic and Methodology

Heuristic research begins with the “initial engagement” with a topic or question. According to Moustakas (1990), during the “initial engagement” phase the task is to “discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher” (p. 27). This period encourages “self-dialogue, an inner search to discover the topic and question” that allows the researcher to encounter one’s self, “one’s autobiography, and significant relationships within a social context”; during this stage “the investigator reaches inward for tacit awareness and knowledge, permits intuition to run freely, and elucidates the context from which the question takes form and significance” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

My “initial engagement” started in the fall of 2003 at McGill University where I had first begun my doctoral studies. Finding the most appropriate methodology was a gradual process of studying various types of qualitative research methodologies in depth, e.g., ethnography, life history research, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology, which spanned several years. Phenomenology as a methodology appealed to me and I felt an urge to explore it in depth.

In the first semester at McGill I met a doctoral student from OISE/University of Toronto, who lent me a dissertation written at OISE that was very interesting, innovative, and unusual. In hindsight, this event turned out to be highly significant not only in selecting my methodology but
also in illuminating my research topic. Ultimately, the encounter with this doctoral student from OISE re-directed my path completely in pursuing my doctoral studies.

*Reading the thesis prompted me to do something with my self-exploration. I have a deep desire to create something that comes from within me, of who I am as a person. It's time for me to take my life into my hands and do something meaningful that will be lasting, interesting, educational, and exceptional; that will speak to me as well as to my audience through me.*

*Another realization was about the methodology of this thesis. First, I didn't understand what “heuristic phenomenology” was. However, it started to dawn on me that I had been “using” this methodology in my own life without even labeling the process as phenomenological. I have always been looking for the meaning in my own and other people's actions, words, behaviors, feelings, and emotions. At this point, I had an intuitive feeling about this methodology being the most appropriate for my research. (My Personal Diary, January 12th, 2004)*

*I think it is becoming imperative to look at the Self of the teacher, who we are as teachers, for a simple reason: as long as we don't know ourselves deeply, we are disconnected from our students, colleagues, the profession and the subject matter we teach. I still don't have a clearly verbalized research question but I feel that it must be connected to the selfhood of the teacher. (Professional Reflections, January 27th, 2004)*

The reading course with Dr. Lise Winer, my supervisor at McGill, in the winter of 2004 helped me gradually uncover my research topic as I had engaged in an in-depth, reflective, autobiographical self-exploration by means of writing my professional autobiography (reconstructed in part in Chapter 2). After having completed the Ph.D. coursework at McGill in the academic year 2003 – 2004, I withdrew from the program. I wanted to study teacher identity using phenomenology and heuristic research at OISE/University of Toronto. However, it did not happen until the fall of 2007 when I started my doctoral studies anew at OISE/University of Toronto.

“Immersion” is the second phase of heuristic research described the following way:

*The researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even dream states. Everything in his or her life becomes crystallized around the question. […] The researcher is alert to all possibilities for meaning and enters fully into life with others wherever the theme is being expressed or talked about – in public settings,*

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13 In 2008 an email communication with Ardra Cole confirmed my assumption that “heuristic phenomenology” was used incorrectly in that dissertation. The methodology is called correctly “heuristic research” developed by Clark Moustakas (1990, 1994).
in social contexts, or in professional meetings. Virtually anything connected with
the question becomes raw material for immersion, for staying with, and for
maintaining a sustained focus and concentration. People, places, meetings,
readings, nature – all offer possibilities for understanding the phenomenon.
(Moustakas, 1990, p. 28)

The “immersion” phase spanned about three years (2004 – 2006) that I spent in an
intense spiritual self-exploration about who I am as a person and a professional (see Chapter 2).
This three-year period was also an immersion into reading about the topic of identity and self in
a wide range of academic and popular sources. Also during this time, my professional
collaboration on co-authoring a book with Dr. Devon Woods, my M.A. supervisor at Carleton
University, contributed to my deeper understanding of myself as an individual and a
professional. The collaboration helped me to learn to appreciate and develop my intellectual
capabilities; and last but not least, it provided me with a sound – and at times, very steep and
challenging – learning curve to expand my professional knowledge of teacher education and
teacher learning in breadth and depth.

Next, the “incubation” phase of heuristic research refers to
the process in which the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus
on the question. […] The period of incubation allows the inner workings of the
tacit dimension and intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on
levels outside the immediate awareness. (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 28-29)

This phase began with taking courses in the Ph.D. Program at OISE in Toronto in the fall of
2007. I dedicated much less direct attention to my self-study and my research topic. Instead, I
took a course on narrative inquiry with Dr. Carola Conle at OISE to immerse myself in the
subject. The course convinced me that heuristic inquiry – a form of phenomenology – was more
suitable as an overarching methodology to explore my research questions in depth, and I wanted
to engage with narrative inquiry as a method of data presentation in my dissertation.

The last three phases of heuristic research, i.e., illumination, explication, and creative
synthesis, are discussed in Part Two of this chapter.
What is Heuristic Research?

The methodology of my doctoral research is “heuristic research” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990, 1994), also called “heuristic inquiry” (Patton, 2002). I am using these two terms synonymously and interchangeably in my dissertation referring to the same concept and methodology (Moustakas, 1990) since they appear as equivalent terms in the literature as well.

Heuristic research is defined as “a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience” that illuminates “a focused problem, question, or theme” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 40). The term “heuristic” originates from the Greek word heuriskein, meaning to discover or to find and “it refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9, emphasis added). This internal search refers to the intellectual, psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects of the researcher’s and the participants’ self-discovery process. According to Sela-Smith (2002), who wrote an overview and critique of Moustakas’ methodology, heuristic research is an organized and systematic way of investigating human experience “in which attention is focused inward on feeling responses of the researcher to the outward situation rather than exclusively to relations between the pieces of that outside situation” (p. 59). In other words, there is an emphasis on prioritizing the researcher’s emotions, feelings, intuitions and tacit knowledge with regard to the phenomenon under investigation rather than highlighting exclusively the relationships between the tangible aspects of that phenomenon. This type of methodology invites the conscious, deliberate self of the researcher to surrender to feelings, intuitions and tacit knowing inherent in experience. The heuristic nature of this methodology is reflected in the importance of self-search, self-dialogue and self-discovery of both the researcher and the participants. Disciplined sensitivity and passionate commitment to the search to illuminate the question or problem are key components of heuristic research.

The core of heuristic inquiry is “the human person in experience” and that person’s reflective search, awareness and discovery (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Put differently, heuristic inquiry focuses on the person having an experience (“How do you make sense of your experience?”) and it is about self-understanding through the study of relationships, connections and influences on the person’s way of thinking.
Heuristic research focuses exclusively and continually on understanding human experience and “only the co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon are considered, not how history, art, politics, or other human enterprises account for and explain the meaning of experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 19, emphasis added). It is, however, understood and acknowledged that the external world with its history, politics, arts, education, social contexts and social interactions does play a crucial role in how individuals make sense of the world around them. Any of these external aspects were recognized in my research to the extent that my research participants found them relevant to making sense of their experiences. In other words, these external factors helped the participants interpret their experience during the research process.

In heuristic inquiry, the researcher must have had a direct personal experience with the phenomenon being investigated. There must be concrete autobiographical connections and during the research process the researcher is “not only lifting out the essential meanings of an experience, but [he is] actively awakening and transforming [his] own self” (Moustakas, 1990, 13). Sela-Smith (2002) notes that the researcher’s and the participants’ “self-transformation is an expected outcome of this method” (p. 70). There is a strong connection between the external world and the researcher’s inner world in reflective thought, feeling and awareness. The emphasis is on the researcher’s intuition, self-searching, and indwelling as well as the participants’ internal frames of reference having also experienced the phenomenon under investigation. My prior experience with my professional autobiography and my intense self-exploration (see Chapter 2) along with my on-going self-discovery process during the entire doctoral thesis journey served therefore as a strong foundation for utilizing this research methodology.

Heuristic inquiry is a process that begins with a question or problem that has personal relevance to the researcher. Thus, this process is autobiographic with an individual person as its focal point:

Heuristics is a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one’s senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments. This requires a

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14 Moustakas (1990, 1994) uses the term “co-researcher” for research participant
passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 15)

Heuristic research is a seldom-used qualitative methodology in educational research, and is a form of phenomenological inquiry “that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher” (Patton, 2002, p. 107). In this sense, then, the foundational guiding question of heuristic inquiry can be articulated with a personal focus in mind: “What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?” (Patton, 2002, p. 107, emphasis added). Heuristic research has been derived from phenomenology, but it differs from it in four major ways:

1. Heuristics emphasizes connectedness and relationship, while phenomenology encourages a kind of detachment from the phenomenon being investigated.
2. Heuristics leads to depiction of essential meanings and portrayal of the intrigue and personal significance that imbue the search to know, while phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definitive descriptions of the structures of experience.
3. Heuristics concludes with a “creative synthesis” and it may involve reintegration of derived knowledge that includes the researcher’s intuition and tacit understandings, while phenomenological research concludes with a presentation of the distilled structures of experience.
4. “Whereas phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis, in heuristics the research participants remain visible in the examination of data and continue to be portrayed as whole persons. Phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristics retains the essence of the person in experience” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 43).

**Important Concepts and Processes in Heuristic Research**

According to Moustakas (1990), the heuristic research process entails the following important concepts and processes that help illuminate the meaning of experience: identifying with the focus of inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and the internal frame of reference. This section clarifies each of these processes.
Identifying with the focus of inquiry is the first important process that a heuristic researcher goes through. The researcher seeks to gain an understanding of a question or phenomenon based on his/her personal experience with it and that of others’ who have also had an experience with the question or phenomenon under investigation. Herein lies the importance of the researcher’s autobiographical connection with the research question. The researcher dedicates his attention fully to the focus of inquiry (i.e., the phenomenon), he gets inside the question and becomes one with it. Moustakas (1990) referred to this ability as an “inverted perspective” since attention is directed inward on the researcher’s internal “sense-making” of the phenomenon that is “out there” rather than highlighting the visible aspects of the phenomenon “out there” from an observer’s perspective.

In addition to becoming one with the phenomenon, the heuristic researcher also engages in a dialogue with it. Self-dialogue is a crucial step in this regard. If one wants to be able to discover the elements and qualities of a phenomenon, one must begin with oneself. Put differently, “one’s own self-discoveries, awareness, and understandings are the initial steps of the process” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 16, emphasis added). Moustakas (1990) explains that the researcher needs to be open, receptive and attuned to all possible aspects of an experience, “allowing comprehension and compassion to mingle and recognizing the place and unity of intellect, emotion, and spirit” (p. 16). Self-dialogue creates an opportunity for the researcher to face herself and to be honest with herself about an experience or problem. My self-discovery process over the years enabled me to engage in an internal self-dialogue with myself, to face some of my issues, and ultimately, to become honest with myself (see Chapter 2). A key feature of self-dialogue in heuristic inquiry is an “emphasis on disclosing the self as a way of facilitating disclosure from others – a response to the tacit dimension within oneself sparks a similar call from others” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 50). Thus, disclosure of the researcher’s own personal experience with the phenomenon may encourage participants to embark on the same process as well. Polkinghorne (1988) notes that self-narratives play an important role in the formation of personal identity and he quotes Karl Scheibe who claimed that “narrative enrichment occurs when one retrospectively revises, selects, and orders past details in such a way as to create a self-narrative that is coherent and satisfying and that will serve as a justification for one’s present condition and situation. The retrospective revision needs to conclude and coincide
with the known present” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 106). This was an important consideration that I adhered to when I decided to use autobiographical journaling as one of my research methods.

**Tacit knowing**, underlying all other concepts and processes, is fundamental in heuristic research, maintains Moustakas (1990). Polanyi (1969b) explains that tacit knowing can be covered with one word “understanding” (i.e., comprehending or making sense of experience). Tacit knowledge is pre-verbal, inarticulate, mostly seen in the act of doing things and one can test it only by using it. Polanyi (1969b) asserted that “while tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence, all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge” (p. 144). To illuminate this statement, let’s take an example. For instance, explicit knowledge is articulated and formulated in language and symbols. Language and symbols can convey information but they can never mean anything in themselves. It is only a person who says something who can mean something by them. Polanyi (1969b) explained that we always utter a statement with the intention of saying something and we always know approximately what we mean to say a little before we say it. We can’t explain how we know what we mean (i.e., tacit knowing) but we need this tacit knowing (i.e., processes of understanding) to understand and apply explicit knowledge. Therefore, “we can know more than we can tell” (Polanyi, 1983, p. 4). According to Moustakas (1990), tacit knowing is a “basic capacity of the self of the researcher” that helps illuminate an issue or problem and it “precedes intuition” in attaining knowledge. Sela-Smith (2002) explains the tacit dimension of personal knowledge as an internal place where experience, feeling, and meaning join together to form both a picture of the world and a way to navigate that world. Tacit knowledge is a continually growing, multileveled, deep-structural organization that exists for the most part outside of ordinary awareness and is the foundation on which all other knowledge stands. (p. 60)

**Intuition** is viewed as a “bridge” (Moustakas, 1990) that connects implicit knowledge inherent in the tacit dimension with explicit knowledge that is observable, describable and measurable. When relying on intuition, one uses an internal capacity to make inferences based on the subsidiary or observable factors to arrive at a knowledge of underlying structures and dynamics. According to Moustakas (1990), intuition makes immediate knowledge possible without the intervening steps of logic and reasoning. He explains the difference between tacit knowing and intuition saying that
while the tacit is pure mystery in its focal nature – ineffable and unspecifiable – in the intuitive process one draws on clues; one senses a pattern or underlying condition that enables one to imagine and then characterize the reality, state of mind, or condition. In intuition, we perceive something, observe it, and look and look again from clue to clue until we surmise the truth. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 23)

Intuition is also an important capacity for the heuristic researcher; through practice and exercise one can develop advanced perceptiveness and sensitivity. **Intuition is essential to perceive things as wholes.** For example, we can look at a tree from several angles, sides, or from the front, the back and the side; however, we cannot see the tree as a whole. The whole tree must be intuited from observation and experience using the ability to connect the parts with the whole, seeing relationships and patterns of the tree that finally enables an intuitive knowing of the tree as a whole. As Moustakas (1990) claims, “every act of achieving integration, unity, or wholeness of anything requires intuition. […] Intuition is an essential characteristic of seeking knowledge” (p. 23).

**Indwelling** refers to the process of directing attention inward to seek a deeper, more extended understanding of the nature or meaning of a human experience. “The indwelling process is conscious and deliberate, yet it is not linear or logical” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24). Indwelling is an essential process; particularly during the data analysis and synthesis stages of the heuristic research process.

**Focusing** is another necessary process in heuristic research that is both viewed as a concept and as a process. Moustakas (1990) explains that “focusing is an inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the more central meanings of an experience. Focusing enables the researcher to see something as it is” (p. 25).

Finally, **the internal frame of reference** plays a fundamental role in heuristic research. To know and understand the nature, meaning and essence of any human experience, the researcher depends on the internal frame of reference of the person who has had the experience. Moustakas (1990) claims that only the experiencing person – by looking at their own experiences in perceptions, thoughts, feelings and sense – can validly provide portrayals of experience. If one wants to know and understand another’s experience, one has to talk directly with that person encouraging them to express, explore and explain their own meanings of their experiences. Rogers (1951) emphasized that the empathic understanding of another person’s internal frame of reference is an essential condition of constructive personality change. Our understanding of
another’s experience – when observed from an external frame of reference – can be distorted when we fail to recognize the internal frame of reference of the experiencing person, and when we fail to try to understand an individual’s experiences through their perceptions, feelings, and the meanings that they attach to their experiences.

Conclusion

In Part One of this chapter I first outlined the chronological process of arriving at my chosen methodology and research topic by means of the first three phases of heuristic research (i.e., initial engagement, immersion, and incubation) developed by Moustakas (1990). The subsequent sections of Part One focused on describing the theoretical aspects of heuristic research as a methodology. Then, I explained important concepts and processes inherent in heuristic research, such as identifying with the focus of inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing and the internal frame of reference. Thus, Part One of this chapter provided a presentation of the “theory” behind the heuristic inquiry process, using Schwandt’s (1997) term from the introduction of this chapter. Part Two of this chapter presents the “practical” aspects of carrying out my doctoral research from a methodological point of view.

Part Two: My Research Design

Part Two of this chapter describes the process of developing my research design, which is organized in the following four major sections:

1. Development of the Research Questions;
2. Finding Research Participants and Obtaining Consent;
3. Data Collection; and
4. Data Analysis and Interpretation.

Before elaborating on each of these topics, I decided to include a section that illustrates the process of how I was working with conscious and intuitive thought processes throughout the
Part Two of Chapter 6 begins with describing some personal aspects of writing my dissertation utilizing both modes of thought (i.e., reason and intuition), which would otherwise remain undisclosed.

**Working with Conscious and Intuitive Thought Processes**

Developing my research design and selecting the methods of data collection began in the fall of 2008 as I was working on my Doctoral Research Proposal. During the entire thesis journey, I wanted to acknowledge reason and intuition as two complementary thought processes in conceptualizing and carrying out my research. I was, of course, aware of the fact that completing a doctoral dissertation was primarily a rigorous academic, rational, and intellectual undertaking. However, I also wanted to give space to my intuitive thoughts, feelings, hunches, and ideas as they occurred and guided me through the process. I attempted to explicitly acknowledge these two complementary thought processes (i.e., reason and intuition) that had already become my chosen “modus operandi” in my personal and professional life in the past several years. Since my dissertation focuses on weaving together the conscious/rational and the tacit/intuitive aspects of knowing and being in a holistic fashion, I wanted to “walk the talk” by demonstrating it myself throughout the entire doctoral research process. Therefore, I included here some instances of how I focused my attention on making conscious the intuitive thought processes so that I can make this process “visible” for the readers.

For example, in the fall of 2008 I participated in my M.A. supervisor’s graduate course at Carleton University and he made a statement that “discussions stimulate thinking” (Devon Woods, September 26, 2008). As I jotted this down in my notepad, the idea itself indeed stimulated my thinking. Paradoxically, I almost completely tuned out of the discussion in class subsequently because the sentence sparked an internal flow of ideas about my research design and about the inclusion of an intuitive technique, such as a meditative, imaginative technique, a visualization exercise, or the repertory grid technique. I listed several possibilities in my notepad. As I was working on this, even more thoughts flooded my mind. I started to sketch tentative themes for my three interviews: professional self, personal self, and a synthesis of the two. Essentially, I developed a rough draft of my interview themes in this class that was triggered by a sentence I heard.
Later, I further developed and polished my ideas about the interview themes for the Thesis Proposal Defense in November 2008. During this process, I realized that the repertory grid technique was not appropriate for what I wanted to probe into because of its primary reliance on rational thinking to access a person’s hidden unconscious beliefs. I was interested in including a technique that could allow participants to first have an experience with their intuition that would be followed by drawing on their rational, analytic thinking to make sense of the experience. Therefore, I decided to include a guided visualization technique that I had used quite successfully for several years in my personal and professional life.

Another instance of drawing on my intuitive side was connected to my setting goals, or in other words “creating visions” (Fritz, 1989) about the whole research process and the end result I aimed for in terms of the quality of my dissertation. Creating a vision about my doctoral dissertation involved several steps: writing down the qualities of my dissertation that were important to me; visualizing it regularly “as if I had it already”; and taking actions. The overall “dissertation vision” included several sub-visions about each important step along the thesis journey. For example, I had sub-visions about working with my supervisor and committee members, the result of my Comprehensive Exam, and the defense of my Doctoral Research Proposal. I also visualized finding the “right” research participants and working with them in a mutually beneficial way during the data collection process. I had set a vision for my data analysis, the dissertation write-up, finding the External Examiner, and my Oral Defense. Seeing these visions in my mind’s eye helped me to align myself emotionally and spiritually – and not just intellectually – with every action that I had to carry out to complete my dissertation.

During the lengthy process of writing up the various chapters of my dissertation I also had several periods when I felt that my intuition “prompted” the flow of ideas, how to organize sections of different chapters, or which references to use to support my ideas. In particular, two instances stand out that made me feel “guided” by my intuition. The first month of working on the literature review chapters was remarkable due to my extraordinary efficiency in writing in the face of also dealing with my Grandmother’s death emotionally. In less than a month I completed two chapters without feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or otherwise drained. I was writing practically for 10-14 hours a day feeling completely in “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997) with the ideas and without even noticing the time passing by. I became oblivious to everything else around me. My fingers had a hard time typing and keeping up with the pace of the flow of
ideas. The second similar experience occurred when I was writing Chapter 8 and I felt, again, intuitively “guided” as I had sudden flashes of ideas, for example, about connections of ideas and about authors and references to use to support my arguments. In both cases, writing was effortless and “easy”.

1. Development of the Research Questions

As stated in Part One, the research process begins with a question or problem that has personal relevance to the researcher and the research question springs from the researcher’s personal experience “stated in simple, clear, and concrete terms” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 41). Important key words and phrases of the research question are placed in the correct order and clearly defined and delineated.

When I first read Moustakas’ recommendations, they sounded very simple and easy to do. However, VERBALIZING the research questions took me several years. The burning issue or phenomenon had already been tacitly, intuitively embedded in me as I was writing my professional autobiography in 2004, but I could not verbalize my questions clearly enough. Then, the research questions went through a silent incubation process until I resumed my doctoral studies at OISE/University of Toronto in 2007 and I began the process of finding a supervisor in early 2008. Each meeting with several professors – and the refusals by many of them – forced me to re-think and polish the articulation of my research questions. The first meeting with my supervisor, Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov, in April 2008 pushed me further in the process of crystallizing the articulation of my research questions. His questions pointed out some of the flaws in my articulation that I had not been able to see before.

I was working on my Doctoral Research Proposal in October 2008 when I realized that the formulation of the research questions was flawed because the questions implied an “observer perspective” of the researcher coming from the outside rather than an internal perspective from the experiencing person’s point of view. That first set of research questions was as follows:
Original Research Questions (early October 2008):

1. How do language teachers’ important personal, educational and professional life experiences influence their perceptions, assumptions and beliefs about their teacher identity and teaching practice?
   a. What role do language teachers assign to their language learning experience in the development of their language teacher identity?
2. How do language teachers’ perceptions and understandings of themselves change during the process of re-constructing their interpretations of their experiences and integrating the relationships between their experiences and their professional selves?
3. How do language teachers interpret the effect of a probable degree of perspective change on their professional practice?

The email exchanges and discussions with my supervisor about this subtle but significant flaw highlighted the importance of examining thoroughly every single word of the research questions to ensure that each word represented the intended meaning in my research.

Based on my understanding reading Moustakas (1990), in heuristic research the main focus is on the internal search for the discovery of the meaning of experience. Thus, it is primarily the PARTICIPANTS’ interpretations of their experiences and the changes in their interpretations and understandings that I intended to focus on in my research. I wanted to explore how THEY interpreted the relationships among their experiences, beliefs, perceptions and assumptions. I was curious to see how THEY experienced and interpreted any changes in their self-understandings. I realized that THIS internal angle had to be clearly stated in my research questions. This was an important epiphany, which led to revising the research questions in the following way:

Revised Research Questions (November 2008):

3. How do language teachers experience and interpret the influence of important personal, educational, and professional experiences on their perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs about their teacher identity?
4. How do language teachers experience and interpret the changes in their perceptions and understandings of their teacher identity as they re-interpret and integrate the relationships between their experiences and their teacher identity?
Definitions of Key Words and Phrases in Research Questions

The two verbs “experience” and “interpret” refer to two types of experience and awareness that I was interested in investigating. The verb “experience” refers to the wholeness of the entire research process from the participants’ internal frame of reference, including emotional, intuitive, spiritual and intellectual aspects of their experience to the extent that they became aware of them and were able and willing to disclose. The verb “interpret” signifies the conscious and deliberate cognitive process in which the participants re-constructed and re-interpreted the meaning of their experiences and the bearing of the re-constructed interpretations on their identity. Thus, these two verbs were meant to indicate both the intuitive, tacit ways of knowing as well as the conscious, deliberate level of interpretation and reflection.

The word “important” refers to the significance of experiences that each participant deemed essential to recall, reflect on and disclose during the data collection period.

The word “changes” denotes both the process and the result of re-interpreting and re-evaluating the participants’ views and understandings of their teacher identity as they articulated them. I assumed that changes had been occurring in my participants’ perspectives before my inquiry and they would continue to occur after it. My purpose was to see how the research process influenced this change that I call “perspective transformation”.

The concept of “teacher identity” or “identity” plays a crucial role in my research and requires an elaborate definition. In my understanding, based on the review of the literature (see Chapters 4 and 5), “identity” is an elusive, intangible and highly idiosyncratic abstraction that cannot be accessed or observed directly. Nonetheless, one’s identity may be expressed in the form of beliefs, assumptions, values, and actions as well as in the various ways one perceives and interprets oneself and the world. Put differently, one’s self-perspective and self-perception may be the most telling forms and modes of manifesting and revealing one’s identity at any point in time. This is why I was interested in exploring teachers’ beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations of their identity. Thus, the terms “beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations” in the research questions refer to the forms and modes of manifesting and expressing one’s identity as a teacher.
2. Finding Research Participants and Obtaining Consent

The participants of my doctoral research are four experienced ESL teachers from Canada. All of them are female teachers. Mary and Janet have extensive experience with teaching international students in a variety of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses at the university level. They are both mature and seasoned English language teachers. Karen and Cassie are in their mid-30s and they have been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to immigrants and refugees at an educational organization. In selecting participants my assumption was that the target student population and workplace of prospective participants were not as vital for my research purpose as some other criteria I had set for my research and that I explain below.

I developed several criteria for selecting participants for my doctoral research, which are summarized in Figure 3 below. This way of selecting participants can be defined as “criterion sampling” (Patton, 2002).

**Figure 3: Criteria for Selecting Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Selecting Participants:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Active teaching experience in ESL preferably at the university level for at least 5 – 10 years;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Actively engaged in teaching ESL, or undertaking graduate studies, or being on leave from teaching duties;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interest in holistic / reflexive self-development;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willingness and openness to embark on and commit to an in-depth self-exploration for a period of 6 or 7 months and to dedicate sufficient time (i.e., 2-3 hours/week) to engage in the research process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inquisitiveness about understanding the relationships and connections among beliefs, life experiences, and professional practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Ethics Review Protocol (Bukor, 2008b)

One of my criteria was that participants should be actively engaged in teaching ESL for at least five to ten years preferably at the university level, which allowed me to choose experienced teachers. I assumed that teachers with extensive professional and personal life experience would be better equipped to participate in the research. Due to the nature and purpose
of my research it was crucial to find participants who had an interest in holistic / reflexive self-development as well as willingness and openness to embark on and commit to an in-depth self-exploration for the period of six or seven months. One of my assumptions was that participants should also be inquisitive about understanding the relationships and connections among their beliefs, life experiences and professional practice.

Upon having been granted Ethics Approval from the Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto, I contacted people in my social and professional network asking them to pass on information on my research study and to circulate my Letter of Invitation and Informed Consent Form (Appendix A) among ESL teachers in their own social networks. This type of sampling or participant recruitment procedure is referred to as “network, nominated, or snowball sampling” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), or “chain sampling” (Patton, 2002).

At my Doctoral Research Proposal Defense in November 2008 I remember that my Thesis Committee Members were concerned about potential difficulties with participant recruitment due to the in-depth, personal and sensitive nature of my study as well as the heavy time commitment required. I had already been working on my vision of finding the “right” research participants since early fall 2008. My vision was to “find enthusiastic and interested language teachers who were ready and open to exploring the connections in their lives”; and “to work with them in a mutually beneficial and respectful manner”. It was reassuring that in about five weeks after having received ethics approval I recruited all four participants. I introduce them in the chronological order of having met them.

The first participant, Janet, contacted me by email in December 2008. She learned about my research from the Letter of Invitation that one of her colleagues had forwarded to her. She became interested in my study and indicated her willingness to participate. Then, I arranged a personal meeting with her to follow up on her initial interest in my research. I met her on January 22nd, 2009 in her office at the university to establish personal rapport, to inquire about her background and to learn more about her interest in participating in the research. This meeting also provided an opportunity for us to discuss the criteria of participation in more detail and for her to ask questions to clarify any unclear points in order for her to make an informed decision about participation. This meeting lasted about forty-five minutes and it ended with our agreement to follow up another time, closer to the beginning of the data collection period, when she would
sign the Informed Consent Form. I met with Janet the second time on February 27th, 2009 in her office again to discuss the research participation in more detail. At this time, she signed the Informed Consent Form. I provided her with the first set of activities for the journaling and a CD with the guided visualization activity.

The second participant, Mary, contacted me with a phone message on January 30th, 2009, in which she expressed her keen interest in participating in my research. She learned about my research from the Letter of Invitation that had been sent to her by a colleague of hers at the university. I had already known Mary personally and the follow-up meeting took place at my home on March 1st, 2009. We had a conversation about the details of research participation and she signed the Informed Consent Form. She also received the first set of journaling activities with a CD containing the guided visualization activity.

I had a meeting with Cassie, the third participant, at a coffee shop on February 1st, 2009 with the intent to ask her to circulate my Letter of Invitation for Research Participation among her colleagues at her workplace. I had known her when she had pursued graduate studies while I had taught at the department. Then, we met at a conference in November 2008 where we re-established our professional connection. At the coffee shop, we had an engaging conversation about my research topic and I explained the details of participation in it. To my surprise, at the end of the conversation she expressed her honest interest in the project and she became the third research participant. I had a follow-up meeting with Cassie on February 26th, 2009 at the same coffee shop. I walked her through the details of research participation again and I answered her questions about the research process. The meeting ended with her signing the Informed Consent Form and I provided her with the first set of journaling activities and the CD with the guided visualization activity.

The fourth participant, Karen, got in touch with me on February 27th, 2009 by email indicating her willingness to participate in my study. I arranged a personal meeting with her at a coffee shop to establish personal rapport with her since we had not known each other before. It was a very positive conversation and she became even more interested in my research as I explained to her the details and answered her questions. On March 6th, 2009 she agreed to the research participation and signed the Informed Consent Form. She received the first set of journaling activities and a CD with the guided visualization activity at that time.
Researcher – Participants Relationship

I established a close and respectful rapport with my participants and the research relationship evolved in a trusting, honest, and mutually supportive manner. My role as a researcher during the entire data collection period was that of a facilitator and observer who asked questions, probed into issues, and facilitated the reflective process for the participants. I allowed my participants to respond to questions, ponder upon the meaning and significance of their personal and professional experiences, and the beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations they discovered in their experiences. They were also allowed to develop their own questions and find answers to them during the research process (e.g., guided visualization activity). My goal during the entire data collection period was to provide a trustworthy and open space for my participants to reflect on and interpret their experiences, to become aware of and make connections and relationships between their experiences and the beliefs rooted in them in relation to their teacher identity.

Research Participants and Confidentiality

All three in-depth interviews took place at my home. Participants were offered the possibility of conducting the interviews either in their homes or at my place and each of them decided to come to my place for reasons of convenience and confidentiality. At the end of the data collection period I asked each participant to choose a pseudonym to identify them in the research study. For the sake of confidentiality they decided to call themselves Cassie, Janet, Karen and Mary (in alphabetical order).

During the data analysis process participants were given a draft of their portrayals to validate their accuracy and comprehensiveness. Participants were asked to read the document carefully and thoroughly to identify any part to be modified or deleted in order to insure accuracy, comprehensiveness, anonymity and confidentiality. Participants had varying length of time to review the draft of their portrayals, which ranged from three weeks to two months. I sent the drafts staggered because of completing one portrayal at a time, making sure that each of them had sufficient time to review the document. A set of questions that pertained to the corroboration of their experience was also sent to each participant (Appendix E), along with the draft of their
portrayals. I asked them to reflect on those questions that were later discussed at the corroboration interviews (see Interview Schedule, p. 152).

3. Data Collection

The data collection period covered six months in total from late February/early March 2009 to September 2009. This section describes my methods of data collection and the rationale for selecting them to carry out my research.

Methods of Data Collection

The term “research method” describes ways of collecting and analyzing empirical data in qualitative research. In other words, method denotes the procedures, techniques, strategies, and tools of inquiry that may be used in fieldwork or after data collection in the actual “deskwork”, i.e., data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1997).

I employed the following methods for data collection: reflexive autobiographical journaling, guided visualization technique, and in-depth interviews. Participants were provided with three sets of “homework assignment” prior to the interviews. Each set of “homework assignment” included autobiographical journaling activities and the guided visualization technique, which were conceived of as preparation tools for the participants for the in-depth interviews. Therefore, journaling was guided by specific activities, and questions were provided by the researcher to keep the participants’ focus of reflection on the particular theme of the interviews.

Reflexive Autobiographical Journaling

Research participants were asked to keep reflexive autobiographical journals during the entire data collection period. Journaling served as a heuristic tool enabling them to immerse themselves in a deep exploration of the personal and professional selves for a period of six months. The reflexive autobiographical method (e.g., Bailey, 1990; Clarke, 1995; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Francis, 1995; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Korthagen, 2004, 2005) provides a means to understand oneself and to explore the implicit connections between beliefs stemming from significant personal life-experiences and the impact of these beliefs on professional practice.
According to Pinar (1988), autobiography “enlarges the space [of mediation] by pushing back the edges of memory, disclosing more of what has been “forgotten”, suppressed and denied. […] Autobiography … moves below the surface of memory, requiring the dismantling of self-defenses” (p. 28).

Participants were provided with a total of three sets of journaling activities in preparation for each interview well in advance (for details see Appendix B). For example, they received the first set of activities in preparation for the first interview about one month prior to the interview. The second set was handed out to them on the day of the first interview and they had about two months to complete the activities before the second interview took place. The third, final set of activities was distributed on the day of the second interview and participants were able to spend also about two months on the activities before the final interview. The guided visualization technique was part of each “homework assignment” carried out on a continual basis that I discuss separately.

The journaling activities were designed to engage participants’ conscious, rational, analytic way of knowing as they explored their personal and professional experiences, whereas the guided visualization activity was meant to engage participants’ tacit, intuitive, empathic way of knowing. The sequence of the activities followed a path from the general to the specific and from the rational to the intuitive in each set of homework assignment.

The rationale for using a broader, more general framework for activities preceding the journaling process rested on the hypothesis that one may not be fully aware of one’s beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations. Therefore, framing the activities in broader terms allowed space for the participants to express themselves, recall a variety of experiences, and tell numerous stories so that the narration and reflection could facilitate the exploration of hidden beliefs and relationships.

In the first set, the general activities (e.g., A/1, A/2, and A/3) had a broad framework to allow participants to create a repertoire of life experiences, which was considered as a pool of information that could be drawn on as they completed the more specific, autobiographical writing activities (e.g., A/4, B/6, and C/1) during the entire research process.

In the second set, the general activities (e.g., B/1, B/2, B/3, B/4, and B/5) took a broad perspective on life experiences in general, which allowed for the exploration of beliefs and assumptions originating from various aspects of the participants’ personal life. This broad
perspective also helped participants to explore how their personal beliefs might have influenced their views and beliefs of who they are as a teacher. According to Erikson’s (1959) theory of personality, in adult life the recurring problems or issues that an individual encounters may have to do with interpretations and perceptions rooted in early life experiences. Furthermore, the claim that early childhood experiences and the assertions of significant others (e.g., parents) play a role in the development of one’s self-concept (Bergner & Holmes, 2000) provided the rationale for using sensitive topics and questions related to personal experiences and to participants’ understandings of their perceptions about the influence of their parents/caregivers. Bergner and Holmes (2000) maintain that individuals in early childhood usually take the assertions of significant others for granted, and without questioning they assign those characteristics coming from others to themselves (see pp. 80-82 in Chapter 4). Thus, in adult life it is important to re-examine those assumptions and beliefs and re-construct them in a new light from a fresh perspective. The inclusion of the analysis of significant others as well as questions related to experiences with parents/caregivers in the second interview attempted to facilitate the exploration and re-construction of potential constraining beliefs that may have influenced the participants’ views of their teacher identity.

In the third set, the writing activities were designed to allow for the analysis and synthesis of both the professional and personal experiences from the work completed up to that point. It was important to come to a synthesis of insights, connections, and relationships among events, interpretations, beliefs, and their interconnectedness with how participants saw themselves as a teacher at that point in time.

The more specific, autobiographical writing activities in all three sets (e.g., A/4, B/6, and C/1) were developed to engage participants in attempting to reflect analytically and rationally on their experiences related to the theme of each set in preparation for the subsequent interview.

The activities in each set of “homework assignment” began with the rational, analytic reflective activities (i.e., the general and specific activities) because this type of reflection is well-known and frequently used in an academic environment. In each set the visualization activity was the last one to do because it was an alternative, exploratory technique less frequently used in an academic environment and it intended to engage the participants’ intuitive, tacit way of knowing.
At the last interview I collected all participants’ journal entries and notes about the guided visualization activity. They had the choice to decide which journal entries and notes they felt comfortable sharing with me as a researcher. These materials amounted to approximately 120 pages in total. I relied on these notes and journal entries during the data analysis and interpretation phase. They proved to be important supplementary material to the interview transcripts because in some instances they provided me with clarifications, further details, and explanations about some less developed or fragmented answers in the interviews.

**Guided Visualization Activity**

Various alternative research methods have been discussed in the educational literature, for example metaphor analysis (Bullough, 1991; Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Martinez et al., 2001; Sumison, 2002), the use of metaphoric pictures of occupations (Ben-Peretz et al., 2003), professional mask-making and wearing to explore emotions related to teacher identity (Day & Leitch, 2001), guided visualization and mental imagery in language learning (Arnold, 1999; Arnold, Puchta & Rinvolucri, 2007), and the role of intuition in reflection and teaching (Dewey, 1897; Korthagen, 2005; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). More recently, a doctoral dissertation (Björklund, 2007, 2008) found that experience-based knowledge plays an important role in education since experts utilize non-declarative, implicit memories to perform better. Research studies on intuition have also begun in psychology and, for example, Hodgkinson et al. (2008) argue that their research findings on intuition validate that “the concept of intuition has emerged as a legitimate subject of scientific inquiry, one that has important ramifications for education” (p. 19). The popular science literature has also discussed the importance of differentiating between two selves (Gallway, 1974), the reliance on the “adaptive unconscious” in making snap-shot decisions (Gladwell, 2005), the role of emotions in decision-making (Damasio, 2003; Goleman, 2005), the impact of psychotherapy on brain plasticity (Doidge, 2007), and the impact of our thoughts and beliefs on the cells of the human body (Lipton, 2008).

The guided visualization technique is viewed as an innovative technique in my doctoral research that was part of each “homework assignment” and followed up during the in-depth interviews. The purpose of this activity was to expose the participants to a less rigorous, less cognitive, and more intuitive and imaginative type of activity in order to allow them to
experience their intuitive, implicit, or tacit side through a guided visualization exercise. This technique was meant to assist the participants in exploring connections and various aspects between their personal life and the way they saw themselves as teachers in a setting that was less constrained than an interview could provide. The activity had an empathic approach allowing the participants to attempt to explore their more intuitive, tacit thought processes so that based on first-hand experience they were able to reflect on the meaning and relevance of the experience in relation to their perspectives of their identity. This consideration and purpose were based on Jung’s view (outlined on pp. 82-84 in Chapter 4) emphasizing the importance of allowing an experience with the more intuitive realm of our psyche before jumping to conclusions about its meaning and relevance to our conscious life experiences.

Thus, the guided visualization was a short exercise of about twenty minutes provided on an audio CD for each participant’s use. Participants were asked to write down two questions they wanted to explore preceding the visualization activity. The relaxation part of the visualization was meant to create a relaxed atmosphere that is conducive to calming the mind and to focusing one’s attention more inward rather than outward. The rationale for using the visualization activity rested on the presumption that a relaxed state of mind would be conducive to bringing forth spontaneous, imaginative, non-logical, intuitive thoughts, feelings, and hunches. Participants were asked to do this activity on a regular basis, preferably once a week during the six-month data collection period, and keep their notes and reflections about it in their journals (see Appendices B and C). Prior to my doctoral research I had used this technique for several years in my personal and professional life quite successfully. The guided visualization activity was adapted from the Technologies for Creating: Basic Course: Participant Workbook created by Robert Fritz (1994). Some parts of the visualization exercise were reworded to suit my academic research purpose (see Appendix C).

In-Depth Interviews

Three in-depth, open-ended interviews were conducted as the primary mode of eliciting information from the participants, which was congruent with heuristic research methodology. Theoretically, the design of the interviews drew on the general principles of Kelly’s (1955, 1963) Personal Construct Theory, outlined in Chapter 3. (As a reminder, the main premise of this theory states that individuals create their own reality based on how they see the world and the
events in which they participate.) The interviews allowed participants to go deeper in exploring
the themes that they had reflected on beforehand in their journals. The length of the interviews
ranged from two to three hours. All interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed.
Questions were handled with sensitivity and respect. Sometimes, I turned off the recorder at the
participant’s request when they wanted to share sensitive and confidential experiences off the
record. Each interview had a specific focus in concert with the journaling theme preceding it,
which is described below. A detailed list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

Interview #1: The Development of the Professional Self

The first in-depth interview centered on the participants’ perceptions of themselves as
language teachers and their beliefs related to language learning and language teaching. The
following topics were covered:

- educational experiences as a student (e.g., schooling and professional education)
- professional experiences as a teacher (e.g., teaching experiences)
- professional beliefs about good teaching and being a good teacher and beliefs about good
  learning and being a good student

The second half of the interview addressed the participants’ experiences with the guided
visualization activity. Questions were developed to elicit a general sense of the participants’
feelings about the visualization activity. I was interested in investigating how participants related
to doing this activity emotionally rather than intellectually. Interview questions related to the
frequency of doing the visualization technique; the participants’ feelings about performing the
activity; the feelings about the answers received during the activity; and finally their
interpretation of the experience.

Interview #2: The Development of the Personal Self

The second interview explored the personal self through the examination of implicit
beliefs stemming from significant personal experiences, and the relationships of these beliefs and
experiences to their professional practice. The second part of the interview revisited participants’
impressions, feelings and experiences with the guided visualization technique in the same
fashion as discussed above.

The following topics were discussed:
personal life experiences (e.g., childhood, family, friends and significant other people)
personal beliefs that may have been connected to professional issues

Interview #3: The Re-Construction of Teacher Identity

The third, final interview revisited the participants’ initial perceptions of their professional and personal selves based on the previous two interviews and it followed up on any changes in interpretations and insights about their identity during the elapsed time since the first interview. The goal and intent of the final interview were analysis and synthesis of the experiences and the work completed in the first two interviews along with the journaling activities during the elapsed time. The analysis included finding the underlying meaning of both personal and professional experiences in relation to teacher identity; uncovering and connecting forgotten or taken-for-granted beliefs, assumptions and perceptions; and connecting the intuitive activities with the rational reflections and insights. Focus was also put on exploring any differences or slight changes in participants’ perspectives, views, and interpretations about their professional and personal selves since the earlier interviews.

The following topics were discussed:

- Finding relationships between personal and professional experiences
- Re-connecting the personal and professional selves with beliefs, assumptions, interpretations and perceptions
- Re-constructing the various selves of your teacher identity (e.g., mental self, emotional self, enacted self and the intuitive self)
- Synthesizing teacher identity at present

The ultimate goal of the last interview was to create a “snapshot” synthesis of the participants’ teacher identity in that moment in time by re-constructing the connections and relationships between interpretations, beliefs and assumptions rooted in their life experiences.

The interview questions regarding the guided visualization followed a rationale similar to that used in the previous interview. The goal was to allow participants to make connections between the intuitive activity and their rational reflections/journaling during the six-month research period. I was interested in eliciting any changes in how they related to and made sense of their intuitive hunches, thoughts, and feelings.
Transcriptions

After having completed the second round of interviews with my participants in early July 2009, I had an intuitive hunch that I should start thinking about transcribing the interviews. For this purpose, I decided to hire a professional transcriber. I found a person in mid-July 2009 and we agreed on the time-frame for transcribing the interviews and the monetary compensation for completing the work. I was teaching during that summer and I did not have enough time to do the work myself. The transcriber completed the work in two stages. During the first stage (July and August 2009) she transcribed Interviews #1 and #2 of all four participants (in total 8 interviews). She transcribed Interview #3 of all four participants (in total 4 interviews) during the second stage (September 2009).

There were a total of 12 interviews with the four participants that amounted to about 22 hours in total. Each interview ranged in time from two to three hours. I used a digital voice-recorder with built-in microphone for the interviews. The mp3 digital recordings were transferred from the digital recorder to my desktop and laptop computers as well as to an external drive to backup the data. The transcriber sent me the interview transcripts in emails. The transcripts totaled about 400 pages including verbatim accounts of the researcher’s questions and the participants’ responses noting pauses, silences, laughing, attempts at trying to find the right word, filler words, such as “like”, “right”, “okay”, “you know”, “stuff like that”, and repetitions of phrases or clauses. I printed all transcripts for each participant. Each participant’s set of three interview transcripts consisted of an average of 100 pages (ranging from 80 pages to 125 pages per participant).
## Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Name</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>April 9, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>June 29, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #3</td>
<td>September 17, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corroboration Interview</td>
<td>January 25, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>April 14, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>July 3, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #3</td>
<td>September 18, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corroboration Interview</td>
<td>January 28, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>April 18, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>July 4, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #3</td>
<td>September 11, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corroboration Interview</td>
<td>January 21, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>May 14, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>June 30, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview #3</td>
<td>August 25, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corroboration Interview</td>
<td>January 27, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The final major phase of the research process was the data analysis and interpretation that occurred at three distinct levels and phases:

1. Compiling each participant’s narrative portrayal based on the interview transcripts and journal entries;
2. Analyzing each portrayal individually in detail using my research questions; and
3. Explicating and interpreting the meanings of experiences as a whole group.

I present the process of data analysis and interpretation by means of the six phases of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990), which are the following: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, expliciation, and creative synthesis. In Part One of this chapter I explained the first three phases in connection with finding my research topic and methodology. In this section, I relate the phases of heuristic research to the process of data analysis and interpretation.

There were some important processes that I went through during the data analysis and interpretation, e.g., “indwelling” and “focusing” (see p. 133 above). To guide myself during the data analysis, I considered the following important procedures recommended by Moustakas (1990):

1. gathering all data from each participant;
2. immersion into the material until the researcher has a comprehensive understanding of each individual participant’s experience as a whole and in its detail;
3. data is set aside for awhile and after returning to the data the researcher begins to review and analyze all data elicited from one participant at a time, taking notes, identifying qualities and themes expressed in the material;
4. the researcher constructs an individual depiction of the experience for each individual participant;
5. the individual depiction of the experience may be shared with the participant for affirmation of its comprehensiveness and accuracy.

According to Moustakas (1990), when all these steps are completed with one participant, the researcher repeats the steps for every other participant. Reviewing the material over and over
again for each individual and then for the whole group is a crucial and time-consuming process in the data analysis. Finally, the researcher creates a composite depiction of the experience as a whole group representing all important themes and qualities experienced by individual participants and by the group as a whole.

Having kept these guidelines in mind, the following sections present the account of my heuristic process with the analysis and interpretation of the data.

**Immersion: Compiling the Participants’ Portrayals**

I began the first phase of data analysis by creating each participant’s portrayal in early November 2009 after all data had been collected. First, I printed the interview transcripts of all participants (in total about 400 pages). Initially, I felt a bit lost in literally hundreds of pages of data not knowing where to begin. Following Moustakas’ (1990, 1994) guidelines, I decided to focus on one participant’s data at a time, which reduced the batches of transcripts to about 100 pages per participant.

The “immersion” phase lasted altogether two months, with two to three weeks spent on each participant’s data. This initial period of data analysis involved several readings of the interview transcripts and journal entries. I read one interview transcript at a time and highlighted important parts of it with a colour highlighter. As I was reading and highlighting, I started to separate the data according to the interview themes (professional self, personal self and the synthesis of teacher identity) and the experiences with the guided visualization activity. I decided to put together relevant passages of the guided visualization activity from all three interviews of each participant that later became the part called “intuitive self”.

After highlighting the important passages on the hard copy, I went back to the original file and cut and pasted the highlighted chunks into a new document. I read over the first rendition again and again, highlighting, and further reducing the information several times. I also began to bold phrases and passages in the drafts that I felt indicated important themes and patterns. Later, I used some of the outstanding bolded phrases as subtitles for sections in the text. I selected a font type for each participant that I felt reflected their identity visually. Thus, the initial steps in the data analysis included highlighting and bolding the phrases, patterns, and themes, reducing the information and taking hand-written and typed notes about my thoughts as they emerged.
This process was essentially a so-called “content analysis” that refers to “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative data material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings. […] The core meanings found through content analysis are often called patterns or themes” (Patton, 2002, p. 453).

I created three to four drafts of each “part” of the participants’ portrayals. This meant an average of 14 – 16 drafts per participant that amounted to 500 pages of “rough drafts” of the portrayals in total. Gradually, the structure of the portrayals took shape in five parts (the professional self, the personal self, the intuitive self, teacher identity, and the final corroboration of experience). The length of each portrayal developed organically to an average of 20 pages representing “thick description” (Geertz, 1983). The purpose of the portrayals was to depict each participant’s experience of her teacher identity and to show the evolution of their thinking and any transformation of self-perception. I wanted to let the “data speak for themselves” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 10) in the portrayals. Therefore, I retained the participants’ voices by using their verbatim articulation of ideas in the interviews, which was congruent with the guidelines of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990). I acknowledge, however, that there is no such thing as “pure” description. I agree with Wolcott’s (1994) argument that

In every act of constructing data out of experience, the qualitative researcher singles out some things as worthy of note and relegates others to the background. […] Nevertheless, qualitative researchers typically introduce their studies with an essentially descriptive account. […] They acknowledge that such accounts are filtered through their own perceptions. (p. 13)

I acted as “recorder and editor” (Taylor & Bogdan 1998) during the periods of data collection and data analysis. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), researchers “present and order the data according to what they think is important. […] they decide on what to include and exclude, edit the raw data, add connecting passages between remarks, and place the story in some kind of sequence” (p. 135), which reflect the processes that I also went through.

As I immersed myself into the data with one participant at a time, I also documented my thoughts and feelings about the process in my working journal. Surprisingly, I never felt overwhelmed or stressed during the entire process even though it was a lot of work that took up practically all of my time. Early in the immersion phase I wrote the following about my feelings:

As I’m reading the interview transcripts, the words bring me shivers down the spine. I feel reverence and respect for each participant. I feel deeply honoured and humbled that these teachers made a commitment to
my research. I feel truly blessed to have worked with them. (My Working Journal, November 13, 2009)

After a while, I noticed that I was operating on two concurrent levels of awareness during the process of transforming the data. On one level, as I focused on understanding and making sense of the data by putting myself in the shoes of each participant, I learned a lot about each of them and I learned to look at things through their eyes. On a personal level, reading the portrayals triggered several insights about me; I began to see many parallels in their stories with my own life. As the data transformed from raw interview transcripts into the drafts of each portrayal, I personally went through a transformation process as well. I captured one of these personal insights in my working journal:

I naively expected the analysis to go quickly. Making plans is beneficial but I don’t factor in the extra time necessary in the process. I want the end result quickly. I am impatient. I discerned that this whole process would take longer than expected and consequently, my deadlines may have to change. However, unlike earlier in my life, I am now willing to accept this. This is a HUGE realization and a great achievement: I can accept that things won’t always work out the way I want them to be. I have been letting go of controlling how events and things should proceed. This is my surrender of position. It is very humbling, actually. I am beginning to feel how I can trust myself, my intuition, and its guidance in the process of my doctoral research. I’m learning to become patient. (My Working Journal, November 16, 2009)

During the two-month immersion phase, creating each participant’s portrayal presented me with different feelings, issues, and challenges. Completing the first complete draft of the first participant’s portrayal in about ten days made me feel good. However, it also made me question myself whether or not I was “rushing” the process. My doubts signaled the fact that I was focusing too much on things rationally, as I later recognized. For example, I read several books on qualitative data analysis and I compared my own process to that of the lengthy analyses described in them. My mind kept telling me to “worry about not doing things correctly”. Yet, I did feel very confident and positive about the quality of the first draft. Intuitively, I knew that I succeeded in capturing the most important themes in the portrayal. So, I listened to my intuition and I moved on to the next participant’s data, acknowledging the fact that compiling the portrayals was only the first step of the lengthy process of data analysis and interpretation.
The next three portrayals presented other types of challenges. There were a lot of stories in the interview transcripts that were interrupted and then picked up later. It was difficult for me to follow one of the participants’ lines of thinking. In this case, I had to rely on her journal entries and I included some parts in the portrayal that finally cleared my confusion. I faced a similar issue with two other participants because of their digressing from the questions asked, telling long stories without looping them back to the question, simply going around in circles, or having incomplete thoughts in the transcripts. Creating the portrayals was a quite time-consuming process. I spent two months exclusively on compiling the portrayals. In my personal life this meant literally doing nothing else but writing.

Incubation: Revising the Portrayals

The “incubation” phase commenced with sending off the drafts of the portrayals to each participant asking them to validate their accuracy and comprehensiveness. I scheduled short corroboration interviews with all participants so that we had a face-to-face opportunity to discuss their feedback on the portrayals, and to get their final thoughts about their research participation (see Appendix E). Two of these short interviews took place at my home and two in the participants’ offices at their workplace. These interviews ranged from fifteen to thirty minutes. They were recorded and later transcribed. The transcripts of the corroboration interviews totaled 30 pages.

Some minor changes were made to the portrayals based on the participants’ review and feedback. One participant gave me extensive feedback on her portrayal and asked for several changes in the draft. The changes pertained to omitting information to assure and maintain anonymity and confidentiality, which did not alter the main ideas expressed by her in the interviews. During this phase, I retreated from the intense focus on the data and I was writing up other chapters of my dissertation.

Illumination and Explication: Analyzing and Interpreting the Portrayals

The second phase included the time-consuming, detailed and thorough analysis and interpretation of the portrayals, which were guided by my research questions. At this stage, I
wanted to do a rigorous data analysis *from the researcher’s point of view*; therefore, this process merged the principles and procedures provided by Moustakas (1994), Wolcott (1994) and Patton (2002). This was the point where I diverged from strictly following the data analysis guidelines of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1994). As a result, an “analytical summary” was added to each participant’s portrayal written from the researcher’s point of view, which is *not* a requirement in heuristic research.

I had several “illuminating moments” during the process of writing the analytical summaries that helped me “notice” relationships between events, beliefs and subsequent events in each participant’s portrayal. Moustakas (1994) describes the process of “illumination” as “one that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition” (p. 29). In these moments, I had deep intuitive insights about hidden meanings and new dimensions of my participant’s experiences. In these instances my purpose was to fully examine my initial intuitive hunches about the relationships in each participant’s portrayal in order to understand the various hidden layers of meanings in these connections. In other words, my analytical mind allowed my tacit knowledge and intuition to surface *before* making a rational and analytical interpretation.

Writing up the “Researcher’s Analytical Summaries” started early March 2010 and ended at the end of September 2010 focusing on one participant at a time. This second phase of data analysis involved the following steps:

1. several readings of each participant’s portrayal;
2. highlighting again their significant experiences from *my* researcher perspective;
3. identifying and listing each participant’s beliefs, assumptions, desires, insights;
4. matching up the beliefs with the “first” instances they occurred in the portrayals and finding an instance of the impact of that particular belief on the participant’s professional life and teacher identity;
5. identifying instances in the portrayals that revealed signs of perspective transformation; and
6. preparing several drafts of each participant’s analytical summary before crafting the final version.

The third and final phase of the data analysis included the interpretation of the results representative of the whole group (see Chapter 8) that emerged from the individual analyses of
the “Researcher’s Analytical Summaries” in Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D. At this final stage of data analysis and interpretation I moved away again from strictly following the guidelines of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). I applied some procedures from general qualitative research recommended by Wolcott (1994) and Patton (2002). My rationale for including an interpretative and analytical final chapter rested on my preference for a healthy balance between description, analysis, and interpretation as opposed to relying heavily on description, as would be expected in heuristic research. The final stage of data analysis and interpretation was complete in about three weeks.

Creative Synthesis

At the end of Chapter 8, I decided to include a “creative synthesis” – based on my interpretations of heuristic research spelled out by Moustakas (1994). Accordingly, the creative synthesis sums up the heuristic researcher’s interpretations and presents a comprehensive portrayal of the essences of the experience in the form of a creative, narrative description. I gave myself artistic license here by diverging from the original guidelines of my methodology. The final section of Chapter 8 provides a brief follow-up to the researcher’s portrayal (see Chapter 2) as I returned to myself, also having gone through the same reflective process as my participants. It is also an amalgamation of all dominant themes that emerged from the participants’ analyses. Thus, the creative synthesis is a concise portrayal of the entire doctoral thesis journey and the research process presented through my own transformation that exemplified each participant’s transformation as well.

Conclusion

This chapter contextualized my inquiry within a specific research methodology that is organically aligned with my theoretical orientation (Chapter 3).

Part One has offered a narrative description of the process of identifying the most appropriate methodology for my doctoral research. I presented the theoretical aspects of my heuristic research as my chosen methodology. Then, I explained important concepts and processes inherent in heuristic research, such as identifying with the focus of inquiry, self-
dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and the internal frame of reference. Thus, Part One provided a presentation of the “theory” behind the heuristic inquiry process.

Part Two of this chapter presented the “pragmatic” aspects of carrying out my doctoral research from a methodological point of view. This part highlighted my engagement and negotiations with the research design. I discussed the development of my research questions, introduced the research participants, and showed the process of data collection by describing and justifying the various research methods employed in my inquiry. Finally, I described the process of data analysis and interpretation.

The following chapters (Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D) present the narrative depictions of the research participants’ transformative experiences with teacher identity. These chapters present each participant’s portrayal separately with the “Researcher’s Analytical Summary” at the end, respectively. I decided to keep all portrayals in one chapter – hence the consistent labeling of Chapter 7 – to emphasize the fact that this chapter exhibits the “thick description” (Geertz, 1983) of the data of my research. However, due to the length of the portrayals, I present each participant in a separate section within Chapter 7 (e.g., 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D). Thus, Chapter 7A presents Cassie’s portrayal, Chapter 7B is Karen’s portrayal, Chapter 7C is Mary’s portrayal, and Chapter 7D presents Janet’s portrayal.

The participants’ experiences are depicted in narrative portrayals that retained their voices in the first person. Thus, the ideas, thoughts, and feelings are expressed in the participants’ own words as they had been verbalized in the interviews. The portrayals are a description of their experiences and interpretations of important personal, educational, and professional experiences that they deemed essential in the development of their teacher identity.

The portrayals are organized in five parts that represent the diversity of influences on the development of teacher identity. Part One presents important experiences from schooling and professional education, including language learning experiences and teaching experiences. Part Two shows significant personal experiences that influenced the development of each participant’s teacher identity. Part Three captures the participants’ interpretations of their intuitive experiences through a guided visualization activity. Part Four offers a synthesis of the previously discussed experiences and the participants’ interpretations of the re-construction and integration of their teacher identity. This synthesis focused on identifying connections and relationships among educational, professional, and personal experiences, and articulating any
changes in their perspectives. I wish to emphasize that some recurring topics, themes, and issues (i.e., the repetition of ideas) from earlier parts of the portrayals were kept on purpose in order to show the evolution of the participants’ thinking and any changes in self-perceptions over time. Part Five concludes the portrayals with a short corroboration of the participants’ experience and interpretation of the entire research process in retrospect. Each portrayal is followed by the researcher’s analytical summary. It presents an analysis of each research participant’s portrayal based on the two research questions.

I offer two routes for the reader to go through Chapters 7A – 7D. If the reader wants to get an in-depth impression of each participant’s portrayal and the researcher’s analysis, I recommend that the reader read both the portrayal and the analytical summary. If, however, the reader wants to glean a more concise and analytical view of each participant, I suggest that the reader skip the lengthy portrayals and focus only on the “Researcher’s Analytical Summary”.

The portrayals are presented in a creative and artistic format to highlight the content visually. I selected a special font type that characterizes each participant’s personality. Most sentences begin in a new line to signal new thoughts that also serve to guide the reader visually. I bolded important phrases and sentences and I used different font sizes to draw attention to significant thoughts, feelings, qualities, and events. The portrayals are divided into several sections that are indicated with bolded subtitles.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents the discussion of my interpretations of the results – representative of the whole group – based on the individual analyses of each participant’s portrayal summarized at the end of Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D. This chapter concludes my dissertation with the implications and limitations of my research, recommendations for future research, and a creative synthesis.
Chapter 7 – Part A

Cassie’s Portrayal

Part One: Experiencing the Professional Self

My Mom passed away … I was insecure...

I was four when my Mom passed away and my Father had to take care of me and my newborn sister. A lot of the time I was at a family friend’s house. I’d do my school work there.

I was very unsure of myself as a child.

I didn’t really understand what was happening when my Mom died.

I was insecure.

I remember playing teacher and school and being a teacher as a kid.

Behaviour problems...

My Father had placed me in a French Immersion School.

I had some behaviour problems in that school. I was mouthy. I would get really nervous.

I’ve always been that person since then. Presentations, interviews kill me.

I hate being the centre of attention. I don’t want everyone looking at me.

I hate it because some judgment is going to be made.

That’s the first time I can consciously remember feeling that way. I still feel that way...

I’m not good on the spot. I’m not good on my feet.

I have to plan everything.

I’ve never had a lot of confidence...

In public speaking, I’d always come in second place. That really killed me, not winning.

I was first in everything else.

That expectation really damaged my ego.

I’ve never had a lot of confidence, which makes me work really hard.

I still feel that I am even below average...

I remember putting a lot of emphasis on grade ever since a young age.

So if I’d bring home 95 percent, it was like “Where is the other 5 percent?” I used to get straight A’s and from that point on, grades have been so important to me.
They still are. And why? It’s not really always an indication of how much you’ve learned.
I’m not the smartest but I would always bring home the best grades.
I’m average but I work hard. I just can’t let go. I can’t.

In my head it’s not very positive talk to myself.
If I do get too positive and too comfortable, I’ll never push myself.
I can’t NOT plan everything to a T.
I spend a lot of my time planning. I’m so organized.

Major Self-Image Issues...
I was 15 when I started to have major self-image issues. I would starve myself, I was tiny. I thought I was fat.
Then, I had my first relationship and I just could not accept the breakup.
I couldn’t get over it. I can’t deal with rejection.
I got stuck in this circle of my own thoughts about physical appearance.
I remember thinking then to get plastic surgery. I was 16. I had major self-image issues!

About grade 11, I just stopped caring about my grades.
I had depression. I had an eating disorder.
I was hospitalized a couple of times.
I used to be an honour roll student and I dropped from 90 plus to 50s and 60s.
My mom always said, “Looks don’t matter”.
I have no clue why I became obsessed with it.
That ruined a lot of my high school experiences. Then I switched schools.

I was too afraid of being bad...
I was just bad at competitive sports. It was never emphasized in my family, they put everything on grades.
I remember slowing down this community basketball team to the point where the coach called my parents, and thought it might be a good idea, if I joined a different team. I remember feeling embarrassed.
The worst was failing, being the worst, being the dumbest.
I was too afraid of being bad.
I would stay away from organized sports. But I would jog in the backyard for hours.
I would exercise six hours a day.
I think these memories stayed with me for a long time because of how I felt at the time.
When things make you feel strong emotions, you remember them.
I really excelled socially in high school. I was really well-liked.
I would never go back to high school.

I forgot that I could do it...
I did a first-year sociology course with 200 people.
We had this exam and the professor one day asked me to stand up because I had the highest mark of all of those people in the exam.

Then, for a paper I wrote, he made me stand up too because I had 50 references.

I felt like it was important again. It felt really good because I wasn't doing well in high school.

I had focus.

From that moment on, those numbers and letters on my transcript were important again.

Because of that feeling and because I knew I could do it,

I forgot that I could do it.

I was brought up to think that success is important.

I was brought up to believe that those letters were very important.

I didn't know what I wanted to do after. I just wanted those letters, no plans.

All my transcripts were full of A’s.

But that’s not enough. Not good enough for me.

If I tell myself it’s good enough then I won’t try to do better.

I think it’s necessary to always be open to learning. It’s dangerous if you don’t grow as a person.

I don’t think it’s important to be the best. Verbally I’ll say that but that’s not the way I think.

My mental talk has been like that for so long.

It’s hard to change your mental talk.

You can change behaviours but you can’t really change personality.

I think it’s hard to change. I’m too afraid. I can’t explain it.

My biggest fear is being dumb.

I excel in the school system. Getting good marks doesn’t mean that I’m smart. It means that I’m a hard worker.

Intelligence is so important to me.

I admire people who are comfortable enough with themselves that they can say “I don’t know”, and ask questions to show that they don’t know. I think that we don’t say “I don’t know” enough because we’re too scared.

I’m too scared.

Being perceived as not intelligent scares the hell out of me.

It’s perception that scares me more than actually not being intelligent.

I’m very perceptive. I’m very sensitive to my surroundings and how people perceive me.

Maybe, hyper-sensitive, over-sensitive. It’s not a good thing.

But, what if your self-perception is not accurate of yourself???

I don’t know... I don’t know... I don’t know...

In my best courses the professors did a good job. They were approachable. They explained things well and they were really good at answering questions people had, and answering them thoroughly. They were engaging.
They were sharing knowledge, not kind of just giving you knowledge. I liked the way they delivered the content. They really liked what they were doing, and part of that comes across because enthusiasm is contagious.

That course taught me that it’s important to bring enthusiasm to your course. I think that can make a huge difference. For me enthusiasm is very important. I think people can feel energy. I believe in that.

My worst course was boring. He would sit there reading a textbook. I didn’t find him engaging at all. I found his voice was so soft that it put me to bed. He didn’t have a strong presence and he wouldn’t come and sit around in groups. I don’t think it’s a good idea to stand in front of the whole class and read out things from paper all the time because it’s not interactive. I don’t think as a teacher you can have a monotone voice. Humour was lacking.

She made me feel really comfortable...
I took a Spanish course with a Mexican Spanish teacher. She would be repetitive and slow and there were lots of actions. She made me feel really comfortable and starting off with things that were doable. You feel comfortable asking questions and using the language. She created that environment where there is no laughing at someone, if they mispronounce a word, or don’t know what something means.

I really try to make students feel comfortable, especially teaching adults because I was learning it as an adult. I think being a second language teacher I wish I had learned a language as an adult so I really understand what people go through. I think it would make me a more effective teacher because I could see what really works for people, from a learner point of view rather than just based on theory and teaching.

My Stepmom has influenced me a lot...
One of the influential people in my life is my Stepmom. I just admire her strength and her ability to balance everything. I admire her. I couldn’t do what she did. She’s probably the most logical woman I know. She has influenced me how you can’t give up when you’re faced with difficult things. You have to keep going. She’s demonstrated that time and time again. She always takes time to sit, relax, and read. She’s told me that it’s important to have balance. It’s important to be strong – that’s the most important thing I’ve learned from her. I don’t see myself as strong enough. I don’t think I can handle as much as she does. She mirrors this image of strength to me but I don’t think I’m that. She thinks my expectations for myself are too high.

Teaching is something I fell into... It’s not something I chose...
I wanted to be an animal doctor.
Then, I started volunteering in a primary school working alongside a speech and language pathologist with students. I just wanted to see if that was what I really wanted to do. That was my first introduction to teaching. I didn't think it's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Honestly, teaching is something I fell into, it's not something I chose.

After undergrad, I did one of those TESL vacations that you go overseas and teach English. In South Korea I hated teaching again. I broke my contract after four months because it was the first time being away on my own, and being in a country where no one speaks your language. Teaching is something I learned takes time to adjust because it's tiring at first. I didn't know how tiring it was. Then, I went to Thailand and I taught at a language school. It was flexible. It gave me the opportunity to travel.

When I came back, one experience led to another, which allowed me to apply for a TESL program. I completed the program and I took the internships. I still didn't really love teaching. That's how I fell into teaching.

Then, I went to Hong Kong for a year with a friend. We taught kindergarten students. I didn't want to come back. I didn't want to do more education.

I was accepted in a Master's program because of my good marks and my experience in the field. It wasn't enough for my mind to "be accepted". I was accepted with a TA scholarship, too. I did the Master's for the wrong reason: to get through it and to get that degree. Everything happens for a reason. Because of that I'm teaching where I am. It took all that time and a lot of decisions for the 'wrong' reasons:
- Not wanting to find a job,
- Not wanting to go back to school.

I fell into teaching and it took all those years. Now I can say I love it. I'm looking for a program because I actually want to do it. I think I'm in the right profession, but it took all those mistakes. Mistakes ... maybe not mistakes, but making decisions not based on the best reasons:
- Going back to school, so I wouldn't have to work and that fear of entering the work force
- Or, doing the certification, so I could go overseas and teach, make money, and travel. Travel is a real pull at that age and that entices you.

I love the work I'm doing now. Now education is my passion.

This is where I've really become a teacher, I think...

After I finished my Master's, I worked for a language institute in another city. Then, I was a supply teacher for a while and the students used to give very positive feedback about me.

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15 TESL = Teaching English as a Second Language
16 TA = Teaching Assistant
My friend’s mother worked for a big immigrant and refugee organization that helps newcomers settle into the community. After TAing, I didn’t want to be in the university. The community was just a better fit for me. It’s more relaxed, less structured, and just casual. It does have its own challenges as well.
I finally got into this organization. I’ve been there for almost exactly a year.

It’s that first year of everything…
This is where I’ve really become a teacher because of being responsible for everything: marks, grading, tests, curriculum, and activities. It’s been challenging.
The first year, they say, is always the toughest, and it has been tiring.
I was trying to really listen to my students’ needs and to build a curriculum based on that. It’s very taxing to me.
I think everything happened as it was supposed to.

My strength in teaching is definitely my rapport with my students. I know I make them feel very comfortable and they come to me with issues. I’m glad they can approach me. They do trust me. I bring humour to the classroom.
In terms of teaching a skill, I can’t see what my skill is yet. I think I come up with good activities and interesting topics. I’m good at trying to connect them with the community resources. I’m resourceful.

In terms of my weaknesses, I still need to develop how I give feedback. It’s very challenging.
It’s very time consuming to give constructive feedback. I’m always trying to think about a teacher who gave me constructive feedback. I need someone to guide me.

When you’re first teaching, you’re nervous as hell in front of the class.
The judgment thing has changed obviously. It’s just that fear, and the fear of teaching grammar.
I’m not scared of that anymore.
I’m very comfortable that I’m planning my lessons.
I’m more confident in myself and especially in grammar. It was my biggest fear coming up teaching grammar.
But now I really like teaching grammar and I’m good at it. That was a big surprise to me.
I think that it’s a fear that has become a strength. That’s the biggest change.

Being patient doesn’t come to me naturally...
My first job ever was at an old age home serving.
I had to serve people and make them happy. I liked pleasing.
I used to do a lot of customer service jobs growing up.
I think my customer service skills helped build my communication skills.
I think teaching involves communication and so does customer service.
As a teacher I’m very patient. I smile a lot because I think, it’s important for me.
I’m attracted to warm people so I try to also be warm, and it works really well in a classroom.
Being patient doesn’t come to me naturally.
It was very tiring for me because I had to learn all these skills that don’t come to me naturally.
If I had the qualities outside the classroom, I think I’d be a much more likeable person.
Teaching is a different role.
We have different roles.
I'm different as a daughter than I am as a wife, than I am as a sister, than I am as a friend.

I began this job but I also was married around the same time.
It's that first year of everything...

This job is my best teaching experience because

- I've had to be fully responsible for all aspects of what happens in the classroom: curriculum and marking
- I've learned the most: what works, what doesn't work, how to teach things in different ways
- I like working with adults
- I've understood myself the most in the classroom
- I have gotten very constructive feedback from my students on what they want and what I do that works and what I could change
- of all the teaching experience I've had.

My worst teaching experience was at a private language school after I first graduated. I got an advanced level grammar course and it was disaster. It was a good learning experience for me and made it clear that I wasn't ready to teach an advanced level grammar. I was up until one every morning to learn grammar. That proved to be useful for this job. Now I think I'm very competent in grammar.

As a good language teacher, you

- are flexible and open to changing things, if they don't work in the classroom
- have good communication skills
- have an ability to create good rapport with the students
- have a sense of humour because it makes people feel comfortable
- can create an environment where it's okay to make mistakes
- can think on your feet
- are resourceful
- have knowledge of how to teach certain things
- know where to find information and even ask teachers who have more experience than you
- can identify what is useful and bring those authentic things into the classroom

I think teaching is a profession where you're always learning in order to remain an effective teacher. I believe that what I teach inside the classroom has to be useful outside the classroom.
Part Two: Experiencing the Personal Self

My Mom passing away was a big one...
I was so young when my Mom died. I don't remember how I felt.
Lots of family friends took care of me.
I don't know how it affected me consciously other than I can't figure out why I don't want kids so badly. Why I don't want them. I just don't know.
I don't know if it has anything to do with not having a Mom for a few years.
When my Mother passed away, my little sister was taken back to India for the first couple of years of her life.
I knew I had a sister and I really wanted to see her.
I remember my Stepmom and my brother coming to Canada, picking them up, my sister coming back with them, and that adjustment period to having a new Mom. I was in grade one.

When I saw an injured animal, like a bird, a groundhog, I'd bring it home in a box.
I couldn't stand to see them suffer. I just couldn't.
Later on I realized I wanted to be a vet.

I won. It was in the newspaper...
I remember when these performers of a play came to our school and we had to write a short article on how it made us feel. I wrote about how I wanted to be with my baby sister in India. I didn't know it was a competition.
I won. It was in the newspaper. They gave a free ticket to go anywhere in Canada.
I was proud at the time I won the competition.

Anxiety... Anxiety... Anxiety...
A lot of my memories are academic: public speaking and always coming in second place; my marks and winning awards. I remember once in grade four I came home and I had all Bs. I was crying and crying. I remember that really affecting me. I never got Bs after that.

My Mother dying doesn't stand out to me as being particularly horrible.
I remember the adjustment period when my Stepmom came to Canada with my brother.
It was tough but I liked it. I liked having brothers and sisters back. I had lived without a Mother for so long.
I didn't like taking orders and directions from somebody new.
In my head, she wasn't really my Mom yet. She would discipline me. She was an excellent Mom.
Those childhood experiences just caused me a lot of anxiety.

Worrying about the public speaking and coming in second.
Worrying about people thinking that I wasn't the best in the class.
I couldn't shake that nervous feeling like “What am I going to do?”- type of feeling.
I wasn't able to fall asleep at night.
I still have the same symptoms. Now, I'm just used to it. I've never been able to deal with anxiety.
My worst experiences have caused me the most anxiety.
The best ones were when I felt like I had achieved something.
When I really work myself hard, I can do well.

But I don't want to be the best. There's too much responsibility.
If people think you're good, you have to maintain peoples' expectations because you're the one that caused them to think that way. I definitely care about what others think.
I always have. I think I always will. Less so now, but I still do.

I understand myself a lot more...
Now I understand myself a lot more, how I deal with things, how things affect me.
Stressful situations affect me physically.
I have to control stress.
That's why I plan way ahead. I can't leave things to the last minute.
I think that's why I've become so organized. I'm so overly organized.
Anxiety kills me. So I have to avoid that.
I can't deal with anxiety, it kills me.

Planning... Planning... Planning...
I'm not averagely organized. I am overly organized.
For example, I plan and I type out a lesson plan for each day and I follow that exactly. I need that.
I always have things done ahead of time.
For example, in my job at the end of every month we have to type up an end-of-the-month report.
I remind myself every week in my planner. I'll do it weekly so I don't have to leave it until the end.
I'll say exactly when to submit, exactly when to do things, so I don't forget anything.

I'm always planning in my head. I can never relax.
Even when I sit and watch TV, I can't do it because I'm thinking, "Well, no, I can make my lunch for tomorrow, so I can sleep earlier, and I can iron my clothes".
My head doesn't stop. I'm just planning, planning, planning.

I'm just sick of planning. But I can't let go.
I know the consequences of not planning, I just don't want to plan.
I'm not good at improvising.
I don't trust myself on my feet.
I don't trust myself to be able to answer things on the spot or to do things on the spot.
So I need to plan. I always plan. It's my life.

I can see I got some negative characteristics from my Father.
I'm impatient, very impatient. I'm very rude. I can be moody like him.
I wish I got more positive characteristics from my Mom. I really look up to her. I think I got her drive for independence. I realize how important balance and independence are. I was lucky because my parents were successful immigrants. My parents are both educated. My Father just wanted all of us to be professionals, like a teacher, an engineer. They just wanted us to be educated, which we are.

Confidence... Independence... Balance...
I find my sister's independence very admirable and also important. I'd like to be independent in all the ways my friends are independent. I think confidence, independence, and the ability to juggle a lot are important to me. I don't know how to let go of that planning. I couldn't live without this. I would die. I think balance is important. You need balance of professional and personal, mental, physical in order to have a happy life. I don't think it's healthy to be dependent on people for everything whether it's your spouse, or sibling, or friend. There are things I still can't do because I'm too scared to do on my own. I admire confidence.

My Past Preoccupations...
I used to be preoccupied with three things: physical image, perfectionism, and security. My obsession of physical appearance was just insane. I wanted plastic surgery when I was 16. It became an obsession, which affected my body image, which caused eating problems, over-exercising, and depression. It's been such a preoccupation for so long.

Perfectionism in my school work meant always getting A pluses, and handing in assignments that were perfect right down to the spacing. I think it's a personality trait. It's my personality that I need to control and plan. It affected my physical image as well as what I perceived to be good work in school.

Security was another preoccupation. I had this horrible relationship for years; he was just cheating and taking money from me. It really affected me. It took me so long to date again because I was so scared of like losing that feeling of security. You can get security back but you have to give yourself that chance to do it.

What have I learned...?
I still haven't got past the physical image thing. And perfectionism, I don't think I'm as critical now that it needs to be perfect. It's more so that it needs to be planned and prepared in advance. So perfectionism has changed to maybe not the end product but the process.
Teaching is the perfect career if you're organized. It gives me a daily opportunity to organize things. Sometimes it's too much. I can't turn it off. I'm always planning, planning, planning.

In term of perfectionism in my teaching, things should be done right away. When they give me a test, it's marked within a day. It's just that idea of not wasting time, being efficient, and getting things done.

In terms of self image, I don't know how that affects my teaching. When I first started teaching, it was a big problem because I was so conscious of how I looked. But now I'm more comfortable.

In terms of security, I get a lot of positive feedback from the students. I'm always worried about getting a supply teacher who will be better than me. Then they will wish she was their teacher. So, security is about not being good enough, or not being on par with somebody else.

If I could change things, I think I'd be happier...
I wish I had a little more discipline to go to the gym and eat right. I would like to change my physical appearance. I would like to know how to effectively manage my time so that I'm more productive in that time period instead of spreading things out. I would like to read more but I don't have the time. I feel like there's not enough time, or I don't know how to make the time. According to other people, I'm very good with my time. I think I could be more effective within that time.

I don't know if I've ever achieved anything substantial; nothing substantial. I guess self-acceptance is hard. I think I would need professional help for that. It's hard to change the way you think, it's really hard to do. Security has gotten much better in my personal life. Now I'm insecure in being the best in my professional role. I'm still working on that. I hope with more experience I gain more confidence myself. I don't think I'm as likable as some other teachers. I worry about being likable. I think likability is very important.

If I could change things, I think I'd be happier. I have no doubt about that. I think I'd be more content, more relaxed. I don't know if I really want to change that. Something about it scares me, but I don't know what it is that scares me.
What am I willing to do about changes?

I think about what to do. I think about eating healthier, or going to the gym.
If I lost weight and I looked completely different, I don’t know if the problems would ever truly be gone.
The problem is definitely here in my head, I know that. I’ve known it for years.
I don’t know if I want to deal with my mental talk.
I think I would be happier. I know.

“Why don’t you just do it, if you know it’s going to lead to happiness?”

It’s too time-consuming.
I don’t think the time thing is a good enough reason.

“What the hell, this is your mental health! It’s equally important as your physical health, right?”
It’s always easier to tell other people, though...

Part Three: Experiencing the Intuitive Self
(Through Guided Visualization)

I doubt its usefulness... First Interview (April 9, 2009)
The whole relaxation part doesn’t really work. It might get better the more I do it.
If I do loosen up a bit and allow myself to relax, it might be more effective. But it hasn’t been so far.
I didn’t let myself let go.
I doubt its usefulness.
I’m interested in the theory behind it because I’ve never done anything where you think of something, and be open, and you might come up with suggestions. It’s strange too.

I’d be curious to know if it did help me.
So I’m going to keep trying it. Is it guaranteed to work, no?
It might be more effective after this interview because it has put the visualization activity more into context.
I have a lot of whys.

I’m open to it... Second Interview (June 29, 2009)
I’m trying to keep an open mind when I do it because I do believe in these things to get answers.
I feel that the answer is already there, but it’s just bringing that answer out.

I’m open to the guided visualization.
I wish I could just relax! Oh, just relax and not have anything on my mind. I find it hard to relax.
I have been finding that answers have been coming to me much quicker.
Earlier, I didn’t know if this was actually going to work, or if this is like “out there” beyond the realms of science.
I’m more open to it now than I was the first time.
At the beginning, I felt doubt and I didn’t really appreciate what this could do for me.
I wouldn’t say I’m doubtful now because I don’t know why the answers are coming to me much quicker.
The answers I’ve been getting have all made sense. They seem logical, practical.
I’m just curious to know if there’s more to those answers.

Maybe I should start asking myself non-teaching related questions and see if it works.
See if I can get more, not just a ‘why’, but maybe a ‘what’ or a suggestion.

The initial length of the answer was one line. Now it’s up to maybe four.
I’m hoping I’ll get more out of that, in terms of length, but in terms of depth as well.
I have done it around ten times so far.

I’m not skeptical... Third Interview (September 17, 2009)
Over time that it was easier for me to focus and to get answers.
I have done it approximately once every week, so about 13, 14 times.
I’m not skeptical.
I think it’s like focused advice, just to provide clarity.
I’m happy with the answers. They gave me some direction. I feel that the answers are quite accurate, logical.
I’m not sure if that’s the answer I’m looking for.
I want something deeper than that.
It was a logical answer but I’m looking for something less logical, less rational, and something hidden as to why I feel this way, which I didn’t get at.

I think my intuitive side is still very blocked because the answers I got seemed very logical.
I consider myself quite logical. I always try to base decisions on logic.

There’s more control when you have logic.
Whereas feelings are so illogical sometimes; they don’t always make sense. In my mind if you always choose the logical - for lack of a better word - you’re bound to get in less trouble. But not having control is a risk.
I’m more interested in seeing what else is in there that I can come up with that’s not so logical.

Before this research, I may have gotten an intuitive hunch at times, but not to this degree.
It would occur to me, I’d brush it off.
Now I’m taking it more seriously. I’m going to use it to drive me to take action, to do things, and to explore it more. I’m hoping that I can find a way to really explore things so I can see things more clearly.
I have more direction now. I feel more aware but I want to focus on this now.

Before, I thought of focusing on books and building up my knowledge but it hasn’t brought me any peace.
I want to try something different now.
I’m definitely more open to following up on suggestions I get in these activities.
There are things that occur to me now. I'll write down so I don't forget to reflect on it later.
I'm thinking about this more now "How can I become more complete?", "What is the issue preventing me?"
I have a hard time verbalizing what's going on inside. I think when you verbalize things it almost makes you feel better.

I'm more open now to listening to my own intuition.
I want to become more in sync with it in a positive way.
There are things I want to try that never occurred to me before.
For example, at some point in the process my intuition told me that "Maybe, it's your perception of reality. What's real? What's not real?" I'm listening to this more.

I want to deal with my self-perception: "What parts are real?", "What parts are not real?"
Before I questioned reality a bit, but that wasn't an issue for me.
It was how I filled these ideas of success for myself rather than dealing with how realistic this is, or what's this going to do for me; questioning the basis of my thoughts.
I've been questioning the goals that I set out for myself.
It's a tough thing to do.

It took me a while... well years... to be honest.

I've learned that it's important to understand yourself.
I've often put aside these thoughts or feelings because you're always trying to accomplish the next thing.
Trying to get tangible things that we can measure because we can say "I've travelled here and here", "I've done this type of work", "I've written this many papers", "I have these many degrees".

I think it has made me realize how important self-awareness is.

But we keep ignoring these feelings and thoughts, and putting them together to understand ourselves better.
I think we don't value that. I think our culture doesn't value enough self-understanding.
I think that's the basis of emotional intelligence; how you understand yourself, why you feel the way you do; why you react like this in certain situations; why you avoid certain situations.

I think the biggest thing you get from self-awareness is some sort of peace.
You can let go and move on with your life.

That's what this whole process has made me realize.
Keep myself busy...

The first major event in my life was the passing away of my Mother at a young age and then being taken care of by my Father and family friends. One connection I can make is that I always found ways to keep myself busy. I really enjoy my alone time. I don't get lonely. I'm very productive in my alone time. I can't always be with people. The connection with teaching is that I like the lesson planning time because I'm alone. I can reflect on how things went in the classroom; what I need to do tomorrow to connect with what I did today. I can do things at my own pace.

I had a Stepmom who was very influential in my life. I do aspire to be like her. I remember being a self-conscious person, always worrying what people thought about me. I was worried about my physical appearance but now it's more about my intelligence. It's still an issue I carry with me in the classroom. It's very important for me that my students perceive me as organized. I am very organized but I want them to know that. I want them to perceive me as a GOOD teacher.

High academic marks are very important to me. I was always on the honour roll until a certain point where I had some personal issues. I think because marks are so important to me, I kind of devalue them as a teacher. I tell my students that it's not the mark; that I'm just doing this so they stay on top of their stuff.

Heavy emphasis on education...

I don't know how I fell into teaching. Going to teacher's college just seemed a logical next step because it provided some security and solid profession. I wish I had more direction earlier on. I remember there always being a heavy parental emphasis on education, "You should be educated." My sister asked me this when we were in Peru. She said, "Education is so important to you. It seems like education is an accomplishment; as though it defines someone. How did you turn out so differently from the same family?"

Our Father was always emphasizing it. Something in me just really grabbed onto that. I structure my whole life around the school year. I buy planners that are structured from September.

I'm not a huge helper. I do help because I think it's the right thing to do. I enjoy helping my students more than I enjoy helping my family because I'm more concerned about my students' perception of me. I kind of go out of my way so much more. These are some of the connections I can draw for the value on education and always being self-conscious.
Major personal issues have been due to my self-image and worrying what people think of me. Then I choose the role of a teacher where I’m in front of people all the time; people are always judging me. It’s just so weird to me.

In terms of connections I can draw between me and my parents, it’s always emphasizing stability. I really value financial stability but I hate routine.

In terms of beliefs I got from my parents, it’s hard work. I value the process no matter what the results. But for my Father, if you bring home a 95, “What happened to the other 5 percent?” It’s that never being good enough.

In terms of my personal aspirations, I like helping the community and globally. I’m unsure about having children but I don’t know why kids don’t appeal to me so much.

It’s very important for me to do something useful and I don’t know what that is yet. I think it’s helping in some way people who are less fortunate. One of my personal aspirations is to intellectually stimulate myself and to increase my knowledge of things, which I feel I’m lacking right now.

Personal relationships, as I said my parents are very important for security. It’s important to me to have good, solid, and warm relationships with family, friends, and colleagues who are in my life. For me, getting married was never important. What you do with your life is very important, but then I fell in love.

I see a lot of connections...

I see a lot of connections between my personal and professional experiences and who I am as a teacher. My belief is that students should feel comfortable in order to learn. I learn best when I’m most relaxed and comfortable. I try to show this in my life personally.

In the classroom, it’s important to be respected but also to be respectful of others.

I have valued constructive feedback from my own education. It’s important for students to know what they’re doing wrong, and to have something to guide them. Otherwise, how do they ever change that or learn from their mistakes? Reinforcement and review are also important. I learn best when I review something again.

I hate routine, but I think in my classroom it is important to have some kind of routine so students know what to expect. A schedule allows you as a teacher to be more organized in that you can see how one activity could possibly feed into the next. It’s so funny, I hate routine but I have a lot of it.

At the same time, I’m dependent on it to organize myself, but I hate it. If I don’t have it, I feel so disorganized and that’s the worst thing for me. I need to be organized, in my head especially.

I make decisions very quickly. I like to know things right away. I’m very prompt.
For my personal life, **a sense of humour** is so important.

I do think that **laughter is the best medicine** because it is **very cathartic, very therapeutic.**

I associate a sense of humour with intelligence. I try to be very humorous in the classroom.

I value patience and not jumping to conclusions. I learned that from my Mom.

I use her as a role model for my personal and professional life.

The negative things in my life - and I've had quite a few - have made me a more empathic person towards other people's situations. I'm working with immigrants and refugees and some of them are coming from tough situations. I'm a very empathic teacher.

I think empathy is the biggest thing I've gained from the negative experiences in my life.

I think it's difficult to be a good teacher. It takes a lot of work.

I want to be a good teacher. It's very important for me to be a good teacher.

**Always comparing myself to others...**

**Insecurity** is a huge pattern in my life.

I'm always comparing myself to others, trying to be like others who I admire.

I'm also comparing myself to other teachers and trying to be like the good teachers.

I have a need to always be the best, and always be better at what I do.

I think of myself in relation to others most of the time.

I don't know how to get passed this. I think I need therapy.

I think of myself as less than others, less accomplished, less driven, less attractive, less successful.

Obviously my thoughts affect my feelings.

**Something is missing...**

I've become aware that there's something missing. There's emptiness, a cavity inside me.

It has only come up in the last few months.

**It has never even occurred to me before** because I always thought the gap, the void was

- not being successful enough,
- not being physically attractive enough,
- not being healthy enough,
- not being well read enough,
- not knowing enough,
- not being good enough.

If I did these things, I don't think that's it. I really don't think that's it.

**How do I fill that cavity?**

I'll make a schedule this term and follow it but I don't know if any of this is ever going to fill that.

It's **something else** that needs to be taken care of. I think over time it affects me more and more.
I've become less confident, more hesitant person.
I want to come across as a very calm person who doesn't jump to conclusions; who has everything together; who listens more than she speaks. I've noticed a difference in myself socially because I’m trying to be that person.
I've become a less social person in the last year or so.
I'm becoming such a self-conscious person and so aware of how am I being perceived, and then it makes me feel down.
I am more hesitant in the classroom too. I don't like it.
I've noticed that hesitation personally and professionally.

My thoughts affect my feelings, which affect how I act. I can see that.

I'm starting to see the void as just inside, which is a harder void to fill because you have to understand it.

You have to understand yourself better.
This research has made me think more about that.

What I'm missing the most is that sense of self.

I want to understand myself better. I think right now I need that time.
All I'm doing is focusing on my job, my students, and helping my husband all the time with his stuff, my Father because he has Parkinson’s, and my Mother.

It's just too much sometimes. All these things externally might make me look good or look successful.
But I haven't had time for myself. I think you need time to reflect on things.

I don't feel at peace with myself.

There's so much going on in my head all the time; so many comparisons and jealousy. I can't control it.
I just need to be at peace with myself, personally and professionally.
There is definitely a connection among thoughts, feelings, and actions.
It all comes from my thoughts.
It affects everything: my personal life, my professional life, the stress I feel, and trying to be this person that maybe is not realistic, but I can't stop.
If I can change my thoughts that would change the way I feel. Of course, it would change my actions.
The hardest thing is your thoughts because it's hard to change the way you think.
I have a hard time now discerning whether my thoughts are based on reality or not.
I actually want to do something now.

My thoughts affect my feelings, my feelings affect my actions. I can see the connection but I don't think it's a positive in sync. These three factors are in sync in a negative way.
I would like to change that.
After an argument I had with my sister in Peru, I actually wrote down how I was feeling. Then I started to write about my insecurity, and never feeling whole, and never feeling enough.

It has made me think about my feelings.

I never would have written down before how I feel.

It’s something new I’m trying. I’ve had to write down things for this research too.

It’s almost easier to draw the connection between things when you see it on paper.

Writing down things also contributed to that awareness and seeing what I have to do now.

**Balance depends on wholeness...**

My sense of being in balance depends on wholeness, a feeling of contentment.

I wasn’t aware of this before. It’s a recent awareness.

It got clarified on my trek in Peru when I had four days of just walking, thinking, and looking at the llamas.

I think that feeling of being content with myself is missing.

Not always looking for approval from the outside.

But, I want to know what works for me, more, instead of focusing on what works for other people.

Is it self-love or just self-contentment?

The research process has made me more aware.

**THAT** question about the thoughts, feelings, and actions — that’s when I really started to put it together and see how one is informing all the rest.

It helped me focus my thoughts and draw connections.

Because I’m more aware, now I’m starting to research what I can do or what I can try.

“Okay, now what do I do? What do I try to help me start overcoming this stuff?”

I think awareness is the key thing.

Before, without the awareness, I had all these emotions and feelings.

I didn’t know what to do because I didn’t know where to start.

It was like a whole jumble of thoughts and emotions.

It’s helped me pinpoint what my issues and themes in my life are that weigh down on me.

I feel less stressed also. I have some direction, which makes me feel better.

Now I know that it’s causing this emptiness and I want to take care of this.

The most significant impact of this reflective journaling for me is **Awareness**.

The process has also made me see that my personal life is not separate from my professional life.

I’m not two different people, like I thought I was. There are lots of connections.

Maybe, people perceive me differently professionally and personally.
But I perceive myself the same in both contexts.

I've become more sensitive to who I am, who I am as a teacher, and what kind of teacher I want to be. It made me reflect on what I do in the classroom, and what the results are of that. It has just made me more reflective in my professional role. How I want to conduct my classes; how much time I want to spend on skills; how I want to assess those students' needs; and if I'm meeting those needs.

A lot of that is tied back to my personal self.

I'm starting to think more about the impact of the reflective process on my teaching and my relationship with colleagues. I have a colleague at work that nobody really likes and it used to bother me. But something clicked and it doesn't bother me as much. I'm more relaxed now with her.

What is (my) reality?

I've started to question whether the perception of myself is based on reality, or is just based on these things that I've had in my head for so long and have controlled everything. In Peru walking for four days made me think a lot about why I want to be this person, why I value things so much. I haven't questioned before how realistic it is to be this person I want to be. I don't even know why.

Where do these thoughts and perceptions of myself come from?
Are they real, or not real?
What are they based on?
I still don't have answers yet.

I want to become more self-aware.
I want to know why I feel and act the way I do.
I want to be more conscious of it at a healthy level where I understand myself.
I think that's the biggest thing.

I want to get to know myself better.
I'm starting to question my beliefs, which are very hard to change.
"Why do I believe this is what intelligence is?" "Why do I believe this is what being a good person is?"
I've noticed a change in my thoughts.

What was in it for me...?
One of the questions made me think about why I participated in this research.
I wanted to help you out because you're a colleague and I know how difficult it is to do these things.
I also thought this would help me in putting together a very strong teaching philosophy.

But in the process I got so much more from it.
I wanted to do this accurately for your research.
The third set of questions was the most effective in bringing out answers that really reflected what was going on inside.
Reflecting on the process was a lot of work at first.
It was a lot of work with the guided visualization.
I didn't do full journal entries. The interviews really made me think.
When I left your place, I would still be thinking about the questions you asked, my answers, and where my answers were coming from.

I wasn't able to draw connections until the moment in Peru.
Everything contributed towards that; the setting helped.
I was surrounded by mountains and nature.
It added up, it added up, and added up, and then this part really got to the inside of it all.
The first two sets of questions started to get me to think, and it got me thinking, and then I could put it together.

The interviews gave a chance to articulate my thoughts. I would draw things together as I'm speaking.
I might think of new things that I hadn't thought about before.
Then more comes out during the interview that I hadn't even written down.

As a result of this research I'm thinking about changing things in my personal life.
Before I always knew it was something I had to take care of, but I never had direction.
I never knew how or what to try. I feel like this has given me more direction.
I'm spending more time thinking about what needs to be fixed inside of me, how to make these changes, how to implement these changes.
I feel a little bit less lost in the world of my thoughts and feelings.
I'm actually becoming more active in taking these steps than I had before.

I don't want to feel this void for the rest of my life.

It has been the most valuable to me professionally but also personally.
I know what I have to do now. I have direction. I'm happy I did it.
It really worked out for the better. I'm very happy I participated in the research.
Part Five: Corroborat Part Five: Corroborat Part Five: Corroborat Part Five: Corroboration of Experience

January 25, 2010

Reading my portrayal I found interesting how you bolded certain parts of that reoccurring themes. It’s accurate but I was surprised at how often certain themes kept coming up about how I view myself or what I thought was important.

If I want to capture my experience in one word, it would be **INSIGHTFUL**.

Reading the portrayal made me worried that these themes in my life were so prominent and so reoccurring. They are still there but not as strong as they used to be. Even though I knew these things about myself and I became more aware of them as we went through the interview process.

Through our interviews and personal reflection, I’ve come to see there are so many things that I want to do, but there is something holding me back. I’m not sure what it is. So it has given me initiative to get on top of things. Participation gave me a reason to stop, sit back and think about why I am not doing the things that I want to do.

After a year I became more comfortable in my teaching and how I set up my lessons. I want to explore other ways of doing what I’m doing. Personally I feel more aware of how I am. I don’t have all the answers as to why but I’m more aware as to my behaviour and as to my thought process.

In retrospect, I reflect on the visualization activity positively. I’ve kept the CD and I’m open to trying it in other areas of my life whenever I encounter something that the answer is not coming to me. I’m open to using it in the future. I’m learning breathing exercises right now.

The most important thing I got out of my investment in this project is that it was insightful, it made me very aware. I know I’ve said that, but I think that’s a lot. That’s for me the biggest thing. It was a time-consuming project. Looking back I’m happy that I did it. I’m happy that I stuck with it.

I know what kind of life I want. I’m not sure exactly all the steps I have to take to get there but I’m generally more aware of some things that are holding me back. I’m more relaxed but I still can’t stop working. I can’t just sit there because I feel like I’m wasting time. I can’t say the anxiety is totally gone…that would be a miracle…but I’m amazed.
Researcher’s Analytical Summary

I identified several important experiences in Cassie’s life that made an impact on her beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations about her identity as a teacher.

This summary is divided into two major sections as responses to both research questions. First, in response to the first research question I present a selection of what I, the researcher, saw as the most influential experiences of Cassie’s life based on the analysis of her portrayal. The analysis maps out the connections and relationships between Cassie’s educational, professional, and personal experiences and the development of her teacher identity. Then, I present some prevailing themes as signs of Cassie’s perspective transformation about her identity as a teacher and a person that emerged during the analysis. This section outlines the answer to the second research question.

1. Important educational, professional, and personal experiences – including language learning experiences – that influenced the development of Cassie’s teacher identity

Educational Experiences and Language Learning

The most significant event in Cassie’s life has been the passing away of her Mother when she was four years old, which made a deep impact on every single level of her life. This major loss at a young age is reflected in several school-related issues: (i) behaviour problems, (ii) lack of confidence, and (iii) emphasis on grades, success and intelligence.

One of the first obvious impacts of the loss was behaviour problems at school: “I was mouthy”, “I didn’t like taking orders and directions”. Cassie felt insecure “I hate being the centre of attention. I don’t want everyone looking at me”. She recalled being nervous and self-conscious about public speaking and presentations in primary school, “I’m not good on the spot. I’m not good on my feet”. These perceptions rooted in her primary school experiences became engrained beliefs that influenced her teacher identity later. Cassie claimed that “I’ve never had a lot of confidence” and she developed several compensating strategies to remedy this perceived deficiency: “I work really hard”, “I spend a lot of time planning. I’m so organized”. I identified a sign of Cassie’s low self-esteem, e.g., “I feel I’m below average”; this feeling contradicts with her statements about herself “I used to be an honour roll student”, “For public speaking I always came second but I was first in everything else”.

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Cassie put a great emphasis on grades, success and intelligence throughout her education and her professional life. She admitted that “I was brought up to believe that grades were very important”. She received straight As but she claimed that “that’s not good enough for me”. Paradoxically, as a teacher Cassie does not find marks so important “I devalue them” but she views them a motivating factor for students. The importance of grades appears to be connected to another belief of hers, “Getting good marks doesn’t mean that I’m smart. It means that I’m a hard worker”. This statement shows her unwillingness or inability to acknowledge her intellectual accomplishments at school. There is a close connection between her lack of self-approval and her desire for success at school “I was brought up to think that success is important”. She yearned for success, yet she was unable to acknowledge it for herself in the face of obvious excellence at school. This exemplifies Bergner and Holmes’ (2000) limiting self-concept that “possesses a curious resistance to change in the face of apparently disconfirming facts” (p. 38).

Cassie’s university studies presented her with well-deserved acknowledgement and appreciation. In a first-year university course her professor made her stand up “because I had the highest mark of all those people in the exam”, and later “he made me stand up too because I had 50 references”. These experiences ignited her self-esteem and from that moment on grades became important again, “I forgot I could do it”. Cassie stated that “it’s necessary to always be open to learning. It’s dangerous if you don’t grow as a person”. During her undergraduate studies she placed a great emphasis on intelligence and on others’ perception of her: “Being perceived as not intelligent scares the hell out of me”, “My biggest fear is being dumb”. Cassie always viewed herself in relation to others: “I think of myself as less than others, less accomplished, less driven, less attractive, less successful. I don’t know how to get passed this. I need therapy”. As a teacher, Cassie worries about her students’ perception of her in the classroom. She wants to be seen as “organized” and as “a good teacher”. This exemplifies an unconscious projection of a desire for acceptance and approval by the external world because she seemed unable to do so within herself. She suspected that paradoxically her self-image issues and worries about others’ judgment of her may have influenced her to become a teacher “I chose the role of a teacher where I’m in front of people all the time, people are always judging me”. These claims demonstrate the significance of perceptions for Cassie. I should note that perception does not necessarily reflect reality as is, which became evident in Cassie’s portrayal
that I return to in the second part of the analysis. In my understanding, her becoming a teacher offered her an opportunity to accept herself as being “a good and organized teacher” despite her limiting beliefs about the contrary.

Cassie’s language learning experience is connected to learning Spanish as an adult. The course and the instructor influenced her beliefs about language learning because the teacher “made me feel really comfortable”, which she valued. The impact of this experience is reflected in her instructional practice as a teacher, “I really try to make students feel comfortable.”

Cassie valued professors who are “approachable” and “engaging”, who “explain things well”, “share knowledge” and “are good at answering questions thoroughly”. These intellectual character traits were inspiring for Cassie that influenced her instructional practice and attitude to students. They planted a seed in Cassie that transformed into one of her beliefs about teaching “it’s important to bring enthusiasm to your course. I think people can feel the energy. I believe that”. Besides the professors, her stepmother has influenced her greatly. Cassie admires her stepmother’s “strength and her ability to balance everything”. Her influence is detectable in Cassie’s beliefs about perseverance, “She has influenced me how you can’t give up when you’re faced with difficult things”. Upon closer scrutiny, it is obvious that the appearance of these traits (e.g., approachable, engaging, knowledgeable, intelligent, strong and balanced) were important for Cassie because she was unable to acknowledge them in herself. She appeared to be prone to looking for these repressed traits outside of herself. These people personified an unconscious projection of Cassie’s hidden desire for self-expression ever since her childhood. This is a good example of raising the personal unconscious to consciousness (Jung, 1959) because Cassie was able to notice these traits in others, but could not see them in herself at the time.

**Professional Experiences**

Cassie’s path to becoming a language teacher revealed many twists and turns over a longer period of time that she captured in the following way: “Teaching is something I fell into, it’s not something I chose”. In her childhood and adolescence I identified several precursors for her becoming a language teacher. As a young child Cassie used to play teacher and school. Later, she “started volunteering in primary school”, which was her first introduction to teaching. At the time she was not convinced that this was for her. During high school she had “customer service jobs” and she worked “at an old-age home serving people and making them happy”.
Cassie admitted that she “liked pleasing” other people. These experiences helped Cassie build her communication skills and they allowed her to express her caring for others.

Cassie’s travelling experiences in Asia (South Korea, Thailand and Hong Kong) offered the second introduction to teaching, which did not bring about positive feelings about the profession “I hated teaching again”. However, these teaching experiences germinated a belief in her, “Teaching is something I learned takes time to adjust because it’s tiring at first. I didn’t know how tiring it was”. These experiences were a good stepping stone for her to consider formal education in language teaching. She applied for a one-year program at a Canadian university that offered internships. However, Cassie was not convinced about becoming a teacher, “I still didn’t really love teaching”. Yet, another year of teaching abroad (Hong Kong) and the teaching assistantship in the Master’s Program were necessary for her to find the workplace where she was teaching at the time of her participation in my research project.

Cassie made several insightful comments about her application for graduate school “for all the wrong reasons: not wanting to find a job; not wanting to go back to school”. Nevertheless, she discerned that “everything happens for a reason” and she realized that all those seemingly wrong reasons guided her to her current workplace “where I began to love teaching and I have become a teacher”. Cassie’s verbalizations reveal her passion for teaching and education “I’m in the right profession, but it took all those mistakes”, “Now education is my passion”, “I love it”. After several attempts to engage in teaching, her current workplace inducted her into a fully-fledged language teacher who is “responsible for everything: marks, grading, tests, curriculum, activities, and students”. As Cassie put it, “it’s that first year of everything”.

Cassie found that “learning” is an important part of being a teacher that is linked to her educational experiences and her belief about the importance of intelligence and learning, “You always have to be learning in order to remain an effective teacher”. Education is a top priority for her “it seems like education is an accomplishment, as though it defines someone… Something in me just grabbed onto that”. This belief is tangible in her daily life as a teacher “I structure my whole life round the school year. I buy planners that are structured from September”.

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Personal Experiences

Her Mother’s death when she was four made a lasting impact on Cassie’s sense of self. At the same time, she also lost touch with her baby sister for two years who was taken back to India by an aunt and she was deprived of living in a nuclear family. Cassie’s Father was busy settling professionally in a new country and raising her little daughter, so family friends cared for Cassie. At the age of six, Cassie had a new Mom and a stepbrother. This tragic personal experience made a quite powerful effect on her educational, professional and personal development because of conscious and unconscious psychological and emotional wounds during the initial years of her life. This, in turn, also influenced the development of Cassie’s teacher identity.

Cassie seems to have repressed her feelings about her Mother’s death, “I don’t remember how I felt” and she added that “I don’t know if it really affected me consciously other than I can’t figure out why I don’t want kids so badly”. Based on my analysis, there appears to be a selective recall of feelings from that period of her life. There is no recall of feelings about her Mother’s death. On the other hand, she recalled a strong longing and desire to be together with her baby sister. Cassie wrote a short article about her longing and love for her sister, which won a competition and was published in a newspaper. Upon closer scrutiny, this event was noteworthy because Cassie got rewarded for expressing her feelings and emotions, “I was proud at the time I won the competition”.

Based on my analysis, Cassie’s portrayal reveals evidence for a strong connection between her Mother’s death and Cassie’s several issues and personality traits that appeared as recurring themes in her portrayal: (i) compassion and empathy for others, (ii) self-image issues (e.g., eating disorder), (iii) insecurity, anxiety, perfectionism, and (iv) planning and being organized. These themes are also reflected in her teacher identity and professional life.

I found it remarkable that at a quite young age Cassie cared so much about injured animals that she would take them home, “I just couldn’t stand to see them suffer”. This shows her empathy and compassion for the wounded and her desire to alleviate suffering. These character traits (i.e., empathy, compassion) may be a projection of Cassie’s unconscious need for caring and empathy that she had perceived to be lacking in her life. She must have needed the expression of love from her environment when she was little, especially during the years of living without a mother. This is a profound example of the projection of her repressed and
unresolved emotional pain about the loss of her Mother that she “doesn’t remember”. These emotions prompted Cassie to become a vet, which remained an unfulfilled desire. Nevertheless, I found a close relationship between her desire to become a vet and her actual becoming a teacher. Both professions require a certain degree of empathy and compassion. In my interpretation, as a teacher Cassie can exercise these qualities with other human beings in the classroom that provides an opportunity for reciprocity and mutuality on emotional, intellectual, verbal, physical and spiritual levels. On the other hand, as a vet this interchange with animals would have been constrained and limited. Thus, I consider this career choice – after a long path leading to it – a fortunate twist in Cassie’s life. Caring for others is manifested in her desire to help her students. Cassie characterized herself as “not a huge helper”, which contradicts her taking care of injured animals, customer service jobs, and the fact that she liked pleasing others. Her claim is also in conflict with her personal aspiration to “help the community and globally. It’s very important for me to do something useful. It’s helping people who are less fortunate”. Cassie also made a comment that negative experiences in her life made her “a more empathic person towards other people’s situations” and this, in turn, is reflected in her teaching “I’m a very empathic teacher”, “Empathy is the biggest thing I’ve gained from the negative experiences in my life”.

The second important theme is Cassie’s physical image issues during adolescence, in particular her eating disorders (i.e., bulimia and anorexia) that can be connected to the loss of her Mother. Cassie claimed that she was “depressed” and “hospitalized a couple times”. She recounted that her physical image “became an obsession, which caused eating problems, over-exercising, and depression. I have no clue why I became obsessed with it”. As a result, her grades dropped considerably in high school, she failed in competitive sports and she was “too afraid of being bad”. Cassie could not find a rational explanation for her eating disorders; I found a link that may have operated in her unconsciously. Woodman (1993), a Jungian analyst focusing on conscious femininity, explains that “food represents nurturing by the mother, and when we reject it, like the anorexic, we are rejecting life itself” (p. 13). She further claims that “anorexia and bulimia tells us that our souls are starving. Also that our lives have become too heady. These people cut off at the neck. They have lived life as a performance… they are also addicted to control and perfectionism… they are starving for an inner life” (p. 14). The description appears to be pertinent to Cassie’s issues (loss of mother, the mind’s control, repression of feelings, perfectionism, grades and success at school) that I observed during the
analysis and Woodman (1993) also provides an explanation for the unconscious connections among Cassie issues.

The third theme that I detected in Cassie’s portrayal is about her insecurity, anxiety and perfectionism. Her childhood experiences caused her a lot of anxiety, “Worrying about public speaking.... about people thinking that I wasn’t the best in class”. Cassie admitted that she still had a lot of anxiety in her daily life but “now I’m just used to it”, which reveals an assumption about anxiety being a ‘normal’ part of her life. This is an unresolved issue for her since she acknowledged that “I’ve never been able to deal with anxiety”. Cassie’s insecurity and anxiety generated fears about her being the best because “there’s too much responsibility. Then, you have to maintain other people’s expectations because you’re the one that cause them to think that way. I definitely care about what others think”. These statements show that Cassie wanted to own others’ thoughts and expectations of her, which is obviously impossible to do. One cannot be responsible for other people’s interpretations, expectations and thoughts of oneself. This is a flawed presumption that constantly makes her feel fearful and anxious. Cassie articulated that perfectionism reflected in her school work as “always getting A pluses and handing in assignments that were perfect right down to the spacing”. This trait is also present in her teaching, “things should be done right away. When they give me a test, it’s marked within a day”.

Cassie developed several compensating strategies to deal with her anxiety, insecurity and lack of confidence. She shared her view that “I have to control stress” and one way for her to do so is to “plan way ahead”, “I’m just planning, planning, planning”. Cassie articulated that she always found ways to keep herself busy and “I enjoy my time alone”. This appears in her instructional practice as well: “I like lesson planning time because I’m alone. I can reflect on how things went in the classroom”. I found several paradoxes in her portrayal, e.g., she confessed that “I’m sick of planning” but “I can’t let go”, and “I hate routine but I have a lot of it. I’m dependent on it to organize myself, but I hate it”. She acknowledged that “I’m not averagely organized. I am overly organized” and she added that “I need to be organized, in my head especially”. Cassie made a connection between her personality trait and teaching: “teaching is the perfect career if you’re organized”. She also linked her insecurity with planning, “I’m not good at improvising. I don’t trust myself on my feet. I don’t trust myself to be able to answer things on the spot” and therefore “I need to plan. It’s my life”. 

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According to Gergen (2009), “the reality of the mind is also the reality of bounded being […] … the assumption of an internal or mental world invites alienation, loneliness, distrust, hierarchy, competition, and self-doubt” (p. 61). The analysis of Cassie’s statements about planning and routine clarifies her strong inclination to prepare and play thing out well in advance mentally, in her head. Routine refers to monotonous, repetitive actions that she in fact carries out on a regular basis (e.g., planning, going to the gym). Planning is a mental activity that is done in the moment with a focus directed toward the future. Thus, she is thinking a great deal about future events in the present when planning, instead of enacting them. Cassie’s claims about trusting herself on the spot and being not good at improvising imply that she does not feel comfortable doing things in the present moment. She feels safer to play things out in her mind in advance. As a result, she does not trust her abilities to handle things on the go. Cassie’s lack of self-esteem and acknowledgement of her abilities are evident in her portrayal, “I don’t know if I’ve ever achieved anything substantial; nothing substantial”, “I guess self-acceptance is hard”. Yet, she has strong desires to remedy these lacks “I think confidence, independence and the ability to juggle a lot are important to me”. Developing self-love and self-acceptance would be desirable for Cassie because “it is the recognition of the total individual and loving the individual for who he or she is” (Woodman, 1993, p. 19) that is essential for healthy self-growth.

Cassie’s lack of confidence and her mind’s control are reflected in her initial struggle with the guided visualization activity. I observed a gradual progression from doubt, to openness, and finally to listening to her intuition. Initially, Cassie found relaxation difficult “I didn’t let myself let go” and she questioned the intuitive activity “I doubt its usefulness”. Cassie’s intellectual curiosity about the intuitive activity illustrates the dominance of her mind, “I’m interested in the theory behind it”, “I have a lot of whys”. She seemed to be impatient because she wanted to see or know the results without going through the process itself “I’d be curious to know if it did help me”, “Is it guaranteed to work, no?” This is another instance of the dominance of the mind; she wants to know it instead of allowing it to happen to her so that she can experience it. Cassie recounted that the clarification about the guided visualization in the first interview helped her become “open to it”. However, it was still challenging for her “to relax, to sit there, and do nothing”, as she put it.

By the end of the data collection a positive change occurred as she became convinced of the usefulness of this activity, “I’m not skeptical”. She had insightful comments about the
activity: “I feel that the answer is already there, but it’s just bringing that answer out”, “Things are coming to me much quicker”. Cassie was content with the answers that seemed logical and accurate because “they all made sense” and she described them as “focused advice” that “provide clarity”. Although they “gave her some direction” Cassie doubted whether that was what she was looking for: “I want something deeper than that”, “I’m looking for something less logical, less rational and something hidden as to why I feel this way, which I didn’t get at”. This comment brings to light a subtle change in her perceptions.

Cassie concluded that despite her opening up to the guided visualization her “intuitive side is still very blocked”. This supports my observation about the dominance of logic for her “I consider myself quite logical”. She was reluctant to give up the mind’s control because “there’s more control when you have logic”. Cassie considered feelings illogical because “they don’t always make sense”. She rationalized that “if you always choose the logical – you’re bound to get in less trouble”, “Not having control is a risk”. The analysis revealed a dichotomy between her intuition and reason. According to my analysis, Cassie may not be ready to deal with her “mental talk” because her mind has been controlling many things in her life (e.g., planning, being organized, intelligence, perceptions, education, repressed emotions); thus, changing her thinking patterns would have a domino effect on her life that she may not feel comfortable about at this point in her life.

2. Prevailing themes that reveal signs of perspective transformation

I identified several themes (thoughts, feelings and actions; following intuition, self-perception; self-understanding; self-awareness; and impact of research participation) in Cassie’s portrayal that reveal signs of perspective transformation. The occurring shift happened gradually during the research process. Based on my observation and analysis, important transformations in Cassie’s perspective occurred as a result of integrating intuitive hunches with rational reflection. The following section presents my analysis of the relationships between the above-mentioned themes and her perspective transformation.

Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions

It is a crucial step in the process of changing one’s perspective that Cassie was able to identify the relationship and the interplay between her thoughts, feelings and actions. She made a
mental link between the source of her issues and the need to take actions about them: “The problem is definitely in my head, I know that. I’ve known it for years. I don’t know if I want to deal with my mental talk”. Cassie could recognize that her thoughts and perceptions were the root of her problem, and actions were necessary to bring about the desired changes in her life: “What am I willing to do about changes? I think about what to do”. I observed uncertainty and hesitation in her self-monologue: “If I could change things, I think I’d be happier… Why don’t you just do it, if you know it’s going to lead to happiness? … It’s too time-consuming”.

Cassie made a connection between her thoughts and feelings, which shows her growth as a result of the self-reflective process: “My thoughts affect my feelings, which affect how I act. I can see that. It all comes from my thoughts”. This statement coincided with one of my presumptions about the probable impact of my research project and it is excellent evidence in support of my hypothesis. Cassie also expressed the possible outcome of making changes in her life: “If I can change my thoughts that would change the way I feel. Of course, it would change my actions. The hardest thing is your thoughts because it’s so hard to change the way you think”. This point depicts her incisive mind that can make deep connections.

Cassie recounted that her trip to Peru allowed her to express her repressed feelings, “for the first time I actually wrote down how I was feeling. Then I started to write about my insecurity, and never feeling whole, and never feeling enough. It has made me think about my feelings. I never would have written down before how I feel”. The sibling trip to Peru during the research process appeared to play a pivotal role in her perspective transformation. Cassie pointed out that the tipping point in her self-reflective process was “That question about the thoughts, feelings and actions – that’s where I really started to put it together and see how one is informing all the rest”. She put this realization in perspective by referring to her struggle prior to that moment, “I wasn’t able to draw connections until the moment in Peru. It just added up and added up and then this part really got to the inside of it all”.

**Following Intuition**

Over time, an observable change occurred in Cassie’s relationship to intuition despite her mind’s control and her initial scepticism about the guided visualization. Cassie claimed that her intuitive feelings became stronger and she was paying more attention to them: “Before this research, I may have gotten an intuitive hunch at times, but not to this degree. It would occur to
me, I’d brush it off. But now I’m taking it more seriously”. She articulated that the intuitive activity was instrumental in opening her up and in following up on ideas, insights and suggestions evoked in the activity: “I’m going to use it to drive me to take action, to do things, and to explore it more. I feel more aware but I want to focus on this now”. She discerned that intellect and logic by themselves could not give her peace, which implies an implicit desire on her part to find a healthy balance between intellect and intuition: “Before, I thought of focusing on books and building up my knowledge but it hasn’t brought me any peace”. Cassie expressed an interest to try new things based on her intuitive hunches, “I want to become more in sync with my intuition in a positive way. There are things I want to try that never occurred to me before”.

During the analysis, I found that Cassie integrated her intuitive hunches, suggestions and insights with conscious reflection that resulted in her perspective transformation. I identified three intertwined examples of this type of changes in her perspective: self-perception, self-understanding and self-awareness.

**Self-Perception**

It became evident during the analysis that others’ perception of her was quite crucial for Cassie, “I’m maybe hyper-sensitive to my surroundings and how people perceive me”. Her comment that “It’s perception that scares me more than actually not being intelligent” implies the priority of perceptions over facts. I view perception as one’s way of perceiving or seeing the surrounding world through the lenses of one’s belief system that does not necessarily reflect reality as is (e.g., Bergner and Holmes, 2000). Nevertheless, one’s perceptions can create a version of reality that seems quite real for that individual. In concert with my theoretical framework (Chapter 3), perceptions and interpretations require occasional re-interpretation and re-evaluation. This is based on Kelly’s (1963) concept of “constructive alternativism” claiming that “we assume that all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement” (p. 15). In this sense, Cassie’s self-reflective question posed early in the research process “But what if your self-perception is not accurate of yourself?? I don’t know... I don’t know... I don’t know...” shows a flash of insight that was the first step in her perspective transformation.

The guided visualization evoked an important turning point in her self-perception: “At some point in the process my intuition told me that ‘Maybe, it’s your perception of reality.
What’s real? What’s not real?” I’m listening to this more”. Cassie mentioned that “Before I questioned reality a bit... but questioning the basis of my thoughts. It’s a tough thing to do”. This statement touches upon a delicate distinction between perception and reality. Before this research, Cassie questioned reality as she had perceived it, but she was now willing to question the underlying basis of her thoughts and the impact of her perceptions: “whether the perception of myself is based on reality or is just based on these things that I’ve had in my head for so long and have controlled everything”, “I’m starting to question my beliefs”. I consider the willingness to examine her perceptions and thoughts a crucial step forward in self-development. As a result of the research process she came to a profound realization: “It took me a while... well years... to be honest”.

Self-Understanding

The analysis uncovered another sign of change in Cassie’s perspective of herself: “I’ve become aware that there’s something missing. There is emptiness, a cavity inside me. It has never even occurred to me before”. Cassie realized that the void had nothing to do with her not being “good enough” in relation to others in all kinds of ways. Her pondering upon “How do I fill that cavity?” indicates readiness to do something about it. At first, Cassie could not pinpoint the underlying issue. Although she had an idea of what to do, she felt intuitively that “it’s something else that needs to be taken care of”. Over time, she became increasingly affected by this feeling: “I’ve become less confident and a more hesitant, self-conscious person”. These traits also reflected in her classroom, “I’ve noticed the hesitation personally and professionally”.

Upon reflecting on her feeling, Cassie came to realize that “the void is just inside me, which is a harder void to fill because you have to understand it”. This realization guided her to a new insight “You have to understand yourself better”, which is one of the results of her participation in the research process. She voiced her opinion that “I think our culture doesn’t value enough self-understanding”. At the end of the research project, she articulated profoundly what the emptiness was all about: “what I’m missing the most is that sense of self”. Cassie expressed her need and desire to go deeper in self-understanding, “I want to understand myself better” because the surface happiness and perceptions are not fulfilling anymore “I don’t feel at peace with myself”.
Self-Awareness

The analysis revealed the importance of self-awareness for Cassie as another instance of the combined effects of intuitive insights and conscious reflection. She attributed a role to the guided visualization in making her realize “how important self-awareness” was. She found that self-awareness contributed to her feeling at peace with herself: “I think the biggest thing you get from self-awareness is some sort of peace. You can let go and move on with your life. That’s what this whole process has made me realize”.

Cassie expressed that “the most significant impact of this reflective journaling for me is AWARENESS”. Becoming aware of one’s thoughts is the crucial first step in self-development and Cassie articulated that awareness was a key factor to clarify the relationship between her thoughts and feelings: “without awareness I had all these emotions and feelings and I didn’t know what to do because I didn’t know where to start”. As a result of making those connections, she stated that “I feel less stressed. I have some direction, which makes me feel better. It’s helped me pinpoint what my issue and themes in my life are that weigh down on me”.

Cassie offered a well-articulated and insightful response when the factors of her being in balance were elicited, which is another sign of perspective transformation: “My sense of being in balance depends on wholeness, a feeling of contentment. I wasn’t aware of this before. It’s a recent awareness”. She added that her sense of balance should not depend on “always looking for approval from the outside”.

Impact of Research Participation

As a result of participating in my research project, Cassie came to realize the interconnectedness between her professional and personal life: “my personal life is not separate from my professional life. I’m not two different people, like I thought I was. There are lots of connections”. Although “people may perceive me differently professionally and personally” she perceives herself “the same in both contexts”. I consider this an important message for the profession that justifies the purpose of my doctoral research.

I identified a change in Cassie’s perspective about reflectivity and her teacher identity. She became “more reflective in her professional role” that is connected to her personal life and more reflective about “my teaching and my relationship with colleagues”. She gave an example of how her relationship with a colleague changed as a result of her becoming more aware of
herself. Cassie discovered that “I have become more sensitive to who I am as a teacher and what kind of teacher I want to be”. Cassie admitted that “Reflecting on the process was a lot of work at first. It was a lot of work with the guided visualization”. She highlighted the importance of verbalizing ideas during the interviews that made her think and make connections “I would draw things together as I’m speaking. I might think of new things that I hadn’t thought about before. The more comes out during the interview that I hadn’t even written down”.

Finally, signs of perspective transformation are related to possible future actions: “I’m thinking about changing things in my personal life... about what needs to be fixed inside me...how to make these changes. I feel like this has given me more direction”. Cassie confessed that “I feel a little bit less lost in the world of my thoughts and feelings” and “I’m actually becoming more active in taking these steps than I had before”. She had a quite strong and admirable desire to implement changes in her life “I don’t want to feel this void for the rest of my life”. Cassie acknowledged that the research process was “insightful” and reading her portrayal made her realize how “prominent” and “reoccurring” the identified themes were in her life.
Chapter 7 – Part B

Karen’s Portrayal

Part One: Experiencing the Professional Self

I was quiet, shy and sick...

As a child I was quiet, shy, and sick. I had kidney problems and I was in and out of the hospital. My siblings are much older than me, so in a way you’re an only child. My siblings were very protective of me. I was in the hospital once a year at least. I learned a lot there.

I learned what pain is. I never complained because it was so normal. I got used to pain. I tolerate pain a lot more and it made me stronger and more aware. Deep down I know I’m very fortunate, I still have my kidneys.

I hated school...

In grade 3 something happened and I still feel the shame. I’m a good student; nothing ever bad comes from my actions. I was sitting by myself. I grabbed a pen and I started poking a soccer ball, eventually it deflated. Nobody saw me do this. I just hid it. The teacher found it and asked “Who did it?” There was this boy who was in trouble all the time. Somebody said he did it. He got blamed, sent to the principal’s office. It impacted me because I got somebody else in trouble. It’s so out of character. I’ve never done anything like that again. I must have been so embarrassed. I don’t know if I was trying to be bad, just to see what it’s like because I’m always good. It still bothers me.

Grade 6, I hated it with a passion. It was a new school. I felt like a big failure because I was supposed to be so smart and I wasn’t getting the grades. The teacher was horrible; he was mean, like a military dictator. I was so shy and we had to do book reports in front of so many people. I could not do it. I stood up and I couldn’t say a word, I got a zero.

Then I discovered I could act. I wrote a monologue all by myself. When I performed it, the class loved it, found it very funny. I was able to perform. People were laughing with me and it was rewarding. I felt good. I felt strong. I was competent. It wasn’t me, it was somebody else. It was much easier to act than to be myself in front of people. I think they saw a side of me that they’d never seen before. Not just the quiet girl there, something of substance.

In grade 8, I had a different teacher. I started to believe in myself and my marks improved. I think this goes back to instructors and how they can motivate you. They do a lot if they believe in you.

I remember I wrote a book report. The teacher loved classics and she was encouraging us to read classical literature. My book wasn’t a classic but I still got a good mark and she’d say “Look at Karen. She did a good job. She got an A.” That was a surprise. I wasn’t used to it.

In grade 8 it all just started to come together. The teacher asked certain questions for the book report. I thought there was a certain answer they wanted, and I tried to give that answer. But that time I said “Oh, I don’t care. I’m going to write how I feel.” That’s when I got rewarded. I realized that I should respond naturally, honestly. Not what was expected, but what was true, honest. It’s funny; I never made that academic connection.
That was the year when if it could go wrong, it could go wrong. My brother was in an explosion, my Mom had cancer, my Dad had surgery, and my sister moved away. It was huge. You’re trying to find out who you are. I became a vegetarian that year. I became anorexic. It’s not about losing weight, it’s about control. My life was so out of control. Food was the only thing I could control. I performed well academically and I got rewarded for it, but at the same time my personal life was out of control. I felt like a loser; smart but unable to achieve.

There was a lot of anger, a lot of helplessness. My family life was so lost and out of control. I put all my energies somewhere else, into academics: striving to be perfect, academic, looks, and everything. It was difficult. I hated going home. I wanted to spend more time at school.

I felt special…
I felt special. I went to the school of the arts and I did acting. We had our own bus, and you know, just feeling that specialness. I was involved in plays, I was part of a dance drama and we went to provincial finals.

But everything fell apart…
Academically it was horrible, I hated it. I remember dreading school. Personally I was falling apart, the marks, everything just fell apart. I was struggling and about grade 10. I started being bulimic. I cut myself and it was just bad. I hated everything, everyone.

In grade 11, I was forced to see a psychiatrist. I was a bad bulimic person because I had to get that first aid syrup to make me vomit. I kept all the bottles underneat my bed all lined up. My Mom found them. She went immediately to the doctor and they made all these arrangements. When I came home, it was like “You’re seeing a psychiatrist.” I fought it and he put me on antidepressants.

There was a lot of tension between my Mother and myself. At one point she said she wouldn’t kick me out, so she left for a week.

As much as I hate to say it, my marks went from C’s to straight A’s. Especially when I was on antidepressants, I became super-smart. I learned something valuable. I got very good marks in school. I worked very hard in the first project, the first test or two. You’ve already established yourself as smart and you can slack off later.

I noticed when I was involved with that play, my marks were better. When you’re busy, you don’t play around. You just do the work. I seemed to work harder when I had less free time.

I really failed at Math. I liked that instructor because he never made me feel stupid. There was such a feeling of safeness. That was a bad experience. I struggled, but it was still good in a way.

I excelled in world issues. I was smart. I worked hard and I could do so much. In an OAC project in class the teacher singled out five people who really did top-notch work. I was one of them.

I ended up taking a family studies course. It really opened my mind to a lot of things because we talked about families and family structures. It changed my perspective. I think a good course changes you. I learned that “don’t judge a book by the cover”. It opened me up. I always thought I was open-minded but I realized I wasn’t. I saw the world differently.

I took introductory German in high school because I needed a credit. I was by far the oldest in the course and it was a struggle between me and another girl for the best marks. She beat me. I enjoyed it. I tried to emulate my sister so I went to Germany. The competition between me and my sister is huge. It’s
looking for the love. I’ve struggled for my Mother’s love and we try to communicate but it doesn’t work out.

Success is more than just marks...

Often students think of success as marks, like if you get 100, 90 percent. If you get 50, you weren’t successful. I like to think there is more to it than marks. I was successful because I learned about me and the world more than marks could ever show. To me THAT is success.

My sister was a huge motivating factor for me. She was the smart one and my goal was to beat her, which I did of course.

I think you learn about yourself and it changes you. That boy and that soccer ball so affected me. I learned so much about how we blame others; what I was capable of; and there was so much there. It changed me; it changed my perspective of myself.

I think that’s why I stay. I think our memories are based on what’s important; what’s not important to us. The bigger question is why is it important to you, why is something else not important.

Learning is negotiation, the struggle. You have to come to terms with it and hopefully at the end you have this product. I think that’s why these memories are so important because something happened to me internally and it either affected me negatively or positively. Everything affects you somehow. It just depends on the degree.

Going to Germany was about running away from home...

I was terrified going to Germany and I thought “Okay, I could survive with that little bit of German I knew.” When we landed I listened to everybody and I had no idea what they were speaking. That was not what I learned in class. I relied a lot on my friends and I keep telling my students don’t do this. I wasted such an opportunity in Germany. All my friends were Australian, American. What a mistake! I had a really good time, but it did not help my German.

I remember the first time waiting for a streetcar and somebody turned to me and asked me in German what time is it. I remember being too afraid of asking this bus driver “Is this the right bus?” and going on this huge tour in a different part of the city. The more you struggle, the more it’s going to be deep learning. Somehow I caught myself speaking it. That was a huge, huge moment. My roommate said “You keep answering me in German. I’m speaking English and you’re answering in German”. I was not aware of it. After several long months I had started to become comfortable with the language. I had found myself writing journal entries in German. But it’s a long struggle. I think that makes me a better teacher because I always think about my students and I remember that year in Germany. It’s terrifying.

Going to Germany was about running away from home. It was a huge, huge learning experience. I could say I learned the language, the culture, but I learned more.

Being in Germany, I had this train ticket and I could go anywhere. Everything kind of fell apart at the last minute. I was supposed to go to Italy to visit my friend but there was an emergency and I was stuck with the train ticket. I decided to go to Paris for the weekend. My French wasn’t very good. I think everybody, especially young girls should go to a different country, and they don’t speak the language and survive for the weekend. You really learn a lot about what you’re capable of, how strong you are.

I took the train in the last minute and I had to rely on myself to find a place to stay, look for food. I had a big backpack. I realized how crafty I am.

I remember how scary it is to ask somebody where I can find stamps. You do it and after this confidence, I can do anything. I bought all of these postcards for my Mom and for everybody. I lost them
on the metro. Somebody picked them up, put stamps on them, and mailed them. And they arrived! I think I've learned a lot of strength. There's so much learning there.

Apparently, I went to study to Germany. Then, I went to Budapest and I learned something in Hungary. My friend from Canada speaks Hungarian but finds reading difficult. When we were there, we were doing all the touristy things. We were at the subway, we got off, and we were trying to negotiate how to get somewhere and I said “Oh we go over there”. He said “You don't speak Hungarian”, which was true, but I could recognize certain key words. So that was really good.

I fought, but I got something out of it...

In fourth year university I received a bad mark in a course. It was the whole snowball: “I've got a bad mark, therefore I'm not going to go to grad school, therefore I can't be a professor, therefore I just lost my whole career plan, and therefore I have no future”.

I talked to my sister and she said “I have a secret to tell you. Second year I received a 55 in statistics. Look, I'm doing a Ph.D. now, that's one mark”. Then, it finally dawned on me that you don't have to be perfect in everything.

One of the best courses was in graduate school. It was the worst and the best course put together. We all called the professor the “dragon lady”. She was mean. I had severe anaemia with headaches at the time. I missed two classes and she threatened if you miss one more, you're kicked out. She was tough. Everybody complained but I liked it. I think education should expose you to more things. I did well, I got the mark and I received an A plus. I liked her because it was difficult. I fought, but I got something out of it.

I had a better course in my last term. I wish I had it earlier on; it would have completely changed my direction. I ended up writing a paper on Ebonics and fighting for the right of Ebonics. It really did change me. She was a good professor because she encouraged us all to present at conferences. She said once that “Our role as professors is to encourage these students, force them to try new things. If I don't do it, who is going to do it?” She really changed my life, I see everything differently.

The best teachers believe in you...

In high school I received once an 88 and the comment was “has potential to do better”. I was so angry. I thought 88 was pretty good. A year later I thought she was right, I was coasting. I had the potential to do much better than that. I think it’s when they have that belief in you that you could do better; they will struggle with you and push you. If they don’t push you, they don’t care.

The best teachers often go with the best courses and they weren't run of the mill. They challenged me. They have to expose you to something different. If they're able to make you see things or understand something that you were never able to before, I think that's good.

Once I wrote a letter to a professor because I liked his course. He really liked it. He was surprised that so many years later he made such an impact. As instructors, I don't think we realize the role that we play in our students lives.

That professor exposed me to so much and had so much belief in me, and it made a big impact on me. I think it’s usually the instructors who believe in you who push you. I mean the dragon lady. I hated her. I worked so hard. As much as I hated her, she impacted me greatly in a positive way, making me work harder.

My sister has played a huge, huge role in my life, good and bad. Sometimes students tell you something or make a comment that impacts you.
A lot of little things leading up to becoming a teacher…

In grade 6 I was so shy. We had to do a project on diseases. I went up and I was able to explain exactly, they all understood. I think there were little things like that leading up but I never wanted to be a teacher. I didn’t like kids. I don’t know how I got to ESL. I remember reading The Edible Woman, making all those connections in the book, and the symbolism that day made me think “Oh, I’m going to be a teacher”.

I was 26 and I avoided teaching at all costs. I don’t know why ESL. Maybe, because I’ve always liked languages. I just applied. I did a TESL program and M.Ed. in education. I started out as a TA at a college. I did a lot of tutoring. The first time I had to teach, it was a LINC-2 class and it was horrible because they are so polite. They will not tell you, they don’t understand. You keep going and you know something is wrong. I was able to simplify it.

The first course was at a private school and it was hard. My Father died that summer and I completely, completely lost my patience for all of them. I just backed off and said “No, I can’t do this right now.” I took some time off until I started with the military. It was all contract work. This is the first real full-time job for me; it’s always been part-time.

Teaching for the first time is hard. It’s a lot more work than you could ever anticipate. Teaching is not the same as tutoring. You can’t reach everybody and there’s so much you don’t know. You just have to learn as you go. You have to be able to think on the top of your feet how to adapt. It was really difficult teaching. The second time around it was easier. I knew more, I knew what to expect. Whenever I teach a new course, it’s really, really hard.

It’s important to know the students and the levels. I need to spend some time to get a feel from them. A lot of teachers do needs assessment or look at the benchmarks. That’s meaningless. I’d rather meet them then go from there. At the beginning of teaching, you don’t know what resources are available and how to manipulate them. Developing interesting materials comes with the time and experience.

Strengths and weaknesses change…

Finding your strength is difficult. I was funny and I was nice and that’s not much. The weakness is how to make things interesting, or how to find that appropriate level. It was so difficult. It’s always difficult to be the new teacher. I found it difficult, really difficult at the beginning. I’m glad those years are over.

I think the initial experiences taught me how to know your stuff. I over-prepare. I have enough ready in my classroom for the next two years. I’ll just pick and choose. I used to think that was a sign of a poor teacher and a colleague said “No, it means you’re adapting to your students’ needs.”

I do the planning in the morning because I have a better feel. I can think better with the students. I can adapt very easily with what they want. I perform very well. I do very well at the lower levels. I’ve taught the higher levels and I know the weaknesses, the gaps. Now I have the very low level, I’m making sure everything is covered.

I think strengths and weaknesses change according to the level and focus area (reading, writing or listening). When I was teaching in military, I hated the curriculum. The students were difficult. Teaching military people is completely different. You become a different person and it was me needing to adapt. The politics at work amongst teachers and the workplace environment changes your identity.

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17 ESL = English as a Second Language
18 TESL = Teaching English as a Second Language
19 TA = Teaching Assistant
20 LINC = Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
Teaching in the military was life-changing to me. It taught me thick skin. Earlier on you really want them to like you. I still want them to like me, but I really don’t care. I have a job to do, I’m going to do it whether you like it or not. It came from the military where they were tough, and towards the end I was tough too.

I had some bad experiences that made me stronger, tougher. Before, I wanted everybody to learn, now it’s like “Look, I’ll teach you if you want to be here. If you don’t want to learn, get out, I don’t have time for you”. I was never like that before. It’s not that I’m mean but I have a lot of people who do want to learn and I want to do my best for them.

My theatrical background has influenced me. You’re performing. Having eyes watching me was never a problem. I’m used to performing. When you teach, things often don’t go according to plan. You need to know how to adapt, roll with the punches. The acting background helped me. When you act, you become somebody completely different. When you teach, they all think I’m really nice and outgoing and I’m not. I think this is a big fat lie. I’m showing them that it works.

Teaching is a different role. I’ve become this maternal person, like a resource. It’s a role of being this nice person. I guess deep down I am a nice person, but I’m not as outgoing. At the lower levels you can’t explain with words, so I do a lot of acting. I embarrass myself almost daily, but they learn and to me that’s more important. Everybody has a teaching style and that’s just what works for me.

Teaching experiences...

I had a really bad teaching experience in the military. I was there for a couple of days and this one lady didn’t want a new teacher. She had put in a formal complaint. It’s the military; there is protocol, they have to investigate. My supervisor talked to my class in French to find out what happened. It was basically one troublemaker. I was miserable. The next day my supervisor said “She has to apologize to you. If she doesn’t, we’re kicking her out of the school. Don’t you dare apologize. You are right. Never show them fear.”

It was really tough to teach her afterwards knowing that history, keeping her in check. I was never comfortable with her. I hated it. It wasn’t just about people coming to school. They’ve all worked with each other before. They all have these past experiences, relationships, like over in Afghanistan together and that history comes into your class.

As for the best, I like those days when I have this feeling “Oh I’m a good teacher”. When you teach immigrants, your role isn’t just an instructor, it’s different. I only had one student for a month and she had no confidence and very little language ability. I was trying to build up her confidence, telling her how great she was. One day she had to leave early. She was in an abusive relationship and you have to tread very carefully. I gave her some options, like counsellors. When I had all the students back I told her how much I missed her. The next day she was gone. We got a phone call from social services that she’s now in protective custody.

I think what I did with her was more than just language. I gave her the confidence, the resources, and options. She acted on her own. It’s amazing how the roles we play affect their lives so much. So I think that was one of my best teaching experiences with her. It was outside the classroom but it was still important.

I think teaching is successful when there is a connection. You teach, they understand, enjoy it, they get the grammar and help each other. It’s very important early on to do some activities that are just for fun; you can laugh and you have that shared experience. You need to have that trust factor.
A good language teacher has to be:

- outgoing,
- funny,
- knowledgeable,
- sensitive,
- reflective,
- be able to analyze, learn from it and improve it,
- aware of all the little things,
- able to adapt and roll with the punches,
- able to meet students’ needs.

I don’t know if I have a teaching philosophy. I think you have to meet their needs, do it in a way which is at their level. Have fun, enjoy it, and laugh. I think there’s nothing wrong with having a good time.

**Part Two: Experiencing the Personal Self**

_I remember being very shy, very quiet…_

My siblings are six and seven years apart so I’ve always been separate. I’ve always played by myself. I loved to read.

I would be so scared, so terrified when I had to present or do speeches.

Somebody in my house was always reading and I knew that’s what big people did. I remember reading a full book in the car when we were driving somewhere. Something clicked in and it felt like “Wow! Reading is cool. I’m a big person too.”

*I loved riding on my bike.* When you’re little, your bike is everything. *It is freedom.*

I think it’s so easy for us to forget how important our bicycle was, but bikes are important to a child. Even now I’m older, when you’re tired, you’re stressed out, you go for a bike ride you feel better, more relaxed.

When you’re little, you’re going with a destination with your friends.

*It’s about being all together and being part of a group, but still on your own bike you’re an individual.*

Just before kindergarten I had surgery with my kidneys.

They had tubes come in and out of me and they had to clean the tubes. They would hook me up to a machine. As they moved that machine to my bed I had tears in my eyes because it hurt. I remember that.

*The surgery was painful.*

I think that’s probably the first time I ever felt real pain.

*My mother wasn’t there to hold my hand. I was on my own. It was very, very painful.*

*Every day was a chore to go to school…*

I remember hating high school so much.

If you’re not wearing the right clothes, they’re upset with you, and they would make fun of you.

*It was horrible.*

Drama people can be mentally unstable and they have a need for attention.

I learned *it’s better to be who you are by yourself* than change your personality to fit in.

*I felt very lonely in high school.*
It was very difficult having problems...
People who were your friends are not really your friends.
By the time grade 12, 13, I found my own place. I discovered who I am.
I had real friends who don’t care what you wear. You support each other.
Finding myself happened through medication.
I was put on antidepressants.
I started to like school more. It turned out I was smart and I enjoyed it.
I really worked hard but I got a lot of satisfaction out of it.

I think it’s important to know who you are.

When you’re little the whole world is open to you. You don’t know who you are, you’re still exploring.
The older you get, the more you know who you are, what you like, what you don’t like.
The lesson I learned goes back to how I was really quiet earlier.
I’m happy to be on my own than with other people. It’s not that I don’t like people.
I just need a lot of me time.
This is a painful lesson but you have to realize not everybody fits in that box and it’s okay.
That’s probably the biggest lesson I’ve learned.

In Germany I had a good friend. She was always at my side.
One day I had to say “I need a day with me. Just me. To read, just me”. She took it as rejection.
I can’t be with people all the time. I do a lot of stuff on my own.
People are always surprised because they think at work I’m so outgoing and I have lots of friends.
I think there’s the “work me” and the “real me”.
I need to balance it.

Often I feel like I was the bribe price...
My Dad was very shy, very quiet, very calm, and patient.
I was embarrassed by him.
I knew he would always defend me.
He would never get upset. He was kind, gentle, bad laugh. He was safe.

My Mom is quite the opposite.
She is very controlling, very critical. She’s more the authoritarian.
I remember in elementary school where children would be defending their mother if somebody insulted them,
I’d be “No, insult my Mom. I’ll join you.”
I think there’s always been this tension.
We’ve had a very, very difficult relationship.

We’ve never gotten along until my Dad died.
I was so close to my Dad that we, the two of us, were in such a deep mourning.
She was sick after my Dad died and I looked after her and we became really close.

When I was young, I was so surprised they weren’t divorced.
I thought they’re a couple that’s waiting to be divorced.
Only once have I ever seen them hold hands. I think this is a deep wound in me.
When my Mom met my Dad she was widowed with two young children at 23.
I really felt - maybe I still do - that she married my Dad because it’s stable.
You know, a nice man willing to take her and the kids on.
Often I feel like I was the bribe price, like “I’ll raise your kids but give me a child.”
I really felt that way.
I remember my first boyfriend said “No wonder you don’t want to get married. Look at your parents.”
When my Dad died, the biggest shock was apparently that my parents had this relationship I never knew about. **Apparently there was this big great love that they hid from me.**

It’s still a process I’m going through. I’m 34 and it shouldn’t affect me, but I think it does.

When I saw my Mom got married quickly to a stranger, she has changed her personality to make her more attractive to him.

I shouldn’t be thinking about my parent’s relationship but I think it does affect me in many ways.

I can be very critical and moody like my Mom.

I see myself being my Mother.

Whenever I’m a bit critical, I always think about her.

If I catch myself being her, I stop because it’s the one thing I don’t want to be.

But I see my Dad’s tenderness, the kindness in me too.

My Dad is gone but he’s almost like an idol.

I see that life is short…

If you want to do something, don’t wait, do it if you can.

You don’t want to live with regrets.

I think people have positive and negative influences on you.

My sister was annoying but she did very well at school.

She is also very controlling, she gets it from my Mom.

It’s very frustrating because everybody loves her and she’s not that lovable.

She is so popular and so smart.

This frustration alienates me because I’ve had friends meet her and pretty soon I feel my friends prefer her to me. Everybody loves her.

I try not to be like her.

I’m always a passenger in relationships. I need a driver. It’s not that I can’t be the driver.

I just prefer the passenger role.

People make all the decisions and I just sit back. I’ve noticed that with a lot of relationships.

I like being with strong people so I can be the passenger.

I see something I don’t like about me.

I said I liked to be the passenger, but I don’t.

I wish I could be more confident like my sister.

I wish I could be more involved in things.

When I do get involved, I realize I don’t really like it.

I wonder how much I want to get involved to emulate my sister versus what I actually like.

I see I wanted to be educated like my sister, but I don’t at the same time.

It’s a double-edged sword. It’s very frustrating.

My brother and sister are the polar opposites. I’ve always been in the middle.

There’s always been that tug of war for my attention. I see it between them.

I think it would be nice to stand on my own two feet and to be recognized for what I do.

Teaching ESL I still feel in my sister’s shadow even though she’s in education.

I always try to distinguish it. It’s very different from what she does.
People make all kinds of decisions and nobody asked me what I wanted. I don’t think parents realize what they do to their children. I think it was in high school my Mom said “We don’t expect you to get straight A’s like your sister.” I think she meant not to put the pressure on. But the way she phrased it made me feel like “What? You don’t think I’m capable?”

Intelligence… Kindness… Tolerance…
My best friends are all smart, intelligent, kind and good-hearted. They have university degrees and all in different fields. I think it shows that we’re friends with a personality, not a common subject goal. When I was at university I discovered what makes friends be friends is what you hate, what you don’t like in common. It’s not so much what you like in common; it’s what you don’t like in common. It’s all about tolerance.

My Past Preoccupations…
My past preoccupations have evolved through the years:

- to be liked,
- to be loved,
- to be good enough,
- to fit in.

At the same time, I wanted to fit in and I didn’t want to fit in. I didn’t want to be like them. It’s weird because you want it but you don’t want it.
I think for a long time control has been a big preoccupation. I need to be in control and it developed the eating disorder.

That was huge, huge, huge, huge.

Self-esteem has been a rather negative attribute in my life. I have always compared myself to the accomplishments of my siblings, especially my older, very successful sister. Usually this has been negative, never feeling good enough, never perfect. I have learned that perfection is a moving a target. So this has turned into a positive attribute because I’m always striving and trying to become better.

Physical image has been negative for me. This started when I was young and I always felt too fat, too ugly. I had an eating disorder. I can’t find a single way this has positively affected me. It has wrecked my teeth, digestive system, and affected me emotionally. Perhaps the only positive attribute is that I am more sensitive to others and their feelings. I feel empathy. I’m surprised that I have found something positive.

Independence has been a mixed blessing attribute. Growing up I never thought I would marry so I knew I had to be independent, not relying on anyone. This is negative because it’s very difficult for me to ask for help. I think it is a hindrance. Men don’t like women who are too independent. Overall, I believe perhaps mistakenly that this is positive and contributes to self-worth and the belief that I can do anything.

I think I’ve always been looking for my Mom’s love.
I’ve always known I’ve had my Dad’s love, but **I’ve had to fight for my Mom’s.** I know she loves me as a mother, but to love beyond what is instinctive. In grade 12 or 13 I was at the kitchen table and she said “You know, I’m beginning to like you.”

**I think deep down I’ve been trying to get her approval, her to like me.** I’ve never noticed that she’s so critical and how I’ve been trying to get her love, her acceptance. It probably stems to a lot of things I’ve done, a lot of my actions.

These preoccupations have hugely influenced my feelings about myself. 
**I felt that I wasn’t good enough.**
**I wasn’t smart enough.**
**I wasn’t pretty enough.**
**I wasn’t enough for her.**
**It was always a struggle trying to please her, trying to be smart enough, trying to make her proud of me.**
**I see my Mom does have a lot of good qualities.** She is a survivor because she lived through cancer, widowed at a young age, and lost her second husband. I also see I’m critical and I think a lot of who I am is from external people who you hold in high regard. **I still don’t think I’m good enough for her.**
**I’m still fighting with that and I know I’ll never win.**

**I have high expectations for myself** and when I don’t fulfill those expectations it hurts. I know it’d be better to **lower the expectations** and to be **more realistic.**

**What I’m learning ….**
I’m learning to **accept myself that I’m okay.**
I’m learning to **value my positive attributes.**
I’m learning that **you can see things two ways.**
You can look at the same problem and put a positive or a negative spin on it.
I am learning that **it doesn’t matter what you do if you do it with enough confidence**, you can get people to believe in you.

I’ve been in therapy for a while and **I’ve learned to look at things differently.**
It’s so easy to slip into the negative.
I’ve learned that **I have to look after me above anybody else.**

**I am the most important person.**

It doesn’t matter what I do, but if I can look at myself in the mirror and not feel guilty, it’s okay.
I’ve learned to treat people nicely.
I think I always have; now I’m pretty well happy with myself. I don’t think people are as happy with me.

As a teacher, I have always **worried about being judged.**
At work anybody can see what I’m doing and it used to terrify me. Now I don’t care.
I’m always wondering **if I’m good enough for the students.**
I’m always worried about meeting their needs.
Then I talk to other students who go to different schools and different teachers, and I’m okay compared to others.

**When you’re a teacher, you’re always performing.**
You do the same thing twice and it’s different and you always wonder why it was different.
There’s a lot I would like…
I’d like to have more money.
I’d like to work harder.
I’d like to have more patience.
I’d like to be a better teacher.
I’d like to lesson plan better.
I’d love to be able to meet all my student’s needs. You can’t but it would be nice.
I’d like to be not as critical.
I’d like to be smarter.
I’d like to be healthier, fitter and cleaner.

I think it’s your mindset. It’s how you look at things, nicer, healthier.

Change doesn’t come automatically.
It’s step by step.
I don’t want to dwell on the fact that I failed.

You should believe in yourself.

It would make me a better person.

It’s all connected.
I notice when my apartment is messy, my whole life is messy.
When my apartment is neat, I feel better, at school I’m better.

It is all interconnected.

I’d be more confident.
I’d be more effective.
I’d be better in general, overall a better teacher.
I don’t think I’d ever be content.

When I was young and foolish, I was depressed, cutting my wrists and bulimic.
In therapy, I remember we were looking at a magazine with a fashion model thinking “Oh, she’s nice and pretty!” The counsellor therapist said “Look at her collarbone.”
When you looked at it, her bones were sticking out.
It was a big wakeup moment saying
“Wait a minute. It’s how you really read into things. She’s underweight. Your bones shouldn’t be sticking out.”

I always think of that, it’s how you view things.

Step by step, day by day you can change your perspective.
I think we’re always striving to be a better person.
I think if you keep the goals realistic you’re more likely to meet it.

Be honest with yourself.
Part Three: Experiencing the Intuitive Self  
(Through Guided Visualization)

Do I believe what they would say to me? First Interview (April 18, 2009)

I’ve done it four times.  
I’m neurotic and I worry too much. I didn’t think I did it the way you wanted.  
It’s funny because I know the answers are coming from within me.  
But I’m still thinking about how much is really from myself and how much is what I know they would say to me.  
Is it really what I think deep down? Or, is it what I think they’re going to say to me?  
Do I believe what they would say to me?

I noticed that it’s not going in the direction I thought it would. So far it’s about how uncomfortable I am and why I am uncomfortable. That’s the same topic that keeps coming up.

Sometimes it’s surprising that the answer came from me.  
Sometimes I think it’s predictable.

The answer does make sense because after I finish writing I’m still thinking about it.  
I think it’s self-learning and learning doesn’t happen overnight; it takes time and I know it is taking time.

I think that there are things I never ever expected to be connected.  
The acting and teaching was new. I never ever made that connection.

Right now this reminds me of psychotherapy when I was a teenager; the questioning and the probing, but in a gentle way.

It’s easier… I feel more comfortable… Second Interview (July 4, 2009)

I have done it about 12, 15 times.  
It’s easier. It’s easier. I know what to expect and it’s not as nerve-wracking.  
I feel relaxed. The preparation was nerve-wracking.  
I feel more comfortable. I’m not worried about doing it incorrectly.

I started to get angry because a certain question keeps popping up.  
In the visualization different people try to present different perspectives. But deep down I know what they’re saying and I know it’s coming from me. I think deep down it’s looking for the answer within me and I think they’re telling me what I want to hear.

The answers seem to be okay.  
Once or twice I was surprised because it was not the answer I would have thought but I know it’s coming from me. So it had to be in my head anyway.

At times I felt frustrated because I’m not satisfied yet with the answers.  
I don’t know if I’ll ever be satisfied, but I keep doing it. They all have a common theme.

I have been asking the same question in different ways. I didn’t realize I was doing this until I started looking at them and they’re almost similar.

A lot of the answers are justifying me as an instructor that I am good enough.
I think, deep down that is how I feel. It’s just having somebody different tell me to reconfirm, to establish, to validate my feelings.

It’s funny. I’m starting to think of things differently so my questions have evolved. I think originally it was just generic questions. Now it has become more specific about how different people have influenced me.

I like the fact that I’ve been questioning things. I know it’s within me and it’s bringing that to the surface.

I don’t trust the voice because I know it’s what I want them to say. You don’t know if that’s truly what they would say but it’s a nice feeling. The answer is always positive and I don’t think in real life it’s always positive. This is puzzling because I don’t think it’s realistic. I think it’s me deep down trying to make myself feel better, to give myself confidence.

It might not be true.

I only hear the positive, or maybe that “You should do this better”. I’ve never had a negative answer; it’s always been positive. I’ve noticed when I question things I’m thinking more critically. I’m seeing it from more perspectives.

I don’t know how I feel about this. It’s too early.

It boosts my self-esteem... Third Interview (September 11, 2009)

I found I tend to do it when I started to have something in my mind. I think I have done it about 16, 17 times. Some of them are really short. Then it just started to go in a completely different direction. It was interesting who came, who I chose.

I start wondering whether I look for the positive, and then I notice I’m being more positive lately. Are they correlated or not? I don’t know.

I wasn’t surprised at most of the answers. One or two of them I was like “Wow!” or “I didn’t expect it.” I asked something about teachers and paranoia. I’ve heard it many times, but it was like I believe it now and that surprised me.

What probably surprised me even more is that deep down it had to be within me to start with.

I know this sounds so weird but if I’m questioning something, I think I’m more easily to investigate it. Or sort of like visualization: just see what ideas I could come up with; see where that train of thought is. There have been some recurring answers like “Don’t doubt yourself.” “You’re good enough.” “You’re no different than anybody else.”

I think my intuitive side has been developed more acutely. I think the first visualization was more rigid and once I started to let it flow, it just came out. I think it’s very important to remove barriers because it’s all in there.
If you can somehow let it out, you can analyze it.
I don’t think I noticed any intuitive thoughts before participating in this research.
I don’t or if I did, I was too afraid of them. I was afraid of what I would find.
That was one of the reasons for my rigidity at the beginning and not knowing.
There was a part of me that wanted to please you. Another part of me has hoped I’m doing what you want.

I’m more assured of my gut feeling. I really believe in the gut feeling.
Often you ignore it but every now and then I need that kick in the pants to activate it. Being more assured.

I’m more willing to go with them, follow them through.
I do follow through and it must be okay because I don’t remember anything negative.
I’m more accepting, more comfortable with my intuition.
I think with everything new you have that initial uncertainty.

I understand myself better.

The activity made me feel more normal. If anything, it boosts my self-esteem.
I don’t feel as paranoid. I feel surer of myself. It’s nice to know that you’re questioning something.
I think it’s been a positive experience.

I think it’s important to understand yourself, but to know that for everything there is a positive and a negative. You try to focus on the positive.

It is reassuring to know that deep down I have it within me.

Part Four:
Experiencing the Re-Construction of Teacher Identity

I am the same person... It surprised me...
Looking back at my childhood I don’t think I’ve changed that much since then.
It surprised me.
I was quiet back then and I am quiet now, but I have learned to work around it.
The drama program at high school helped me immensely to overcome my shyness.
In both my personal and professional life I believe I am the same person.
But when I analyze it, I do show very contrasting traits.

I can see different ways how my shyness, quietness affected my teaching.
I often feel more comfortable in front of my lower level students than I have ever felt with my higher students.
I was questioning whether I went into teaching immigrants because

• it was a more comfortable space,
• I was uncomfortable,
• maybe they needed me more and
• they wouldn’t be as judgmental.

I started to explore this idea and it scares me.
I want to step back because I think that’s a huge step forward. or very introspective.
I need some more time to think about that. I’ve never made that connection before.

I think it’s scary when you look at yourself.
I always thought that you shouldn’t enjoy therapy. It’s not supposed to be a fun experience. You’re supposed to be thinking about yourself, you analyze and it takes time to come to conclusions. I’m afraid if I think too much, I won’t like what I find.

I think we can change.

My values and beliefs…
One thing my parents have always insisted upon is to treat people fairly, be nice to everybody. Everybody should be treated the same way. These values have been ingrained to me. I’ve always been told that you have to do your best. It’s about trying to be the best person that you can be and I know that I have those values now. I still feel very sensitive right now because of my father’s death. Things have still been up in the open with my Mom and I realize there are a lot of unresolved issues. My mother being hypercritical instilled a lot of issues in me, like self-worth, putting a lot of pressure on me.

I’m critical of myself and I’m very critical of my teaching. I’m very worried if I’m okay. I explored this because teachers generally are a little paranoid. I think you have to find your own way. Everybody has their own style of teaching.

People are people…
I’m very happy I’ve travelled. That year abroad I realized that people are people no matter where they come from. I always try to picture what it’s like for my students: go to a new country and you don’t speak the language, especially at the level I teach, almost absolute beginner. I just try to make it easier for them because I know how scary it is. It’s a huge step. I try to be patient with them. I try to look after them. I’m going to end up being married to my job. I don’t think that’s really a bad thing. I think it shows hopefully that I’m passionate.

It’s my job to help them…
I think that every teacher teaches the way you learned and what didn’t work for you, you avoid it. I think when I teach I always go back to everybody is equal. Sometimes I have to discipline my students. I may be angry or not pleased for a moment. After I make an effort to show that I won’t harbour that grudge because I know they’re going to be sensitive. I’m trying to meet their needs and to see them as individuals. In my class I always encourage laughing. You make a mistake; nobody’s going to die. I sing every morning with my class. I embarrass myself daily, but they have a good time and they learn. I think that’s important. When I learned German and French, songs helped a lot. I enjoy songs that’s why I teach my class songs. I’m always striving. Sometimes I think teaching, at least for me, is very insecure, paranoid. I’m always questioning myself and why I do things. You have to like where you work, and enjoy it. You spend more time at work than you do at home. I think it’s my job to look after them, to help them, especially in the LINC\textsuperscript{21} program. It’s not just language; it’s helping the little things.

\textsuperscript{21} LINC = Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
I think *that’s part of my job.*
*I want them to be happy* and *it’s so difficult to make everybody happy.*
You can’t, but I try and I drive myself nuts trying to do it.

**My class knows everything about me.**
I think *the lower levels need that bond* and I guess I’m inviting them into my life.
But I also know a bit about their life.

*I have high tolerance* but if you push me, I’m really angry.
It doesn’t happen often and I try to control it.

I remember when I first started teaching my mother saw me working very hard.
She said “You must be doing something wrong. No other teacher works as hard as you.”

**That was tough to hear.**
My sister said “No, that’s the sign of a good teacher, you’re working hard.”

*I think it depends who you talk to.*

If you listen to the negative people, they can bring you down. *But you try to ignore them.*
When I start to feel a little down, I can rely on a few people.
They can boost me up, or remind me of how good I am and how important I am.

**Lately I have been able to ignore the negative comments.**

I’m not sure how successful I was earlier. My mother’s comment hurt...
At the lower levels they tend to be scared and *I do so much encouraging and telling them how proud I am because I know what it’s like to be insecure.*

**Everything depends on my mood...**
The way I think and feel about myself and the way I act are all wrapped up in one thing:

**How I feel at the moment.**
I’m quiet in social situations and teaching. I learned a great trick about insecurity: fake it.
I can see negative things but also *you have to look back to see the positive.*
Someone said, “This is negative how can you turn it positively?”
I see it in the teaching.
It took a while to get to this stage when you can say “Okay, maybe I’m not so good here but I’m really good at this.”

*I used to follow different people’s paths* until you realize everybody has a style.
You have to develop your own method and *you can’t follow in anybody else’s footsteps.*
In my own personal life I *never followed the crowd.*
I always thought *it was very important to be true to yourself,* and I see that now as I get older.
Even in the teaching *I will do things if I believe in them.*

**Why do I do what I do...???... Desire for Adventure...? Freedom...?**

**Everything depends on my mood.**
I came across this thinking about *why I chose the field:*

**Am I so insecure, if I worked with English speakers, they might see how bad I am? Maybe the immigrants can’t?**
*I thought that’s why I went into this field because I can’t really understand why.*
I think this is one of those issues that has to percolate.

I think *everything is related.*
The feeling, *the desire to be loved;* I think we all want to be loved.
I've always looked for it.

It also makes me think “Why do I do what I do?” You know, go out of the way trying to please them.

Am I trying to gain LOVE from them?

Is that why I chose a certain population because I know that they desperately need me?
I've been thinking about this idea for a while.

I really like to travel.
When I work with these people, I almost get a taste of it.
I think this desire for, maybe, freedom, travel and experience new things, I ended up in ESL.
I love languages and in the class we're always learning words and different languages, and I like that.
I wonder if I'm getting that desire for adventure from my students.

I'm quiet, shy and insecure and in social situations it plays out in two different ways.
I'm very outgoing, but it's a ‘fake me’.
I push myself and I act. I was brought up to be nice.
It's an act, I'm not like that. I also feel like a fake and a fraud.
Work is work and sometimes I think teachers are performers in a way.
Or unless I speak right away, you'll never hear a word out of me. I notice this in school, university.

I think there is the way you see yourself and the way others see you.
I think I'm socially awkward, and everybody I say that to they're like “You're the most confident, comfortable, outgoing person.”

I think too much...
I always think “Just go with it… This is who you are… If you behave this way, you're not a fraud.
This is who you are. Don't be afraid of who you are…”

I don't know; it's so complicated.

Thoughts, feelings, actions...
I think my thoughts, feelings, and actions are in sync.
It's a wheel; one contributes to the other.
Sometimes I think if you feel confident, eventually you'll feel confident.
Maybe, the point is to try to act that way until you feel that way.
It doesn't always work though.

My Mother is always complaining that I'm too quiet I should go out more.
Why if I'm happy, why should I?
So I don't know, maybe it's a paradox.
Humans are complicated.
I've seen inside an actor's studio that so many actors are so scared in front of people.
They said “It's so easy to recite lines, pretend to be somebody, but it's scary to be yourself.”
My sense of being in balance depends on my mood but I don't know what causes my mood.
It depends on people too.

The impact of the reflective process...
Prior to participating in this research I pretty well knew who I was.
The biggest impact of this reflective process has been turning the negative attributes into positive ones. When I hand wrote about it, it was like “Oh, I’m sorry. I can’t think of anything positive.” Then when I was typing it, it was like “Wait a minute… I can.” If I learned anything during this process, it’s learning to put a negative to a positive, dealing with the insecurity, and wondering whether I’m looking for love and attention from the students. I think everybody works hard, but I really work hard to help them. I wonder if that’s related. During the research process a lot has happened in my life. A lot. I don’t know if it’s personality things but I saw a lot of negative things. Then… “Wow! I’m a negative person. How much of this is related?” I realize how much your childhood impacts who you are as an adult. Little comments. Or, if somebody encouraged you to try something.

I’m feeling more confident. I don’t know if I act differently. I’m more confident of my actions.

I think I understand myself better. I know pretty well why I do what I do and that’s good.

I feel better. If somebody says something negative, I dismiss it more readily now.

I understand better, I think, why I became a teacher. I don’t think I’ve really changed my actions, but I’m just more sure of what I do. I think a lot of people live their lives, but unless you’re forced to analyze and look at it, you will not really understand.

I think it’s very important that the realizations came from me. It really has to come from myself what experiences I picked from my childhood. We all have many experiences. But there are only certain significant ones that stay with us at all times.

I think if you look at your actions and your feelings, you’ll understand why you do things. Why you think a certain way. It’s really good to just let my mind go and think. Once I do that, I can really draw inferences.

I never thought this research would affect my personal life… I think the research process made me think about things more deeply that I didn’t think about before. A lot of things impacted me, like teaching for love. I was like “Wait a minute! That’s huge, huge.” Then, I started thinking how many teachers do it for the love.

I have found an impact of the research with my family. I think we think things and we don’t question why we think things. We’ve been arguing about my childhood forever. My brother and sister are so much older than me that they had these camping and Smore campfires. I do not have any recollection of this. I never thought this research process would affect my personal life.

This research process probably impacted my personal life more positively. I have more patience.
I feel stronger, more confident.
I feel like a better person and I know why I am into teaching.
I think a lot of things but you need that realization.
Everybody says “See a silver lining” and I never did. I always saw like a “zinc” lining.
I think it’s still early… but hopefully I can see more positives than negatives.
I came across this huge realization recently.
I was wondering why I love teaching lower levels so much.
I taught the high levels and I didn’t like it as much.
With the lower levels in a lot different ways it’s a lot of work when they can’t understand you.
I like this level, maybe, they need me more than the upper ones.

I’m so proud of myself for one thing I did.
I was going to work and on the second floor there’s a bulletin board.
It said “back to school program supplies low income, call this number”.
I called and it was for basically any students and I told my students about it.
I helped them, I made them call but I was there for assistance.
When they received their package, they came up and “thank you, thank you teacher”.
I don’t think I did this because I wanted the love; it’s just the desire to help them.

I can see some changes… but there’s a huge “but”
I can see some changes in my beliefs and perceptions of myself, but there’s a huge “but”.
We started in March and I just started to teach a new level in January.
I don’t know if the project helped me feel more comfortable, or time.
Every month they threw something new at me and that’s when we started working.
I don’t know if it came from you, or from teaching the level better.
While we’ve been doing this together, there was a lot of growth.

I understand my family better, especially siblings.
The age difference is huge, seven years. I have more patience with them.
I think I can accept their different perspectives.
That was a big, big moment for me. That’s very, very profound.
I’ll certainly need time to digest, internalize but I know it was a huge leap, massive.

In my teaching, maybe, I feel more confident.
I understand myself better.
I also understand why two teachers can teach the same level, but have two different approaches.
Before I felt intimidated by some teachers’ suggestions “Hey, I have this in my class, would you like to try?”
I was suspicious “Okay, why are they telling me? Do they think I’m bad?”
I used to think these things and generally I’m paranoid, or I don’t know.
I’m not like that anymore.

I feel more confident.
I didn’t realize this until yesterday, the day before, very recently.
I started teaching them Canada and geography. I was looking for materials and a lead teacher, who’s taught every level, said “Why don’t you try this, why don’t you try that.”
Before I’d be like “Oh, thank you, thank you” and just ignore it.
I felt more part of the team. So it was good.

I started to look back and analyze things as I was working on the last part of the journaling.
That’s when all things started to come together and I had some very introspective moments.
At the beginning of the research process I thought it would be easier.

It was a lot of work.
What I found difficult, I thought it would be easy.
And the difficult parts were, I don’t know, just not how I thought it would be.

I think that’s good.

I don’t know if I want to credit you or what, but right now I’m happy.

Part Five: Corroboration of Experience
January 21, 2010

The overall impression about reading my portrayal was that I was surprised how candid I was.

Considering we don’t know each other well I opened up quite a bit. That surprised me. It was shocking.
I think it’s pretty accurate but that’s kudos to you if you made me feel comfortable to share everything with you.

The first word that came to my mind reading the portrayal was EYE-OPENING.

I think it opened the doors to a part of me that was always there I never considered.
I remember while I was reading it I made a connection about teaching and acting. “Wow, I never made that connection before.”

I think overall teaching is a lot more than I expected it to be.
You’re a lot more than just a teacher. I don’t know if this is for all teachers or if it’s specifically for ESL; but it’s not just one single role, you’re there to teach, you do so much more.

Reading the portrayal made me a bit surprised.
I didn’t realize I was that complex. I was reading the part with my Father and it still makes me uncomfortable. That surprises me. My Dad has been dead for about five years and it’s still raw.

When I was reading it I thought “If that’s who I was then at that time; who I am now is different.”
It’s not one is good one is bad – it’s just different.
I don’t know if I’m changing as a person or my class composition has changed and I’m changing with it.

At the time I felt not a good teacher, just struggling. Now when I think back I think I did a good job.
Now I think “I’m struggling but probably in six months I’ll look back and think I was pretty good.”
I think that’s a topic that keeps recurring.

I learned I’m stronger than I thought I was. There’s more to me.

I’m surprised at the connections. I must have always known they were there but it surprised me to the degree how your childhood really affects who you are as an adult.

Afterwards I stopped doing the visualization activity. I thought I could do this all the time. I realized I don’t.

One thing I could really take away from it is knowing that these answers are within me and if I look hard enough I can find them.
Researcher’s Analytical Summary

I identified several important experiences in Karen’s life that made an impact on her beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations about her identity as a teacher.

This summary is divided into two major sections as responses to both research questions. First, in response to the first research question I present a selection of what I, the researcher, saw as the most influential experiences of Karen’s life based on the analysis of her portrayal. The analysis maps out the connections and relationships between Karen’s educational, professional and personal experiences and the development of her teacher identity. Then, I present some prevailing themes as signs of Karen’s perspective transformation about her identity as a teacher and a person that emerged during the analysis. This section outlines the answer to the second research question.

1. Important educational, professional and personal experiences – including language learning experiences – that influenced the development of Karen’s teacher identity

Educational Experiences and Language Learning

Karen’s relationship with her family members, in particular with her Mother, stands out as one of the decisive influences on the development of her teacher identity. Karen’s portrayal depicts that most of her experiences are interwoven with the impact of her family background. I identified several school-related experiences that are closely connected to her family issues: (i) negative school-experiences and eating disorders; (ii) artistic experiences at high school, and (iii) language learning and travel experiences.

One of the first obvious impacts of the family background was Karen’s negative experiences in grade school and high school “I hated school with a passion”. She recalled a shocking incident in grade 3 when she poked a soccer ball even though she was “quiet and shy” as a child. She felt shame because “I got someone else in trouble”. Karen still could not come to terms with this incident at the time of the interview: “It’s so out of character”, “I’ve never done anything like that again”. Based on my analysis, this incident exemplifies her hidden need for attention and caring that, however, remained unfulfilled. Instead, it turned out to be a rather embarrassing experience for her. The poking of the soccer ball is a quite aggressive act that seems to express Karen’s repressed, unconscious anger about the lack of attention, caring and
love that was missing at home. In grade 6, Karen recounted another negative school experience when she failed to do a book report in front of the class “I stood up and I couldn’t say a word. I got zero”. Karen felt that “I was a big failure because I was supposed to be smart but I wasn’t getting the grades”. Later on, she wrote a monologue and discovered her ability to act “I was able to perform” that evoked rewarding feelings in her “I felt strong. I was competent”. Her comment that “it was much easier to act than to be myself in front of people” shows her insecurity and reluctance to acknowledge herself for who she is.

In grade 8, Karen gained more self-confidence “I started to believe in myself and my marks improved”. She connected this feeling to having teachers who could motivate students: “They do a lot if they believe in you”. Karen had a successful book report and the teacher acknowledged her accomplishment that she regarded as “a surprise. I wasn’t used to it”. Karen’s surprise about the teacher’s acknowledgement implies that she may have lacked positive reinforcement and praise at school and at home. Karen realized the importance of being honest and expressing her own feelings instead of fulfilling other people’s expectations because “That’s when I got rewarded”. As a result of reflecting on this experience during the interview, Karen had an insight that she did not have before: “I should respond naturally, honestly. Not what was expected, but what was true, honest”.

Karen had an emotionally challenging time during this year at home: her brother was in an explosion, her Mom had cancer, her Dad had surgery and her sister moved away from home. In response to these dramatic family events Karen became a vegetarian and she developed an eating disorder: “I became anorexic”. She explained that the eating disorder was “not about losing weight, it’s about control. I needed control”. She found herself in a conflicting situation because she “performed well academically and got rewarded for it, but at the same time my personal life was out of control”. Karen’s feelings depict a similar paradox: “I felt like a loser, smart but unable to achieve”. Karen was indeed smart and intelligent but her negative feelings prevented her from achieving things. Karen had “a lot of anger, a lot of helplessness” about the family situation, which made her put her energies into her studies “I wanted to spend more time at school” because “I hated going home”.

The first two years of high school show signs of the impact of her demanding family situation since “academically it was horrible. I remember dreading school”, “I remember hating school so much”. Karen claimed that she personally fell apart in high school because of her
family issues. In grade 10, she developed another eating disorder “I started being bulimic” and she recalled that “I cut myself and it was just bad. I hated everything and everyone”. This act illustrates her repressed anger, rage and helplessness about her family situation that she could not resolve. As a result of taking antidepressants her grades improved, she “became super-smart” and she “worked hard”. The family studies course at high school “opened her mind” and “changed her perspective” about her own family issues: “I saw the world differently”. The positive experience in this course germinated a belief in her “a good course changes you”, “it opened me up” and she also learned not to “judge a book by the cover”.

Karen’s high school experience with the arts made her “feel special”. She was involved in plays, she was part of a dance drama, and the collective artistic efforts were also acknowledged “we went to provincial finals”. Karen shared an insight about the impact of acting on her academic standing “I noticed when I was involved with that play my marks were better”. This insight shows that allowing her artistic, intuitive side to be expressed brought her greater peace of mind that, in turn, supported her academically. She also stated that “the drama program helped me immensely to overcome my shyness”. Based on my analysis, the arts and acting offered an opportunity for Karen that could, in part, offset or alleviate the emotionally demanding family situation. Acting was the bridge to her intuitive side that also needed soothing.

Karen’s language learning experience was also intertwined with her family issues. She learned German at high school and she commented on her competition with a classmate: “I enjoyed it”. This language learning experience played a role in her going away to Germany for a year, which “was about running away from home”. Karen viewed this travel experience as “a huge, huge learning experience”. She admitted that she “was terrified” of the trip because of the little German she had learned at school. In hindsight, Karen realized that she “wasted such an opportunity” by having relied primarily on her English-speaking friends, “What a mistake”. Karen’s memories reveal several insights about language learning, e.g., being too shy to speak initially that led her catch herself “speaking it” without even being aware of it. It took her “several long months” to “become comfortable with the language” but later “I found myself writing journal entries in German”. She found learning a language “a long struggle”, which is related to her belief “the more you struggle, the more it’s going to be deep learning”. Karen’s experience in Germany is detectable in her teaching that makes her “a better teacher because I always think about my students here and I remember the year in Germany”.

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Karen emphasized the importance of this trip in her life: “I learned the language, the culture, but I learned more”. She became self-reliant, self-confident and resourceful: “I had to rely on myself”, “I realized how crafty I am”, “I’ve learned a lot of strength”, “I can do anything”. Karen concluded that her travel experience taught her that “people are people no matter where they come from”. This belief is translated into her teaching and her relationship with her students: “I try to be patient with them”, “I try to make it easier for them”, ‘I try to look after them”, “I’m passionate” about my job.

Karen expressed her view that good teachers “often go with the best courses” and these teachers “weren’t run of the mill”. Karen believes that “a good professor” is “demanding” and “tough”. In her view, best teachers “challenge” you, “expose you to something different” and “they are able to make you see things or understand something that you were never able to before”. According to Karen, good teachers if they “have a belief in you that you could do better, they will struggle with you and push you. If they don’t push you, they don’t care”. Karen recalled that she liked a graduate course because “it was difficult”. She said that “I fought” in the course “but I got something out of it”. Receiving a bad mark in another course taught her a lesson about perfectionism: “It finally dawned on me that you don’t have to be perfect in everything”.

Professional Experiences

Initially, Karen had no desire to become a teacher “I never wanted to be a teacher. I didn’t like kids. I don’t know how I got to ESL”. However, the analysis justified that there were “a lot of little things leading up to becoming a teacher”. Karen named several factors that helped her make up her mind: (i) good presentation and explanation skills in grade 6; (ii) her theatrical background, and (iii) reading a book being a major turning point in her becoming a teacher. My analysis identified a parallel between Karen’s views about her graduate studies and her first teaching experiences. The graduate course was described as “though”, “difficult”, “but I got something out of it”, while the first teaching experiences as being “hard” and “really, really difficult” leading her to a conclusion that “It’s always difficult to be the new teacher”. Karen’s frequent use of these words in the interviews illustrates her belief that ‘it is normal if things are difficult and you need to struggle for something valuable’. This belief may be rooted in her kidney disease and the fact that she “got used to pain”. Karen discovered that as a teacher “you
don’t reach everybody” and “there is so much you don’t know”, which is the reason why “you just have to learn as you go”. She admitted that “teaching is a lot more work than you could ever anticipate”.

Based on my analysis, Karen’s portrayal shows evidence for important connections between teaching, on the one hand, and the impact of the workplace and her theatrical background, on the other. Karen expressed that “the workplace environment changes your identity” after she had taught a course in the military. She admitted that “teaching in the military was life-changing to me” because “it taught me thick skin”. Karen also learned that “I have a job to do, I’m going to do it whether you like it or not”. The negative teaching experience in the military made her realize that “bad experiences made me stronger, tougher”. Karen also made a connection between her theatrical background and teaching: “You are performing”. Because of her drama background she got used to performing, “having eyes watching” her and to accepting the idea that “things often don’t go according to plan”. The influence of her theatrical background is evident in Karen’s insightful comment about performing in the classroom: “When you act, you become somebody completely different”. She believes that “Teaching is a different role”, which is “a role of being this nice person”. This is illustrated with an example: “When you teach immigrants, your role isn’t just an instructor, it’s different”, “It’s amazing how the roles we play affect their lives so much”. One of her best teaching experiences was with a student because “what I did with her was more than just language ... I gave her confidence, the resources, and options”. Karen concluded that “teaching is successful when there is a connection”, “when you have that shared experience”, “You need to have that trust factor”. She also made a point with an insightful comment, “As instructors, I don’t think we realize the role that we play in our students lives”.

Karen’s shyness and quietness from childhood are expressed in her feelings about teaching “I think teaching is very insecure, paranoid”, “I’m always questioning myself and why I do things”. She also admitted that loving the workplace is essential for her. She started to examine her reasons for teaching immigrants “I often feel more comfortable in front of my lower level students”. Karen questioned whether this was because “it was a more comfortable space, I was uncomfortable, maybe they needed me more and they wouldn’t as judgmental”. She expressed her conviction that it is “my job to help them” and she was “trying to meet their needs and to see them as individuals”. She is encouraging and praising her students “because I know
what it’s like to be insecure”, which demonstrate the influence of her personal experiences on her teaching. Karen adopted some beliefs in her teaching philosophy that she learned from her parents: “treat people fairly, be nice to everybody”, ‘you have to do your best”. Karen found that she “used to follow different people’s paths”. However, she realized that it was important to develop her own teaching style because “you can’t follow in anybody else’s footsteps”. Personal commitment is important for her in teaching, “I will do things if I believe in them”. Finally, she commented that “overall teaching is a lot more than I expected it to be” and “you’re a lot more than just a teacher” because it’s “not just one single role”.

**Personal Experiences**

Based on my analysis, Karen’s portrayal reveals highly interconnected themes that made a lasting impact on her personal development because of the conscious and unconscious psychological and emotional wounds received at home. These themes are also reflected in her teacher identity and professional life: (i) relationship with mother, (ii) health problems (i.e., kidney disease and eating disorders), (iii) looking for love, and (iv) searching for identity.

I found it important that the nature of Karen’s relationship with her parents, in particular with her Mother, has influenced quite strongly the development of her teacher identity. Karen’s difficult and challenging relationship with her Mother has shaped her perceptions and beliefs in many ways that, in turn, has also made an impact on the other three themes described above (i.e., health problems, looking for love, and searching for identity). Karen described her Mother as “very controlling, very critical” and “authoritarian”. She detected these character traits in herself, e.g., “I can be very critical and moody like my Mom”, “I see myself being my Mother” that are also observable in her teacher identity “I’m very critical of my teaching”. Karen claimed that “there’s always been a tension” between her and her Mother. This seemed to diminish after her Father passed away, who “is almost like an idol” for Karen. She acknowledged that “there are a lot of unresolved issues” with her Mother. Karen also inherited several character traits from his Father, “I see my Dad’s tenderness, the kindness in me, too”. His death evoked deep insights in Karen: “I see that life is short”, “If you want to do something, don’t wait, do it if you can”. Karen concluded that “I think people have positive and negative influence on you”.

The second important theme is Karen’s health problems, in particular during childhood and adolescence that can be connected to her relationship with her Mother. Karen’s kidney
disease from an early age on has greatly influenced her life in all kinds of ways, “Just before kindergarten I had surgery with my kidneys”. She was “in the hospital once a year at least”. The first hospital experience was painful for Karen not only on the physical level, but also emotionally because “my Mother wasn’t there to hold my hand. I was on my own. It was very, very painful”. She learned what pain was and she “never complained”. Her disease has taught her tolerance, endurance and strength over the years. In my interpretation, the kidney disease can be viewed as a symbol of unconscious psychological problems (Dethlefsen & Dahlke, 1991, 2002). According to the authors, “within the human body the kidneys represent the realm of partnership, […] the fundamental way in which we approach our fellow human beings” (Dethlefsen & Dahlke, 2002, p. 171). This idea seems relevant because Karen’s shyness and solitude were prevailing in her childhood “I’ve always played by myself” and in adolescence “I felt very lonely in high school”. Even in her adult life, Karen expressed her need for “a lot of ‘me’ time”, “I can’t be with people all the time. I do a lot of stuff on my own”. Her ideas about marriage are also pertinent here: “Growing up I never thought I would marry”. Karen said that “I’m always the passenger in relationships” because “I need a driver”, which appears to show her unconscious beliefs about imbalanced power relationships. She articulated that she enjoys being with “strong people”. However, she seems to be ambivalent about being in control vs. being passive in relationships: “I liked to be the passenger but I don’t”. Based on my analysis, the kidney disease may emphasize for Karen the importance of working on building healthy relationships, partnerships with other people, which is also confirmed by Karen’s deep desire to be “more confident” and “more involved in things” and to be able to “stand on my own two feet and to be recognized for what I do”.

Karen developed eating disorders (i.e., anorexia, bulimia) in her adolescence that can be associated with her relationship with her Mother that resulted in low self-esteem. The eating disorders created a devastating experience for Karen because it “has wrecked my teeth, digestive system, and affected me emotionally”. As a result, Karen’s grades dropped considerably at school, she hated school and she had several negative school experiences as described in the first section of the analysis. In the face of numerous negative experiences, Karen always had a desire “to be liked, to be loved, to be good enough and to fit in”. Most of her life, she struggled with low self-esteem because “I have always compared myself to the accomplishments of my siblings” and she never felt perfect. As a result of participating in the research project, she
realized that “perfection is a moving target”. Karen rationalized her eating disorders with the need for control “food was the only thing I could control”. I found an explanation for the link between Karen’s eating disorders and her relationship with her Mother in a book written by Marion Woodman (1993). She is a Jungian analyst who explores the concept of conscious femininity explaining that food symbolizes Mother. The bulimic wants Mother so desperately she just gorges her down. But the minute she’s in her stomach, she can’t assimilate her, so she vomits. The anorexic refuses and rejects Mother until she wastes away from her lack of inner nourishment. The body is like an elaborate metaphor. One may be able to taste and not swallow, like the anorexic, or to swallow and not integrate like the bulimic. (Woodman, 1993, p. 15)

Woodman (1993) further clarifies that “a profound unconscious fear and rage goes back to infancy. Because our mothers could not love themselves as complete feminine beings, they could not love us as feminine beings. [...] We have a tremendous sense of something within being shut off, abandoned. This is our own self, our own soul” (p. 15). The analyst’s diagnosis describes clearly several issues in Karen’s life: a) anorexia in early adolescence when she unconsciously rejected her Mother (e.g. “Insult my Mom. I’ll join you”); b) bulimia when she unconsciously needed her Mother (e.g., “I struggled for my Mother’s love”); c) unconscious fear and rage (e.g., the soccer ball incident); and d) shyness, solitude, looking for love, and searching for identity.

The third theme, looking for love, is intimately interlocked with the other themes analyzed above. Karen explained that her parents’ relationship “does affect me in many ways” and she often feels like she “was the bribe price” for that marriage, which “is a deep wound” in her. I found several instances for the lack of expressing affection and love in her family: “I’ve struggled for my Mother’s love and we try to communicate but it doesn’t work”; “I’ve always been looking for my Mom’s love” and “I’ve had to fight for” it. Her Mother’s comment that “I’m beginning to like you” in grade 12 got her to try hard “to get her approval, her to like me”. Another comment of hers that “We don’t expect you to get straight As like your sister” evoked a strong desire in Karen to demonstrate that she was capable of doing well academically. These experiences have made an impact on her self-esteem “I felt that I wasn’t good enough. I wasn’t smart enough. I wasn’t pretty enough. I wasn’t enough for her. It was always a struggle trying to please her, trying to be smart enough, trying to make her proud of me”. However, Karen
acknowledged her Mother’s positive traits too. I found evidence for the need for love in Karen’s professional life when she talked about her students, “Am I trying to gain LOVE from them?”

Karen’s sister “was a huge motivating factor” for her because “she was the smart one” and “the competition between me and my sister is huge. It’s looking for the love”. Karen’s frustration about her sister is another evidence for her looking for love: “everybody loves her and she’s not that lovable”, “she’s so popular and so smart” and she added that “this frustration alienates me”; “I try not to be like her”. These experiences taught Karen to become “sensitive to others and their feelings”. I found that Karen articulated her self-perceptions and insights with a lot of depth and wisdom.

The last theme, searching for identity, is also dominant throughout in Karen’s portrayal and interwoven with her other issues. Karen’s childhood, e.g., her memories about riding a bike with her friends, shows some evidence of her desire to belong to a group and to be acknowledged as an individual: “It’s about being all together and being part of a group, but still on your own bike you’re an individual”. In high school, it was difficult for her to socialize with her classmates: “I felt very lonely in high school”. Karen was searching for her place in the world “You’re trying to find out who you are” and during this process she also learned that “It’s better to be who you are by yourself than change your personality to fit in”. This signals her unwillingness to compromise her identity for the sake of being accepted by others, “I think it’s important to know who you are”. By completing high school Karen found her identity: “I found my own place. I discovered who I am”. This process was facilitated through taking medication “I was put on antidepressants”. As a result, Karen felt more secure “I started to like school more” – partly because she realized that “I was smart and I enjoyed it”. In her professional life the theme of identity is reflected in the way Karen defines her separate selves: “I think there’s the “work me” and the “real me”. I need to balance it”. Later she voiced her view that “I believe I am the same person … but I do show very contrasting traits”. In her personal life Karen revealed that “I never followed the crowd” because “I always thought it was very important to be true to yourself”. In my interpretation, these are clues in Karen’s articulation that highlight the importance of “having” and “enacting” her true and authentic identity.

Karen’s responses about the guided visualization activity present different kinds of feelings. I observed a gradual progression from initial skepticism and discomfort, to letting go, and finally, to enhanced and restored self-esteem. Initially, Karen found relaxation difficult “I
worry too much”. I detected some sort of skepticism about the guided visualization “Do I believe what they would say to me?” The analysis identified a contradiction between patience and frustration in Karen’s words about the intuitive activity. She seemed to be patient with the visualization activity because she knew that “self-learning doesn’t happen overnight. It takes time”. However, she felt frustrated about the answers “I started to get angry because a certain question keeps popping up”, “I felt frustrated because I’m not satisfied yet with the answers”. Some answers evoked distrust in her because “the answer is always positive”. She found this “puzzling because I don’t think it’s realistic”, “It might not be true”, “I’ve never had a negative answer”. These reservations depict a rather rational approach to the intuitive activity. Some recurring answers reminded her about enhancing her self-confidence and self-esteem: “Don’t doubt yourself; You’re good enough; You’re no different than anybody else”.

Karen claimed that over time knowing what to expect made it “easier” for her to carry on and she became more committed. The analysis identified some positive changes in Karen’s understanding of herself: “I think that there are things I never expected to be connected”, “I’m seeing things from more perspectives”. Another sign of positive change can be attributed to a subtle shift in Karen’s mental and emotional attitude “I start wondering whether I look for the positive, and then I notice I’m being more positive lately”. By the end of the data collection, Karen became confident of the usefulness of this activity “I believe it now”. She found some answers surprising because “deep down it had to be within me to start with”. This indicates that Karen may be ready to acknowledge her intuitive side and inner wisdom which may further boost her self-esteem.

2. Prevailing themes that reveal signs of perspective transformation

I identified several themes in Karen’s portrayal that reveal signs of perspective transformation: self-perceptions, following intuition, self-acceptance and impact of research participation. The occurring shift culminating in improved self-esteem happened gradually during the research process. Based on my observation and analysis, important transformations in Karen’s perspective occurred as a result of combining her intuitive feelings with conscious reflection. The following section presents my analysis of the relationships between the above-mentioned themes and her perspective transformation.
Self-Perceptions

The analysis revealed the importance of self-perceptions for Karen as being a precursor for perspective transformation. She claimed that a person can be viewed in two ways “there is the way YOU see yourself and the way others see you”. She emphasized the importance of “your mindset” that plays a role in “how you look at things” and “how you really read into things”. Karen came to realize that “I think we can change”; however, she added that “change doesn’t come automatically; it’s step by step”. A crucial factor in the process of changing one’s perspective was Karen’s realization about self-trust, “You should believe in yourself”. She articulated a profound insight about honesty with oneself as an important requirement of self-development: “Be honest with yourself”. Karen put these realizations in perspective by referring to her participation in therapy as a teenager that had provided her with an opportunity to learn to “look at things differently”. Karen made a connection between looking after herself and self-perceptions “I am the most important person.”

Following Intuition

During the research process, an observable change occurred in Karen’s relationship to her intuition and inner wisdom despite her initial misgivings about the guided visualization activity. Karen claimed that prior to participating in this project “I don’t think I noticed any intuitive thoughts… or if I did, I was too afraid of them and what I would find”. This claim appears to support my observation about Karen’s apprehension of the activity, which made her feel “more rigid” in the beginning. Later Karen became more relaxed and she “started to let it flow” and “it just came out”. She came to realize that there was an inner wisdom operating inside her and it was important “to remove barriers because it’s all in there”. It became evident during the analysis that opening up to the wealth of intuitive thoughts and feelings was instrumental for Karen to make connections analytically: “If you can somehow let it out, you can analyze it”. She claimed that understanding comes once you analyze the connections. Karen pinpointed the importance of taking time to reflect on one’s life and allowing intuition to play a role in this reflective process “once I start letting the thinking go, I can really draw inferences”. Karen expressed that the answers justified her professional expertise as a teacher “I think, deep down that is how I feel” and as a result she started to “think of things differently”. However, she
needed external validation: “It’s just having somebody different tell me to reconfirm, to establish, to validate my feelings”.

As a result of doing the guided visualization activity, Karen concluded that her “intuitive side has been developed more acutely”. The analysis justified that the intuitive activity brought about profound changes in Karen’s self-perception: “I’m more assured of my gut feeling”, “I’m more accepting, more comfortable with my intuition”, “I feel more normal”, and “I don’t feel as paranoid”. This reassurance of her “gut feeling” boosted her self-esteem. Finally, Karen said that “It is reassuring to know that deep down I have it within me and if I look hard enough I can find them”.

Self-Acceptance

During the analysis I identified self-acceptance as a sign of Karen’s perspective transformation: “I’m learning to accept myself that I’m okay. I’m learning to value my positive attributes. I’m learning that you can see things two ways”. Karen’s claim that her professional self “is an act” and that “I feel like a fake and a fraud” led her, over time, to a deep realization about self-acceptance in her professional life: “This is who you are. If you behave this way it’s not a fraud. This is who you are. Don’t be afraid of who you are”. This was a sincere introspective insight because she finally came to realize that her “acting self” is just as much part of her teacher identity as the other part that questioned it. By gaining self-esteem and self-confidence she was able to accept herself, which is a quite impressive and admirable act. Karen found that the research process encouraged her to accept herself.

Impact of Research Participation

The analysis identified several obvious signs of perspective transformation in Karen’s portrayal: “The biggest impact of this reflective process has been turning the negative attributes into positive ones”, “dealing with insecurity” and “wondering whether I’m looking for love and attention from the students”. Karen claimed that the research process made her think about things more deeply that she had not thought about before. As a result, she was able to see the “silver lining” in the numerous challenging and difficult life experiences, which “I never did” before. Karen’s profound comment that “you need that realization” shows the depth of the impact of her introspection. She identified the last part of the journaling as most meaningful for
her because “that’s when all things started to come together and I had some very introspective moments”. She admitted that “it was a lot of work” but “I think that’s good”. Karen appreciated the fact that participants were allowed to select their important experiences because it assured her that “the realizations came from me”.

The analysis uncovered an important change in Karen’s perspective of the relationship between childhood and adulthood: she realized “the degree how your childhood really affects who you are as an adult”. The research process made a positive impact on her personal life: “I understand my family better, especially my siblings” and “I have more patience with them” and “I can accept their different perspectives”, which she called a “big, big moment for me… that’s very, very profound”.

Participating in the research project brought about some changes in Karen’s perspective of her teacher identity. By the end of the research process, the examination of the reasons for her becoming a teacher resulted in a crucial realization regarding “why I love teaching lower levels”. Karen discerned that “Maybe, they need me more than the upper ones”. She admitted that “I’ve never made that connection before” and she evaluated it as “a huge step forward… very introspective”. This exemplifies Karen’s ability and willingness to turn a perceived negative trait of hers (i.e., going into teaching for love) into a positive one (i.e., being more useful and helpful for the lower level students). Karen observed some changes in her teaching as a result of the research process: “I have more patience. I feel stronger, more confident. I feel like a better person, and lately I have been able to ignore the negative comments”. Prior to the research project, Karen was “suspicious” and felt “intimidated” by other colleague’s suggestions, whereas “now, I’m not like that anymore”. She claimed that she could accept teaching materials from a lead teacher that made her feel “more part of the team”.

Finally, Karen confessed that reading her portrayal made her realize that “I was that complex” and she admitted that “I was surprised how candid I was” and “I opened up quite a bit”. She claimed that participating in the research was “eye-opening” for her because it “opened the doors to a part of me that was always there I never considered”. Karen acknowledged that “I’ve learned I’m stronger than I thought I was. There’s more to me. I’m surprised at the connections”, “I believe I am the same person … but I do show very contrasting traits”.
Chapter 7 – Part C

Mary’s Portrayal

Part One: Experiencing the Professional Self

There’s Nothing That Stands Out…
I was one of eight children and the oldest girl in my family.
I was just one of many.
I have no significant recollections from the very early years.
I was always a good student.
We always came first or second or third in any classes.

Looking back now I see there was a great deal of mental abuse in general. My Mom simply had much more than she could handle. It caused a very, very strong bonding amongst the children, which is really great. We had to be strong because my Mom was kind of crazy.

I knew that teachers liked me.
I was the best reader in the class.
I read a lot, a lot, a lot.
For Whom the Bell Tolls when I was 11.
I read for the pleasure of the words, like Anne Michaels or Joseph Boyden, beautiful writers.

I really don’t have any memorable experiences.
I didn’t want to go home and I started to cry.
I would really rather not be home.
We all studied piano or music of some kind, this was mandatory.

An expected.
We didn’t get praised.

I remember winning a piano competition when I was in grade 5 or 6.
It just wasn’t a big deal. It was expected.
We didn’t get praised.

We tried very hard to avoid the criticism or the punishment. That just was the reality.
In terms of personal development, big cost all the way through the family. When one is not allowed to experience the world beyond the home, church and school, one is very poorly equipped for life in the real world.
There was no opportunity for the development of a sense of self.

Nothing was Memorable…
In high school I took four years of Latin at my Mother's insistence.
I really didn't want to.
My Mother is a horrible snob.
Latin meant you were going to be a professional.
I could translate it. It was okay but we had a boring, horrible teacher.
One time I got a failing mark in a Geography test, which was on the report card.
I can't imagine that I got a 17, but maybe I did. It's not like me. I got good marks usually.
But I do remember changing the 17 into a 77.
We weren't allowed to fail.

I really enjoyed solving quadratic equations in high school.
I did it actually for fun.

Nothing was memorable… probably because of the childhood conditioning to just not stand out.

I'm saying “Nothing is memorable” because we really kept a low profile.
We did not draw attention to ourselves.

Discovering my Identity: Beginning Studies at University…
I got to university as a mature student.
I was very much aware of discovering myself, maybe, much more because of the non-existence of myself.
I took my first course at university in 1976 when I was 26.
This was a real big thing.
So what's memorable is the 'non-memorableness'.

When my youngest was about 12 months old I had been 'home' for five years and was greatly in need of some mental stimulation. My sister, who had done a commerce degree by then, said "You always liked English. Why don't you take a course at the university?"

She had gone on her own, took a bus, and had no idea where the university was.
She had done all that exploring.
She literally took me by the hand, took me and registered me as a mature student, showed me where to go.

I had said "How can I do this?"
I had no child care.
I guess the two boys were in a 'two-afternoon-a-week program'.
I thought, if I put my daughter for her afternoon nap at my Mother's, I can zoom into the university and zoom back, which is what I did.

First Experience with Recognition of my New Self…
I don't know if I can emphasize enough what a big deal this little story was for me.
The first course I took was in 20th Century Literature, and of course, it was wonderful.

I can't tell you how much it meant to me when I was writing the final exam.

I had no problem with the content. It was a joy. I loved it, it was easy for me.
I wasn’t worried about my performance, but I realized as I was writing it, I was so excited. I wrote and wrote in the test booklet page after page. I knew that someone was going to read what I had written an assign a grade. This was incredible. It was fantastic.

For the first time in my life I was having someone acknowledge my thoughts, my ideas, and my effort in a tangible way, with a grade.

I was always at the top of my classes so this was routine, no big deal. It was part of daily life. But THIS was different. I didn’t HAVE to take this course. I WANTED to, and someone was about to acknowledge my effort.

I don’t think I had felt this before in all my life. My Mother was not one to praise. My husband was not one to praise either.

Praise and positive acknowledgement were alien to me.

Even when we won prizes in school or won music competitions, the attitude of my Mother was more, “Well, this is to be expected after all I have done for you” rather than praise or acknowledgement for individual effort. So when I wrote that exam in this new venue with this group of almost strangers I was, for the first time, experiencing the potential acknowledgement for nothing more than being me. Not someone’s eldest daughter, not someone’s wife or even someone’s mother.

This was just ME.

That was a profound experience for me. This I will never forget. It’s pathetic to admit this that I had lived for 26 years without ever feeling I had an identity of my own, that I had to seek among strangers to have someone value an idea or thought I had. When I went home I was high. I was just elated.

Nurturing my New Self...

I was hooked. I not only wanted to study, I needed to study. But there was no daycare. There was no money for daycare and for courses. I used my baby bonus to pay for the courses because that was the only thing that came in my name. I'm sorry to admit that my husband was very unsupportive of my venture into higher education.

I couldn't read a textbook if he was in the room, it would upset him. He was intensely jealous.

I couldn't play the piano in the house if he was there. So small wonder my sister took me by the hand and said “Let's go to the university”. Small wonder I had all these experiences.

I had no idea what Psychology, or Sociology, or Political Science, or Economics was beyond the vaguest of ideas so I took each of these as first year courses to find out. I was mostly inspired by Sociology so I chose it as my major.

I had a real learning experience when I was doing my second year methods course in Sociology. I learned what I feel has guided my teaching throughout all my years in this profession.

This lesson was that when we are doing research, everything is valuable. This is the second truly memorable classroom experience for me. That if I work hard at something, regardless of the result, it has value. Wow.
Rather than “this is the right way” and “this is the wrong way” which was always the deep conditioning of my childhood, adolescence, and even my marriage.

My worst course was an undergraduate French course.
I can speak enough French to survive.
I thought I’ll take this French course because during this time I put my children into a completely French system because I had built a house in Quebec.
I really had to use my French.
I think I was interested in using it.
But the teacher was lousy, horrible, older guy.
He would come in and sit on the desk and he’d open the book on page 23.
Never mind that it was French, it was just the most horrible teacher.
He didn’t teach.
It was horrible, it was awful. That’s the worst course I ever had.

The best course made me to be philosophical, to value myself.
The worst course was just a lazy person that was just going through the motions.
So, there was absolutely no value in it besides the mark you got at the end.
In the other one there was immeasurable value because there was a personal learning experience.

Influential People...
I would say both in my elementary, high school and university careers some of my profs were mediocre, none was outstanding. I have to say in all fairness, I have never been 100 percent in the classroom.
I’ve always had the children and even when I started my graduate work my kids were going through adolescents. Sometimes I wonder how I survived.

There is one professor who influenced me.
I took a Canadian Literature course for my own pleasure.
There was this guy, he was a short, overweight older guy.
One day he came up to me and he said “Can you explain to me what a sociology major is doing in a required honours English course?”
I was very touched.
I thought he actually looks at his student lists.
But he was so genuine.
He spoke to us, he was so human.
I remember that he shared a story about a function he had attended at an African embassy and he was saying how beautiful the shades of colour in the skin were. I don't think I’d ever heard anyone say that before.
It wasn't related to anything we were studying.
He was simply sharing something that struck him and I really liked that.
He was just being honest.
He wasn't trying to make any points.
He was very much himself.

He loved the subject. He wasn't trying to impress us or please us.
I think he was probably trying to inspire us.
He was just honest.

I had a professor who had hired me and other two guys one summer for a research project.
However, we weren't getting paid.
We designed the research, we did interviews and we had to produce a paper, of course.
Finally, we went to the chair of the department and we said we were going to go on strike.
There was a lot of public awareness about this project.
I remember her trying to cajole us. She first started threatening us but we were quite resolved. This was back in 1980. After all that we produced the paper.

Then, she wanted me to change part of the paper. If there is one thing I learned is you have to be honest about your data. I couldn’t believe it. That summer was very unpleasant and gave a lot of stress and tension. I just couldn’t believe that a professor in that department had asked someone that the findings be changed. You never mess with the data. That was really, really profoundly disappointing. I wanted to believe what we were taught.

So these experiences influenced my views on teaching and learning profoundly, profoundly.

**Language Learning Experiences...**
I learned Latin in the most traditional translation way. I learned French in a very similar way, but never really thought much about it. When I was pregnant with my third child, I was really going nuts because I had no companionship with my husband. He left really early, he came home late. One winter I saw in the local paper there was conversational French at the high school, so I decided to go. It was a big thing. Tuesday and Thursday nights from seven until nine. We were maybe eight students and this was so neat. We would read it together. Each class somebody would summarize a chapter and we would discuss it. This was really fun. I wanted to do it and I liked it. It was a great language learning experience. I think that this, more than any of my other language learning experiences, very much influenced my approach.

**My First Contact with ESL Teaching...**
...goes back when I was home with my kids. I remember hearing on CBC a call for volunteers for English conversation classes to immigrants or refugees. I went, which was a really big deal. Even to go out at night was a big deal because my husband was very possessive. That’s the first time I came into contact with people whose first language wasn’t English, aside from the French people who were around me. I realized then that they just wanted to talk, to use the language before I heard that in any classroom. I enjoy people.

I remember asking one fellow “What did you eat before you went to bed?” He said “Snake.” I thought, “Well how unusual... but what do I know?” Of course, it dawned on me later that he meant a “snack”.

I was also very touched by how genuinely grateful these people were for the time. I think these are things that did help me in the classroom ultimately.

**Becoming a Language Teacher...**
I completed a three-year 'Pass BA' in just over four years. It’s not an Honours Pass. I learned by trial and error what was needed to succeed in each course I took.
Then I did a TESL\textsuperscript{22} program.

My husband wanted me to stop studying and take a job. The idea of my world collapsing back into the scope of the town we lived in was horrifying. Getting through this one year program was a nightmare. That's the time my marriage broke up.

I never really felt I had a formal education to become a teacher. I never thought about being a teacher, and I guess, taking the TESL program was it. I had to do a practicum and I worked with newcomers. I realized these are nice people, mainly middle-aged who just wanted to learn the language. I liked it.

I began teaching ESL in the Intensive Program at the university. It was absolutely a wonderful training place. As far as teaching, I don't think I learned anything really in the TESL program. I learned hands on in the Intensive Program, which was very small. The classes were reasonably small. I found we could be quite creative and you just figure things out as you go along. I taught as a contract teacher for eight years there.

Then, I was offered a tenured position, which I accepted. From that point on I taught only credit courses in academic English. After about ten years, I began to teach courses to regular first-year students in a program. Throughout this time, I was also coordinating the academic English (EAP) program. I did this for ten years. I also completed my Masters Degree during this time. I have been back to teaching only EAP courses for the past two years.

I've been teaching since 1982 and it is 2009, so we're pushing 30 years almost. I didn't know what I was doing when I started.

But now when I look at what I'm doing, it is called \textit{“Sustained Content Approach”}. I have all the students buy a book and we go through this book together doing lots of different things from paraphrasing to synopsising chapters. Everybody has to do a piece of research that relates to the topic of the book. They have to have a theoretical framework. I know that when the kids leave me, they're better equipped for what's ahead because of the things we do in class.

It's a hell of a lot of work but it's worth it when you see that they really are proud of what they do. Nothing better than that. When I get into a classroom, I try to see who the students are, what they need, and how I can as a teacher best make it bloom.

One of the reasons I like to teach the advanced course is that I can really do a lot, I can demand a lot. The more you can do and demand, the more interesting it is. Once they finally understand that I'm not looking for the correct answer but I'm looking for them to take bits and pieces and put it together somehow, that's great.

\textit{My Strengths...}

My strength in teaching is that I'm basically a nice person. I'm not trying to be the boss. Well, this is a funny.

\textsuperscript{22} TESL = Teaching English as a Second Language
I've never thought I was more important or better or brighter or anything '-er' than anybody else. I like to think that this makes students realize, I'm quite human. Even when I do well in something, I'm almost apologetic about it because of the old conditioning. I think warmth and normalness are just strengths.

My Weaknesses...
I suppose my strength was very much a weakness in the early days of teaching. You can't just be nice, you really do have to be the boss in many ways. I suppose over time you learn how to combine those two. I learned, for example, never to let a student redo something for a changed grade. They can redo it as many times as they do and I will give them feedback, but that grade doesn't change. I had a student who kept redoing things and then he failed his final because he didn't learn anything through doing this. I'll never do that again.

Strengths and weaknesses... you just get a lot wiser as you get older and you learn from experience. I do believe this.

I've learned so much about people. I was very naïve.
Today I'm nice, but first of all I'm much more authoritarian in the beginning.
I'm also incredibly well-organized.
I really want to make it clear that I am the teacher and this is my classroom which I'm sharing with them. A very dominant thing, I know.
At about three weeks, I want them to come up with their own research question, which is the hardest part of the course really.
It almost forces them to get in touch with me, or see me in my office. When they do this, I see they're really trying.
I'm my old, nice self, helpful and approachable so we can discover each other on an individual basis.
Later, I'm making exceptions and I'm giving extensions.
By that time it's a nice mesh and then they know what they're doing and they are interested.
They're working not for me, but for them.

Before, I used to give away my niceness and it was taken advantage of.
Now in a way, they almost have to earn it.
So it's just a different way.
In the bigger picture it all comes out the same.
I'm simply wiser now in how I distribute toughness or niceness.

My Worst Course was an intermediate course with mostly Hong Kong Chinese students. As I walked into this classroom and I knew right away this was going to be a bad course.
I had a lot of guys in the class who really just didn't care.
It was bad karma and bad vibes from beginning to end.
Maybe, this was the only time in my life (it could have been 20 years ago) that I got to the point where I just went through the motions.
It gave me no pleasure, no stimulus.
It didn't really change. My efforts were failure.
I almost never teach intermediate courses.
I'm a much better teacher when I'm stimulated.

Every Advanced Course is a “Best” Experience...
... because I end up with at least half of the class doing work that they are truly proud of. When I see them doing that, I know I have done what I wanted to do.
This was my objective and I know it's good for them, let me put it that way.
I've had students come back after for letters of recommendation when they're graduating.
But they do say they realized what a good foundation they got. What we do together is good.

Another thing is the books that I choose in my courses. For example, we used Jeffrey Sachs The End of Poverty a few years ago. Since 2006 I have always had some focus. I try to guide their research a little bit. I think it's important.

I think consciousness-raising and awareness-raising is very important. I work on behalf of the “Grandmothers in Africa” through the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

So aside from giving them the kinds of skills and academic strategies they need, I also give them a framework with the books that I choose when they do their research. It's a loose framework and I push sometimes a little bit to keep them in, so that they do become more aware of this globe that we share. I feel I wouldn't have to, I could do it on anything, but I think that's important.

My teaching, especially over the last few years, has truly, truly undergone some changes. I'm toast at the end of the term, but I really feel actually good. Again, not to pat myself on the back, but I've really done my best. I'm very pleased, it's very satisfying.

A Good Language Teacher Needs to Be...

- really human,
- certainly not threatening,
- very flexible and at the same time really know what they want to accomplish,
- honest with oneself and with one's students. I think that's probably a really very important characteristic,
- strong because it's really hard work,
- honest and caring.

They really have to care because if you care, I think you are honest and if you're honest, you care.

My Teaching Philosophy Reflects my Late Awakening...

My late awakening is very much what I try to have happen in my classroom. It's just that simple. It's not a matter of being more or less talented. It's a matter of self-discovery.

If you recognize yourself, then you want to do well. You want to do your best for yourself, not for your professor, or your mother, or your grandma. Without question very strong parallels there.

The most important thing for me in teaching is getting to know what it is about each individual person, how I can - as a teacher - inspire them to do their best whatever they're learning.

As long as the students are on the other side of the desk and they figure they have to sit there for 72 hours and then they're going to be free… nothing much is going to happen.

You can awaken a student to be on fulfilling that 72 hour requirement. How? Do whatever they need to get them interested. Once they're interested, they'll start to care.
Get them engaged rather than just “I’ve got to do this, so I’ll do it.”

Dream first; then act.
Without the dream there will be no change.
If you work on it, something will happen.
Never give up on something you feel is important. Always do your best.

My teaching philosophy is more geared to the students who play the passive receiver of knowledge. “Okay I’m here, make it happen.”
Basically it's to affect a change in attitude, or affect a change in role.
Just to get them active instead of passive, get them engaged.
I know this sounds so simplistic but that’s basically.

I think that knowing my own talents, weaknesses and shortcomings in terms of learning and having intellectual curiosity have really had a big impact on my teaching.

I teach really with all my heart.

I tell my students that I just want them to do their best.
If they don’t do their best, they're in trouble.

This has really fundamentally informed my approach and I think it will until I die.

Part Two: Experiencing the Personal Self

There was Nothing Outstanding...
I had a lot of siblings, it was a busy life.
I just saw myself as another cog in the wheel.

I see myself in a way non-existent as a child.
I don’t think I really had a childhood because I was always caring for my younger siblings, which wasn’t valued.
It was expected. I didn't mind doing that.

My Father was at work and my Mom was home; it was very traditional then.
My Mother should never have had eight children.
She's not really a terribly nice person.

She never, ever, ever praised us.
She was extremely critical.
If you didn’t get a knock on the head or told that you were lazy or whatever that was good.
That was sort of the praise.

Very Regulated Life: Church, School, Home, and Music...
We went to church every single day. We would get dressed and go to church.
When we came home we would have our porridge.
Always porridge. Never ate porridge after I left home, never.
Then, we would go to school.

When I came home from school, it was my job to feed the two youngest.
One was born when I was 13, and one was born when I was 14.
I would feed them and make a pan of biscuits, so that was as soon as you got home.
Then, somebody would be practicing because we’d all have to practice half an hour or an hour a day.
Then do our homework.
Go to our music lesson and go to bed.
No TV during the week.
We did well. We didn't shame anyone.

Nothing was memorable.

These memories of routinized life taught me to have a very fear-based attitude toward everything rather than exploratory, and it taught me about myself.

When I was 15, I remember thinking that I was my Mother's Mother.
None of us was really encouraged or even allowed to develop any kind of a personal identity.
If we did, it was just kept very quiet.

I got engaged at 17 to the boy next door, so you can see how small my world was.

I didn't want to become engaged.
I got married the week after my 19th birthday.
I had already started to work.
We built a house. We had a nice house, everything was perfect.

I had three babies in four and a half years.

By the time I'd had my third child and was married about 10 years or so, my sister took me by the hand.

I started my undergraduate degree at that point.

When I was 26, 27, 28, even through those years, I was still trying to be the good quiet wife and mother.
I was a sister, I was a neighbour, I was a mother.
I was all the things but there was no me and that's for sure.

I really didn't have any expectations of myself but I was very glad we had our own house.
I was very grateful about that.
I kept my house meticulously clean because that was how I would be judged.
I was so naïve. I really was, I'm sorry to say it but it's just true.
So in those years I began to just explore the world beyond my own doorstep.

My Mother was very, very good to us up until the age where you start to show a little bit of independence and self expression, and that she really couldn't handle.
I can see that she was in very, very strong competition.

My Mother was like the enemy, although we never thought of her that way.
She was never really a friend. She was certainly never a confidante.
I don't know exactly when I figured out I really couldn't trust my Mother.
Her needs were tremendous. We just didn't realize that.
So we learned how to behave to keep peace at home.

My Mother was like the enemy, although we never thought of her that way.
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So we learned how to behave to keep peace at home.

My Dad was a good guy. He went to work, he came home, and he paid everything.
He was kind of quiet. I realize he was surviving too.
Daddy was secure, stable, fair and peace-seeking, and also incredibly well-read. He kept a low profile.
Daddy always, always, always was reading and studying, I think he was quite intelligent. I know that my Father really felt education for us was crucial.

What Kind of an Impact does This Have on Us?
From our Father we had a tremendous stability. Now he didn't sit with us and we didn't have all these intimate moments with him, but he was always there. He didn't frighten us.

My Mother on the other hand, competed with all her kids. It's tough when your Mother sees you as competition. I don't just mean in terms of physical attractiveness, but in any way. We couldn't develop identity, it just could not be. My Mom was a control freak. This does have an impact on you. We had a lot of security when it came to my Father and a lot of insecurity when it comes to my Mother. Maybe that's a good balance.

On one hand, I am very, very afraid to go into a doorway I haven't been in before. On the other hand, I also have unbelievable courage. So it's weird.

I know that I have this and I’m sure that this came from my parents, these two almost black-and-white types of people.

I was just trying to be the perfect wife, mother and daughter. If my Mother even once in my life had said “I'm proud of you” or “You've done well” or “You're a good mother”, I think I would have fallen down. Never, ever, praise from my mother. Mostly you got criticised really. After a while it didn't even matter.

I feel that my Mother wounded me by depriving me of the kind of mother whom I could trust, in whom I could confide and look to for understanding and emotional support. It has taken a long time for me to be able to come to terms with this.

I've spent a good part of my life trying to get some kind of acknowledgement from my Mother. It certainly had a big impact on who I married and my views. My Mother lived vicariously through us. When I got my degrees my Mother's attitude would be “Well, of course, I raised you well.” Even today we have no identity with my Mother whatsoever. Without a doubt these experiences of mine – never any praise; no opportunity to build an identity, and so on – have a big impact on how I am as a teacher. I became a teacher almost walking backwards, but that's where I found myself.

Without a doubt the most important thing for me is to try to help the student to take pride in themselves. Whatever they're doing is important.

When the children's father and I separated in the 1980s, I started to have what I called “Sisters' Dinners”. We did it about four times a year. I started this because I really needed this. So I would have my sisters over to dinner. Then as they married and had their own houses we’d take turns where we went.
Over the next five years what came of that was what we called “Mom Bashing Sessions”.
Up until then we never criticized my Mother or said anything.
I could look back now and see that this was very, very good group therapy for us.
We all admitted that my Mom was really a pretty self-focused creature for whatever reason.

About five years ago I found myself feeling – just in my heart – a little more distanced.
It’s really hard to explain. I just see us not so much as a cohesive bunch.
I’ve just backed off a little bit.
We give each other space to settle into our little corners of the world.
Underlying it all we’re still extremely, extremely tightly bonded.

Honesty, Spirituality, Generosity…
I admire honesty, especially in terms of people looking into themselves and trying to understand who they are.
I greatly admire people who acknowledge spirituality as a dimension of self and dare to explore it.
Generosity of spirit is also an important quality.
It means that people are considerate of others, understand that our lives are richer when we share with and care for one another.

I love my sister who is next to me deeply and dearly. She’s kind of my mother.
She’s the one I turn to; she’s the one I trust; she’s the one I know will be so discrete; she is the one who would be able to comfort me.
I’m just really glad that I have this is one person in my whole life that I feel I can turn to.
I have lots of friends and some of them are very good friends.
But I have this special, special, special bond with X.
I wanted to mention that because no doubt this is also related to my non-mother figure.

I learned that life is very, very painful or unfair.
I do very much believe that the only way we can progress is to struggling.
Yet, I’m so glad my life is behind me.
I’m one woman who doesn’t want to be one day younger than she is.

I’m tired, I’m really, really tired.
At the same time I sure am grateful, like I have a pretty good life.
I’ve been given lots of gifts.
All of my kids are healthy, I have all these siblings, I got hired, and I got tenure.

I really believe that life is what we choose to make of it or said in another way, I believe that we are, to a great extent, the constructors of our lives.
I am the only person responsible for making my life good, satisfying, happy, and fulfilled.
By ‘constructor’ I don’t mean I feel I am in total control.

I believe that life is a challenge.
I believe that these challenges, however difficult they may be, are meant to help us to grow as individuals.
We must work to make the best of what life presents to us.
As contradictory as it may sound, we are not in control of the big picture, but by functioning within this bigger picture we can acquire the skills we need to help to control some of the images within that picture.

I think security has been a preoccupation even before I realized the meaning of this word.
I’m thinking of emotional security rather than physical or financial security.
As a child I so wanted to feel not so much needed, but I wanted to feel valued.
I guess I’m equating the feeling of security with that of feeling valued.
This need to feel valued has added to my life in that it has directed my life choices.
I desperately wanted to be accepted in all spheres:
- family (childhood),
- school (childhood and adulthood),
- the workplace,
- in social situations,
- in every sphere I can think of.

I chose to conform always so that I would feel valued.

Without question my family has had a great impact on who I was and still am. As I child I all I wanted to do was to obtain my Mother's acceptance, to somehow please her. I was in my 40's when I began to understand and accept that it was impossible to please my Mother. I was trapped for so long in terms of wanting and trying to please someone whom it was impossible to please. This psychological entrapment led to my choice of husband because he, like my Mother, was impossible to please.

There are some things I'd like to change in myself. I would like to be more self-disciplined.

I really want to wake up and feel energy.

I'm so tired of being tired and sometimes I think I'm just plain tired.

The 80's was really hard on me, trying to raise kids. The 90's were okay, but they had their challenges. Then throughout our current decade, I've carried the challenges of my daughter's horrible marriage. It has been 10 years of challenge and struggle.

Sometimes I think I'm at that point where you just don't wake up with energy any more. But I'm very obstinate, I refuse to accept that.

Boy, would I like to have energy again...

There should be a formula I can apply.

I have learned that adapting to a context rather than struggling against it is the key to a fulfilling life. "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade". I recall a prayer that says "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

One of the things that I love the most about my job is the amount of creativity it allows. Creativity in teaching approach, in choice of content, in individual interactions with colleagues and students. I have considered myself a creative person for many years now. I think adaptability and creativity make me value myself.

Isn't that a big statement!

I Have a Quite Good Prayer Life...

I take my spiritual dimension seriously and I like it. It has intensified over the past 10 years I'd say because I read and I pursue. I do incorporate it into my professional life in a way but on quite a surface level. When I am going to school I usually pray and sometimes I pray for my students in general. Sometimes if they're writing a test, I'll pray while I'm walking. Sometimes I give what they call 'spiritual direction talks'. When I'm preparing those talks, I pray before and I do ask for guidance. I just ask to be used as a vehicle for that.
Part Three: Experiencing the Intuitive Self
(Through Guided Visualization)

I didn’t Do It… First Interview (May 14, 2009)
I honestly thought it wasn’t time yet to do the guided visualization activity.
I simply misunderstood.

Anyway, I didn’t do it. That’s it.
I’ll do it next time.

Well, they say there’s a reason for everything. I guess there’s a reason I didn’t do it.
I mean ultimately it will be beneficial.

It’s Not Easy for Me… Second Interview (June 30, 2009)
Well I’m glad I did it. It’s not easy for me.
I’m one of those very stubborn people. I’m just very stubborn.
So I just tried my best, which is my approach.

I did it three times and it was interesting.
I did at the same time understand that it’s the process.

So anyway, I wrote questions that related to teaching that are important to me.
Looking at the three times there is definitely an evolution in terms of who I chose and what they said.
I always remember if I had to choose one word that is the most important thing in my whole life or my biggest weakness, I would probably choose the word “trust”.
I think this very much comes from my experience.

Maybe I’ll do it again. I’ll try it just to see.
It’s very hard for me to go there, okay.
I really do try. I crave the atmosphere, but it’s not easy.

The questions were pretty important and related to my teaching and my professional life.
Without a doubt I really care about these questions.
But to pray about them…?

You see when it comes to my spirituality the fact that I’m a teacher is just a gift.
The progression in the three answers to the questions is evident and tangible.
The answers made sense. It doesn’t really resolve anything.
It’s not something I didn’t already know on some level.
I guess, we’re talking about the different dimensions of dealing with practical questions.

I think the answers are already in there. It’s a matter of getting at them.
It’s a matter of what dimension or level we choose to deal with them.

Going through the activity was interesting.
It showed me again how resistant I am to truly altering any kind of mental state.
I’m even not very good at meditation.
It takes time.
Then you just go with it and see what’s happening when you’re in there.

I only did this once.
There is one parable where Jesus is throwing seeds, and some fall on the rich soil, and some fall on the rocks, and some fall here and there. That happened to be the passage for the day, so I was with him walking along the road.

**What was I doing?**
I was picking up the ones that fell on the rocks.

Now, when I thought of it after, this is so my role in the family.
Take care of stuff and it's so NOT accepting and letting go.
It's so controlling, fixing.
It was very interesting for that. I don't see I even put the seeds down.

So I'll continue to try and do this once a week or maybe twice a week.
I'm open to it anyway.

*Part of Me didn't Want to Go There...* Third Interview (August 25, 2009)
I only did it twice more.
So I'm bad but that's the truth.
But I changed my question.
When I did it these last couple of times, my question was much more about me and the world as opposed to the classroom.

I'm being very honest with you; I think I'm just not a good candidate for this kind of thing.
I was going to say it was a bit of a struggle, but that's kind of dramatic. It wasn't a struggle.

Maybe it gets back to this issue of “trust”. I don't know, but I was kind of forcing it.
I think I'm not a good candidate because I can't say in any of these cases this was illuminating for me.

My intuitive side can be scary but I don't think that's the problem. I'm exaggerating a bit.
I think that there is part of me that really didn't want to go there obviously, or else I would have allowed myself to go there.

But there is definitely something in there that is protecting me.
I don't understand why or how.
I just resist giving up myself, I don't know.

On one hand, I really have nothing against it. I think it would be very interesting.
On the other hand, it's not going to happen. Why, I don't know.

From a bigger perspective, maybe I can't or shouldn't really ask a question.
It's just very contingent upon my view of the world that there is a God.

We shouldn't really question.
We should accept some things.
We should learn.

We should do our best.
I'm a practicing Catholic, but I would like everybody in the world to explore their spiritual dimension.
I think there's only one Greater Power, whatever we call it.
I'm a Catholic so this is how I've been taught to think.

So maybe that's part of that because the Catholic, just as at home things were very, very strict and so was my religious training. Maybe, if I had been raised as a Buddhist this would be very easy for me because I think it's much more contemplative.
Also, remember I'm a Scot and we're very stubborn. I mean it. I'm really nice and I'm fairly generous but there's a point at which I will die before I will give in.

I do have a deep, deep bravery but I don't exercise that unless it's a really important principle. Maybe that's working there as well.

Part Four: Experiencing the Re-Construction of Teacher Identity

I Was an Adult before I Could See Myself as an Individual...
... rather than someone portraying a societal role. I believe my early childhood experiences were influential in constraining rather than expanding my self-perceptions. My Mother was a very controlling person and was not the kind of person who gave, or could give, praise or positive feedback, for anything, at any time. As children we came to take non-criticism as something positive.

It's like I had to fulfill all my duties to my Mother, maybe parents,
- get married,
- build a house,
- have babies,
- and only then could I look to myself and my needs, even if I did not really recognize these needs at the time.

I began to develop as an individual, as my own individual.

Feeling Guilty about the Person I Am...
As far as beliefs about myself go:
I always had and continue, to this day on a personal level, to have feelings of guilt about the person I am. I know this can be part of depression but I had discussed these feelings with my doctor. I was on anti-depressants for about a year about a decade ago. I think these feelings of guilt are very much a part of my indoctrination as a child, as never being good enough to be praised or to receive any overt gestures of love from my Mother, or for that matter from my Father. These feelings of guilt do not enter into my perceptions of self as a teacher.

I Do Not Have Sufficient TRUST in Others...
I have very few extremely close personal relationships but many good, solid friendships. I think I do not have sufficient trust in others.
I was extremely close to my sisters. But I found, in small and big ways over the years, that the level of intimacy I wanted, needed or expected was not given in the ways I wanted or needed. No doubt this is stemming from my feelings of inadequacy as a child and from never feeling truly valued. I have some close friendships. There is always a part of myself that I will not commit to anyone. I cannot risk this because in the past I have been too often disappointed somehow. I really need intimacy in my life because I think it's something I didn't have or I thought I had but then found that it was maybe false. I have accepted that I'm never going to have this. It's almost like the ideal partner, the ideal marriage, the ideal workplace. There is no ideal that I should be. I have accepted myself with all my good and bad points.
I am more **contented** at this point in life than ever in my past.

**Traits from My Parents Reflected in My Teaching...**

I really had a hard time looking at my parents in my journaling.

I saw my parents as the leaders, the **directors of my world as a child**.

When I look at my Father, I learned from him to **take what you have and make the best that you can**.

When I look at my Mother, I took a negative and I turned that into a learning experience in that **“Do not operate in this negative way”**.

**My Mother** taught me that **when it is all about me it is nothing**.

It is **only when it is about others that there is value**.

In the classroom this relates very much to **finding the best in somebody else** and then **trying to do the best with that**. So that would be the father-trait.

The mother-trait is **“Never tell anybody that they’ve done something wrong.”**

You don’t get anywhere with criticism, people close when they’re criticized.

So they’re not open to learning more.

Those are very clear to me having gone through this process.

**I Am a Very Good Teacher...**

I believe I am a very good teacher because I **care so much about how my students feel about themselves as learners, as individuals, as members of our shared global family rather than caring about the extent to which they ingest a certain amount of course content**.

This perception of myself as having a good approach, strategy and perspective definitely **informs my work as a teacher**, from deciding what I will present in the classroom to how I present it and how I evaluate the work that students do. I **feel very strongly about this**.

I don’t suggest that what I do and how I do it is the only right way to teach.

It is the **right way for me**.

I never doubt myself when it comes to the classroom.

I do my best and expect students to do their best and I tell them this.

It **is even in my course outlines**.

I see teaching as an **opportunity to personally interact with people** no matter what you're teaching.

My classroom experience has always been with **first year students**.

I am very much **the person with the power** here and I never want to wield this power for my own sake.

Rather I try to use this power to **make them feel more and more powerful** in terms of navigating through the maze.

I want to go through life and **basically do no harm and do the best I can**, do what good I can.

If I say “for other people”, I sound a little bit like Mother Theresa but I see no value in any other motivation.

**I want to look back at what I’ve done and value it and not be ashamed of it.**

When I’m working with a student, my tendency is to praise what they’ve done well or half-well and I try not to come down too hard on what is lacking.

It's really very connected.

That’s my answer of how my life experiences have influenced my teaching.

**It’s just that simple.**

**It took me a long time to figure it out.**

Of course in recognizing self you have to come to value yourself and feel valued by others.
I think the value thing and the self are connected.  
In my teaching the value for me as a teacher is doing my best to help students come to value themselves.

First, I had to go through this rebirth or epiphany with respect to myself.  
In terms of my professional life, this very much is translated into what I do and how I do it as opposed to teaching a curriculum.

**I Would Love to Retire...**  
There are very few people that I work with that I truly respect.  
If I feel someone is a good person, I will offer them respect.  
This is very judgemental and perhaps very selfish of me.

I need to keep my energies for my students and for myself.  
I would love to retire.  
I don't want my professional life anymore.  
There was a time when I really needed it and I'm sure it helped me to build my identity.  
There is very little that is shared in my personal and in my professional life.  
I wish I could retire.

My professional life at this point is purely a source of income.  
I am tired, weary, exhausted from teaching.

I derive no professional satisfaction from what I do.  
My satisfaction comes from identifying the challenges in the classroom and doing my best with what I am given for a limited period of time.

I like to sing. I hum at work.  
I like to laugh. I laugh at work.  
I like to smile. I smile at work.

**The Way I See Myself as a Teacher...**  
I'm extremely organized.  
I'm very honourable for every time, no matter how much I hate it, I give the feedback that I feel this kid needs.  
I give good value.  
In the first few weeks I'm very rigid.  
I play this role and then as time goes on I become more flexible.  
There's this whole teacher role that I do.  
I see myself as a teacher who is interested in stuff, eager to try new things.  
I'm fearless, I guess, in a way.  
I have total confidence in myself as a teacher.  
I had no confidence in myself as a child.

**Why Am I Like That as a Teacher?**  
I suspect that these are connected to my childhood.  
There were all these rules and you didn't really raise your voice because you didn't want to rock the boat with my Mother.  
At the same time inside of me has always been this rebel that “if there's a rule it must be broken”.

I'm not afraid to break it.  
So I think some of those things come from my hidden self, maybe.  
I have this need to break rules, this need to be not so confined, so constrained.  
I don't criticize as a teacher because of my Mother and her constant criticism.  
Nothing positive comes from criticism.
I've carried two husbands; the first one was a great weight because you never really stop carrying the father of your children. I've carried my children both literally and figuratively. I've carried my Mother certainly. I've carried one of my brothers and then some of my siblings.

I feel very healthy. I really feel I did my best. I definitely have this feeling of “never being good enough” but I don’t mean good enough as far as my colleagues, my parents, or my siblings think.

It’s really hard to pinpoint this but it’s there. My thoughts about myself are a bit of a melange too because it takes a little bit of that guilt. When I feel that or when I see that I tell myself “not to worry about that”. Just to carry on and do my best.

I am judgmental. Certainly this also I can relate back to my Mother. I am definitely judgmental. There are not that many people who I genuinely respect in my terms. I mean I want to acknowledge them as individuals and who they are. But on the other hand, there is no particular reason I want them in my life.

I don’t want to carry anybody else.

I feel I’ve carried a lot of people in my life. I’ve carried two husbands; the first one was a great weight because you never really stop carrying the father of your children. I’ve carried my children both literally and figuratively. I’ve carried my Mother certainly. I’ve carried one of my brothers and then some of my siblings.

I’m happy to listen to somebody. In my relationships now I want balance. I want it. I need it. I look for it. I have nothing to give besides a bit of time sometimes.

I want people to see me positively but if they don’t, I won’t die. I don’t need others. I deeply need others, but I have found that the cost is too high and so I keep my distance. This is very helpful in the classroom because I can work very hard with the student and I can even support them whether it’s personal or content. When the term is over, I have no wish to maintain the connection. This definitely has an impact in the classroom in a good way because I don’t think that teachers should be friends even after the course is over.

I think there’s a lot of connection how I feel about myself as a person and a teacher.

My Being in Balance Depends on

- my sense of self,
- my discovery of self,
- my acknowledgement and recognition of self, and
- my acceptance of self.

Big way.
It was in my 40’s that I let go of my Mother.

This was a big freeing thing in terms of coming to accept, acknowledge, and recognize myself.

It took many years to acknowledge my Mother’s shortcomings, identify, acknowledge, and forgive her for them insofar as I could. That traditionally, she had no duty to me beyond having me, feeding me, protecting me from the elements.

My happiness was not contingent on her acceptance.

So that was a whole process.

I didn’t come to embrace myself until I let go of my Mother.

I don’t want to go back in my life at any point at all.

It’s a painful process but at the same time everybody goes through that.

I’m not unique.

I truly believe that life is a gift that’s given by God, or a Higher Power, or whatever you want to call it.

It’s not supposed to be a bed of roses.

I don’t want to sound too Catholic but you never learn much if it’s smooth.

We don’t recognize that these burdens are given to us as opportunities for our self-discovery.

The Research Process was Confirmatory…

Participating in the research has been a very good process.

I’ve been through the steps very much as a result of these “Sisters’ Dinners”.

The guilt thing is still there.

So this process has been interesting because I am older now and have more life experience behind me.

It’s been like a refresher course in a way and a confirmation of many things.

I guess the research process was confirmatory.

It was nice to have the opportunity to put it down and write.

When you actually write something it’s quite different even from saying it.

So, it was confirmatory.

I think in terms of my teaching it was good too.

When you’re teaching, you’re so busy. You don’t have time for this kind of introspection.

That was really good.

It confirmed who I see myself as, what I see myself doing.

That’s good, that’s good.

So there’s a certain reward about focusing on you in a research process because it is all about me.

But at the same time I have a lot of respect for what you’re doing:

➢ Tackling an area that doesn’t fit quite into the academic world and still doing it.

That has been a motivating factor too to go and sit down and do it.

All you’re asking is a bit of my time to sit and focus on me.

Let’s face it.

This research process has helped me to remember the positive experiences perhaps.

Back in the early 90’s I participated in another research.

This was the first time that I articulated my key learning experiences and really looked at myself as a teacher.

I felt that I should mention this.

If I had not had that experience, this research process might have been more informative, or it may have been more of a discovery for me as opposed to kind of a confirmation of things.
I'm very proud of what I do.
I have a lot of respect for myself.
I feel all kinds of positive things about myself.
I don't mean to be prideful or boastful.
Going through the process of doing this work with you has sort of validated my confidence in myself as a person and as a teacher.

I accept myself.

Part Five: Corroboration of Experience
January 27, 2010

I found the portrayal surprisingly accurate in terms of the overall picture.
Three words came to mind as I tried to capture my experience:

CONFIRMATORY, ASSURING, and CLARIFYING

It was confirmatory to look at my young self, then my older self, and now my old self. So that was nice.
It was assuring and it was a positive thing.
It was a clarifying experience.

Then, I must admit that in some ways this was a HEALING EXPERIENCE for me too.
Not in big astounding terms, but in small ways but still it’s also a very positive thing.

This experience was like putting on a pair of glasses and things came better into focus.
The Child Inside feels acknowledged and the Adult feels competent.

Reading the portrayal was definitely positive and reinforcing. It just made me feel good.
It made me feel that I'm on the right path.
I thought I'm going along with what I have to work with, I'm making progress, whether it's fast or slow compared to somebody else I don't know, but I don't care.

I need to be a less involved teacher simply because of class sizes and the kinds of things I'm asking them to do.
I'm really, really at the limit of my resources or maybe I have more resources but I have to give them to other places and I can't seem to do it.
I don't know if I could live with myself to do less for them.
I really need to become less involved and I don't know how to do that and sleep at night.
Interestingly in the mail today I got a textbook. I was looking at it a little bit. I said to myself “Apropos, this is how I can become less involved”. Maybe, I'll have to try to use textbooks.

It was just interesting that as I was going through these questions and thinking about new insights, this book came the same day.
This project showed me that today I'm certainly more experienced, I'm better at teaching.
It's really a blessing that I happened to end up teaching here so that's really been great.
Clarification and confirmation are always good.
I was thinking that this process showed me that it's very important and I really value this kind of research.
I'm glad you're doing it. I hope other people will do this kind of research as well.

Being involved I definitely got something out of it, but I didn't know at the beginning that I would.
Giving time to it really showed me that I'm a great fan of this kind of research.
I really hope the world is ready for this. That's something I worry about sometimes.
Researcher’s Analytical Summary

I identified several important experiences in Mary’s life that made an impact on her beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations about her identity as a teacher.

This summary is divided into two major sections as responses to both research questions. First, in response to the first research question I present a selection of what I, the researcher, saw as the most influential experiences of Mary’s life based on the analysis of her portrayal. The analysis maps out the connections and relationships between Mary’s educational, professional and personal experiences and the development of her teacher identity. Then, I present some prevailing themes as signs of Mary’s perspective transformation about her identity as a teacher and a person that emerged during the analysis. This section outlines the answer to the second research question.

1. Important educational, professional and personal experiences – including language learning experiences – that influenced the development of Mary’s teacher identity

Educational Experiences and Language Learning

Mary grew up as the oldest girl in a big family, which made quite a deep impact on her sense of identity, “I was just one of many”. From very early on, she took care of her younger siblings and she had duties and responsibilities. Her comments about her childhood revealed sadness, “There is nothing that stands out” and “Nothing was memorable”. I wondered whether her childhood was in fact not memorable at all or the comments were only a way for her to avoid the recollection of some unpleasant experiences. She admitted that she had not liked being at home and “we’d rather be at school because my Mom was kind of crazy”; “I read a lot and I think this was an escape for me”. She created an imaginary world through her readings and this was her way of getting away from the realities of life in her family. She played the piano and she loved playing music, which appeared to be another form of escape for her. Her winning a piano competition at a young age was an indication of her musical talent and skills. However, she “didn’t get praised” and in general, doing well “was expected”. She seems to have been deprived of living and enjoying life in her early childhood and concluded that “There was no opportunity for the development of a sense of self”.

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Yet, Mary was always among the best students at school, which was also expected of her at home. Her parents had high expectations about their children’s studies, “we weren’t allowed to fail”. However, there was no praise and no acknowledgement of her accomplishments and efforts in the family, which made a powerful emotional and psychological impact on her personal and professional life later on. Wonderful accomplishments and good grades were taken for granted. Conformity was highly encouraged in Mary’s family; as a result, she learned that “we didn’t draw attention to ourselves” and “we really kept a low profile”.

Mary’s studies at university played a crucial role in the development of her teacher identity, especially because of the “non-existence” of herself in childhood. University studies were one of the first opportunities for her to develop and explore her sense of identity. She was 26 years old and married with three young children when she began her undergraduate studies. She recalled that she was “very much aware of discovering herself” through her studies and “this was a real big thing” for her. Her first exam in a literature course was an opportunity for her to express herself, “I can’t tell you how much it meant to me when I was writing the final exam”. It was in this exam situation that “for the first time in my life I was having someone acknowledge my thoughts, my ideas, and my effort in a tangible way”. This experience was particularly meaningful for her because of her sense of “non-existence” as a child, “I had lived for 26 years without ever feeling that I had an identity of my own”. She was very excited about having found an outlet for self-expression. Mary articulated her deep desire to take courses and to get more knowledge and experience: “I was hooked. I not only wanted to study, I needed to study”. This learning experience was a profound turning point in her life because of the “potential acknowledgement for nothing more than being me” and also because of the fact that “praise and positive acknowledgement were alien to me”. Despite her enjoyment of and excitement about studying, and in spite of it being a great opportunity for self-discovery and self-expression, her efforts were not supported by her husband. As Mary put it, her husband disapproved of her interest in reading books, playing the piano, and pursuing university studies. In other words, all forms of her self-expression hit a barrier and were frowned upon. These obstacles can be viewed as “tests” of her determination and commitment to standing up for herself and exploring her identity.

Mary claimed that she had learned important lessons in some of her courses, e.g., “when we are doing research, everything is valuable”. This course taught her to value herself and to be
proud of her accomplishments that, in turn, also influenced and guided her later instructional approach and teaching philosophy. Stemming from this learning experience, Mary developed a belief: “If I work hard at something, regardless of the result, it has value”. This belief shaped her pedagogical knowledge expressed in the following way: “The most important thing for me is to try to help the student to take pride in themselves. Whatever they’re doing IS important”. Thus, the above aspect of Mary’s teaching philosophy exemplifies the impact of beliefs stemming from educational experiences on her instructional practice. Mary’s negative experience working with a professor on a research project was the source of the following two beliefs: “you never mess with the data” and “I wanted to believe what we were taught”. The first one shows her strong position and belief about research ethics, while the second one reveals her deep desire for confidence and trust in a professor’s credibility and the reliability of teaching materials. When I probed into these educational events in the interview, Mary affirmed that “these experiences influenced my views on teaching and learning profoundly”.

Mary spoke very highly of only one professor who influenced her perceptions and interpretations in important ways because “he was genuine”, “he was human”, “he was very much himself” and “he was just honest”. These character traits were inspiring for Mary that ultimately shaped her instructional practice, her attitude to students and her teaching philosophy. Upon closer scrutiny, it was obvious that the appearance of these traits (e.g., genuine, human, honest, being oneself) were crucial for Mary because she was discouraged to express them in her childhood. She appeared to be inclined to look for these traits, which had been repressed, outside of herself. The professor acted as a role model for her and personified an unconscious projection of Mary’s hidden desire for self-expression ever since childhood. This is a good example of raising the personal unconscious to consciousness (Jung, 1959) because Mary was able to notice these traits in others, but could not see them in herself at the time. However, over time she succeeded in developing and expressing these qualities in her professional life, “I’m quite human”, “I think warmth and normalness are just strengths”, “I have total confidence in myself as a teacher”, and “I’m very proud of what I do”.

Mary learned Latin and French, both in a similar, traditional grammar-translation way. After having had her third child, she decided to take a conversational French course, which employed, however, a different teaching approach. In a small group setting students had a French book, summarized a chapter, and discussed the main points. This turned out to be a powerful
experience that made an impact on Mary’s instructional practice that she described as follows: “students buy a book; we go through this book together doing lots of different things from paraphrasing to synopsizing chapters”. Mary acknowledged the connection between her own language learning experience and her teaching approach (e.g., using books as teaching materials), “This, more than any other language learning experiences, very much influenced my approach”.

**Professional Experiences**

Mary’s first language teaching experience was volunteering for English conversation classes. Based on my analysis, the concept of volunteering can be connected to her childhood experiences in the family where she had learned to give herself freely. She loved the way her students expressed their acknowledgement and appreciation of her effort, “I was also very touched by how genuinely grateful these people were”. The first overt sign of student gratefulness for her work obviously compensated for her parents’ lack of appreciation and affirmation of her efforts making her feel valuable and important and her “childhood conditioning to just not stand out”.

Mary’s formal education to become a language teacher reveals a great deal of courage and perseverance on her part, considering that she dared to make a number of personal sacrifices (e.g., giving up her marriage, raising three kids as a single mother). As she recounted, her teaching approach has undergone several changes over the decades of her professional life. The changes in Mary’s teaching approach and teaching philosophy clearly reflect the influence of her own personal development and growth, “my late awakening is very much what I try to have happen in the classroom”. She summed up her teaching philosophy as follows: “it’s a matter of self-discovery” because “if you recognize yourself, then you want to do well”. Mary found “consciousness-raising and awareness-raising” very important in her teaching as a result of her late awakening in her personal life. This is another instance of the impact of a personal experience on professional matters. The articulation of her beliefs connected to her teaching philosophy are quite profound and inspirational, e.g., “dream first, then act”; “without a dream there will be no change”; “if you work on it, something will happen”; and “always do your best”. It stands out without a doubt that she is very passionate about her students and wants to inspire them, “I just want them to do their best” and she cares deeply about them, “I teach really
with all my heart”. Mary’s verbalizations depict her genuine reflective skills and her ability to make connections between her teaching and her personal experiences, e.g., “knowing my own talents, weaknesses and shortcomings in terms of learning and having intellectual curiosity have really had a big impact on my teaching”.

**Personal Experiences**

Personal life experiences, such as (i) strictly regulated life in childhood, (ii) parental influence, and (iii) religious upbringing, made a lifelong impact on Mary’s sense of teacher identity. Indeed, her personal life experiences had a more powerful influence on the development of her teacher identity than any of the above-described educational and professional experiences because of the deep psychological and emotional wounds.

Mary’s regulated life in childhood and adolescence included going to church every morning, going to school, helping out at home, studying, and practicing music. It is quite profound that she saw herself “non-existent as a child” and “as another cog in the wheel”. She always cared for her younger siblings and she admitted that it “wasn’t valued. It was expected”. She and her siblings never received any praise from their mother who “was extremely critical”, controlling and demanding. No wonder that Mary did not want to remember those times when she had not been allowed “to develop any kind of personal identity”. Mary expressed that “these memories of routinized life taught me to have a fear-based attitude toward everything rather than exploratory”. These early family experiences obviously contributed to the development of her lack of trust and confidence in self and other, naïveté, lack of expectations of herself, and feelings of guilt that she saw as “very much part of my indoctrination as a child, as never being good enough to be praised, or to receive any overt gestures of love from my mother or my father”. The restrained family situation did not allow her to have personal freedom and creativity. She admitted that this situation taught her that “adapting to a context rather than struggling against it is the key to a fulfilling life”. She succeeded in developing her identity, personal freedom and creativity later in her professional life, as she put it, “that’s where I found myself”.

Several aspects of Mary’s teacher identity could be traced back to her perceptions and interpretations of her parents’ personalities and her relationship with them. Her mother clearly made a lasting impact on Mary and also influenced her attitude and personality as a teacher,
which were acknowledged in the interviews. Mary’s mother was “in very strong competition” with her own kids and she lived through them. She used the phrase “garrison mentality” describing her feelings of the home culture. Her mother was almost like an “enemy”, “she was never really a friend”, and “she was certainly never a confidante”; therefore, “I couldn’t really trust her”. These are emotionally-charged claims to make and very strong perceptions and interpretations on Mary’s part about her mother. Based on my analysis, there appears to be a connection between Mary’s perception of her mother and her claim that she never received genuine love, caring and warmth from her. Her lack of trust in others may stem from these perceptions and interpretations about the dominant female figure in her life. Her assertion that “I love my mother but I don’t like her very much” exemplifies a paradoxical relationship to her mother as well as to her own female self. Mary confessed that she did not have a “healthy mother/daughter relationship”.

Her mother’s demands, needs, lack of praise and lots of criticism brought about feelings of guilt and insecurity in Mary, “I’m very afraid to go into a doorway I haven’t been in before”. In other words, she is afraid to explore new and unknown things. On the other hand, her father provided her with stability, “I also have unbelievable courage”, which creates an interesting paradox (insecurity vs. courage). For a long time, Mary tried to fulfill her mother’s needs to gain her acknowledgement and love. She stated that it took her a long time to come to terms with these issues, which made a huge impact on Mary’s personal life for many years (e.g., trying to be the perfect mother, wife and daughter). The suffocating grip of these experiences led Mary to initiate a series of dinners with her siblings in her adult life that was called “Sisters’ Dinners” and later renamed as “Mom Bashing Sessions”. They proved to be good group therapy for all of them and helped Mary to let go of the past and to heal the wounds associated with her mother.

Several traits inherited from her parents are reflected in her teaching: from her mother she learned that “when it’s all about me it is nothing. It’s only when it is about others that there is value”. This belief contributed to her struggles with self-acceptance and to her feelings of guilt about herself as a person. The positive impact of this perception is expressed in her teaching, “the most important thing for me is to try to help the student to take pride in themselves”. It is truly admirable and commendable that she was able to turn the negative experiences with her mother into a learning experience that culminated in her realization “Don’t operate in this negative way”. The positive result of this insight is demonstrated in her teaching, “My tendency...
is to praise students” and “I don’t criticize as a teacher because of my Mother and her constant criticism”. From her father she learned “to take what you have and make the best that you can” that is also reflected in her teaching philosophy “in the classroom this relates to finding the best in somebody else and make the best that you can”.

Mary’s deep-rooted lack of trust, religious upbringing, and stubbornness are reflected in her claimed resistance to the guided visualization activity. She admitted that “it’s very hard for me to go there” even though she craved the atmosphere. She further claimed that she wasn’t “very good at meditation” and “not a good candidate for this kind of thing”. Mary recognized that the activity intended to provide her with an opportunity to work with “different dimensions of dealing with practical questions” and she concluded that “it’s a matter of what dimension or level we choose”. This statement implies that she was not in favour of using the guided visualization technique to address questions “related to her teaching and professional life” despite her awareness of the available range of “different dimensions or levels”.

Mary’s lack of trust toward the guided visualization activity may be attributed to her “fear-based attitude toward everything” coming from her childhood that, in turn, led to her resistance: “it showed again how resistant I am to truly altering any kind of mental state”. Mary admitted that she was “just very stubborn” and “part of me didn’t want to go there” probably because “I resist giving up myself”. She argued that part of her resistance may be attributed to the perception that her “intuitive side can be scary”. Mary’s worldview rooted in her faith and religious training may have influenced her resistance to the guided visualization activity. In my understanding, Mary’s perception of her religious indoctrination may explain her statements that “We shouldn’t really question. We should accept some things”.

Mary presented a fairly consistent relationship among her thoughts, feelings and actions as aspects of her teacher identity. Her thoughts and feelings about herself are quite positive. She is aware of her merits and shortcomings, e.g., “I believe I’m a very good teacher”, “I see myself in positive ways”, and “I’m interested in things”. On the other hand, she considers herself as somebody “who doesn’t really drive toward a particular end”, which seems to contradict her teaching philosophy and her desire to help students. Occasionally, she still had feelings of guilt (stemming from her upbringing, but not further specified), which did not interfere with her professional life. She described herself as fearless, confident, supportive, judgmental, extremely organized, and eager to try new things. Mary offered a well-articulated, insightful and mature
response about the factors of her being in balance. Thus, as a result of her long-term personal and professional growth her sense of balance depends on her “sense of self”, “discovery of self”, “acknowledgment and recognition of self” and her “acceptance of self”. The “non-existent” child finally found herself.

2. Prevailing themes that reveal signs of perspective transformation

Mary’s portrayal depicts several important changes in her perspective that occurred, in part, prior to her participation in my research. Although, my research question about perspective transformation explored primarily those signs and aspects that occurred during the period of my research process (i.e., data collection period and the corroboration interview), I consider them significant to be mentioned here because they show the continuity within Mary’s life and the interconnectedness with her views of herself at present. Thus, I present Mary’s earlier experiences as precursors to my research that is followed by the impact of her research participation in my doctoral research.

Earlier Life Experiences

I identified two important experiences in Mary’s portrayal that can be viewed as precursors to my research process: (i) the “Sisters’ Dinners”, and (ii) Mary’s participation in an earlier academic research project.

The “Sisters’ Dinners” provided her with an opportunity to come to terms with her perceptions and interpretations of her constraining family experiences and that of her relationship with her mother. These dinners helped her realize that as a young girl she had set a priority to fulfill all her duties to her mother before she could “develop as an individual”. This insight reflects her deep-seated belief about putting others first that has characterized both her personal and professional life. As a result of the dinner conversations with her siblings, she learned to accept herself with all her good and bad qualities and she was gradually able to heal her psychological wounds caused by her mother. As Mary put it, “I didn’t come to embrace myself until I let go of my Mother”.

Mary had participated in another academic research in the early 1990s, which was the first time for her to articulate her “key learning experiences” and to look at herself as a teacher. Involvement in the earlier research provided Mary with a good foundation for taking part in my
doctoral research. More than a decade between the two research projects presented Mary an opportunity to re-interpret and re-evaluate her experiences from a different perspective.

Impact of Research Participation

As a result of participating in my doctoral research, Mary emphasized that “this process has been interesting because I am older now and have more life experience behind me” and she was “more contented at this point in life than ever in the past”. She stated that her research participation was also a reminder for her that there was a reward about focusing on herself, which, in turn, helped her “remember the positive experiences”. Mary confirmed that taking part in this research project made her notice how powerfully the traits inherited from her parents were reflected in her teaching, “those are very clear to me having gone through this process”. Her statement implies that this particular research project offered her an additional, new perspective to examine her teacher identity and to make connections between personal and professional experiences. Mary claimed that her positive self-perception informed her work as a teacher in a constructive manner. Allowing, however, for this connection to be made, she admitted that she “had to go through this rebirth or epiphany with respect to herself” before the personal insights could be translated into her classroom practice.

I pinpointed several observable results of Mary’s participation in this project that reveal apparent signs of her perspective transformation. It is truly admirable and commendable that Mary named self-pride, self-respect and self-acceptance as clear outcomes of her research participation that are obviously connected to her positive feelings about herself: “I’m very proud of what I do”, “I have lot of respect for myself” and “I accept myself”. Furthermore, Mary stated that this process also “validated my confidence in myself as a person and as a teacher”, and it confirmed that “I’m on the right path” and “I’m making progress”. Mary concluded that “this project showed me that today I’m certainly more experienced, I’m better at teaching”. Lastly, I found some evidence for Mary’s thoughts about the future of her professional life. She claimed that she would have to become “a less involved teacher simply because of class sizes”. This comment refers to her workplace reality with larger groups of students (e.g., 30 students) in a writing-intensive course that requires a lot of written feedback and marking. Mary also voiced her sense of tiredness, “I’m tired, weary, exhausted from teaching”, and her desire to retire “I would love to retire”, “I don’t want my professional life anymore”. 
Finally, Mary acknowledged that the research process was “confirmatory, assuring and clarifying”, and it was also “a healing experience” for her. It justified her insights and interpretations stemming from earlier personal and professional experiences, “this experience was like putting on a pair of glasses and things came better into focus”.

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Janet’s Portrayal

Part One: Experiencing the Professional Self

*I was Raised in Three Languages…*
I was raised in three languages, hearing English and other two languages every day.
I don’t remember learning either language.
I had a nanny who spoke German.
We moved back to Canada when I was two.
I remember that my neighbours spoke a third language, a dialect unique to my ethnic group.

I’m the fourth of six siblings.
I was very shy as a child.
My first memory of any learning experience was *going to Sunday school when I was three years old.*
When I was five I learned to write neatly and I learned to read German. I remember really liking that.
I was terrified of the teacher. I know I don’t respond well to people who scare me.

*I Always Liked Being in School…*
I always liked being in school.
The teachers were so kind and they were just beautiful.

In grade 4 our teacher used to read to us every afternoon.
I just remember being in heaven.
I could hardly wait to get back to school after lunch and she would read to us and we could just sit there.
It was that pleasure and I still love to be read to but nobody does.
I think it was that feeling of being special in a group of 30 kids.
I don’t think I was neglected in my family, we were a big family. My Mom was incredibly busy.

I started to take books out and this was such an incredible experience because we could just escape and read.
I read a lot. I would go to my room and I would practice being like this teacher exactly.

I did well at school. It was easy.
I was good at memorizing. I just liked being there.
I got prizes every year.
I had to be first in class.
In grade 6 my teacher was very nice. I really liked that I had a man for a teacher.
I had written an essay and he especially came to me and gave this essay back and he said, “This was really very nice. I really liked this”.
It was very special for me.
I liked the activities at school. I liked singing, we had music. I had friends.

My doing well in school was affirmed at home.
I remember in grade 6 I got my first in class.
My brother also was first in class and my Mother gave him a dollar.
I didn’t get anything. She said “Well, you always get first in class.”
My parents were proud of us.
It was almost expected that we would do well at school.
I don’t remember really ever working hard in school until high school.

I Had to Work Hard at Music…
The one thing I really had to work at was music, piano lessons.
I was almost 8 when I started to play the piano.
My teacher was the most beautiful, sweet, kind, lovely woman.
I liked music and I did well in that but I worked hard.
When I was about 10 she sent me to an audition with this other teacher who had a big reputation in the city.
I was accepted.

But this other teacher was scary.
She taught me to be really disciplined.
I remember her reducing me to tears several times because I hadn’t practiced enough or done well at my songs.
I liked the fact that she demanded something.
I learned that I need to be challenged but I also need affirmation.
Every year I switched schools in grade 8, 9, and 10.
It was making new friends although they were all connected from different neighbourhoods or church things.
I started getting into trouble. I would talk a lot in class and fool around, but I still worked enough at my school work. That’s when I started learning French.
It was audio lingual, repeating words, but actually it was exciting.

High School is About Friends and The Whole Social Thing…
I was not one of the cool, beautiful girls.
I always wished I had a boyfriend.
I had lots of friends. I was always friends with a lot of guys.
I’ve struggled with how I looked all my life.
I overcompensated by trying to be funny or loud, which is not always a good compensation.
I went to a private church-based high school for grade 10, 11 and 12.
It was a really good experience.
I had no French there so I did it by correspondence.
Three male teachers (English, history, and religion) had a huge influence on me.
I never had female teachers in high school, no women.
Those teachers turned me on – if that’s the right word – to the excitement of learning, of really studying.
I actually read stuff that wasn’t required in high school.

I read books about socialism.
I read the Bible. I was fascinated.
I read literature, just novels.
Most of the time I spent was on piano and socially.

Until I was 18 I was going to finish my Toronto Conservatory in piano and go to university.
I had it all set up.
Then I won a scholarship to university and I couldn’t do music courses on the side.
So then I just dropped it.
I don’t know if my piano teacher has ever forgiven me because she trained me to this point and then I dropped.
But I have maintained the piano.
It’s something that when I play the piano – until recently – I still feel beautiful.
I excelled in piano and even studies I did well.
Learning French by correspondence in high school was a huge success because I figured out the French grammar system and I was thrilled.
One thing piano lessons taught me was that when something is really hard, you just keep working and working and sometimes there’s a breakthrough.
It's amazing; you thought you couldn't do it, but you did it.
I remembered that when I first started teaching.

I failed in feeling confident.
I failed in being able to see myself and say “This is who I am. This is good. I'm good at this. I figured out French all by myself.”

All of us struggled with confidence in our family, I think.
I had this brother who seemed mega-successful.
I used to think “Why couldn't I have that? Why couldn't I be like that?”
My parents always encouraged me and my Mother believed in me.

The failure part was that I didn't have a boyfriend.
I wanted social success.
I had good friends and I knew that I was well liked.
I always felt like “If I had been beautiful, I would have made that one step up because I would have had both. That would have changed everything.”
I think the failure was simply in not being able to say “It doesn’t matter.”
Beautiful physically to me means to have a good body, to be good at sports, to be the kind of girl that is noticed when somebody walks by.
It's my value, so to me it was important and I didn't match up.
I had these thick glasses. I had curly hair when everybody had long straight hair.
Then when long straight hair went out and curly hair came in, my hair started getting straight.
I felt I was a loser.
That sense of inadequacy, not being good enough was tough.
When you're a teenager you want “somebody” to like you.

**Studies at University…**
One of my best experiences at university was **French in first year** because I had not ever spoken it.
I had been put in quite a high level first year class but I didn't know how to speak French since I hadn't spoken it since I was 14. I got into this class because I learned grammar so I did well on the placement test.
I spent hours practicing in the lab.
It was the most fabulous experience.
I learned to pronounce French and once I caught on, then for me it was helpful.
It was amazing that the professor in the lab encouraged me.

The **history of science professor** was an amazing lecturer.
He had a way of explaining the relationship between historical ideas, the Romantic Movement, for example, Schubert’s unfinished symphony and theories of evolution and relativity.

He was brilliant.
He had a way of communicating information and getting us involved in the ideas in a huge lecture hall.
He really was excited about his material. He believed in what he was doing.
To me that's a master teacher.
I had a professor in history who knew how to ask interesting questions in the class.
My Honours Degree was in History and I took French as my other major.
For me French was always the easy courses. I did it for fun.
History was more “serious” for me.
But this history professor got me to do research for him in the summer.

He was someone who took an interest.
Again, someone personally said to me “You have potential. You have talent. You should pursue this.”

These profs took a personal interest; they made it interesting and challenging to me and they encouraged me.
That's always been really important.
As a teacher I try to remember how to communicate that kind of excitement, how to get people involved and how to affirm and encourage students.
My worst course ever was a graduate course in Education. In this course I had my first experience with the idea of post-modernism as the way to see the world like dogma and I reacted to it the same way that I did as a child and all my growing up years. I come from a strong religious background and I still actually hold to some of my beliefs. I do not like people who say “This is how it is. There is nothing else.” In the first class the professor said “We have rejected the enlightened tradition of critical thinking.” I found that interesting because I never was completely convinced of the enlightenment tradition but I haven’t given up critical thinking. So I put up my hand and said “Excuse me, who are you referring to by ‘we’ because I’m not sure I subscribe to that idea.”

She’d make comments that were quite narrow in perspective. I disagreed with her. She could not accept that. She made me furious. I used to come home in a rage.

In journals she had asked us to explain how our background had influenced our approach to ESL teaching. I brought up my parents’ example of being well educated in a neighbourhood of refugees. The other thing was that each of us is created unique and God loves us. To me every student who enters my class is like that. I don’t tell my students that. I don’t inflict religious ideas on them.

She questioned and rejected my explanations, telling me my religion was bigoted, so it couldn’t lead me to a positive way of teaching and interacting.

It was a bad course because she didn’t respect the students in the class. She was teaching us about being open and that every point of view is valuable. But it didn’t count if you disagreed. It taught me that you can have the most interesting ideas but if you aren’t open to helping students to get into those ideas, you don’t actually help them.

You really have to find a way to not impose your opinion but to invite students to see it and if they don’t agree with you give them the space to say why.

I tend to have strong opinions. When I was younger I used to get into huge arguments with people. I have learned not to do that as much and to back away.

That experience really has shown me how threatened a student can feel and how silenced they are.

Language Learning Has Always Been Fun…

I always liked my language classes, even German class where everybody knew it and we were just reviewing grammar and stuff.

I can still remember learning some words in French with the audio-lingual method.

In the beginning it was just exciting to get words.

French in university was great too because we actually had to speak to each other and read literature.

I was already teaching French when I decided to learn Spanish because I had known a lot of Latin-American refugees and I’d had a Spanish speaking boyfriend.

I really wanted to know how it felt to learn a new language so I could think of how my students feel in my class. I realized how much you can learn and how good it feels when you can communicate something.

I really had fun and the teacher got us to keep talking and taught us a lot of culture.

I learned Arabic in North Africa and I did lots of memorizing of vocabulary. I sat and imitated tapes.

I learned that you can learn in different ways and it’s fun.

The best thing is to be able to use the language right away.

Some Teachers Influenced Me…

I met a woman from my church when I was in grade 9. She is an exceptional woman and an excellent teacher.

I remember that she is a person who really focused on being strong inside.

I remember one of her talks about Queen Esther’s beauty and this Samaritan woman in the Bible, who had to be strong as well. What really mattered was that she was brave.

She got me my first job at that high school.

Then I taught with her and she was my colleague.

She told me how creative I was, which I’ve never believed at certain levels.
She always encouraged me by telling me what a great teacher I was, how the kids liked me, and how glad she was that I got that job. She is a very important woman in my life. When my son died she comforted me and she told me about her dream about her husband after he had died.

She influenced me as a teacher. I realize how important it is to have an older mentor who says to you “You matter to me, or you matter.” She believed in me and that was a huge thing for me.

My first principal was a huge influence. He actually introduced me to my husband and he absolutely believed in me. Many women have been important to me too. I sometimes wonder if I needed men to affirm me, or whether that’s just because of the generation I come from.

I Always Wanted to Be a Teacher…
I had done my B.A. Honours in History and French. I decided to go into education. I’d always wanted to be a teacher. I entered a Faculty of Education for one year of Teacher’s College. I had a terrible year academically. I had a very good teacher in terms of history and how to teach history. I actually found him very helpful. The language guy was just hopeless and totally uninspiring.

My teaching practicums were terrible. The cooperating teachers didn’t care about their students and the attitude was terrible. My French practicum was in a high school where the French teacher was lovely. I first saw some ideas of how you can teach French. She was very positive and encouraging. She said I’d be a great teacher. It was the French degree that gave me the job. So that was the formal education part.

Then I started teaching.
I was teaching in a school that had never had French before. I taught grade 7 - 10 French and grade 8 - 9 Social Studies. All my classes had 35 kids in them. In my grade 8 - 9 classes I had students with three different levels of French (no French, some French and immersion French). Eventually I just got them all into one level but I almost lost it that year. I was 23. I remember staying up nights. I learned an incredible amount about how to teach and what worked. It went okay and I had a very affirming principal who encouraged me.

I taught there for five years. I learned a lot of French because you speak it all day every day. I had a very positive experience generally.

I felt like I had found something I liked to do.

I learned about teaching French. Three of my students became French teachers. A lot of my teaching I have to admit has been carried through by dint of personality more than specific skills and knowledge in teaching. But you have to be organized and you have to offer them something. Students won’t like you if you’re disorganized no matter how friendly you are. I had lots of energy in those days. That was very good because I experimented but I felt very insecure.

Then I quit that job. I got married, and I moved out here. So that’s my early teaching experience.
**Graduate Studies and Teaching ESL…**
I began an M.A. in Lettres Francaises but it got interrupted in stages by having babies and my son's death. I just lost heart to complete the degree so I ended up with an Honours B.A. instead. I stayed home with my kids for several years. I returned to school by doing supply teaching in French immersion and **I started my M. Ed.** That's often very theoretical and there wasn't much methodology. It took about 4 years to finish my M. Ed. degree as I was teaching full-time and also worked overseas.

**My first teaching experience in ESL was in North Africa for two years.**
I learned a lot about teaching young adults. When I came back, **I got a job in the English Program at the University** and I taught all levels. It was a huge learning curve. I spent hundreds of hours getting to know materials and developing files. **I started reading about methodology and teaching**. I talked with colleagues about this and I really learned. I just had books and I would read and read and get ideas. **That's how I learned.**

When I was teaching French in the late 70's, things were changing in language teaching but not everywhere. **I was just surviving.**
Now **I have more interaction in the classroom.**
I worked as a coordinator of the English program. Then I began to teach credit ESL courses. Besides (credit, non-credit) ESL teaching, I have also taught advanced writing, writing assessment, and teacher education courses that have led to my obtaining tenure at university.

**My Weaknesses…**
One of my weaknesses in the early days was definitely that **I didn’t have methodology.** I had reasonable French because I was teaching core French. The weakness was that **I had no colleagues, no interaction.** I had a friend who was teaching German and he intimidated me because he was always so brilliant. I was always embarrassed because I wouldn’t have had as great ideas as him. But he was encouraging. **I didn’t have enough training, I never had methodology proper.** That was a real gap.
I still don’t feel that I have enough methodology.

Sometimes **I don’t try new things** because I’m afraid of it. **I don’t want to fail.**
**I am afraid of failing.**
**I’m a perfectionist.**
I think a weakness is still that sometimes **I over-prepare, or I get carried away with the details** when I’m preparing. I realize now how detail-oriented I am, just like my Mom.

I did a lot of work with refugee families because our church has sponsored many of them. **I’ve never been intimidated** by those experiences with these women because it’s so human. There’s no test about being a good teacher. But there is certain unease for me. I used to feel a little bit scared. With language teaching it’s formalized. There’s a whole system of evaluation and **I always worry** that I’m not doing well in the course. My friend just laughs and says “You’re going to tell me the course is a disaster. Then, you have great evaluations.” It’s about relationships and feeling a connection, but in a bigger group people don’t give you that. **Part of me is still that little shy girl that’s very afraid of groups, and part of me isn’t.**
I mean part of me has confidence now about teaching that I didn’t have 10 years ago.

**My Strengths…**
I was enthusiastic and I really wanted the kids to be able to speak French. **I did try things** and I applied what I learned in the Spanish classes. I’d tell them a story in French with pictures even though they don’t know what I was talking about. I remember them realizing that they can learn things when someone describes things to them.
I did have a head for organizing a course. I was able to win them over to try things.
The strength has continued to be that ability of **being organized** and **having a plan**.
Nothing is going to happen that I didn't plan for.
**I tend to write everything down because I don't feel secure.**
**I have to have a plan and I like to follow it.**
I know it's a kind of control thing or to make sure nothing bad happens.
Organizing is a strategy to prevent failures or to keep them from feeling I'm wasting their time.
For language classes I **try not to make it all teacher-centered** because that's a danger.

I work hard to **create group dynamics** that work. That is so important for me.
**I really make an effort** at the very beginning of the course to learn their names.
I take a personal interest because to me that's super important.
I have improved in my ability to try new things.
I have read up on it but I'm still terribly worried that something won't work.

**A Bad Teaching Experience…**
I was a TA and I **should have been paid as a teacher** because I had lots of experience abroad but somehow they didn't do it.
**I stayed up nights.**
I did not have methodology and I didn't know what I was doing.
I was a full time Master's student and I had two little kids.
The other TA was confident, had lots of experience, and used to tell me what he was hearing from others about me that I was taking too long on certain topics, which was fine.
**I remember once breaking down and crying.**
I knew I was making mistakes. I needed guidance and I **would rather have had some advice from my supervising teacher.**
I was devastated. Part of it was that I didn't have the skills.
I spent again literally hundreds of hours in that resource centre getting ideas.
The next semester three teachers asked to have me because they saw how hard I worked.
**I made up exams. I made up the course. I did everything.**
What made it bad was that I wasn't given credit for being a teacher.
I had to do it but I really didn't have all the methodology background. And it was a new job.

**My Best Teaching Experience…**
Probably my best teaching experience was two classes with advanced oral communication.
They just went incredibly well because of the dynamic.
It was good because students were willing to try things.
I had worked out some way of having people talk in groups, having debates, and building relationships.

**A Good Language Teacher has to…**
- know the language well and be able to use it well;
- be fluent in the language;
- be able to make students feel at ease so they're comfortable in that setting;
- be able to build positive relationships between students;
- have the knowledge, methodological knowledge;
- know what tools are available and then some ability to work with people and not being doctrinaire about it;
- have lots of understanding and think about how those can be applied in a real situation;
- always be thinking about your students and what they need;
- have an idea about student needs. You ask them what they want and then you produce that.
- be organized;
- be on top of what you're going to do;
- be brave to try new things.
One of my mentors said to me “When you’re teaching you’re selling things. You’re good at this; you can sell yourself in the classroom.”

You need to know what you’ll do, why you’re doing it, and then persuade the students that this is a useful way to do it.

From when I was young I always liked that feeling of safety created by teachers. Encouragement has made me go overboard to try anything. Negative experiences of my own teaching have made me afraid that it will happen again so I work overtime. As I have more experience, I realize that occasional bad classes are just part of it and you can joke about them with students.

My Teaching Philosophy…
Every single person who walks through that door matters.
It doesn’t matter how they look, where they’re from, what their experiences are, or even if they look like they really don’t like me at the beginning.
That person carries with them a whole history as a person.
There is something unique in that person.
Each one of them is this untapped wonder.
As a teacher it is always a challenge how to discover that person and help them to share that person with others around them in a language class.
Students have put effort and time to come into my class.
I owe it to them to bust myself, to do absolutely the best job I can for them.
I believe that you have to prepare and to try and find ways to help them individually.
I also show respect to them by so doing.
Encourage them, make demands and try to push them.
I realize that I can learn things from them as well.

Part Two: Experiencing the Personal Self

My Biggest Childhood Memory…
The biggest childhood memory was going to B.C.
All my grandparents and my Mother’s whole family lived on the West Coast.
I can remember that trip. It was fun.
My Father packed everything up; imagine six kids in this old car.
We spent the first night camping at a lake.
I still remember how wonderful it was in the morning waking up.
I was five. Just to be away from the house and to go and see the mountains was so wonderful.
It was partly being with my family.

Then we visited all my uncles, aunts and some cousins who lived on a farm.
The trip was so incredible because we never had any relatives living near us at all.
It was the excitement of the travel but it was that sense of people who just were crazy about you.
They just were so happy to see us.
That trip stands out because of that feeling of belonging to my family and that sense of complete and total acceptance by the aunts.
Two years later I went by myself and I got to stay there for a month by myself at my aunt’s house.
She was our favourite aunt. I was just treated specially.
I was blonde and blue eyed and no one else in my family had blonde hair.
My younger sister used to tell me I was adopted which was pretty terrifying for me.
The Sense of Belonging Was Important for Me…
I liked to be the winner and never losing.
I had glasses and they got thicker every year, of course.
Kids teased me.
I guess it is totally self-image and self-security, not feeling that I belonged.
I was really shy in some ways.
I have a pretty fragile inner ego, I guess.
One of the lessons I learned was that I was not beautiful.
It's sort of feeling on that score I could never, never quite match up.
I didn't have what it took to be beautiful.
I can be easily threatened if they act very superior about their knowledge or clothing.
It still makes me feel very insecure.
I need to be safe.
I need to feel that I'm loved in order to do well.
I need some challenges.

My Dad Was a Public Presence…
He was a good speaker and he gave good teaching lessons.
I remember watching him in public and used to think I want to do that.
I want to make people laugh like that. I always wanted to be a teacher from the time I was very small.
I'm just insecure about it.
He was a high school teacher. He wore a suit to work that's what teachers did.
I inherited that ability to speak in public from my Father, I'm not afraid to speak in a group.

He was very kind to us but he was very private.
He did not talk about intimate things. He didn't share personal things.
My Dad was generally a very happy person.
He didn't get as easily upset as my Mom. So he was kind of the calming one, the one who would reassure you.

At my wedding he gave a little speech and it was emotional.
I realized that he was emotional but he said not much.
He said “Janet taught us how to talk about ourselves.”
I was blown away.
He never said it to me again. He never said it before.

I was sorry because he died.
I asked him some personal questions but he couldn’t, he just couldn’t answer.
I always knew that he was proud of me, he loved me, and he encouraged me to go to school.
I never felt that he made fun of how I looked ever.
I'm Very, Very Close to My Mom…
She always knew about everything that happened to me.
My Mom is a much more emotional person than my Dad.
She's sensitive and she has more insecurities.
She was a very shy person as a young woman and she’s much more of an introvert than I am.
She chats, she loves to talk. She was incredibly kind. She completely supported my father.
I remember her being tired, being anxious, and worried about having to get stuff done.
She was incredibly hard working. Everything was always clean, everything was well done.

She was a perfectionist.
We're still very close, very, very close.
I don't know how I'm going to feel when she dies. I don't even want to think about it.

I have my Mother's problem of sometimes getting into details.
My Mom was very kind to people and I think I've learned a bit of that empathy and listening to people.

I know I worry like she does.
I obsess over details.
I'm anxious and I'm very easily hurt. But I haven't learned how to forgive people like she does.
My Mom didn't defend herself.
I know as a child I said “No one is ever going to do this to me.”
So maybe I learned that too.

My Mom worried so much about what people would say, always worried about not offending people.
My Mom's been lonely often because my Dad didn't talk about private things with her and she needs that.
She didn't have time for fun.

For both my parents, clearly their faith is central to their lives and that has affected me.
It is part of who I am.
I have adopted it for myself but I struggle more with living it out in ways that have integrity.

I have definitely tried harder to have fun in my life.
I think I have the same tendency as my Mom.
I work and work and work... and worry and worry and worry.
I definitely have many friendships.
I just take a book and read it but during my teaching I often don't have any free time.
I make myself time for meeting friends because I'd die if I don't have social interaction.

I Was Very Close to My Siblings…
I was very, very close to my younger sister growing up. Then she got married and I've lived in another city for 27 years so we've in a way grown apart.
I'm very close to my older sister. We lived together for a number of years. She's been single so she has visited our kids and we've just have grown closer.

It gets me that I can't talk personally to both my sisters and brothers about some things.
They don't tell me their inside and that always blocks a certain relationship.
There's a sense they know me so well they must know that there is something wrong with me.
I've always been outgoing and I need people.
I'm not saying I accept all the criticism. Sometimes I just ignore them.

Kindness… Deep Feelings… Connecting with Others…
I admire kindness, and being able to share deep feelings, and connecting on that level in my friends.

I need somebody.
I remember this saying, “A friend is someone with whom you can tell anything, chaff and good stuff alike, and knowing that they'll keep the good and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.”
From my early days in school, I wanted to do well. This has always been very important to me. I have empathized with people who really struggled. It still matters.

I had really worked at that and it just said I was always very competitive about it and as I got older I continued to be.

I think they're so important.

Another preoccupation has been academic and professional achievement. Academic accomplishment was very important to me, very important.

I've always had a thing about control and people controlling me that frightens me. I have been driven to be successful in my professional work as well.

I want to be recognized as a good teacher – by my students and by my peers.

Of course that leads into insecurity and guilt. That leads into insecurity and guilt. That leads into insecurity and guilt. That leads into insecurity and guilt.

I don't know if it comes from this big family. I never doubted that my parents loved me, my husband and my children clearly love me and care about me, and although I have always had good friends, there is a certain insecurity in me.

I am always unsure of myself in my teaching – at some level. This relates to my perfectionism.

I need other people's approval.

I have fears that

- I'm not good enough,
- I don't do well enough,
- I don't do enough research,
- I don't teach well enough,
- I'm not beautiful enough.

That physical image thing has been a huge issue in my life. I really need to belong.

I don't know if it comes from this big family.

Fear and belonging go together.

In my personal life I have often felt deeply insecure about and dissatisfied with myself in terms of physical appearance and relationships.

Of course that leads into insecurity and guilt.

It can also lead to thinking and reflection but I don't usually stop and think about it in the classroom.

That's what I need in a friend.

Someone who can know and say these things to me.

I also admire people who are strong, who know who they are and have integrity. I like people who have a good sense of humour, so people who don't take themselves too seriously or don't think they're so important.

There has to be a certain warmth with all my friends.

My Past Preoccupations…

Christian faith and life without question have been the most significant preoccupation of my childhood and adult life. This has been the single most important influence in my life in terms of major life choices and even minor ones. All my activities are assessed in its light and most of my significant long-term relationships stem from that common bond. This faith has determined a lot of things – whom I married, how I raised my children, how I deal with money. It is the reason why we spent two years in North Africa as volunteers to teach ESL to young adults. It is why I have spent many hours studying the Bible and related books.

This faith has given me great comfort in difficult times: when my son died and when three, very close friends died of cancer. It doesn't answer all my questions but it grounds me. There is a base deep down inside me where I believe I am loved.

Although I have always been loved, I never doubted that my parents loved me, my husband and my children clearly love me and care about me, and although I have always had good friends, there is a certain insecurity in me.

I am always unsure of myself in my teaching – at some level. This relates to my perfectionism.

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It can also lead to thinking and reflection but I don't usually stop and think about it in the classroom.

Another preoccupation has been academic and professional achievement.

From my early days in school, I wanted to do well. This has always been very important to me. It still matters.

I have empathized with people who really struggled.

I was always very competitive about it and as I got older I continued to be.

I received a silver medal one year from the Toronto Conservatory and that was a huge thing for me because I had really worked at that and it just said “You can do this.”

Academic accomplishment was very important to me, very important.

I've always had a thing about control and people controlling me that frightens me. I have been driven to be successful in my professional work as well.

I want to be recognized as a good teacher – by my students and by my peers.
I need someone to work with.
I don’t really have someone that I’m working with.
Sometimes I’m embarrassed to ask.
I am always judging myself by some very high standard.
I find it hard to accept that I have done my best and that is all I can do, which is what my faith tells me.
I go back and forth on this and on the need for approval.

In terms of my beliefs about myself as a teacher there is the whole fear thing.
My insecurity has affected me because I’ve been very afraid in situations.
When I used to teach new courses, I had terrible diarrhea every morning.
I was really afraid.

What Have I Learned...?
I don’t think you learn anything from your preoccupations.
One thing I have learned is that you just have to try when you’re afraid.
You will never overcome your fear if you don’t try.
I have tried new things as I go on.
My husband has encouraged me hugely to go ahead and try something and he just totally believes that I can do anything.

I learned that I’m terrified, I’m embarrassed, and I don’t want to look stupid.
So I just work really, really hard so that I will never have problems.
I want to avoid having a disaster in a classroom, to avoid having issues in teaching.
I like myself sometimes.
That is that dilemma “How can I just know I am enough, like who I am?”
God created me the way I am. Okay, I do things. Who I am is what I have to offer.
The beauty inside of us is what is there and everyone has a different beauty.
I somehow accept messages that tell me my beauty is not the right kind.
My Mom and my younger sister used to get embarrassed because I would say things and I would criticize things publicly.

I would like to be less anxious about myself as a person and as a teacher.
I have spent a lot of time in my life looking for affirmation from men, and from people in general.
I really have to take another look at WHY that is important to me, and what is missing.
Religious faith is really important to me.
One looks everywhere and sometimes one is afraid of just looking inside.
I make a regular habit of praying and you start thinking “Why is this not enough?”
I’ve always looked for that kind of affirmation.
It has to do with how I see myself as a woman.
I feel a certain loneliness.
I would like to change that.
I’ve thought a lot about this in doing this research.

At some point I have to say “I am loved no matter what happens. I don’t have to be the best teacher anybody ever had.” I think when I spend so much time worrying about that, I don’t teach as well either.
When I feel okay in that class and I’m feeling confident, I’m a better teacher for them.

I’m in the process of thinking about changing some of these preoccupations: what is beautiful, what makes me beautiful, why does that matter so much.
I feel very lonely.
I’ve thought of going back to see a therapist.
I remember her once saying “When are you going to grow up?”
I was so offended by that.
But I ask myself this question often.
Who you are inside cannot be resolved.
No one person can ever manage to completely fulfill everything you are.
I can’t ask for my husband to be the one to give me confidence about myself.
On the other hand, without him I don’t know... I would never be... he has helped me a lot.
I don’t know... I’m not there yet...
I’m glad for people who affirm me.
It’s an incredible thing to be affirmed by people, colleagues, and students.
If I can just take that affirmation and be grateful for the gift instead of wishing I could be somebody else.
I don’t really want to be somebody else.
Part of me likes who I am.
Who would want to get used to some other person?
But clearly, I want to be somebody else.

I want to be confident.
I acknowledge that I have those gifts, but sometimes it’s just this feeling that it’s not quite good enough.
I hear people talk about their teaching and they just seem so confident.
I can’t do that. I don’t have that. I can… but I always think it’s fake.
Just that feeling that I don’t quite measure up.
I think I’m good at teaching.
I’ve found a place to use it and people appreciate and need it.

But it makes me anxious. I think I’ll always just be an anxious person.

As I’ve gained confidence in teaching I’ve tried more things because I’m not as afraid.
I have learned that some things work: “Okay, somebody believes I do this well. I’ve been told this enough times in my evaluations.”

When I talk about this, I sound like a total wreck.
I’ve lived my life as if a complete anxious wreck.
I don’t really function that way all of the time. This is only one part of who I am.
Maybe 50 percent of the time, or that’s what I feel.

I think a lot of teachers are like that.
I think the profession wishes us to be anxious, but it’s not healthy either.

Part Three: Experiencing the Intuitive Self
(Through Guided Visualization)

I’ve Only Done It Twice… First Interview (April 14, 2009)
I find the visualization quite moving sometimes.
It doesn’t frighten me.
I’ve only done it twice.

But I just have to get used to it.
I never was able to quite get into it.
I was very moved the very first time.
It was completely unexpected that my Dad would appear.
I couldn’t physically see him but it’s the closest I have felt to my father in years.
He died in 1993. He was a big person in my life.
I really sensed how much he cared about me and that he would be proud of me as a teacher.
One of my questions was about confidence: “Why do I always feel like I’m not quite making it?”

I found it very, very comforting.
I just have to keep exploring it by doing this activity more often.

I Don’t Know Yet About Insights… Second Interview (July 3, 2009)
I don’t completely feel comfortable. I’ve always been kind of resistant.
Once, I was in a situation where people were being hypnotized and the guy said “You don’t like being controlled. You’re not a good subject.” Well, that’s true.

If I do it more regularly, I think it is helpful.
I’ve found that this has helped me to reflect a lot. I think it affects other things when things come up.

I felt very self-conscious at first.
I don’t really feel like I’m completely absent from what’s going on around me. You can’t be.
You have to be focused so you have to be present.

I feel like I’m asking the same questions over and over again.
In some ways the journaling and this activity are the same.
I think the answers are affirmations. The stuff is sitting there at the surface.
I don’t always know where it’s coming from and why that question.
Sometimes I get anxious because I don’t have a question to ask.

I think it’s helpful but I can’t say how.
I don’t know yet.
I’m spending a lot of time thinking about myself.
I don’t know.
I don’t know yet about insights. I think it will take a little longer.

I’m Not Sure… I Feel Resistance… Third Interview (September 18, 2009)
When I first started it bothered me that I was supposed to be feeling certain things.
I couldn’t feel it.
I just thought I wasn’t going to get uptight about it because it made me completely self-conscious.
I thought “Well, what’s the point in this? I can just tell myself to relax. Then I’ll just think.”
So that was what I decided after the first couple of times.

I feel resistance.
I’m not sure about that.
I thought “Just go with what comes to you. Never mind that part.”
I found it encouraging because I do it in a different way and probably not for as long – which was a very, very good insight. If I don’t spend enough time, I’m not going to hear much.

Well, how do we know where all these things come from?

I’ve done it in total about 12 or 13 times.
I learned to just sit and think about.

Basically that’s my experience with it.

I think it’s useful.
I think it would be useful for me at least once a month specifically to sit down.
I don’t know.
This is what my head's telling me.

The question often is “Why do I feel worried?”
It wouldn't be earth-shattering.
Writing down the question before you start brings to the fore what's worrying you, what you're thinking about.

How do I make sense of this activity?
Well, from what you've heard, maybe not a lot.
I've definitely used some categories:
- How can I affirm myself in terms of what is positive?
- How can I help myself to get the overall picture?
- What is it that I'm doing?
- What is it that's keeping me from always seeing my work in a positive way because I just want to quit.

One time I just didn’t bother.
I thought “Well, it's the same question every time, like get over it already. Think of something else.”

But I couldn’t.
I just quit. I just didn’t do it.
I turned it off and said “I can’t do this.”

Thinking about those things has provoked a lot of things: what do I really want to do?
I don’t know if I’m affected by this activity.
I have begun to think more carefully.
I have to think about what I say.
I think sometimes I control some impulses.
Maybe, it has encouraged me now to make a plan. to have something that I’m actually going to do in terms of
- how I will deal with some of the insecurities;
- using classroom techniques;
- encouraging myself simply by realizing that I've been successful;
- the research that's worrying me;
- that whole thing about self-affirmation and needing to be loved;
- this whole thing with men and all that.

I think I realize I won't change inside.
Yes I will, but there are some things that will be there.

It has helped me reflect on how I can improve my existing relationship.
I'm happy to realize again that I'm happy about who I'm married to. I'm just grateful.

The ongoing issue has been “Why can’t I ever believe, why do I feel inferior to colleagues?”
It's not that I feel jealous but sometimes I feel like I don’t fit into certain categories.
I'm not sure.
I was told numerous times that we have hunches, or we have impulses of calling someone, of seeing a student and thinking I should ask that student if something is wrong. In teaching too you switch an example or you sort of sense the mood in the class that day.

Is that intuitive? Is that teacher's intuition? Is that just experience?
In terms of even ideas, sometimes I've had them and I walk away from them.
The activity made me realize how much affirmation I need.
I have to say if I don't find a way to incorporate the intuitions, they'll just remain there and then I'll forget them …

I don't know what I learned from doing this activity.
I feel like I'm saying the same thing over and over again because I'm not sure.

I think it has reminded me of the importance of reflecting simply for the sake of actually taking the time to step back. I realize that sometimes I need to take time to listen to those things.

Overall it has helped me to see that I need to find a balance of work and personal life.

I'm not sure how I can do that at the present because of what my work is asking of me.
My life doesn't belong to the university but to those students.

I can't say that it's been earth-shattering, that it's changed everything…
… that doesn't happen often in life.

Part Four:
Experiencing the Re-Construction of Teacher Identity

The Sense of Belonging…
The sense of belonging stands out for me when I think of being a child.
I belonged to a community and to a caring family.
I never felt I didn't belong there, never.
I had always a sense that we belonged in the Universe, that we had a place because God loved us. I saw that's how you treat people and you care about them. Growing up that obviously has affected how I feel about myself. That has strongly affected me as a person even though I have anxieties obviously.

I Want My Students to Enjoy Learning…
I am energized when I go into my classes.
I see those people and I try to say to them that “We are now a community in this classroom” and I try to draw that out. I love doing this.
That clearly has influenced my identity and also what I see as my role as a teacher.

My parents also worked very hard and cared for people.
To work really hard, to do my best so that my students have a good experience is definitely from that side of my family. Teaching also creates anxieties obviously and the feeling that it's never quite enough.
From my Dad I learned that “You do your best and then you leave the rest”.

It is important for me to give them a sense of themselves as people; to say “You matter in this class”.
Every one of them matters no matter who they are.
As a child I experienced learning as pleasure that absolutely has had a significant effect on me.
I enjoyed learning so I want other people to enjoy it.
There is clearly a connection between my personal and professional life experiences. I like a mix of things in any kind of teaching and learning, e.g., piano lessons. I appreciate people who demand something of me, at the same time kindness and positive reinforcement are so important. I want students to feel successful at their learning so that they enjoy it, and to really care about what they’re learning, to have them feel that what they did matters to somebody. I want to make them feel comfortable.

When I have the courage to have other colleagues come observe me, I want to do some work on how they perceive what I’m doing. Partly, to help me improve certain aspects but also to say “This is a strength, don’t be worried about it.”

One of the most hurtful things in my student evaluations from last winter was that I choose favourites in class. That really upset me, I was sick. I had to put them away. I couldn’t look at them for two weeks and I took them out again. Then I started reading more carefully and I thought “Well, it’s not quite but that’s what they said,” and then I realized that “Well, perception matters.”

I Need Lots of Affirmation…

Worries about what people think of what I’m doing, whether students enjoy me and my course have come up for me over and over again. I worry that I am not really as good as others in my creativity and language teaching approach. I worry that I don’t live up to what is expected of me. I worry about the research aspects as well because I don’t have enough time for that. Just as in my personal life, I can feel insecure and I need to feel loved. I need lots of affirmation. Lots… Lots…

I believe you have to be a little nervous when you teach. I have to be. You asked me last time whether I loved myself. Of course, there are times you feel insecure. That pattern comes up over and over.

I realize that teaching actually energizes me. I get excited about stuff but I’m fearful about committing to follow through on these projects because I’m scared I might fail. Fear of failure, perfectionism, I know it’s there. I work hard and I enjoy it and I have been told that I’m stimulating and fun in class. My parents really did affirm those things and my husband has been absolutely incredibly affirming. People have affirmed the gifts I have for teaching and they encouraged me in my work.

Another contribution from people has been modeling good teaching, modeling caring for people, modeling hard work, modeling perseverance, having wide interests, modeling a passion for justice for all, which is very important for me.

Worries… Worries… Worries…

My Mom was a worrier and I’m a worrier. There is this saying that “God looks after you” and then you get up, and you worry every minute of the day. My son once said “I thought you said you believed God took care of you.” I said “Yeah, but I’m just making sure. I’m just covering all my bases.”

It had a huge effect on my identity as a teacher that people told me that I do this well and then they modeled for me. I’ve watched certain teachers; if they’re organized that’s what I try to do. People have helped me develop my identity as a teacher through models, encouragement, and affirmations.

I work terribly hard to create a community in the classroom. I hate asking my peers for help because I don’t want to look like I’m a loser.
When I received negative feedback from students, I tried to work hard to become more interesting and more organized in my teaching.

In terms of my identity as a teacher, negative personal experiences as a student made me try being more empathetic with the students. As a teacher, negative experiences make me cautious to try certain things. They’ve also pushed me to improve my teaching. My son’s death, as a personal negative experience, helped me to see that people carry all kinds of issues and painful experiences with them in the classroom.

I think we’re people first and I personally care about students as people.

How I think about myself depends on how I feel about myself, so that is so closely bound.

*Thoughts about Myself…*
I think of myself as a person who wants to relate to other people, who cares about them, and wants to teach them something new to help them to learn and enjoy it.
I think I’m a good teacher and I’m a caring teacher and person.
I’m also an anxious person so there are those two things in tension.
I think of myself as someone who has a gift for teaching.

*Feelings about Myself…*
I’m often in situations where I think I’m a good teacher, and I feel like “How am I going to do this?” Usually while I’m teaching I manage to throw that off.
I feel like I care, I have something to offer, but I often feel it’s maybe not as good as what that person is offering.
When things go well, I feel good. I feel like I’m in the right place.
But I feel anxious and worry too much about those other aspects and this whole research thing at work.
I feel like I’m not living up to expectations.
I’m anxious, I’m afraid and frightened, I fumble around and I get nervous and chaotic.

*Expressing Myself…*
I’m friendly, outgoing, compassionate, and I care about my students. Sometimes I see myself acting and expressing myself in a fun, animated, and stimulating way.
I can be organized.
When I get nervous, I talk more quickly and I jump to the next topic and the students are all lost.
When I’m threatened or feel intimidated, I either avoid people, or I back away and I get quiet.
I can’t perform if I feel insecure. I’ve learned to fake that.
Sometimes obviously I get upset, and I vent but not to everybody.

When my thoughts, feelings, and actions are in sync, things are great.
When I’m feeling confident. I get better. It can’t be like that every day because life isn’t like that.
I definitely teach better when I’m confident, but I have to feel a little nervous.
If you feel too confident you don’t evolve.

*I Can Never Quite Be in Balance…*
When I’m feeling insecure and threatened, I can’t feel that joy of sharing things.
I feel the fear.
I have trouble even preparing for the class because already I’m blocked.
Definitely the feelings have an impact on me.
There’s always that nagging, perfectionist voice that says, “They’re going to find out the truth now. They’re going to see that you’re not as good as other people”.
I don’t walk around all day with that, I’m not so handicapped by my feelings thank Goodness.
It’s the feelings that get in the way.

These three factors are intimately linked. I need to keep reminding myself: “This is who you are. This is what you can do. You’re doing your best and if it’s not good enough, you’ll feel disappointed but you will teach again. It will be good again”. Sometimes the feelings can be positive and you get this great feeling about yourself that can be energizing. It’s about taking time to reflect, “Do you see this as a threat or as an opportunity?”

I’m basically a pessimist and a worrier. I know that I can change it and afterwards I’d be grateful. I can never quite be in balance, I probably worry, and I always feel I haven’t quite succeeded. I need to be affirmed constantly “Yes, you’re doing a good job. Yes, it’s good.”

Feelings definitely throw the rest out of sync.

I suppose the balance shouldn’t depend on whether I had a good class today, but it does. Some of it depends on having some kind of affirmation. I need some validation of what I think was successful. So that’s when those student evaluations matter a lot. It’s nice to read them because they confirm that for me. I know that at one point one has to say “I’m a good teacher even if today nobody told me so, even if this month I didn’t really sense it.”

To some extent, teachers are performers. If actors don’t get any ovations, it’s deadly for them. You have to have some kind of feedback. Maybe I will always be like that. I know I will be. I need affirmations from the people I work with.

The Impact of the Reflective Process…

I was already struggling with some of these questions and that’s why I was attracted to participation in this project initially. The project intrigued me. I didn’t know what it was going to involve. I definitely acted on my intuitions, but I’ve blocked them.

When you’re struggling with things, you don’t want to think about some things.

Participation in this project certainly has made things surface. It has caused me to reflect rather than just walking around feeling discomfort because things have come up over and over again. I find, maybe, I’m focusing more.

For a while, it was so much of who I am and my identity. It was driving me crazy. I felt like I was in therapy. I think I needed to walk away from it a bit. I think more about WHY I’m doing what I’m doing. It’s helpful to be aware of those feelings.

This research process has certainly stimulated my own prayer that I have been avoiding for the same reasons. Sometimes you just don’t want to deal with things. It’s just too complicated and you don’t want to face things that are making you insecure.

The biggest impact is that it has made me more conscious of the things that are going on. I will always feel insecure to some extent. Maybe that’s a negative thing but I think it has helped me to work hard, at least.

Sometimes I didn’t write things down and I wasn’t doing the actual process so I felt it wasn’t quite there.
I’m definitely going to take more time to reflect on things that bother me in my teaching.  
I don’t want to become so narcissistic.  
I always get a little uneasy. It’s important, but I get tired.  
I don’t want to become a person who talks about how I’m feeling inside and what’s happening inside me.  
This reflective process has helped me to realize some things, or maybe to remember again, or to verbalize them and then to ask myself “What am I going to do about this?”

It has been wonderful to rediscover that I’m married to somebody for a reason, that he’s an interesting and kind person, and that we can have fun together.  
So that’s a positive thing because it can bring me to a place where I’m not just self-preoccupied.  
I think the research process has reinforced my values.  
Maybe, I need to do now something specific that’s going to pull me past some of those insecurities.  
Maybe, I’m being too vague here because I’m not really sure.

Some of my intuitions are related to my feelings and things keep coming up.  
I’ve been reminded of the fact that  
✓ there is a reason for my having gifts,  
✓ I do love teaching,  
✓ I am loved and  
✓ I have the ability to do some of these things.

So rather than worrying about how I’m not as good as someone else, just do what I can do.

It has provoked lots of thinking, there is no doubt.  
I’m thinking about lots of things I haven’t been for a while, and sometimes I’d rather not.

The most significant impact of this research process has been GUILT.  
I didn’t do it enough.

The other thing is pride. I want to be the best.  
It can be depressing because you can wallow in that and just realize how big your FEARS are.

I realized that there are insecurities because of growing up in a big family and who I was in that place, but I really came out of it grounded in something loving and caring.

I’ve always looked for that sense of belonging in other places.  
When I don’t feel it, like in university, I feel loneliness.  
I don’t quite belong there.  
I love working with my colleagues but we’re not a community.  
The impact on me is my need to belong to a community and to be affirmed.

I find it hard to see the subtle differences, if any, in my perception of myself since the beginning of this research process. If you ask me in a year I might be able to say.

I think this process OPENED me UP.  
Sometimes we close ourselves against something difficult.

I have a quote from a book that says “We steel ourselves against realities that are difficult for us, but essentially by doing that we also steel ourselves against the possibility of being transformed, of being open.”
I think that's what this does.  
It has opened me again to the gifts that I can receive.

*Still, one has to be OPEN…*

**You can't be transformed by others until you're OPEN to that.**

I don't know.
I can only tell you what I think. Even the fact that I'm thinking about it is important.

The research process has brought up little things in me that might have been floating in there. 
But it has this new sense of maybe, I can do other things; maybe, I can find a way. 

I believe that taking time to reflect and being open to inspiration is important.
This project has reminded me of that.

It has also reminded me of the deeper impulses that are there for me. 
I really want for the world to be a better place.
It has reminded me that there's a bigger purpose to why I teach a language.

It has inspired me because often I sit down and jot things down and I have them in files.
I had done that before… but I had stopped. 
It has helped me a lot to reflect on the past. 
Sometimes it's brooding more than reflecting, but brooding just gets you into a spiral.

It's also important to identify what's bothering me. 
The interviews are helpful because you take some of that and you put it together and who knows what it provokes.

*So have I noticed an impact?*

I don't know enough yet.

Maybe, I'm able to see the positive aspects more clearly. 
It has reinforced my sense of what my gifts are.

*So what have I learned?*

Maybe, I don't have to worry about what makes me insecure. 
What matters finally is the students, their motivation, and what they want to do.

*So have I changed my perception?*

I don't know.
Maybe, it has reinforced some of my basic beliefs about how I feel about myself as a teacher.

*This is my identity as a teacher.*

*This is who I am.*
It’s always strange to read things that you’ve said.

As I read the first part I couldn't go on. I thought “This isn’t me.”
It felt more negative than the realities are from day to day.
I sound more traumatized and anxious than maybe I am in life, even inside.

I don’t think I am an anxious person.
I don’t know how to explain it. When you look at problems, you become the problem.
But I’m reasonably well adjusted.

I think my metaphor for participating in this research is STRUGGLE.

It was a lot of hard work.
Initially I was interested in participating - thinking that I could isolate some of my issues and see what positive move I could make. But I’ve struggled.
It’s a struggle of coming to terms with various strains that make up this mix and trying to pull them apart.
I think for me it has been an acknowledgement that this is who I am.

There’s clearly a disconnection between how I see myself and how others view me.
Part of me realizes that there is that other self.
That’s why I think this threw me off a bit because I was simply saying what I struggle with.
At the end I realized that I can’t go just by what people say. That’s a whole big problem, too.
I accept that this is how it is, that’s who I am.

Reading the portrayal pointed out again that… I don’t know… I don’t know how to explain it.
It’s self-consciousness that’s hard to get past.
I was glad that I had done it.

I feel more positive about myself in the sense that I can say those things.
I’m cautiously optimistic. I’ll have more time to reflect.

I think the project has helped me.
I have done a lot of reflecting. I think my understanding of myself is clearer.
I’m cautiously optimistic that this will help me to feel more positive about myself as a teacher.

Sometimes I don’t see what’s right beside me.

It’s clear that just talking about myself and things I could do, would also be a struggle.
But it’s taking the time to meditate and reflect is really important.

There was a point where I thought if I had known how much work this was, I would never have agreed to do it. Never. I wouldn’t have started it.

I am glad I did it, but it was not easy.
Researcher’s Analytical Summary

I identified several important experiences in Janet’s life that made an impact on her beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations about her identity as a teacher.

This summary is divided into two major sections as responses to both research questions. First, in response to the first research question I present a selection of what I, the researcher, saw as the most influential experiences of Janet’s life based on the analysis of her portrayal. The analysis maps out the connections and relationships between Janet’s educational, professional and personal experiences and the development of her teacher identity. Then, I present some prevailing themes as signs of Janet’s perspective transformation (e.g., reflection, taking actions, insights, resistance to change, and impact of research participation) about her identity as a teacher and a person that emerged during the analysis. This section outlines the answer to the second research question.

1. Important educational, professional and personal experiences – including language learning experiences – that influenced the development of Janet’s teacher identity

Educational Experiences and Language Learning

Janet was raised in three languages and from early childhood on, her life was influenced by learning and speaking several languages. She loved being at school and she enjoyed learning in general. She did not have to work hard at school, “I did well at school. It was easy.” Her educational experiences - “I experienced learning as pleasure” - show correspondence with her teaching approach “I want my students to enjoy learning”.

She loved language classes, too. She was excited to learn new words when she was a child. Her experience of learning French, beginning at high school, was a significant experience that has clearly made an impact on the development of her teacher identity. Janet learned French by correspondence because it was not offered at school, which shows her strong enthusiasm and determination for language learning. This perseverance was also fed by her belief that evolved from taking piano lessons “if you worked really hard and just kept working and working, sometimes there’s a breakthrough”. She experimented with a variety of language learning strategies as she learned Spanish (e.g., conversational, informal learning through volunteering with refugees) and Arabic (e.g., memorization). Although she has learned six languages (!) in
total, learning French has been the key experience in determining her career as a language teacher. It was French that gave her the first job. Teaching French in the early years of her professional life further developed her command of the language (e.g., “you speak it all day every day”) and influenced her teaching approach (e.g., “I learned an incredible amount about how to teach and what worked”). During the period of teaching French, she also recognized her passion for becoming a language teacher. The fact that “three of my students became French teachers” indicates that she must have inspired her students in class.

In spite of being successful at learning French largely on her own, she failed to recognize this accomplishment for herself. There was a lack of seeing her skills and knowledge in actual reality, “I failed in being able to see myself and say ‘This is who I am. This is good. I’m good at this. I figured out French all by myself’.” Her undergraduate experience with practicing French in the language lab and the professor’s encouragement indicate that others noticed her skills and abilities. The positive encouragement and affirmation by others brought about amazing results; yet, she could not see and acknowledge them in herself.

Janet mentioned playing the piano as one of her memorable experiences. Although music does not relate directly to her professional life as a language teacher, I found that this experience influenced her in several, interconnected ways. First, she learned to work hard at something she loved doing, which also translated into her passion for teaching. Second, the experience also revealed her talent with playing music: e.g., audition and acceptance by a reputable piano teacher at the age of 10; winning a silver medal in a piano competition; and plans and arrangements to complete her piano studies at the Conservatory. Third, her demanding piano teacher made her realize that she needed to be challenged to produce quality work “I liked the fact that she demanded something” and she also learned “to be disciplined” through spending a lot of time with practicing. This experience taught her discipline and perseverance, which prepared her for her future teaching profession. Her first jobs, both teaching French and ESL, challenged her and she was willing to develop her pedagogical knowledge. At the same time, she also needed positive encouragement and affirmation from others. This belief of hers is also reflected in her teaching philosophy “I encourage them, make demands, and try to push them”.

Playing the piano evoked deep feelings in her “I felt beautiful when I played the piano. I could make someone happy, even me. Something beautiful came out of me. I just felt it. It’s art.” These feelings can be linked to her deep-seated dissatisfaction with her self-image and physical
appearance. This made me wonder *WHY* she dropped something that meant so much to her emotionally. Playing the piano seemed to boost her self-esteem, gave her success and acknowledgement artistically, and satisfaction emotionally. Nevertheless, she gave it up for intellectual pursuits, which - although she also excelled at - did not sustain her emotionally in the same rewarding way. It seems as though she had been unable to accept that *real beauty* comes from within, which she indeed found by playing music. Her excellence at playing the piano is a clear sign that she *WAS* capable of bringing about positive feelings and joy simply by herself when playing music. Yet, she appeared to dismiss the idea that she could find the source of success, affirmation and joy *inside her*. Instead, she continued to focus on getting them from others.

Janet spoke very highly of teachers who awakened her interest and passion for learning, who took an interest in her professionally and academically, who encouraged her, challenged her, believed in her, and affirmed her throughout her education. Several character traits of these teachers (e.g., “an amazing lecturer”, “someone who took a personal interest”, “someone who was brave and strong inside”) shaped her own instructional practice and teaching philosophy. These teachers acted as role models for Janet. She appreciated the feelings of safety and being loved by teachers in her childhood. On the other hand, demanding teachers scared her and intimidated her. The lack of self-confidence, self-acceptance and self-love is clearly shown in her words. Her appreciation of all the above-mentioned traits in others also supports my observation that she noticed and admired the characteristics *in others* because she perceived herself clearly as lacking these traits in herself, or she was *unable* to notice them in herself.

**Professional Experiences**

The analysis justified that Janet demonstrated a formidable and commendable work ethic throughout her teaching career by working long hours, taking charge of her own professional development, and investing a lot of energy and effort into teaching and preparation. However, she has been reluctant to give herself credit for her efforts. I found a connection between her reluctance of self-acknowledgment and three of her negative experiences: her worst graduate course, her negative teaching experience in graduate school, and her emotional response to her recent student evaluations. Janet gave her interpretation of these negative experiences in the portrayal. In light of my theoretical framework (Chapter 3), I believe that there is no negative
experience, but only perceptions and interpretations that over time require re-interpretation and re-evaluation. The negative feelings and emotions in relation to an event may indicate a dysfunctional or obsolete belief that requires attention and re-interpretation. This is in accord with Kelly’s (1963) concept of “constructive alternativism”, which states that “we assume that all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement” (p. 15). According to Kelly, we create our own reality and in this sense, situations and people provide us with opportunities to learn about ourselves. During the analysis, I discovered some subtle, implicit connections between Janet’s negative experiences and her deeper personal issues. I am not in the position to interpret the “ultimate” meaning of these experiences for Janet; however, I present my observations based on the analysis of the data.

Janet claimed that she had the worst graduate course with a female professor who, according to Janet, had a narrow perspective and strong views. Janet expressed her disagreement with the professor’s views and said that “she made me furious. I used to come home in rage”. In her understanding, the professor did not respect students in the class. Janet admitted that “I tend to have strong opinions. I used to get into huge arguments with people. I would attack people.” She also mentioned that she had strong arguments with people in other situations: “I’m not saying that I accept all the criticism. Sometimes, I ignore them. I would say things and criticize things publicly.” Based on my analysis, this professor may have acted as a mirror image for Janet to magnify certain traits that she had previously ignored in herself and needed to be brought back in focus again requiring reflection and re-evaluation. This is a good example of raising the personal unconscious to consciousness (Jung, 1959) since Janet was confronted with something that she was aware of in others, but not in herself. The degree of her discomfort, anger and rage in response to the professor’s behaviour indicates that the experience touched her sensitivity and she reacted vehemently. In my understanding, an important key word in the professor’s verbalization is “bigoted” because this caused so fiercely Janet’s rage and anger. The word “bigot” denotes a “person who constantly and stubbornly holds a particular point of view” and it can refer to things other than the religious context, in which it was used. The fact that Janet holds on to her views is evident at several points in her portrayal. For example, she has a strong need for affirmation, validation and acceptance by others and despite her ‘getting’ them, she has been unable to ‘receive’ and acknowledge them for herself. Despite all evidence of her

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23 www.thefreedictionary.com
being affirmed, loved and accepted by others, e.g., “People have affirmed the gifts I have for teaching and they encouraged me in my work”, she still holds on to her unconscious belief about the exact opposite, e.g., “I’m really not as good as others”, “I don’t live up to expectations”. This exemplifies Bergner and Holmes’ (2000) limiting self-concept that “possesses a curious resistance to change in the face of apparently disconfirming facts” (p. 38).

Janet’s negative teaching experience in graduate school and her emotional response to her recent student evaluations are other instances of the above-described limiting self-concept. In the former case, Janet considered it a negative experience because her prior experiences as a teacher had not been acknowledged. She also admitted that she did not have confidence in her abilities and she did not want to accept criticism and feedback from her peers; she may not have regarded them as “authority”. Janet recounted that she had accomplished a lot, e.g., she developed teaching materials, prepared exams, and marked papers. The fact that three teachers wanted to work with her afterwards indicates that she was doing an excellent job. Otherwise, the job would not have been offered to her. However, she did not see this quality in herself.

Her negative experience with some student evaluations of her work is the third example of a limiting self-concept. Her strong emotional reaction and her sickness about the evaluation stating that “I choose favourites in class” seems to be connected to her early childhood experience of “feeling special”. She recalled that she loved to be treated special by her relatives on her summer vacations. The fact that a student’s comment made her literally sick reveals that this was another important event that attempted to signal her something about herself that needed attention, reflection and re-interpretation. Finally, I observed that the source of her limiting self-concept may have originated in her experience of being first in class in grade 6 and not getting any token of appreciation and acknowledgement from her parents, unlike her brother who did get one dollar. Although Janet admitted that her parents were proud of her and “my doing well at school was affirmed”, the feeling of pride and affirmation did not seem tangible or visible enough for a young girl as opposed to the one dollar bill that her brother received. I identified this childhood event as the source of her need and desire for affirmation, acknowledgement and encouragement from others that appear to be the most obvious and outstanding features in Janet’s portrayal.
Personal Experiences

Personal life experiences, such as (i) the issue of self-image and physical appearance, (ii) living in a big family, and (iii) Christian faith, also made an impact on Janet’s sense of identity as a teacher.

Janet expressed her dissatisfaction with her physical appearance and the resulting displeasure with her self-image several times during the interviews. She had a deep desire to look beautiful physically that was also connected to her desire for having a boyfriend and social acknowledgement in high school. At a young age, other kids teased her and made fun of her because of her glasses or her clothes, which led to her shyness, self-consciousness, and insecurity about herself. These traits are apparent in her teacher identity: “Teaching also creates anxieties and the feeling that it’s never quite enough”, “I think the profession wishes us to be anxious”, “I’m afraid of failing”, “I find it hard to accept that I have done my best”. She became easily offended and hurt by other people’s comments that translated into her need for safety “I want to be confident”. Based on my analysis, there are some contradictory statements in Janet’s portrayal. Although her need and deep desire for affirmation, love and acceptance by others appear very clearly in her statements, there are also several instances for the fulfillment of this need in her life. For example, she stated that she had many good friends and she also built in friendships in her daily routine but she claimed “I feel very lonely” and “I’d die if I don’t have social interaction”, which show a strong desire for social interaction on her part. However, the inner feeling of loneliness may not be truly resolved with having a lot of people around oneself if there is a lack of self-acceptance and self-love.

An especially strong sense of belonging and a deep desire for complete and total acceptance by others originate from her childhood experiences (family, church, larger community) that are reflected in her pedagogical goals and teaching style “I work terribly hard to create a community in the classroom”. She admitted that her success depended on the encouragement of others “I succeeded because someone encouraged me”, which seems to make her own integrity, sense of self and confidence contingent upon others that she has no control over. This very fact dooms her to failure most of the time because she has not been able to transform others’ temporary affirmation into a permanent inner source of self-confidence. She has a strong desire to be the “winner” all the time; yet, she has a “loser” mentality as well “I’m
basically a pessimist and a worrier”, which are obviously conflicting beliefs. The negative belief seems to override the positive one and thus, it makes quite challenging to be the winner.

Several aspects of Janet’s teacher identity can be traced back to her perception and interpretation of her parents’ and siblings’ personalities. Her father’s public presence and his public speaking skills obviously inspired Janet to become teacher. She attributed her self-consciousness to that of being a family trait, “All of us struggled with confidence in the family”, and to her father’s and siblings’ need for privacy, e.g., “My Dad did not talk about intimate things”, “My siblings don’t tell me their inside”. Her mother’s qualities are evident in Janet’s personality, which were acknowledged in the interviews. She inherited the feelings of insecurity, shyness, perfectionism, sensitivity from her mother. She also mentioned that her worries about others’ opinion, her loneliness and emotional isolation from others as well as her obsession over details came from her mother. The “single most important influence” on her life and her major decisions in life has been her Christian faith, “all my activities are assessed in its light”. The influence of her faith is implicitly present in her teaching philosophy, e.g., in her caring about students “every single person who walks through that door matters”, “each of them is this untapped wonder”, or volunteering to teach ESL abroad. It is also important for Janet to give her students a sense of identity “you matter in this class” and “to make them feel comfortable”, which is a cornerstone of her teaching philosophy.

Janet’s feelings of insecurity, lack of confidence and her intense need for external affirmation and validation seem to be reflected in her apparent struggle with the guided visualization activity. She admitted several times that she had had difficulty with letting go of the control of her mind during the activity “I was never able to quite get into it”, “I don’t feel completely comfortable”, “I don’t feel like I’m completely absent from what’s going on around me”. Her struggle with and resistance to the activity “I’ve always been resistant” that primarily intended to put her in touch with her inner voice / intuition, seem to justify her issues about the lack of self-confidence, self-acceptance and self-appreciation. She may have found it difficult to listen inwardly because she was used to focusing so much on the signals of the external world. She mentioned several times that she had blocked her intuitive thoughts and feelings earlier. The desire for being in charge was an important aspect of her experience with the visualization activity. She said that “sometimes I control some impulses”. Her earlier experience with hypnosis appears to confirm my observation because she agreed that “You don’t like being
controlled”. It reveals a strong sense of power and being in control herself instead of allowing being controlled by others. She seemed to have replaced the intuitive activity with a silent reflective process because she relied mainly on recalling her memories instead of allowing intuitive feelings and thoughts to surface. She referred to using her “head” repeatedly in the interview when she talked about her experience with the guided visualization, e.g., “I learned to just sit and think about”, “This is what my head’s telling me”. Thinking seemed to be prevailing during the visualization activity when in fact reflection was meant to be a complementary, follow-up activity only.

Major issues that she addressed in this activity were the following: confidence “Why do I always feel like I’m not quite making it?” or “Why do I feel inferior to my colleagues?”, anxiety “Why do I feel worried?”, and agency “What do I really want to do?”. As a result of this activity Janet came to important realizations. She recognized her strong need for affirmation from others and thus, acknowledged the importance of people around her. She realized the importance of reflection and that of listening to intuitive hunches, feelings and thoughts that she had previously ignored “I walk away from them” or “If I don’t find a way to incorporate the intuitions, they’ll just remain there and then I’ll forget them”. Finally, the activity helped her to see that she needed to find balance between work and her personal life.

Janet’s verbalizations about the relationships among her thoughts, feelings and actions as aspects of her teacher identity further highlight the imbalance that I indentified in her statements. Her thoughts about herself as a teacher are quite positive. She relates to people and cares about them and she wants to teach them, e.g., “I think I am a good and caring teacher”, “I have a gift for teaching”. However, when her feelings were elicited, she revealed anxiety, worries and insecurity “How am I going to do this?”, “I often feel that it’s not as good as what the other person is offering”. Her sense of feeling good depends on external factors “When things go well, I feel good”, “I’m not living up to expectations”, “I’m afraid and frightened, I fumble around and I get nervous and chaotic”. On the other hand, her actions signal that she is friendly, outgoing, compassionate, fun-loving and organized. Nevertheless, when she is nervous and feels threatened, she avoids people, gets quiet, falls apart or she can be sarcastic, “I definitely teach better when I’m confident, but I have to feel a little nervous”.

When I asked about her sense of balance among thoughts, feelings and actions, she responded that “I can never quite be in balance”. When she feels insecure, she is fearful,
nervous and less-organized, she does not act as warm and giving to students, she has trouble even preparing for the class, and she feels blocked. She feels inferior to her colleagues. She admits that her feelings make a huge impact on her. Her sense of balance depends on affirmation and validation from others about her success rate in the class that day, “You have to have some kind of feedback”. She needs affirmation in order to persevere in her teaching. This is, however, unsustainable in the long run. Ultimately, an individual needs to believe in him/herself and find inner balance so that they can grow personally and professionally.

2. Prevailing themes that reveal signs of perspective transformation

I identified five emerging themes in Janet’s case that reveal a certain degree of perspective transformation: (i) reflection, (ii) taking actions, (iii) insights, (iv) resistance to change, and (v) impact of research participation. The signs of potential shifts in her perspective are very subtle and they also uncover hesitation and insecurity on Janet’s part in terms of taking actions. The following section presents my analysis of the relationships between the themes and her perspective transformation.

Reflection

As a result of participating in the research project Janet underlined the fact that it helped her “to reflect on the past” because “things have come up over and over again”. She is now spending a lot more time thinking about herself: “I’m focusing more” and “I have begun to think more carefully”. Janet admitted that the research process “has made things surface” and it “has made me more conscious of the things that are going on”. The research participation also reminded her “of the importance of reflecting” and she added that “I realize that sometimes I need to take time to listen to those things”. She identified some categories of her reflection expressed in the form of questions: “How can I affirm myself in terms of what is positive?; How can I help myself to get the overall picture?; What is it that I’m doing?; What is it that’s keeping me from always seeing my work in a positive way because I just want to quit.” These questions all imply that there is a subtle shift from the focus on the external world to that of her thoughts within. She expressed her interest in taking “more time to reflect on things that bother me in my teaching”. Her self-criticism is voiced in her saying that the reflective process was sometimes “brooding more than reflecting, but brooding just gets you into a spiral”. However, she also
acknowledged that “even the fact that I’m thinking about it is important”. Also, I identified another hint of a potential shift in her perspective when she claimed that “I’m in the process of thinking about changing some of my preoccupations: what is beautiful, what makes me beautiful, and why it matters so much”. This statement implies that she is going through a re-interpretation of her preoccupations that determined her views, perceptions and beliefs about herself as a teacher and a person for a very long time.

Taking Actions

I found it a crucial step in the process of changing one’s perspective that Janet made a mental link between reflection and taking actions: “thinking about those things has provoked a lot of things: what do I really want to do?” She expressed that the reflective process “encouraged me to make a plan”. She presented a long list of probable actions that she planned to carry out in order to bring about some changes in her professional life and to improve her feelings about herself. She sounded optimistic and pro-active as she said that she needed “to have something that I’m actually going to do in terms of

✓ how I will deal with some of the insecurities;
✓ using classroom techniques;
✓ encouraging myself simply by realizing that I’ve been successful;
✓ the research that’s worrying me;
✓ that whole thing about self-affirmation and needing to be loved;
✓ this whole thing with men and all that.”

She came to the conclusion that she needed “to do now something specific that’s going to pull me past some of those insecurities”. The above statements reveal an intention to make a plan and carry it out that helps her resolve her issues. However, the optimism and a sense of hope suddenly seem to fade away with her persistent insecurity and doubts about how to act upon these ideas, “I’m not really sure”. Nevertheless, she insisted on maintaining hope as she said that “it has this new sense of maybe, I can do other things; maybe, I can find a way”. Although there is no clear evidence of her taking actions yet to act upon these intentions, I found it important that she made a link between “thinking” / “reflecting” about her issues and “doing” something about them.
**Insights**

Janet expressed several insights and realizations about various aspects of herself in her portrayal. In my understanding, insights can be an important outcome of reflection that denote a certain level of “noticing” – i.e., bringing the unconscious to consciousness – that, in turn, may prompt further re-construction and re-evaluation of one’s perspective, which may, then, lead to taking actions. Janet articulated several times that the research process made her realize how much affirmation she needed from others, that the process “helped me to realize some things, or maybe to remember again, or to verbalize them and then to ask myself “What am I going to do about this?” and it “reinforced my values”. She also added that “overall it has helped me to see that I need to find a balance of work and personal life.”

Janet found that “the most significant impact of this research process has been GUILT. I didn’t do it enough”. Her guilt is connected to her perfectionism and points out Janet’s unwillingness to accept the idea that this was all she could do at this point in time that I consider a quite remarkable and commendable achievement in itself. Another identified insight was her fears “I just realize how big my FEARS are”. Noticing and acknowledging one’s fears may be the first step in trying to deal with them.

Based on my analysis, I found Janet’s response “I’ve always looked for that sense of belonging in other places” significant and promising. In the corroboration interview she acknowledged that “there’s clearly a disconnection between how I see myself and how others view me”. The analysis made it obvious that the crux of the matter in Janet’s identity was her recognition of the gap between her own feelings and self-perceptions and other people’s views of her, which seemed to be a major step for Janet in self-growth. This realization “threw her off a bit”, which indicates that the disconnection still brings about some emotional resistance in her. Nevertheless, she recognized that “I can’t go just by what people say. That’s a whole big problem, too”. I found this a highly important realization that may prompt her to look inside for answers rather than relying on others. However, it remained unclear from Janet’s verbalization whether or not she would act upon her insight. There is a certain degree of hesitance and struggle present on her part, “maybe, I’m able to see the positive aspects more clearly. Maybe, it has reinforced some of my basic beliefs about how I feel about myself as a teacher. It’s a struggle of coming to terms with various strains that make up this mix and trying to pull them apart.” In the
corroboration interview Janet admitted that the research process had been a “struggle” for her throughout.

Even though she “struggled”, “this process OPENED me UP”, which is another obvious insight about the impact of her participation in the research process. Janet articulated her thoughts quite profoundly that may also indicate a potential shift of perspective on her part, “You can’t be transformed by others until you’re OPEN to that”. It remains to be seen whether or not the realization will lead to an actual perspective transformation. The quote used in her portrayal captured very aptly her own dilemma about the next step in her personal and professional growth, “We steel ourselves against realities that are difficult for us, but essentially by doing that we also steel ourselves against the possibility of being transformed, of being open”.

**Resistance to Change**

Another theme was Janet’s resistance to change, “sometimes you just don’t want to deal with things and face things that are making you insecure”, “For a while it was too much. It was driving me crazy. I needed to walk away from it”, “I don’t want to become so narcissistic”. Her assertions support my observation about her strongly holding on to her views and beliefs, “I will always feel insecure to some extent”, “I will always be an anxious person”, “Who you are inside cannot be resolved”, “I won’t change inside. Yes, I will, but there are some things that will be there”. These claims reflect her feelings of insecurity, anxiety, fear of the unknown and resistance to change, which may imply the perpetuation of the status quo on her part. Janet made a statement that indirectly confirms the above observations I made: “I’m thinking about lots of things I haven’t been for a while, and sometimes I’d rather not”. Her fears and insecurity are likely to hold her back from going deeper to resolve her issues.

**Impact of Research Participation**

Janet claimed that the project helped her but she seemed uncertain to pinpoint the precise effects of the research process on her perspective, “I find it hard to see the subtle differences, if any, in my perception of myself”. Although she could not make the connections clear in the final interview, I identified some subtle outcomes of her participation in the research project. One clear result is shown in her personal life in terms of reviving her marriage, “It has helped me reflect on how I can improve my existing relationship”, “It’s been wonderful to rediscover that
I’m married”. Janet discovered that the research process reinforced her values and it helped her accept herself. She admitted that the project inspired her “because often I sit down and jot things down and I have them in files”. She felt more positive about herself, “I can say those things”; however, she admitted that “sometimes I don’t see what’s right beside me. Things like this take time”. She also mentioned that “my understanding of myself is clearer”. Finally, a positive sign for the future is that she is “cautiously optimistic that this will help me to feel more positive about myself and what kind of research I want to pursue”. 
Chapter 8

Results: Predominant Influences on the Development of Teacher Identity

Your beliefs and feelings mold your perceptions and continuously broadcast a frequency of energy either repelling or attracting life’s events. Sometimes an event is dismissed, as if you were shooing away a fly, yet it is still indelibly imprinted with invisible ink in your subconscious mind. Some events you never forget because you have a flashbulb-like memory of the experience. Whether you consciously remember an event or not, the situation and your projected beliefs concerning it are faithfully stored in your memory banks according to your perceptions. (Marciniak, 2004, p. 114)

Introduction

This chapter diverges from strictly following the methodological guidelines\(^2\) of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). According to Moustakas (1990), the heuristic research process concludes with a “creative synthesis”, which is a comprehensive depiction of the essences of the experience presented primarily in the form of a narrative description. This means that heuristic research design does not require an interpretive chapter. I felt dissatisfied with concluding my study with a descriptive chapter without elaborating on my interpretations of the findings. Since the participants’ experiences have been portrayed in a narrative, descriptive form in Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D, I personally preferred to include both an analytical interpretation of my findings aligned with the guidelines of general qualitative research and a short “creative synthesis” in order to maintain some balance between description, analysis, and interpretation. Wolcott (1994) defines analysis in the following way:

Here is where one reports or summarizes whatever was counted, measured, inquired about, and so on. No more story, just the facts, now organized in such a way as to reveal those underlying properties and structures and relationships that are the stuff of analysis (p. 30).

\(^2\) Phases of heuristic research are the following: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990). See Chapter 6 for details.
In qualitative research, “interpretation involves explaining the findings, answering ‘why’ questions, attaching significance to particular results, and putting patterns into an analytic framework” (Patton, 2002, p. 438). Furthermore, Wolcott (1994) provides a definition of interpretation in the following way:

The term interpretation is well suited to mark a threshold in thinking and writing at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analyses and begins to probe into what is to be made of them. [...] Description is the fulcrum, the pivotal base on which all else hinges, but it is the researcher who decides how the description is to be played out – whether to bear down more heavily on the side of analysis or interpretation or, risking the dull equilibrium of a static state, to try for “perfect balance” between them (p. 36).

Thus, I decided to merge - methodologically - Moustakas’ (1990, 1994) guidelines for heuristic research with Wolcott’s (1994) and Patton’s (2002) recommendations for interpreting my research findings from a qualitative research perspective.

This chapter is divided into three parts: (i) interpretation of the results; (ii) contributions, implications, and limitations of my research with recommendations for future research; and (iii) my creative synthesis. First, I discuss my interpretations of the results based on the individual analysis of each participant’s portrayal summarized in the “Researcher’s Analytical Summary” of the previous chapters (Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D). Hence, the final stage of data analysis included the thorough and in-depth group analysis of all participants’ data and the interpretation of the results, i.e., the emerging predominant influences on the development of teacher identity – representative of the whole group. The group analysis was guided by the two research questions, presented in Chapter 6. Following that, I spell out the contributions, implications, and limitations of my research. Then, I make some recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with my “creative synthesis” written in a narrative form.

**Interpretation of the Results**

In this section, I present my interpretations of the results that emerged out of the analysis of the participants’ portrayals. The results are presented in four major propositions – most of them subsuming several further points – that bring together the two research questions (see Chapters 1 and 6). As a reminder, the research questions investigated (i) language teachers’
perceptions, beliefs, and interpretations about the impact of their important personal, educational, and professional experiences on the development of their teacher identity, and (ii) the overall impact of an autobiographical reflective process combined with a guided visualization activity on the re-construction of their perceptions of their teacher identity. The discussion of the results organically evolved in two parts by virtue of their theoretical and methodological implications. Results 1 and 2 discuss the impact of past and present personal and professional experiences on the development of teacher identity, carrier choice, teaching practices, and teaching philosophy. I present my interpretations of the results based on the analyses of the participants’ re-construction of their experiences. Results 3 and 4 examine the impact of the combined use of rational reflection and guided visualization as methods to access the participants’ perceptions, assumptions, beliefs, and interpretations on their teacher identity. Thus, the first two results have theoretical implications while the latter two have methodological implications. The four major propositions are discussed in the following sequence:

1. The participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their school experiences were heavily influenced by their beliefs (expressed in personality traits) stemming from the family environment:
   - The family environment made an impact on the development of beliefs;
   - Language learning experiences strongly influenced future teaching practice;
   - “Good teachers” as role models affected the development of teacher identity;

2. The participants’ personal experiences strongly shaped their career choice, instructional practice, and teaching philosophy:
   - Teaching provided a “venue” for personal growth (e.g., self-acceptance, self-expression, and self-confidence) that revealed an intricate relationship between family, schooling, and career choice;
   - Personal integrity was fostered by harmonizing one’s masculine and feminine characteristics;

3. The integrated use of the guided visualization technique and rational reflection effectively enhanced self-understanding and personal/professional growth;

4. The autobiographical reflective process revealed a strong interconnectedness between personal and professional life experiences, articulated as major aspects of teacher identity:
• Childhood experiences made a considerable impact on instructional practice and the development of teacher identity; and
• The integrated autobiographical reflective process uncovered a substantial interconnectedness between personal and professional lives.

Result 1: Perceptions and Interpretations of the Participants’ School Experiences were Heavily Influenced by their Beliefs (Expressed in Personality Traits) Stemming from the Family Environment

The first proposition claims that there are obvious connections and influences among the family environment, the development of beliefs and personality traits nurtured in the family, and the participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their school experiences. I discuss this proposition in three sub-sections below, based on the participants’ re-construction of their past experiences.

Impact of the Family Environment on the Development of Beliefs

The participants perceived and interpreted their school experiences through the filters of their belief systems that had been constructed and nurtured within the family environment. This finding provides evidence to support a main tenet of Kelly’s (1955, 1963) Personal Construct Theory in that construct systems influence our expectations and perceptions. Kelly (1963) emphasized the strong influence of an individual’s construct system on one’s perceptions claiming that what an individual perceives may not exist, but his perception does exist and in this sense, whatever an individual perceives becomes real for him.

My findings provided ample evidence at several places in the portrayals that resonated with Kelly’s statements. The portrayals demonstrated both the strong influence of belief systems on the participants’ perceptions and the “real-ness” of perceptions for them. There are several instances that uncovered how the participants’ belief systems and perceptions constrained their behaviours. For example, Cassie questioned the underlying basis of her thoughts in interpreting reality, e.g., “what if your self-perception is not accurate of yourself???” (see “Self-Perception” section, pp. 194-195). In Karen’s portrayal there was an instance about the importance of self-

25 My use of the term “belief system” is identical conceptually with Kelly’s concept of “construct system”
perceptions, i.e., “your mindset influences how you look at things” (see “Self-Perceptions” section, p. 229). Mary emphasized the importance of the Sisters Dinners in her coming to terms with her perceptions of the relationship with her mother that facilitated her own self-acceptance, e.g., “I didn’t come to embrace myself until I let go of my Mother” (see “Signs of Perspective Transformation”, pp. 260-262). Janet’s portrayal provided several instances of the conflict between her self-perceptions and others’ perceptions of her that made her realize that “you can’t be transformed by others until you’re open to that” (see “Insights” section, pp. 295-296).

The participants’ belief systems clearly affected their perceptions of the family environment. These beliefs, usually without any conscious and deliberate decision, were expressed and manifested in a variety of personality traits:

- insecurity;
- shyness/self-consciousness;
- lack of confidence;
- low self-esteem and self-worth;
- lack of pride in one’s accomplishments; and
- commitment and determination.

The beliefs expressed through the individual personality traits, in turn, also made a strong impact on the participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their school experiences. This result demonstrates the interplay between belief systems and perceptions that coincides with other researchers’ conclusions, e.g., Bergner and Holmes’ (2000) “limiting self-concept” explained that “children tend to unreflectively accept the statuses that they have been assigned by important others” (p. 39). On the other hand, Roberts (1974/1994) claimed that the accepted beliefs from parents serve as a framework within which a child grows and “this provides a leeway until the conscious mind is able to reason for itself and provide its own value judgments” (p. 57). Roberts (1974/1994) also maintained that “your beliefs can be like fences that surround you” (p. 20) and “basically you create your experience through your beliefs about yourself and the nature of reality” (p. 11). Lipton (2008) referred to this relationship as the belief effect “to stress that our perceptions, whether they are accurate or inaccurate, equally impact our behavior

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26Status refers to an individual’s “overall conception of one’s place or position in relation to all of the elements in one’s world including oneself” (Bergner & Holmes, 2000, p. 37).
and our bodies” (p. 107). He further claimed that, through gaining awareness, we can begin to observe our beliefs, to consider alternative beliefs, and to actively choose them.

Your beliefs act like filters on a camera, changing how you see the world. And your biology adapts to those beliefs. [...] My point is that you can choose what to see. You can filter your life with rose-colored beliefs that will help your body grow or you can use a dark filter that turns everything black and makes your body/mind more susceptible to disease. You can live a life of fear or live a life of love. You have the choice! [...] It is not our genes but our beliefs that control our lives. (Lipton, 2008, pp. 112-113, emphasis added)

Three participants’ school experiences (e.g., Cassie, Karen, Mary) were influenced considerably by their beliefs and perceptions in their family environment (i.e., relationship with the mother). The negative, often critical and judgmental relationship with the mother influenced unfavourably the participants’ school accomplishments and academic success. In other words, participants developed numerous personality traits (e.g., insecurity, shyness, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem) as a result of (i) their beliefs and perceptions of their relationship with the mother, and (ii) their perceived deprivation of love, praise, acknowledgement, and acceptance by the mother, or, (iii) by their complete loss of the mother figure (e.g. Cassie’s case). In turn, these personality traits influenced the participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their school experiences. These results show evidence of an obvious and strong influence of the participants’ belief systems on their perceptions and interpretations, which corresponds with the claims in the literature as presented above.

The death of Cassie’s mother affected her school experiences: (i) behavior problems at school; (ii) low self-esteem, and (iii) lack of self-confidence and insecurity, e.g., she was nervous and self-conscious about public speaking and presentations in front of others. Due to her perceived lack of self-confidence she developed compensating strategies, e.g., planning, working hard, and being organized. She put a great emphasis on grades, success, and intelligence throughout her education. She yearned for success at school but was unable to acknowledge it for herself despite her excellence at school. Her university studies brought her approval and acknowledgement, which also boosted her self-esteem and self-confidence. Cassie put great emphasis on intelligence and others’ perception of her during her university studies. This is an expression of her unconscious desire for acceptance and appreciation by the external world because she was unable to see this in herself.

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Karen’s school experiences were also interwoven with the impact of her family background. In particular, Karen’s relationship with her mother influenced her experiences of school and learning. She hated going to school in grade school and high school. This resulted in poor academic achievement and her inhibition to show her abilities at school. The lack of love and caring at home made an impact on her behavior at school (e.g., poking the ball). Karen’s school experiences also reveal (i) her insecurity (e.g., failed book reports), (ii) her inability to establish contact with other people and to speak in front of others, and (iii) her reluctance to acknowledge her identity. Karen gained confidence as a result of her teacher’s acknowledgement, positive reinforcement, and appraisal of her good work. This shows that she needed external validation and acknowledgment of her accomplishments because of her insecurity about herself. In response to the challenging family situation she developed eating disorders: anorexia and later, bulimia in high school. On the other hand, her participation in acting and drama at high school compensated her for the lack of love and caring at home. She felt special; acting helped her improve her academic standing. The expression of her intuitive, artistic side brought her greater peace of mind and better grades at school. The drama program helped her overcome her shyness (i.e., communication skills and relating to others) as well.

Mary grew up in a big family that made an impact on her sense of self. She did not like being at home; thus, school was a place of refuge. Other forms of escape were playing the piano and reading books. Praise and acknowledgement of her accomplishments and efforts were missing at home; however, academic success was expected. Mary felt deprived of a healthy sense of self in childhood in the home environment. Conformity was encouraged and as a result she learned to keep a low profile. Mary’s university studies were the first opportunity for her to develop a sense of identify after having been deprived of it in childhood, e.g., first exam being an opportunity for self-expression and acknowledgement of her accomplishments. All forms of self-expression (playing the piano, reading books, university studies) were disapproved by her husband – however, they tested her own self-determination and commitment to stand up for herself. Her experiences in various university courses taught her to value herself and be proud of her accomplishments.

Janet loved being at school and enjoyed learning in general. She did not have to work hard at school and she identified her school experiences as “pleasure”. Playing the piano influenced Janet in several ways: she learned to work hard at something she loved doing, which
also translated into her passion for teaching. This experience taught her discipline and determination that prepared her for her future career as a teacher.

Based on the above interpretation of the results, the school environment provided a “venue” for compensating for the perceived lack of love, praise, and acknowledgement in the home environment. The participants developed various compensating strategies to make up for the missing emotional support at home: among others, (i) focus on grades, academic success, and intelligence; and (ii) importance of receiving acknowledgement and praise from teachers. The school was also regarded as a place for developing a sense of self and identity as well as a place for the expression of passion and pleasure for learning. These results highlight a new role of the school environment in an individual’s life – in addition to the frequently mentioned academic one – that has not received much attention in the educational literature. This new role of the school shows “personal”, “emotional” and “psychological” aspects that are rooted in beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations nurtured in the family environment prior to schooling. Educational research has primarily examined the impact of teachers’ prior schooling experiences on the development of teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs, and instructional practice in formal teacher education programs. For example, Calderhead and Robson (1991) emphasized that student teachers “hold particular images of teaching, mostly derived from their experiences in schools as pupils”, and they added that “we have little understanding of the nature of the integrated body of knowledge that teachers use [and] how it originates” (p. 1, emphasis added). Lortie’s (1975) concept of the “apprenticeship of observation” emphasizes also the role of school experience as a powerful socializing factor since educational experiences from schooling and professional education provide fertile ground for the development of future teachers’ beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. My research has filled a gap in the literature by uncovering a new role of the school setting in an individual’s life that is closely connected to the individual’s beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations derived from the family environment. My research has gone beyond the current findings of the literature by identifying a relationship between personal experiences (i.e., family) and the participants’ interpretations and perceptions of their schooling experiences originating from the home environment that, in turn, also influenced the participants’ professional life. I’m going to examine this less explored relationship in detail in the discussion of result 2 (see pp. 308-316).
Impact of Language Learning Experiences on Future Teaching Practice

My research findings show that language learning experiences also made an impact on native English-speaking teachers, and not only on non-native teachers of English as has been the primary focus in the literature (e.g., Cook, 1999; Davies, 1995; Freeman, 2004; Hawkins, 2004; Kramsch, 1997; Lee, 2003; Liu, 1999; Llurda, 2004; Medgyes, 1983, 1994; Pavlenko, 2003; Poynor, 2005; Rampton, 1990; Widdowson, 1994). Language learning experiences clearly influenced the participants’ future instructional practice, teaching philosophy, and their feelings, beliefs, and attitude toward their students. For example, Cassie’s language learning experience with Spanish, as an adult, influenced her instructional practice of making students feel comfortable in the classroom. Karen’s learning German at high school and her trip to Germany were clear signs of her rebellion against the family situation and her running away from home. This trip also made a later impact on her teacher identity; she learned that people are to be treated equally regardless of their country of origin. Karen’s own language learning experience made her more empathic and patient with her students’ language learning process. Mary’s experience with a conversational French course influenced her later teaching philosophy (e.g., working with a book, summarizing chapters, discussing the main points). Janet’s experience of being raised in three languages (English, German, and a dialect of German) and experimenting with various language learning strategies when learning French, Spanish, and Arabic, made an obvious impact on her future instructional practice. Learning French determined her future career as a language teacher, and it influenced Janet’s teaching approach and the development of her command of the language. Janet’s positive personality traits (e.g., enthusiasm, determination, and commitment) can be associated with her language learning experiences, in particular, learning French.

My findings resonate with the concept of “teachers’ personal practical knowledge” coined by Connelly et al. (1997) and provide further evidence of the impact of interpretations and perceptions of personal and professional life experience, including language learning, on the development of teacher identity in a holistic and integrated fashion.

Impact of “Good Teachers” as Role Models on the Development of Teacher Identity

The personality traits found attractive in “good teachers” also influenced the participants’ future way of being in the classroom and their attitude toward students. Cassie found that good teachers are approachable, engaging, and enthusiastic; they explain things well, share
knowledge, and are good at answering questions. These traits are reflected in her teaching. Karen viewed good professors as demanding, tough, and not run of the mill. They could make students see things or understand things they were never able to before. Karen also found that good teachers believed in their students and pushed them to do better. These character traits are in part present in Karen’s professional life. For Mary, good teachers are genuine, human, and honest, traits which are reflected in her instructional practice. For Janet, good teachers awaken the students’ interest and passion for learning. She also found it highly important that good teachers encourage, challenge, affirm, and believe in students. These traits influenced Janet’s instructional practice and teaching philosophy and they are evident in her teaching approach.

From a psychological perspective, in my interpretation, the identified character traits of “good teachers” can be viewed as the participants’ unconscious projections from when they were students themselves. As I have shown in each participant’s analytical summary (see Chapters 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D), the personality traits of “good teachers” became prominent for all participants because they were either discouraged to express these traits in childhood (e.g., Mary), or they were unable to recognize these traits in themselves (e.g., Cassie, Karen, and Janet). Put differently, these traits became either repressed or fell “below the threshold of consciousness” (Jung, 1959, p.137). Thus, each participant was unconsciously looking for these traits outside of themselves. Those teachers identified as “good teachers” noticeably manifested these traits without being aware of the significance of this “act” for the participants. The act of “noticing”, or “becoming aware” of these traits in someone else allowed the participants – over time – to “internalize”, “re-claim”, or “re-own” these repressed or subliminal personality traits, to make them part of their own personal and professional identity.

My analysis and interpretation of the results are aligned with Jung’s (1959) argument about the importance of raising the contents of the personal unconscious to consciousness with a possibility of assimilating the unconscious contents in consciousness. As Jung (1959) explained, the material that is “added to consciousness causes a considerable widening of the horizon, a deepened self-knowledge” (p. 149). Wilber (1979) also discussed the importance of “re-owning one’s own projected shadow” so that the individual can “expand” his/her identity from the limited “persona level” to a healthy “ego level” (see “The Spectrum of Consciousness” section of Chapter 4, pp. 73-77, regarding the discussion of various boundary lines in consciousness, and Figure 1 presenting the ideas visually).
This result of my study provides evidence of a deep, psychological impact of “good teachers” as role models on prospective teachers’ instructional practice and the development of teacher identity by making a link between the personal and the professional. This result also goes beyond Lortie’s (1975) sociological perspective about the influence of former teachers on would-be teachers as students and his concept of the “apprenticeship of observation” by providing a rationale for the participants’ inclination to “notice” and “favour” certain personality traits in teachers over others. It also provides an explanation as to why some teachers with particular personality traits become role models for students. My result suggests that students’ preferences for certain types of teachers are not haphazard but rather they are deeply connected to the students’ own psychological makeup and perceived or actual “deficiency” of those traits in themselves.

**Result 2: The Participants’ Personal Experiences Strongly Shaped Career Choice, Instructional Practice, and Teaching Philosophy**

The second proposition claims that the participants’ personal experiences, beliefs, and personality traits derived from the family environment made a strong impact on their career choice, instructional practice, and teaching philosophy. In particular, the relationship with the mother (the source of several personality traits, as I have discussed it in result 1, above) seemed to indirectly and implicitly influence the participants’ decision-making for becoming a teacher.

Cassie’s path to becoming a teacher was not straightforward. Initially, she wanted to become a veterinarian. However, the analysis revealed several precursors for her choice of the teaching profession: playing school as a young girl; volunteering in primary school; customer service jobs in high school; serving elderly people in an old-age home; and her pleasing other people. Cassie’s traveling and teaching experiences abroad influenced her decision about going back to graduate school for professional training in the field of education and language teaching. Still, all these experiences were not convincing enough for her yet. Cassie seemed to go back to graduate school for the “wrong” reasons (e.g., avoiding finding a job, etc). Nevertheless, the process guided her to find the workplace and the job she had at the time of the research process. She now loves teaching and it has become her passion. Cassie articulated that life-long learning
is an important characteristic of a teacher. Education is a top priority for her and this is reflected in her daily life as well (e.g., planners structured from September).

Initially, Karen had no desire to become a teacher. However, several “little things” led her to choose this profession. Her first teaching experiences were described as difficult and hard. Karen explained that her teaching has been influenced by the workplace environment (e.g., “it changes your identity”) and by her theatrical background (e.g., “you are performing”). Her negative teaching experience in the military taught her “thick skin” and taking responsibility “I have a job to do”. Karen realized that the negative experiences made her stronger and tougher. The drama background helped her overcome her shyness and stage fright, and Karen got used to improvising or responding on her feet. For Karen, teaching means having a “different role” because she believes that “you act like a nice person”. She considered teaching successful when there was a connection and a level of trust between her and her students. Her shyness and quietness are present in her teaching, too. She found teaching very insecure and paranoid. Due to her lack of self-confidence she questioned herself as a teacher in the classroom. The research process made her reflect on the reasons for her becoming a language teacher. Karen realized that (i) it might be connected to her looking for love from students, which was also evident in her family relationships, e.g., “I’ve always been looking for my Mom’s love”; (ii) that it was important to develop her own teaching style and not to follow other people’s paths; and (iii) that teaching is a lot more than she expected it to be, e.g., “you are a lot more than an instructor”, “you have more than just one role as a language teacher”.

Mary’s decision was made quite late in her life as a result of her graduate studies, after having established a family and raising three kids, and later becoming a single mom. Mary’s first language teaching experience was volunteering in English conversation classes, which shows a close connection with her childhood experiences at home (i.e., giving herself freely and helping out, caring for others). Her students’ acknowledgement and appreciation for her efforts touched her deeply because this compensated for the lack of appreciation and affirmation in her family as she was growing up. Mary’s formal education achievements in the face of numerous personal life challenges are admirable and show a great deal of courage and perseverance. Mary’s teaching approach and her teaching philosophy clearly show the impact of her personal development and growth over the years. For Mary, self-discovery, consciousness-raising, and awareness-raising are very important traits that she tries to pass on to her students. These traits
are also clearly connected to her late awakening in her personal life. Mary’s case is an excellent example of the impact of personal experiences on professional matters.

Based on my analysis, for three participants (Cassie, Karen, Mary) the implicit or indirect driving force to become a teacher clearly originated in their family relationships, e.g., in Cassie’s case the lack of having a mother; in Karen’s case the insufficient expression of love and caring expressed by the mother; and in Mary’s case, the lack of praise and acknowledgement from her mother.

Janet’s professional experiences reveal some tension, struggle, and ambiguity. On the surface, there are several obvious reasons for her becoming a language teacher; her love and passion for learning languages translated into her desire to become a language teacher. However, there are some implicit, unconscious drives in her portrayal, too. For example, her failure or unwillingness to acknowledge and accept herself professionally and personally made an impact on her self-perceptions as a professional. In Janet’s case, there is a split between her own perceptions and interpretations of who she is as a teacher and how others see her as a professional. Her excessive need for external affirmation, validation, and acceptance is an unconscious signal about the imbalance in her self-perceptions and self-esteem. Janet demonstrated a formidable and commendable work ethic throughout her teaching career by working long hours, taking charge of her professional development, passionately caring for students, and investing a lot of energy in teaching and class preparation. However, her self-perceptions and interpretations of her negative experiences seemed to cripple her professional self-esteem. Janet developed a “limiting self-concept” (Bergner & Holmes, 2000). Her strong need for affirmation, validation, and acceptance by others appeared to be the most obvious and outstanding feature in her portrayal. Despite ample and obvious positive reinforcement, she was unable to acknowledge her expertise, professionalism, teaching skills, and positive traits. I presented my analysis and interpretation of the connection between Janet’s limiting self-concept and three professional experiences (worst graduate course, her negative teaching experience in graduate school, and her emotional response to student evaluations) in the “Researcher’s Analytical Summary” in Chapter 7D (see pp. 285-297). In my understanding, the source of Janet’s limiting self-concept originated in her perception of a personal experience in grade 6 when she failed to accept and acknowledge her parents’ affirmation and pride of her school accomplishments.
Teaching as a “Venue” for Personal Growth

Based on the results discussed above, teaching provided all participants with a “venue” for potential self-acceptance, self-expression, enhanced self-love, and self-confidence that they were all deprived of in the family environment as they were growing up. Put simply, teaching offered them a possibility for self-development and self-growth. The analysis highlighted the impact of the participants’ perceptions, assumptions, beliefs, and interpretations on their personal, educational, and professional experiences, and the complex interplay among them. The family environment – the first fundamental socializing milieu – stands out as the cradle of an individual’s personality traits, core beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations, which make a lasting impact on self-development. Since my doctoral research approaches teacher identity from a holistic perspective\(^{27}\) with an emphasis on participants’ beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations, the personal angle of interpretations is prioritized over external factors. The importance of an individual’s internal perspective has been presented in Chapter 6 (see “What is Heuristic Research?”, pp. 128-130) that explains the relationship between the internal and external world. In concert with my theoretical orientation (Chapter 3) and my research methodology (Chapter 6), everything – that is, all external and internal things – is interpreted through an individual’s belief system, or construct system (Kelly, 1955, 1963). Therefore, this personal angle, I believe, can provide a broader interpretive framework than the strictly professional one from an outsider perspective and it may help to shed light on the intricate interconnectedness between life events. I argue that (i) the importance of teachers as role models, (ii) the influence of language learning experiences on instructional practice, and (iii) the impact of schooling experiences on teacher development may be better understood when embedded in the context of teachers’ lives and examined from an individual’s internal frame of reference rather than from a conventional observer/researcher perspective. Thus, I present here my interpretation of results 1 and 2 from this particular personal perspective.

The analysis of the participants’ portrayals shows an intricate relationship between family, schooling, and career choice. The findings discussed in results 1 and 2 reveal an overarching structure that extends over each participant’s life span to the date of my research. My participants acquired some personality traits molded by their beliefs and perceptions of the

\(^{27}\) Holistic perspective refers to (i) the interconnectedness of personal and professional experiences and (ii) the use of conscious/rational and intuitive/tacit thought processes.
family environment. These traits, in turn, made an impact on their perceptions and interpretations of their actual schooling experiences. As presented in result 1, the school environment provided a possibility for compensating for the perceived lack of love, praise, and acknowledgement at home. Good teachers acted as role models in terms of being the participants’ unconscious projections of the personality traits that were discouraged in the family setting. In my interpretation, the period of schooling provided the participants with a possibility to make up for the perceived lack of emotional and psychological support in the family environment. In other words, schooling was a period of compensating, re-claiming, and developing one’s sense of self that had been wounded in the family due to unreflectively accepted beliefs and perceptions that had been influenced or “assigned by important others” (Bergner & Holmes, 2000). These interpretations, perceptions, and beliefs of schooling experiences also influenced my participants’ career choice, the development of teacher identity, instructional practice, and teaching philosophy. Thus, teaching as a profession, in adulthood, allowed for the potential enactment of one’s re-constructed identity in terms of providing a place for self-acceptance, self-expression, enhanced self-love, and self-confidence.

Figure 4: The relationship between family, schooling, and career choice

![Diagram](image)

**Personal Integrity through Harmonizing one’s Masculine and Feminine Characteristics**

My findings reveal several important personal experiences that made a lasting impact on my participants’ perceptions of their identity as well as on their instructional practice and teaching philosophy. I acknowledge the fact that personal experiences are idiosyncratic, which makes it challenging for the researcher to make generalizations and draw shared and definite conclusions. With this as a caveat, the relationship with the mother emerged as a dominant
influence out of the analysis of the participants’ personal experiences. The participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their relationship with their mother made a lasting imprint on their belief system in numerous realms of their lives, e.g., educational and professional experiences, as discussed in results 1 and 2 above.

Cassie’s loss of her mother showed a strong connection with the following issues identified in the analysis: compassion and empathy for others; self-image issues (i.e., eating disorders); anxiety, insecurity and perfectionism; and planning and being organized. These issues are also reflected in her teacher identity and professional life. I have associated Cassie’s compassion and empathy for others with her unconscious need for love that could directly be connected to her career choice. Her eating disorders can be linked to the loss of her mother which also resulted in anxiety, insecurity, and perfectionism evident both in her personal and professional life. In order to deal with her insecurity and anxiety Cassie developed some compensating strategies (e.g., planning and being organized) that she acknowledged as useful in her teaching.

Karen’s challenging relationship with her mother manifested in the following issues: health problems, looking for love, and searching for identity, which are reflected in her teacher identity and professional life. The health problems occurred as her kidney disease that may symbolize building healthy relationships and partnerships with other people to compensate for her shyness and solitude, as presented in my analysis (see Chapter 7B, the “Researcher’s Analytical Summary”, pp. 219-231). Karen developed eating disorders, (e.g., anorexia and bulimia) that are closely related to her challenging relationship with the mother. Looking for love due to the perceived lack thereof in her family affected her self-esteem negatively and that, in turn, also influenced her professional life by her constantly questioning her own expertise. Finally, Karen’s searching for identity could also be connected to her perceived lack of love and affection from the mother when she was a baby (e.g., the feeling of being the bribe price in her parent’s marriage).

Mary’s relationship with her mother and her perceptions of family life are reflected in the following issues: non-existent self in childhood; caring for others in the family; lack of explicit praise and love received from the mother; fear-based attitude toward everything; and striving to fulfill her mother’s needs. For several decades, Mary struggled with self-acceptance. The fear-based attitude stemming from the home environment appeared in the lack of trust and confidence
in herself and others. Mary strove to fulfill her mother’s needs in order to gain her love and acknowledgement. As a result of her late awakening and personal transformation, Mary was able to turn the negative childhood experiences into positive ones as a mature adult. These positive traits are observable in her teaching philosophy and her instructional practice (e.g., encouragement and praise for students).

Janet’s perceptions of her family relationships are reflected in the issues of self-image, physical appearance, and the impact of living in a big family. Janet’s views about self-image are expressed in her strong desire for physical beauty and social acknowledgement. These needs and desires are closely connected to her shyness, self-consciousness, insecurity, and sensitivity inherited from her mother, which are also evident in her professional life. Janet’s upbringing in a big family instilled in her a strong sense of belonging and total acceptance. Despite the positive family descriptions, Janet recalled some disheartening characteristics of her family members, e.g., lack of intimacy and closeness with her siblings; emotional distance between her and her father; and inherited character traits from her mother. Janet’s excessive need and demand for total acceptance, acknowledgement, encouragement, validation, love, and affirmations from others that can sustain her professionally and compensate for the perceived lack of these traits in herself, clearly have roots in her family relationships.

The above-presented issues in the participants’ relationship with the mother may be regarded as a hidden/implicit or overt/explicit driving force for personal development and self-growth. This driving force influenced my participants’ belief systems that found expression in

- various personality traits, e.g., insecurity, shyness/self-consciousness, anxiety, guilt, sensitivity, lack of confidence, low self-esteem and self-worth, distrust in oneself and others, self-judgment of and lack of pride in one’s accomplishments, and
- compensating strategies, e.g., planning, perfectionism, need for encouragement and acknowledgment from others, and being organized.

I have argued in results 1 and 2 that the belief systems (manifested in various personality traits, feelings, emotions, and compensating strategies) influenced the participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their educational, professional, and personal life experiences. Furthermore, the nature of my participants’ perceptions of the relationship with their mother made an indirect, unconscious influence on their career choice, too. The overarching dominant structure emerging
from these intricate relationships is about expressing and accepting one’s feminine side. In my understanding, the mother figure itself – in an abstract sense – is a symbol of the “feminine” side in human beings regardless of one’s biological sex. In other words, it is a symbol of the feminine characteristics, such as being intuitive, patient, nurturing, caring, receptive, creative, allowing, understanding, and empathic. On the other hand, the masculine characteristics can be described as being analytical, impatient, rushing, striving, logical, controlling, and organizing. A psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually integrated individual (both men and women) would display and operate both the feminine and masculine characteristics in balance within him/herself. Each participant had some issues with manifesting and operating their feminine side in terms of being intuitive, empathic, understanding, accepting, expressing, and acknowledging their feelings and emotions, nurturing and caring for themselves, among others. The portrayals depicted a more prevailing presence of several masculine characteristics in all (female) participants, e.g., being analytical, logical, impatient, controlling, organizing, and striving for success and acknowledgement. In my interpretation, the core message of the emerged dominant structure is about bringing the feminine and masculine sides of oneself into harmony; in short, it is about personal integrity. My results resonate strongly with the implications of personal integrity/harmony in teaching and teacher education that are described in Christopher Bache’s (2008) volume entitled The Living Classroom: Teaching and the Collective Consciousness in the following way:

When we teach, what we are enters the room. Of course, our words and ideas always flow from what we are, but I’m suggesting that there is something deeper at work as well. Something of our presence enters the room and there it reaches out to join with the presence of receptive students. Fields couple with fields. Energetic bridges form spontaneously around us that reflect less what we think than what we have experienced. […] When we have sounded our depths, we cannot help sounding the depths of our students. Deep does speak to deep – involuntarily, automatically, silently, energetically (pp. 148-149).

My results are also in harmony with the concept of “the inner landscape of a teacher’s life” as coined by Parker Palmer (1998) as well as with the notion of a “critically reflective teacher” presented by Stephen Brookfield (1995), who emphasized the importance of using autobiographical reflection to learn about ourselves as teachers because “the influences that

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28 “feminine” refers to qualities that are generally attributed to women, or socially referred to as “female traits”

29 “masculine” refers to qualities that are generally attributed to men, or socially referred to as “male traits”
shape teachers’ lives and that move teachers’ actions are rarely found in research studies, policy
documents, or institutional mission statements. They are more likely to be found in a complex
web of formative memories and experiences” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 49). My research, in fact,
provides evidence of and explanation for some of the intricate influences of personal experiences
that affected my participants’ teacher identity and teaching practice.

**Result 3: The Integrated Use of the Guided Visualization Technique and Rational
Reflection Effectively Enhanced Self-Understanding and Personal/Professional Growth**

The literature review (see Chapter 5) presented some alternative methods employed in
educational research, e.g., metaphor analysis (Bullough, 1991; Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Lakoff
& Johnson, 1980; Martinez et al., 2001; Sumsion, 2002), guided visualization and mental
imagery in language learning (Arnold, 1999; Arnold et al., 2007), and the role of intuition in
reflection and teaching (Korthagen, 2005; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Meijer et al., 2009).
These methods attempt to tap into the less rational and more intuitive/tacit realms of the mind
that can accompany traditional forms of reflection. However, they have not been fully explored
in terms of their potential for teacher education and professional development. The traditional,
rational/cognitive approaches and methods are still prevailing in the field of education. My
research has contributed to filling this gap in the literature through the participants’ applying a
guided visualization technique to access their intuitive and tacit thought processes.

The guided visualization activity as an intuitive technique combined with rational
reflection made a beneficial impact on the participants’ personal and professional growth. The
regular application of the visualization technique during the data collection period of six months
raised participants’ awareness that brought about enhanced self-understanding, self-confidence,
self-trust, and restored self-esteem. These positive changes are clearly evident in Cassie’s and
Karen’s portrayals. Despite their initial skepticism and discomfort, they were able to let go of
their worries and doubts thus facilitating the process of their opening up to the exploration of
intuitive feelings, thoughts, and hunches. **Trust in oneself and the process** stands out as an
essential element of allowing access to inner wisdom. Consequently, the lack of trust and a
strong sense of insecurity resulted in resistance to and struggle with the activity as Mary’s and
Janet’s portrayals show. Their fears of the unknown, of letting go and surrendering the mind’s control seemed an insurmountable barrier for them.

Cassie went through a gradual progression from initial doubt, to openness, and then to following her intuition. At the outset, Cassie’s lack of confidence and her mind’s control prevented her from fully exploring the visualization activity. Her intellectual curiosity about the activity illustrates the dominance of her mind. By the end of the data collection, I could identify observable changes in Cassie’s relationship to her intuition; she became convinced of the usefulness of the activity. Cassie realized that the answers had already been inside her and needed to be brought to conscious awareness. Despite making some progress and of letting go of her doubts, her intuition seemed to be blocked because of her reluctance to give up the mind’s control. Nevertheless, Cassie’s intuitive feelings became stronger over time, and she was paying more attention to them. She claimed that the activity was instrumental in leading her to follow up on ideas, insights, and suggestions evoked by the activity. Cassie realized that logic and intellect could not give her peace and she expressed a desire to find a healthy balance between intellect and intuition. She was interested in trying new things following up on her intuitive hunches. The analysis revealed that Cassie integrated her intuitive hunches, insights, and suggestions with conscious reflection that resulted in an improved transformation of her self-perception, self-understanding, and self-awareness.

Karen moved gradually from skepticism and discomfort to letting go, which culminated in enhanced and restored self-esteem. The intuitive activity helped her self-understanding and there was a subtle positive change in her emotional and mental attitude to life in general, e.g., looking for the positive in people/things/situations. Karen became confident in the usefulness of the guided visualization. Observable changes occurred in Karen’s relationship with her intuition despite her initial misgivings about the activity. One of the changes was her paying more attention to her intuitive hunches and feelings. Prior to participating in the research she would not notice them, or if she did, she would be afraid to explore them further. This explains her initial rigidity with the activity that eased up over time. Karen came to realize that there was an inner wisdom operating inside her and it was important for her to remove any barriers to having access to this wisdom. It became evident during the analysis that opening up to this wealth of inner wisdom, intuitive thoughts, and feelings was instrumental in Karen making connections later analytically. She claimed that understanding came after having analyzed the connections.
Karen allowed intuition to play a role in her rational reflective process in order to gain better self-understanding. She concluded that the use of the guided visualization was instrumental in developing her intuitive side that brought about positive, reassuring changes in her self-perception, which, in turn, boosted her self-esteem.

Mary’s distrust, stubbornness, and her religious upbringing are reflected in her resistance to the guided visualization activity. Although she craved the atmosphere created by the intuitive activity, she could not let go of her resistance. Mary was afraid of giving herself up and she claimed to have been “very stubborn to change her mind” about the activity. Mary also acknowledged that her “religious indoctrination” may have interfered with carrying out the activity, e.g., “we should not question things”.

Janet’s insecurity, lack of confidence, and intense need for external affirmation and validation seem to be the root of her struggle with the guided visualization activity. Prior to participating in this research Janet had blocked her intuitive feelings and thoughts. Her intellectual desire to be in control was evident in the portrayal (see pp. 276-278). She seemed to replace the intuitive activity with a silent, conscious reflection by recalling her memories, instead of allowing intuitive feelings and thoughts to surface. Janet acknowledged “using her head” frequently in the interviews. Thus, thinking and logic were prevailing. This activity, nevertheless, helped her recognize her strong need for affirmation by others, and she was able to acknowledge the importance of people in her life. She also realized the importance of reflection and that of listening to intuitive hunches, feelings, and thoughts that she had previously ignored.

The findings present two possible scenarios or paths in terms of relating to, working with, and integrating intuition with analytical reflection. The first scenario (e.g., Cassie and Karen) has shown that intuition can be a beneficial complementary mode of empathically evoking suggestions, insights, and realizations that can be further explored analytically. In the case of letting go of misgivings and fears, and of trusting oneself, there is a wealth of inner wisdom waiting to be accessed “on its own terms” (Jung, 1959), which can raise one’s awareness and enhance personal/professional growth. This finding echoes the argument for “joining intellect and intuition, head and heart, mind and body: this is the key to an authentic human life and a good human society” (Davies-Floyd & Arvidson, 1997). The second scenario (e.g., Mary and Janet) has presented a likely outcome where rational thinking and logic are allowed to prevail. Fear, lack of trust, insecurity, and emotional blocks may prevent an individual from having
insights other than through conscious and rational reflection. In my view, everyone is capable of tapping into tacit knowing and allowing intuition to surface whenever one is ready to accept it. Hence, I consider both Mary and Janet capable of making a connection with their intuition when they are ready for it. The research period of six months seemed to be insufficient for them to reach this point. According to my understanding of the relationship between reason and intuition, the possibility of making connection with intuition lies in a future moment for them.

In summary, there could be two possible reasons for the differences in the participants’ approaching the guided visualization activity. One is connected to a possible generation issue. Cassie and Karen being in their thirties seemed to be more receptive to the activity, whereas Mary and Janet being in their fifties seemed to struggle with it. Age may be a factor in influencing one’s receptivity to opening up to one’s intuition, considering the fact that over time an individual accumulates a number of “acquired” facts and characteristics about oneself from others. The longer this accumulation process is, the more difficult it is to enable major changes in one’s perceptions. Another reason may be the influence of religious upbringing. This appeared to be a hindrance rather than an advantage for the older generation in relating to the guided visualization. I wish to note here that these are my observations only and that they therefore cannot be generalized without having considerably more evidence to support them.

Result 4: The Autobiographical Reflective Process Revealed a Strong Interconnectedness between Personal and Professional Life Experiences, Articulated as Major Aspects of Teacher Identity

My doctoral research aimed to explore any potential changes in my participants’ perspectives triggered by the autobiographical reflective process completed during the data collection period. I was curious to know whether revisiting and reflecting on important past experiences – from the perspective of the present moment, using various modes of probing – would bring about any re-construction and re-interpretation of prior perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions. Mezirow (1978) claimed that perspective transformation occurs “when a meaning perspective can no longer comfortably deal with anomalies in a new situation” (p. 104), and he added that “transformation refers to a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). Furthermore, it is
also important to note that a change in one’s perspective may begin with adopting a new way of seeing and interpreting one’s world, but more importantly, this new perspective should be expressed in one’s life in a tangible way. I support the argument that “perspective transformation represents not only a total change in life perspective, but an actualization of that perspective. In other words, life is not seen from a new perspective, it is lived from that perspective” (Novak quoted in Mezirow, 2000, p. 24). In this sense, there are various degrees of perspective transformation.

Due to the holistic approach of my research, I analyzed and interpreted the relationships between thoughts, feelings, actions, and intuition as they were articulated in my participants’ portrayals. The following results emerged as the overall impact of the reflective process:

- Childhood experiences made a considerable impact on instructional practice and the development of teacher identity; and
- The integrated autobiographical reflective process uncovered a substantial interconnectedness between personal and professional lives.

I discuss each of these results in the following sub-sections.

**Impact of Childhood Experiences on Instructional Practice and Teacher Identity**

The findings indicate that my participants all embraced the opportunity to re-interpret and re-construct their prior perspectives to the best of their abilities. This brought about new meaning perspectives of previous perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, and interpretations. All participants emphasized that the autobiographical reflective process made a positive impact on their self-perceptions. In my view, it is a major step in the process of changing one’s perspective if an individual is able to identify the interplay between thoughts, feelings, and actions. Cassie is a good example of making this step as she came to realize the significance of examining the basis for one’s perceptions as well as their impact and consequences. Karen underlined the importance of “your mindset” that plays a role in “how you look at things”. Janet discerned that one has to face the disconnection between self-perceptions and others’ perceptions of her. Mary claimed that her positive self-perception, achieved over a long period of time, informed her professional life and instructional practice in a constructive manner.

The findings show a strong influence of childhood experiences (i.e., family influence) on the participants’ instructional practice, teaching philosophy, and the development of teacher
identity, as presented in results 1 and 2. Participating in the research project and following through with the autobiographical reflective process proved to be instrumental in raising the participants’ awareness of these implicit influences on their professional lives. Karen expressed her insight about the strong influence of her childhood and family experiences on her teacher identity as well as the fact that the research participation allowed her to turn the negative childhood experiences into positive ones. Mary also confirmed that taking part in the research project made her notice how powerfully the parental traits were reflected in her teaching. Janet also expressed her insights about the influence of her parents’ traits on her instructional practice. My findings clearly resonate with Brown’s (2006) claim in his Ph.D. dissertation about the relationship between self-knowledge and childhood experiences:

Teacher identity requires self-knowledge. […] … what did surprise me was how important teachers’ childhood experiences are to that self-knowledge. I assumed that our experiences in school, as students would no doubt inform how we make ourselves into teachers later in life, but I had no idea how important the earlier years of life would be upon teachers” (p. 216).

Substantial Interconnectedness between Personal and Professional Lives

Finally, the analysis affirmed that the interconnectedness of educational, professional, and personal lives was interwoven in the fabric of all participants’ portrayals. The integrated reflective process evoked a realization in all participants about the strong intricate relationships between personal and professional lives regardless of the apparent differences in roles and responsibilities in each segment of their lives. Cassie discerned that “My personal life is not separate from my professional life. I’m the same person in both contexts”. Karen claimed that “I believe I’m the same person, but I do show very contrasting traits”. Mary admitted that “I had to go through this rebirth with respect to myself before the personal insights could be translated into my teaching”. Janet concluded that “I’m cautiously optimistic that this will help me to feel more positive about myself and what kind of research I want to pursue”.

They all maintained that the research project made a positive impact on their personal and professional lives. For example, Karen gained a better understanding of her family and she is now able to accept different perspectives. She admitted that “I feel more confident in my teaching” and she became more open to collaborating with colleagues. Cassie felt motivated to make changes in her personal life based on the insights she obtained from participating in this
research. Professionally, she became more reflective about her teaching and her relationship with colleagues and she “became more sensitive to who I am as a teacher and what kind of teacher I want to be”. Mary found it rewarding that the project helped her remember positive experiences and she admitted that it was also a healing experience for her. She found that her research participation confirmed her self-perceptions as a teacher and she took pride in her teaching practice. Janet claimed that the revival of her marriage was one of the positive results of her research participation. Professionally, she acknowledged her love for teaching, she felt her values confirmed, and she became more conscious of the things that were going on both professionally and personally.

The examination and re-construction of self-perceptions – over time – strongly enhanced the participants’ self-awareness that contributed to better self-understanding. Each participant affirmed the beneficial effects of improved self-understanding that expanded their horizons, boosted their self-esteem, enhanced their self-confidence, created peace with themselves, healed psychological wounds, and reinforced their values. These encouraging effects proved to be instrumental in self-acceptance as well. I do acknowledge that the participants’ self-perceptions and interpretations had been evolving over time before their research participation and they will continue to evolve after it. My research focused on the changes occurring during the data collection period. All participants made progress to a varying extent on the continuum of perspective transformation. The changes in perspectives identified in the portrayals show the great potential of this kind of research for professional development.

In summary, the research participants have affirmed that teacher identity is an intricate and tangled web of influences and imprints rooted in personal and professional life experiences. The development of teacher identity is influenced profoundly and intimately by the beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations grown out of an individual’s life experiences, which may occur on multiple levels of consciousness. Every single life experience leaves an impression in the individual’s consciousness, whether or not one is aware of it. In my view, teacher identity can be seen as “a world in a grain of sand” because you find the personal when you intend to look for the professional, or you discover the professional when you explore the personal; in other words, everything is connected. Teacher identity can also be analogous to a hologram because it reflects not only the professional, educational, and pedagogical aspects of

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30From the poem entitled “Auguries of Innocence” written by William Blake (ca. 1803 or 1805)
being a teacher, but more importantly, the imprints of the complex interconnectedness of one’s cumulative life experiences as a human being. In this sense, Patton’s (2002) explanation of the relationship between parts and wholes has a direct bearing on the concept of teacher identity:

Holography is a method of photography in which the wave field of light scattered by an object is captured as an interference pattern. When a photographic record – the hologram – is illuminated by a laser, a three-dimensional image appears. Any piece of a hologram will reconstruct the entire image. This has become a metaphor for thinking in new ways about the relationship between parts and wholes (p. 58).

Contributions of my Study

My research aimed at exploring the development of language teacher identity through systematically charting and understanding the nature of the interconnectedness between beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations originating in educational, professional, and personal experiences. More specifically, my research purpose was to examine the process of how language teachers re-construct their interpretations of their teacher identity through an autobiographical reflective process.

My doctoral research contributes to current knowledge on language teacher identity with the following features: (i) a holistic perspective with theoretical and methodological implications; (ii) the combination of a relatively uncommon theoretical framework and methodology; and (iii) an interdisciplinary approach fusing psychology and educational research.

My dissertation is the first one to date – to my knowledge – that explored the development of language teacher identity in a holistic fashion. This holistic perspective included two aspects, which have theoretical and methodological implications. The first aspect was the integration of personal and professional experiences through the exploration of the interrelationships between educational, professional, and personal experiences. The results of the study strongly suggest that it is essential to explore teachers’ personal life experiences in order to gain a holistic understanding of the dominant influences on the development of teacher identity, career choice, instructional practice, and teaching philosophy. Teacher identity is deeply embedded in one’s personal biography, which – although unique and idiosyncratic – makes a crucial influence on teachers’ beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations of themselves as professionals. Thus, my research presents a strong argument in favour of the
exploration of teachers’ personal and professional experiences that goes beyond the current theoretical viewpoint about drawing “a line between students’ private lives and their professional development as teachers” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 67). The second aspect focused on the integrated use of conscious/rational and tacit/intuitive thought processes viewed as complementary, which has methodological implications. The results discussed above suggest that the combination of rational reflection and a guided visualization activity as a technique to access tacit/intuitive thought processes enhanced considerably the participants’ self-understanding and the depth and breadth of their personal and professional development. My dissertation is unique in terms of focusing on the development of language teacher identity from the above-described holistic perspective. Therefore, it goes further than current research on language teacher identity; doctoral dissertations have examined the construction of primarily professional identities of language teachers, e.g., immigrant Chinese teachers’ identity in the USA (Gao, 2010), East Asian teachers’ evolving identities in the USA (Zacharias, 2010), critical language teacher identity in Canada (Lee, 2007), non-native English speaking teachers and their professional identity construction in an ESL context (Choi, 2007). Thus, my research contributes to filling the gap in the literature concerning the integration of both aspects of teacher identity (i.e., the professional and the personal) as well as both reason and intuition as complementary and interconnected thought processes (see Chapters 3 and 5).

The second contribution of my research is the combination of a relatively uncommon theoretical framework (Chapter 3) and heuristic research as my methodology (Chapter 6). This combination, however, has great potential for providing a broader interpretive framework than some of the commonly used methodologies in educational research. My eclectic theoretical orientation merged Kelly’s (1955, 1963) Personal Construct Theory with a number of concepts describing the complementary and interconnected nature of two modes of thought (i.e., reason and intuition) as well as the concept of “perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 2000). The significance of this combination of theories and concepts lies in their focus on the ways individuals create their reality based on their interconnected construct systems: “man creates his own ways of seeing the world in which he lives; the world does not create them for him” (Kelly, 1963, p. 12). This also draws attention to the power and impact of an individual’s beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations on his/her reality and identity. My methodology highlighted the internal search for meaning in individual experiences that refers to
the intellectual, psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the researcher’s and the participants’ self-discovery process. Thus, the heuristic nature of my methodology is reflected in the importance of self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery of both the researcher and the participants emphasizing connectedness and relationship.

Finally, my interdisciplinary approach, bridging psychology and educational research, facilitated the examination of teacher identity from a broad, holistic perspective. The inclusion of a number of select authors, e.g., Jung, Wilber, Csikszentmihalyi, and Bergner and Holmes, from psychology, in fact, allowed for a comprehensive analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the underlying relationships that predominantly influenced the development of teacher identity.

Implications for Professional Development in Second Language Education

The results of my research suggest that it would be worthwhile to design a special type of professional development program primarily for in-service teachers that would facilitate language teachers’ self-understanding and personal/professional development in a holistic fashion. I envision an on-going, longitudinal professional development program that builds on the concepts of life-long learning and personal/professional development, which ideally would be institutionally supported. This program would recognize the complexity of professional development, the unique impact of teachers’ personal experiences, and the idiosyncratic nature of teachers’ personal growth. This longitudinal professional development program should be developed based on the model developed for and mapped out in my doctoral research. It would consist of a series of workshops offered about three to five times over a period of six to twelve months. The workshops should be facilitated by a professional expert who has completed a similar type of personal development program and therefore, is able to design the program, guide, and support individual teachers through the reflective process. The educational literature provides some examples of professional development and various reflective practices, mainly on the professional aspects of teaching, for pre-service and in-service teachers, as presented in Chapter 5 (see pp. 94-99). Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) present a somewhat similar approach to my proposed professional development program. The relevance of the authors’ approach to my research lies in their goal to raise student teachers’ and teachers’ awareness of the implicit sources of influences on teacher behaviour and have a balanced focus on “thinking, feeling,
wanting, and acting” (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 50) by means of a structured reflection called “core reflection”. The difference lies in Korthagen and Vasalos’s (2005) application of primarily rational/cognitive techniques to exploring the less rational and more implicit/tacit sources of teachers’ behaviour as opposed to the integrated use of both rational and intuitive techniques of my proposed professional development program.

The exploration of the relationships between personal and professional life experiences and the development of personality traits and belief systems could also be incorporated in pre-service teacher education courses to raise teacher candidates’ awareness about the interconnectedness of life experiences, and their influence on the development of teacher identity and instructional practice. I acknowledge the fact that the type of ongoing, longitudinal autobiographical reflection combined with a guided visualization (or any other type of intuitive technique) that I propose here, may well be constrained by the time available in a pre-service teacher education course. However, I suggest that a modified, abridged version of the above-described professional development program would be worth offering for pre-service teachers as well, so that reflective practice in a holistic fashion could be introduced and facilitated.

Based on the findings of my doctoral research, I have begun to develop a theoretical model of teacher identity that needs further elaboration supported with more empirical data. I include here a sketch of my initial musings about a theoretical model of teacher identity. From a holistic perspective, teacher identity needs to be viewed as embedded in one’s life as a human being and filtered by two aspects of the mind: the conscious/rational and the tacit/intuitive. An individual’s identity may be expressed primarily in three forms: (i) mental (expressed in thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, knowledge, and values); (ii) emotional (expressed through feelings and emotions in the body and mind), and (iii) behavioral (expressed in verbalizations, body language, facial expressions, actions, and behavior). An individual’s identity may be viewed as the unity of these three forms. Put simply, who we are may be expressed in the form of thoughts, feelings/emotions, and actions, which comprise the conscious aspects of identity. From a holistic perspective, the inclusion of a second dimension of the human psyche is required that deals with the tacit, intuitive, spontaneous, non-logical, and often non-verbal ways of knowing. It is important to note, however, that an individual’s fluctuating degree of self-awareness about the influence of any of the above forms determines one’s perceptions of identity. Thus, teacher identity can be described as the amalgamation of intuitive, mental,
emotional, and behavioral aspects. Based on the results of my research and my understanding of the readings contained in my dissertation, I propose the following definition of teacher identity.

In a narrow sense, “identity” or “teacher identity” refers to an *experienced* and *manifested* mental construct, concept, or idea that is being created over the course of one’s life through social interactions with others and by experiencing oneself in relation to the external world through events, happenings, trials, and errors. Conventionally, one builds up his/her identity based on “facts” about oneself that are accumulated through interactions and experiences with others (e.g. Bergner & Holmes, 2000). The majority of these internalized facts are, however, generally constructed by *others* based on *their* perceptions and views of an individual that might easily be flawed from the point of view of the individual. There is only a small fraction of these facts that are built on the basis of the individual’s *own* perceptions and views of oneself.

In a broader, more holistic sense, however, “identity” can be viewed as a process, a continual unfolding and manifesting of one’s mental and emotional representations of oneself through social interactions with others. Identity viewed as a process has an inherent potential for expanding and re-constructing it as a mental construct through becoming *aware* and *conscious* of new potentials and forgotten aspects of one’s identity during the course of one’s life. As I see it, “identity-as-a-process” encompasses “identity-as-a-mental-construct” in an organic, dynamic, and interconnected fashion. “Identity-as-a-mental-construct”, expressed through beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, interpretations, feelings, and emotions, reveals only a *snapshot* manifestation of a more holistic identity at any point in time, which can be observed, analyzed, and interpreted. Since “identity-as-a-mental-construct” occurs in time and space, it is inevitably constrained and limited. However, more and more aspects of one’s identity can be revealed through the process of rational interpretation and reflection as well as intuitive activities that makes one aware of the hidden parts of one’s identity. In a broader, holistic sense, then, “identity-as-a-process” is ever-evolving, - growing and - changing and is therefore in constant flux, which continually transforms and expands “identity-as-a-mental-construct”.

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Limitations of my Study

Due to the relatively small number of research participants, the study did not aim at making specific recommendations for or generalizations about the exploration of teacher identity. My objective was rather to explore, describe, and interpret the intricate interconnectedness of beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations that influence the development of teacher identity. My research project included only female participants due to the random expressions of interest in research participation during the recruitment process. Also, the research participants were all native speakers of English, which may be considered as a limitation since non-native speakers of English were excluded due to the feasibility and scope of this study. The data collection period included six months that may not have been sufficient for all participants to come to important changes in their perspectives. Thus, expanding the time frame of data collection would be advisable for future research. Finally, this research project was carried out by one researcher, therefore any limitations and mistakes in the study are solely my responsibility. The research study can be regarded as my first step in establishing my career as a professional researcher and future academic.

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the limitations of my research study, I suggest that further research is necessary to explore the concept of teacher identity with a larger population of research participants; ideally with both male and female teachers who are both native and non-native speakers of English. Since my research focused on English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, it would be recommended to replicate the study with teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). My further recommendation is to extend the scope of the research on teachers of other modern languages as well as other subject areas. Further research is recommended to explore the relationships between teachers’ language learning experiences, family background, and their impact on the development of teacher identity. Finally, it would be worthwhile to explore the influence of the interconnectedness between the impact of good teachers as role models and family experiences on the construction of teacher identity employing a heuristic research perspective.
Creative Synthesis:
Reaching New Wholeness…

I’m not the same person who embarked on this doctoral research journey in 2003.
I’m not the same person who gave this process a second chance in 2007.
I’m not even the same person who began to write my dissertation one year ago, in 2009.
I realize that I’m now completing a seven-year cycle.
These cycles are always significant.
I have read somewhere that all cells of the human body need seven years to completely renew...
I can feel this profoundly in every part of my being.

I’m a different person.
I am now so much more as a person and so much richer in experiences, insights and realizations than at the beginning of this process in 2003.
I am deeply grateful for having been able to come to this point in my life.

This past one year has provided me with numerous examples and signs of my transformation that are visible, palpable and perceptible to me and to others.
I have made peace with myself.
I have reconciled with my Father and I am now able to accept him as he is.
He has not changed much. But I have. And my perspective and perception of him have.
I am truly grateful to him for being who he has always been to me.
Now, I can understand what his actions intended to mean when I was young.
I smile more often now.
I feel connected to others: my family members, friends, students, colleagues, and sometimes even strangers.

At the beginning of this year, my professional life received alarm signals in the form of distressing teaching evaluations despite my best efforts and intentions.
I felt completely devastated and humiliated.
This made me reflect on and re-evaluate many things in my professional life.
I applied the same approach to resolve the issues in my teaching that I have been using in my personal life. It worked out.
I received the highest teaching evaluations of my entire career in my summer course.
I worked hard for it and I deserved the excellent evaluations.
I re-vamped the course materials, re-designed assignments, and incorporated new learning modules in the course. I asked for my students' feedback, I listened to their suggestions, and made the necessary adjustments in the course.
I did not fail anyone, unlike before, because they earned the grade to move on to the next level. This was the first time in ten years in my teaching.

On the last day, several students expressed their gratitude to me for “everything I did for them”. I was deeply touched. In my office, I got emotional when nobody saw me.

I was also deeply touched when I received a letter of congratulation from the director of my department on the very high teaching evaluations I received for the course I taught.

The doctoral research process mirrored my own transformation – professionally, intellectually, personally, emotionally, and spiritually.

I have learned to respect myself and feel proud of myself and my accomplishments.
I feel much more confident of myself personally and professionally than ever before.
I feel deeply connected to who I am deep inside and I am fortunate to be able to manifest this connection in everything I do: in my personal relationships with family and friends, and in my professional relationships with students and colleagues.

I feel lighter, happier, more joyful, and much more optimistic than before because I have developed an inner knowing and an intimate connection to my intuition that I have learned to trust and follow.

I am privileged to have worked with Cassie, Karen, Mary, and Janet who are remarkable teachers and admirable human beings. I feel reverence and respect for them.
I feel honoured personally that they made a commitment to participating in my research. I truly feel blessed to have worked with them because I have learned a lot from them.

I consider myself lucky to have witnessed these women’s introspection and transformation and to have learned about their revelations and insights about themselves.
I could literally feel their pain and suffering as well as their fears, doubts, misgivings, and discomfort on a visceral level.
I could completely relate to their struggles to come to terms with themselves and to make sense of earlier, painful experiences from a new vantage point of the present moment.

The analysis process made it very clear to me that it was indeed highly important that I had gone through the same introspective and reflective process myself a few years earlier.

**My own experience prepared me to develop an empathic perspective as a researcher to feel with my participants.**
As I listened to them in the interviews and later as I analyzed their portrayals, a realization hit me deeply that each one of them reflected a part of me and a part of my own perspective transformation and personal/professional growth.

**I can see me in them.**

**Cassie** mirrored my own lack of self-confidence for several decades and just like her, I also put a great emphasis on getting good grades at school and being successful academically so that I could gain my Father’s love and acknowledgement.
I also suffered from low self-esteem that took me at least a decade of conscious “work” on myself to turn it to well-deserved self-pride and self-worth.
For a very long time, I also placed a huge importance on how others perceived me because I desperately needed others’ affirmations and acknowledgement due to my own lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.

**Karen’s** travel experience in Germany showed similarities with my first trip to Germany at the age of 12 that, in retrospect, made me also self-reliant and strong.
Her shyness and her difficulty to build relationships and friendships with others reflected my own struggles in this area from adolescence well into my thirties.
Just like Karen, I was also searching for my own identity until I’ve found it very recently.

**Mary’s** experiences resembled some of my own childhood experiences.
Just like Mary, I did not get much praise from my parents, especially from my Father, when I was at school. My parents, just like hers, also expected me to do well at school, which was taken for granted. I also had to learn to value and respect myself and be proud of my accomplishments.
Mary’s teaching philosophy and her interpersonal relationship with students show close similarities to my own beliefs about teaching and learning. I also find important to help my students bring out the best in themselves and I see myself having a job to help them learn to become self-reliant, self-directed, and independent learners. I can also relate to Mary’s stubbornness although for me, it revealed itself in a different form.

Janet’s love for learning languages and her passion for language teaching resonated with me deeply. I also struggled to recognize my own accomplishments and give credit to myself, just like Janet. Her strong desire for external affirmation and validation struck a chord with me because earlier I also needed others’ affirmations and acknowledgement due to my own lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.
I share her passion for playing the piano, which has taught me to bring out my feminine and intuitive side to compensate for the dominance of my mind’s control. Just like Janet, I also had a painful negative experience with a professor that turned out to be a major turning point and a big lesson for me that I discerned more than a decade later.

“Transformation happens not by rejecting these parts of ourselves but by gathering them up and integrating them. Through this process we reach a new wholeness.”

(Monk Kidd, 1990, p. 50)

I have reached a “new wholeness” as I integrated the previously rejected parts of myself through my doctoral thesis journey. So have my research participants.

Everything is connected.
Dissertation References:


Second language teacher education, (pp. 227-240). Cambridge: CUP


Appendix A
Letter of Invitation and Informed Consent Form

Dear ESL Teacher Colleagues,

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto and I am conducting research as part of my doctoral studies. My proposed doctoral research is entitled “Exploring Teacher Identity: Teachers’ Transformative Experiences of Re-Constructing and Re-Connecting Personal and Professional Selves”.

The objectives of the proposed study are as follows:

- to investigate in depth the nature of relationships among beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations rooted in personal and professional experiences that shape the development of teacher identity;
- more specifically, to explore how ESL teachers’ perspectives of their teacher identity may change as they explore personal and professional experiences and the relationships among their beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, and interpretations related to teacher identity; and
- to enable ESL teachers as participants (i) to examine their personal life experiences and their educational experiences as a student and a teacher, and (ii) to understand the significance and meaning of both their life experiences and the beliefs, assumptions, and interpretations rooted in them in relation to their teacher identity.

I would appreciate very much if you participated in my study. Participation in the research study will involve the following activities: (1) on-going in-depth, reflective autobiographical journaling about your personal and professional experiences using specific activities that will guide this process; (2) on-going guided, intuitive visualization activity; and (3) three in-depth interviews.

The purpose of the autobiographical journaling is to facilitate the recall and reflection of your experiences on your own, and to help you find relationships among your experiences and your beliefs and interpretations about your teacher identity. This reflective process is conceived of as a preparation process to participate more fully in the in-depth interviews. You will receive a set of activities for the journaling prior to each interview. You will have one month to prepare for the first interview and two months for the second and third interviews each. You will be provided with a guided visualization activity on an audiotape, which is designed to allow you to have an intuitive experience followed by reflection on the meaning and significance of the experience. The purpose of the in-depth interviews is to give the researcher a deeper understanding of your experiences and your interpretations of who you are as a teacher. The interviews are conceived of as a follow-up to and an elaboration on the activities you will be engaged in on your own. The interviews will take approximately 2-2.5 hours and will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you. I will record the interviews with a digital voice-recording device and make notes.

There are some criteria to be considered for participation in the research study:

- Active teaching experience in ESL preferably at university level for at least 5 – 10 years;
- Currently either actively engaged in teaching ESL, or undertaking graduate studies, or being on leave from teaching duties;
- General interest in holistic/reflexive self-development;
• Affinity, willingness, and openness to embark on and commit to an in-depth self-exploration for the period of six / seven months and to dedicate considerable time to participation in the study; and
• Inquisitiveness about understanding the relationships and connections among beliefs, life experiences, and professional practice.

If you wish to participate in my study, your immediate personal benefit from participation will involve an opportunity for in-depth, holistic self-development, and self-understanding as a particular form of professional development. A professional benefit from participation in the study includes the possibility of using your own data generated during the period of my research project for your own professional development purposes (e.g., in the form of a formal self-study). This possibility may be offered as an incentive for those participants who are interested in the research topic and wish to carry out their own research (M.A. theses or professional development purposes in their career) using the data that they will generate themselves by participating in my research project. However, the primary researcher’s authorship of the designed activities is to be acknowledged by the participant.

There is a possibility of emotional discomfort that some sensitive topics and/or the recall of some experiences might evoke in you during the involvement in this study. This will be minimized by ensuring that you have the right to deal with events and issues that you are comfortable with and you have the freedom to choose what events and issues you deem important to disclose. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Your participation and any information that you disclose to me will not be shared with other members of your school. Pseudonyms will be used. You and your school will not be identified in any way. No one other than the primary researcher and my thesis supervisor will have access to the raw data. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without having to give a reason and without any adverse consequence. You have the right to decide whether any information you have given me up to the point of withdrawal could be used or should be omitted and destroyed.

If you agree to be part of the research you will have the following commitments:
• Complete and sign the attached Informed Consent Form after a personal follow-up meeting with me;
• Participate in the research for a period of 6 or 7 months;
• Work on the assigned guided reflexive autobiographical journaling to the best of your knowledge and intention;
• Use the guided intuitive visualization technique once a week during the whole research process;
• Participate in the in-depth interviews three times over a period of 6 or 7 months;
• Share your journals with the primary researcher to supplement the interview data.

The interviews will be recorded with a digital voice recording device and then transcribed. I will save the digital files of the interviews on a CD that will be stored in a locked storage cabinet in my residence. The transcripts and the digital files on CD will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. No one other than the primary researcher and my thesis supervisor will have access to the data. If you agree to participate in the research project you will have the opportunity to read the transcripts of your interviews as well as the draft of the analysis based on the interviews and journals to verify the accuracy and trustworthiness of the content. This corroboration given by you will also be included in the final chapter that represents each participant’s experience. You will also have access to the final version of the chapter that presents your experience and the researcher’s interpretations to validate its accuracy and soundness. I will write my doctoral dissertation based on this study to complete the requirements of my program. I will also use the data from this study to write academic papers on teacher identity and professional development. These papers will be submitted to academic journals for publication and to academic conferences for presentation. I would like to use the data from this study for my future writings.
on teacher identity and teacher development. In these papers and conference presentations, once again, pseudonyms will be used and participants and their institutions will not be identified in any way.

By participating in my research you will be helping the research community of second and foreign language education increase its understanding of the development of teacher identity, of the relationships among personal and professional experiences, and of the interconnectedness of beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and interpretations related to teacher identity. I hope to have approximately 4-6 ESL teachers who are either native English speakers or non-native English speakers involved in this study. I hope that your participation also helps you to gain a deeper, holistic understanding of who you are as a person and a teacher, and you will find this study beneficial for you personally and professionally. Although I appreciate your participation very much, no monetary compensation will be offered to you.

In order to go forward with your participation the first step is to indicate your interest to participate in the study by sending an email to me directly (ebukor@oise.utoronto.ca). Then, I will get in touch with you and invite you for a meeting to discuss and follow up on the details of participation. At this point, you must sign and return the attached Informed Consent Forms. There are two copies; please keep one copy for your records.

Thank you for your willingness to be involved and I look forward to working together. If you have any questions, contact me directly, Emese Bukor (ebukor@oise.utoronto.ca or 613-234-3188) or my thesis supervisor, Sarfaroz Niyozov (sniyozov@oise.utoronto.ca). For information regarding the rights of a participant in a University of Toronto study, contact the Office of Research Ethics (ethics.review@utoronto.ca) or Dean Sharpe (416-978-5855).

Sincerely,

Emese Bukor
PhD Candidate
Participant’s Informed Consent Form

Please read the attached Letter of Invitation and the Participant’s Informed Consent Form carefully. This informed consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this research study and the nature of your participation. The Letter of Invitation, the Participant’s Informed Consent Form, and a follow-up meeting before signing the Consent Form must provide sufficient information so that you are in an informed position to decide whether you wish to participate in this research project. There are no penalties of any sort, regardless of your decision. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Name: …………………………………………………………………….. (Please print)

I have read the description of the research project in the attached Letter of Invitation and I understand the conditions of my participation and the commitment it requires. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the research study entitled “Exploring Teacher Identity: Teachers’ Transformative Experiences of Re-Constructing and Re-Connecting Personal and Professional Selves”.

Signature: ………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………

Please indicate the email address (if any) you would like me to use.

Email address: …………………………………………………………

Please indicate a mailing address where the transcripts and the final results of the study can be sent.

Mailing Address: ………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………
Appendix B
Autobiographical Journaling and the Guided Visualization Activity

Guidelines for Autobiographical Journaling #1

Data Collection for the Doctoral Research Project Designed and Undertaken by Emese Bukor

Overall Rationale and Purpose for the Autobiographical Journaling:
The goal of keeping an autobiographical journal is to help research participants remember and reflect on their experiences in a systematic and guided manner. The autobiographical journal is conceived of as a preparation tool for the in-depth detailed interviews with the researcher. In this sense, journaling facilitates the recall of participants’ experiences; it allows them to reflect on them on their own so that they will be able to participate in the interviews more fully. It is, therefore, viewed as a tool for preparing the groundwork for the interviews.

Participants will be provided with each set of activities well in advance of each interview. For example, participants will receive the first set of guidelines in preparation for the first interview about one month prior to the first interview. The second set of guidelines will be handed out to them on the day of the first interview and they will have about two months to work on the activities before the second interview takes place. The third, final set of activities will be distributed on the day of the second interview and participants will be able to spend about two month on the activities before the final interview.

1. Journal Themes in Preparation for the First Interview:

Rationale:
The goal and intent of the following activities are to trigger your memories about your life experiences. They will help you recall your memorable life experiences and will also greatly facilitate your preparation for the first in-depth interview with the researcher. The first interview will build on the material you cover in these activities so please make sure that you spend quality time on these activities. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to further elaborate on your experiences, the significance you assign to them in your life, and it will facilitate uncovering some of the unconscious or hidden beliefs that might be rooted in them.

For your information the Theme of the First Interview: The Development of the Professional Self. The following topics will be covered:

- educational experiences as a student (e.g., schooling and professional education)
- professional experiences as a teacher (e.g., teaching experiences)
- uncovering professional beliefs about good teaching/teacher and good learning/student

The estimated amount of time to be spent on completing the first set of activities is about 15-16 hours in 4 weeks (approximately 4 hours/week).
General Activities: Preparation for the Journaling

Rationale:
The following general activities (A/1, A/2, and A/3) have a broad framework to allow you to create a repertoire of your life experiences, which is considered as a pool of information that can be drawn on when you work on the more specific, autobiographical writing activities (e.g., A/4, B/6, and C/1) 
during the entire research process.

It is important to go as broad as possible with recalling your life experiences so that later you can select from them for the more specific autobiographical journaling activities related to (1) the development of your professional self (Activity A/4) in preparation for the first interview, and to (2) the development of your personal self (Activity B/6) in preparation for the second interview. Finally, you can also draw upon the pool of information to work on the autobiographical writing related to (3) the connections between and synthesis of the professional and the personal selves (Activity C/1) to prepare for the third interview.

Activity A/1: Creating Your Life Line (approximately 2 hours)
Jot down the most important events in your life from birth up to the present. This will comprise the “raw material” which you can draw on during the entire research process. Make sure that you provide every possible event on the Life Line that comes to your mind as significant in a positive or negative sense. Include even those memories or events that seem to have no obvious connection to your professional life as a teacher at the moment.

Birth

Now

Activity A/2: Synthesis of Your Life Line (approximately half an hour)
Looking at the various events of your life (i.e., the raw material), simplify the events with a short title or phrase that describes the main activity or process you felt occurred in certain periods of your life. Decide how you want to break down your life in smaller periods that are meaningful to you.

Example for assigning vignettes to a period of life:
If you find that you moved several times with your parents between the ages of 5-10, you might sum up that period with a phrase “several moves” or “learned to be flexible”. Or you may say: Age 18-24: “turned to academic achievement. Made good grades in school in x subject”.

Activity A/3: Key Events, Turning Points, Significant People, and Insights
(approximately 1 hour)
In your journal compile a list of key events, turning points, significant people who influenced you positively or seemingly negatively, and any insights that you learned from significant events or people. The Life Line could serve as a good tool for this writing activity. The key words can be used in point form as you compile the events under the various time periods of your life. Make sure that you use the same time periods as in Activity A/2.
(You can use abbreviations for places and pseudonyms for people to protect their identity.)
Specific Activities: Development of the Professional Self

Activity A/4: Autobiographical Writing (approximately 6-10 hours)
Narrow your focus on your experiences as a student/learner from early childhood on up to university/graduate studies/professional education both in formal and informal learning scenarios. Using Activities A/2 and A/3 create your narratives about an event that stands out most in your memory from each period that may be related to the development of your Professional Self. Write a separate story about each event with as much detail as you can.

Write reflections on the following topics:
- Early childhood experiences;
- Experiences as a student in primary school;
- Experiences as a student in high school;
- Experiences as a student in college or university;
- Informal learning experiences;
- “Best” and “worst” language learning experiences;
- My “best” and “worst” courses/teachers; Influential teachers as role models;
- “Best” and “worst” teaching experiences.

Intuitive Activity:
Rationale:
The “Guided Visualization” activity is meant to engage your tacit/intuitive/empathic way of knowing allowing for the exploration of connections and aspects between your personal life and the way you see yourself as a teacher in a less-constrained way than an interview provides. This activity will allow you to explore the use of an alternative intuitive technique so that - based on first-hand experience - you can subsequently reflect on the relevance and meaning of your experience of the visualization exercise in relation to your teacher identity. This alternative intuitive technique is meant to complement the more rational reflective/thinking process carried out in the journaling activities and interviews.

Activity A/5: Guided Visualization (approximately 20 minutes)
You will be provided with an audio-tape with a guided visualization activity. This activity is designed to allow you to have an intuitive experience followed by reflection on the meaning and significance of the experience and the information. The activity begins with a relaxation exercise followed by the guided visualization exercise.

You are asked to do the guided visualization activity on a regular basis throughout the data collection period. It is recommended that you do it once a week; it will take about 15-20 minutes.

In the guided visualization process you will be asked to write down two questions prior to the activity. These might be some burning questions / puzzling thoughts related to
- the general activities that you are working on for this research project; or
- the educational and professional experiences that you recall and reflect on in your autobiographical writing; or
- some beliefs, assumptions, perceptions about your teaching / teacher identity; anything that you are frequently thinking about (triggered by the activities and reflections) and can’t find plausible or satisfying answers to; or

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- any feelings, emotions that the activities evoke in you and you want to know more about their significance related to the issues and topics you are reflecting on.

As you listen to the tape, please follow the instructions in it. Be open to receiving answers to your questions. Believe and trust that you will receive an answer. Let it happen. Acceptance is important. Write down any answers that come to your mind as you pose your first and second questions even though you may feel you are making them up. Do not evaluate.

You are asked to document the answers in journal for future reference. AFTER having completed the activity, put it aside and move on to doing something else. Later on, you might want to have a look at the answers again and reflect on them to see how you can make sense of the information. Write a short entry in your journal about this conscious reflection.

Additional Guidelines for the Guided Visualization Activity

This is the written summary of the recommended suggestions about the guided visualization activity that I explained to you in person. This is meant to be a reminder only.

- There are two versions of the same activity: one with plain talking (#1 and #2), and another version with some background music (#3 and #4). Experiment which version suits you better or you can also alternate using the two versions.
- Please, use a notebook for this activity.
- Prior to listening to the visualization activity, take some time to write down two questions that may have been prompted by the reflections you have done. These questions could be about some burning questions, recurring themes, issues that puzzles you and you want to find out more about them. They can be some “why” questions, etc.
- As you do the activity each week, you may have different questions each time or it might happen that you want to ask the same questions for a couple of weeks. It’s up to you.
- **Suggestion:** initially, you may need to repeat the question several times before you begin to “get” an answer. Write down anything that comes to mind without judging it in any way. Trust the process and be open to receive whatever comes to your mind. It may well be that the time on answering one question and the length of it vary from time to time. Trust that you will “feel” when the answer is complete and then move on to the next question.
- After you finished the activity, do something else. Put your notes aside and go back to them the next day or so.
- When you read the answers, write down your thoughts about the content of what you received. Reflect on the meaning it has for you. Reflect on your feelings as well – on the ones you had while doing the visualization. Notice if you have different feelings when you consciously reflect on the answers.
- **On the last week before each interview:** write a short summary on your reflections on all the visualization activities you have done up to that point. Look for some patterns, recurring themes, or suggestions in the answers, or anything that strikes you in any way.
Guidelines for Autobiographical Journaling #2

Data Collection for the Doctoral Research Project Designed and Undertaken by Emese Bukor

Overall Rationale and Purpose for the Autobiographical Journaling:
The goal of keeping an autobiographical journal is to help research participants remember and reflect on their experiences in a systematic and guided manner. The autobiographical journal is conceived of as a preparation tool for the in-depth detailed interviews with the researcher. In this sense, journaling facilitates the recall of participants’ experiences; it allows them to reflect on them on their own so that they will be able to participate in the interviews more fully. It is, therefore, viewed as a tool for preparing the groundwork for the interviews.

Participants will be provided with each set of activities well in advance of each interview. For example, participants will receive the first set of guidelines in preparation for the first interview about one month prior to the first interview. The second set of guidelines will be handed out to them on the day of the first interview and they will have about two months to work on the activities before the second interview takes place. The third, final set of activities will be distributed on the day of the second interview and participants will be able to spend about two month on the activities before the final interview.

2. Journal Themes in Preparation for the Second Interview:

Rationale:
The goal of the following activities is to assist you in the preparation for the second in-depth interview, which will focus on your personal life experiences and the potential beliefs rooted in them. These activities have been designed to facilitate the process of raising awareness of recurring themes, patterns in your personal life, and the possible underlying belief systems that may be connected to/may have influenced your beliefs, assumptions and perceptions as a teacher. The activities are situated in the bigger framework of your life as a whole (including various facets of your personal life and not only your professional life as a teacher).

For your information the Theme of the Second Interview: The Development of the Personal Self. The following topics will be covered:

- personal life experiences (e.g., childhood, family, friends and significant other people)
- uncovering personal beliefs that may be connected to professional issues

The estimated amount of time to be spent on completing the second set of activities is about 24 hours in 2 months (approximately 3 hours/week).

General Activities: Preparation for the Journaling

Rationale:
The following general activities (B/1, B/2, B/3, B/4 and B/5) take a broad perspective on your personal life in general allowing you to explore your beliefs and assumptions originating from various aspects of your personal life. The broad perspective also helps you to explore how your personal beliefs may influence your views and beliefs of who you are as a teacher. The objective of these activities is to help you become aware of recurring topics, issues, themes, character traits in your life and to uncover the underlying hidden beliefs and assumptions rooted in them that may have influenced the development of your teacher identity.
Activity B/1: My Past Preoccupations (approximately 1 hour)
In the list below circle your three most important past preoccupations and write a paragraph (or more if you wish) in your journal about their effect in your life. How have these preoccupations added positively to your life? How have they hindered your life? Reflect on how you see these themes related to your problems and issues in your personal and/or professional life.

Past Preoccupations:
Independence Addictions
Intellectual accomplishment Overspending
Self-criticism Underearning
Security Physical image
Resistance to authority Lack of love
Emotional dramas Anger
Fear Guilt
Control Perfectionism
Gaining approval Revenge
Conformity Other(s)
Family entanglements

Activity B/2: Going Deeper - More Preoccupying Ideas (approximately 1 hour)
Complete the seven unfinished sentences below.

I would like to change
1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________

I would like more
1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________

I keep thinking
1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________

31 Activities B/1 - B/5 have been adapted from Redfield (1997)
In 6 months I would like

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

The most important things in my life right now are

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

The qualities in the people I admire most are

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

I would be delighted if my life included

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

What have you learned about your beliefs and values by looking at your preoccupying thoughts? You might want to elaborate on your thoughts, feelings and reflections about this activity in your journal regarding the connections and relationship that you may find among the uncovered beliefs, assumptions and values, and the way you see yourself as a teacher.

**Activity B/3: Where in My Life am I Going through the Motions?**

(approximately 1 hour)

In your journal reflect on the parts of your life where you feel stuck or as if you are “just going through the motions”. Describe your *feelings* in detail. The more you can bring these feelings into awareness, the more you will open the doors for answers, opportunities and insights.
Activity B/4: Finding New Paradigm Alternatives to Your Old Preoccupations
(approximately 1-1.5 hours)
This activity helps you become aware of some connections between your past preoccupations that you have elaborated on in Activity B/1 and the potential alternatives for them to establish a “new” paradigm for yourself.

First, review the list of the new paradigm alternatives for your old preoccupying thoughts (remember to use the same three you selected earlier). Look at what you circled in on the list as a major preoccupation of yours in the past in Activity B/1. Notice the correlating “new” alternative option for the three old preoccupying thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLD</th>
<th>NEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual accomplishment</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-criticism</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to authority</td>
<td>Sharing leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional dramas</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining approval</td>
<td>Self-trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family entanglements</td>
<td>Honest commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>Self-security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overspending</td>
<td>Healing deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underearning</td>
<td>Being paid what you are worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical image</td>
<td>Intrinsic worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of love</td>
<td>Divine love within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Love with wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionism</td>
<td>Self-acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, take each new alternative attribute (of the three you circled) and write them down in your journal. As the mood strikes you, reflect on how you could attract these new attributes into your life. You don’t have to know the exact way of bringing them into your reality at this point.

Reflect on your thoughts and the possible meaning of each attribute in your life.

How would the new attributes change you and your perception of your life?
What way would you think, act and feel differently from before?
Notice your feelings as you reflect on the new attributes. Write about your feelings in your journal as well.
Activity B/5: Analysis of Significant People’s Influence (approximately 3-4 hours)
The objective of this activity is to explore significant people’s (e.g., parents/caregivers) achievements, attitudes, philosophy of life, their strengths and weaknesses, and their unresolved issues – from YOUR point of view as YOU saw and experienced them as a child.

This process may assist you to reveal dominant links and relationships between your aspirations, achievements/failures, weaknesses/strengths and that of those influential people in your life. The activity also helps you become aware of your underlying beliefs that might be rooted in the way you viewed the role of these important people in your early childhood.

Read the questions and write your answers in your journal from the point of view of your early childhood.

A. Observing a Significant Male Figure’s Life (e.g. father, male caregiver, etc.)
   a. Work accomplishment
      What type of work did he do when you were young?
      Was he proud of what he did?
      In what way did he excel?
   b. Affirmative self-expression
      List positive words that best describe this male figure (e.g., loving, intelligent, etc.).
      What one or two words best describe his personality?
      What was unique about him?
   c. Negative self-expression
      List negative words that describe any negative trait in this male figure (e.g., critical, opinionated, etc.).
      What triggered negative behaviour?
      What one or two words best describe his worst trait?
   d. Significant Male Figure’s childhood
      Describe as best you can this person’s childhood. Was he happy? Neglected? Went to work at an early age? Poor? Rich?
      In what way did his childhood influence his life choices?
   e. Significant Male Figure’s philosophy
      What was most important to him?
      What statement or credo best expresses this person’s philosophy of life?
   f. Missing elements
      List what you think was missing from this male figure’s life.
      What might he have done if he had had more time, money, or education?

B. Observing a Significant Female Figure’s Life (e.g., mother, female caregiver, etc.)
   a. Work accomplishment
      What type of work or activities did she do when you were young?
      Do you think she felt fulfilled in her activities?
      In what way did she excel?
   b. Affirmative self-expression
      List positive words that best describe this female figure (e.g., loving, intelligent, etc.).
      What one or two words best describe her personality?
      What was unique about her?
   c. Negative self-expression
List negative words that describe any negative trait in this female person (e.g., critical, opinionated, etc.).
What triggered negative behaviour?
What one or two words best describe her worst trait?

d. Significant Female Figure’s childhood
Describe as best you can this person’s childhood. Was she happy? Neglected? Went to work at an early age? Poor? Rich? Ambitious?
In what way did her childhood influence her life choices?

e. Significant Female Figure’s philosophy
What was most important to her?
What statement or credo best expresses this person’s philosophy of life?

f. Missing elements
List what you think was missing from this female figure’s life.
What might she have done if she had had more time, money, or education?

C. Analysis of What You Learned from Your Significant Male Figure
Your observations about your Significant Male Figure’s life can function as either positive or negative beliefs that you still carry.

Finish the following sentence with positive qualities you got from this person:

Like this male person, I am ________________________________

Finish the following sentence with negative qualities you got from this person:

Like this male person, I am ________________________________

Finish the following sentence:

From this male person, I learned that in order to succeed, I should
a) __________________
b) __________________
c) __________________

From observing this Significant Male Figure’s life, I want to be more:
a) ________________________________
b) ________________________________
c) ________________________________

For what are you grateful to this person?
For what would you be willing to forgive this person?
From your list of what was missing from this person's life, what, if anything, have you chosen to develop?
a) __________________
b) __________________
c) __________________
D. **Analysis of What You Learned from Your Significant Female Figure**

Your observations about your Significant Female Figure's life can function as either positive or negative beliefs that you still carry.

Finish the following sentence with positive qualities you got from this person:

Like this female person, I am ____________________________

Finish the following sentence with negative qualities you got from this person:

Like this female person, I am ____________________________

Finish the following sentence:

From this female person, I learned that in order to succeed, I should
d) ____________
e) ____________
f) ____________

From observing this Significant Female Figure’s life, I want to be more:
d) ____________________________
e) ____________________________
f) ____________________________

For what are you grateful to this person?
For what would you be willing to forgive this person?
From your list of what was missing from this person’s life, what, if anything, have you chosen to develop?
a) ____________
b) ____________
c) ____________

E. **Putting It All Together**

Take what you have learned from the analysis of both Significant People and synthesize your insights here. Write your synthesis in your journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MALE FIGURE’S</strong></th>
<th><strong>FEMALE FIGURE’S</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Credo</td>
<td>Personal Credo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Achievement</td>
<td>Primary Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>Disappointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Elements</td>
<td>Missing Elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How he wounded me – How she wounded me –
And what I learned from it And what I learned from it
How he inspired me How she inspired me
Gift to me Gift to me

Complete the following sentences:
1. The positive intention behind my early childhood and my significant people’s influence was …..
2. Observing the lessons inherent in the lives of my significant people, I can see that their lives prepared me to …..
3. My life question has to do with …..
(If this is not completely clear to you, write your best guess here)

Specific Activities: Development of the Personal Self

Activity B/6: Autobiographical Writing (approximately 6-10 hours)
As the mood strikes you, reflect on and write about any important personal life experiences that stand out in your memory (that may have been triggered by the general activities above). Try to find personal events and experiences that seem to be connected directly or indirectly to how you see yourself as a teacher at the moment, or to any professional characteristics or issues in your professional life that you may have at the moment.

As time goes on, you may want to keep track of any insights, dreams, coincidences and interesting situations (both personal and professional) that come up. You might want to note in your journal any instances when you find yourself in situations that somehow might help you find some answers to the questions or feelings that have been raised or triggered as you are working your way through the activities.

Intuitive Activity:
Rationale:
The “Guided Visualization” activity is meant to engage your tacit/intuitive/empathic way of knowing allowing for the exploration of connections and aspects between your personal life and the way you see yourself as a teacher in a less-constrained way than an interview provides. This activity will allow you to explore the use of an alternative intuitive technique so that - based on first-hand experience - you can subsequently reflect on the relevance and meaning of your experience of the visualization exercise in relation to your teacher identity.
This alternative intuitive technique is meant to complement the more rational reflective/thinking process carried out in the journaling activities and interviews.

Activity B/7: Guided Visualization (approximately 20 minutes)
You will be provided with an audio-tape with a guided visualization activity. This activity is designed to allow you to have an intuitive experience followed by reflection on the meaning and significance of the experience and the information. The activity begins with a relaxation exercise followed by the guided visualization exercise.
In the guided visualization process you will be asked to write down two questions prior to the activity. These might be some burning questions / puzzling thoughts related to
- the general activities that you are working on for this research project; or
- the personal and professional experiences that you recall and reflect on in your autobiographical writing; or
- some beliefs, assumptions, perceptions about your teaching / teacher identity; anything that you are frequently thinking about (triggered by the activities and reflections) and can’t find plausible or satisfying answers to; or
- any feelings, emotions that the activities evoke in you and you want to know more about their significance related to the issues and topics you are reflecting on.

As you listen to the tape, please follow the instructions in it. Be open to receiving answers to your questions. Believe and trust that you will receive an answer. Let it happen. Acceptance is important. Write down any answers that come to your mind as you pose your first and second questions even though you may feel you are making them up. Do not evaluate.

You are asked to document the answers in journal for future reference. AFTER having completed the activity, put it aside and move on to doing something else. Later on, you might want to have a look at the answers again and reflect on them to see how you can make sense of the information. Write a short entry in your journal about this conscious reflection.

Guidelines for Autobiographical Journaling #3

Data Collection for the Doctoral Research Project Designed and Undertaken by Emese Bukor

Overall Rationale and Purpose for the Autobiographical Journaling:
The goal of keeping an autobiographical journal is to help research participants remember and reflect on their experiences in a systematic and guided manner. The autobiographical journal is conceived of as a preparation tool for the in-depth detailed interviews with the researcher. In this sense, journaling facilitates the recall of participants’ experiences; it allows them to reflect on them on their own so that they will be able to participate in the interviews more fully. It is, therefore, viewed as a tool for preparing the groundwork for the interviews.

Participants will be provided with each set of activities well in advance of each interview. For example, participants will receive the first set of guidelines in preparation for the first interview about one month prior to the first interview. The second set of guidelines will be handed out to them on the day of the first interview and they will have about two months to work on the activities before the second interview takes place. The third, final set of activities will be distributed on the day of the second interview and participants will be able to spend about two month on the activities before the final interview.
3. Journal Themes in Preparation for the Third (Final) Interview:

Rationale:
The goal and intent of the final interview are analysis and synthesis of the experiences and work done in the first two interviews and the journaling activities during the elapsed time.

The analysis will include
- finding the underlying meaning of both personal and professional experiences in relation to teacher identity;
- uncovering and connecting forgotten or taken-for-granted beliefs, assumptions and perceptions; and
- connecting the intuitive activities with the rational reflections and insights.

Focus will also be given to comparing any differences or changes in your perspectives, views, and interpretations about your professional and personal selves since the previous interviews.

For your information the Theme of the Third Interview: The Re-Construction of Teacher Identity. The following topics will be covered:
- Finding relationships between personal and professional experiences
- Re-connecting personal and professional selves with beliefs, assumptions, interpretations and perceptions
- Re-constructing the various selves of your teacher identity (e.g., mental self, emotional self, enacted self and the intuitive self)
- Synthesizing teacher identity at present

The ultimate goal of the last interview is to come to a synthesis and re-construction of
- insights, connections and relationships among events, interpretations, beliefs; and
- the interconnectedness of those with your perceptions about your identity as a teacher in at present.

The estimated amount of time to be spent on completing the third set of activities is about 20-24 hours in 2 months (about 2-3 hours/week).

In preparation for this interview the following activities are suggested:

Specific Activities: Re-constructing and Integrating Teacher Identity

Activity C/1: Autobiographical Writing (approximately 2-3 hours / week)
In your journal, reflect on your perceptions and views about the relationships and connections between your professional and personal life experiences explored to date in your journals and during the interviews with the researcher.

Suggested questions/themes for reflection:
- How do you think your early childhood experiences have influenced the development of your perceptions and beliefs about yourself as a person and a teacher?
- What connections can you find between the way you saw your parents/significant people as a child and the way you see your values, beliefs, aspirations, personal and professional relationships at present?
- What connections can you notice between your life experiences (personal and professional) and your beliefs, assumptions and perceptions reflected both in your identity as a teacher and in your teaching practice?

- What patterns, issues, or characteristics do you notice that seem to be present both in your personal and professional life?

- In what way do you think significant people in your personal and professional life have contributed to the development of your teacher identity?

- How do you interpret the relationships between ‘seemingly’ negative experiences and your beliefs and perceptions as a teacher? In other words, how do you think your ‘seemingly’ negative life experiences have influenced the development of your teacher identity?

- What connections can you notice between the way you think about yourself and others (i.e., your thoughts, beliefs assumptions, perceptions), the way you feel about yourself and others (i.e., your feelings, emotions, sense of self in relation to yourself and to others), and the way you act and express yourself (i.e., your actions) in social situations with others?
  - How do you perceive the relationships among these three factors (i.e., thinking, feeling and acting/expressing yourself) with one another?
  - Are they all usually in sync, some of them in sync, or are they usually (or sometimes) out of sync?
  - What does your sense of being in balance/in sync depend on? Can you give examples of being in sync (or in “flow” / in balance) and out of sync for each factor (i.e., thinking, feeling and expressing yourself)?

- How do you perceive your intuitive side?
  - Did you notice and follow your intuitive hunches, thoughts and feelings in your life prior to participating in this research project? Can you give some examples?
  - Have you noticed any subtle changes in the way you notice (and act upon) your intuitive thoughts, gut feelings, hunches, etc. since your participating in this research project?
  - How has your relationship to your intuition changed over time, during the data collection period? Can you give some examples?

- Can you explain how the reflective process over the past several months has (or hasn’t) contributed to unveiling some previously ‘hidden’ or less conscious beliefs, assumptions, perceptions about yourself? How do you relate to becoming aware of these beliefs and what do you think you can ‘do’ with them to feel more integrated and whole as a person and a teacher?

- What differences (even very subtle ones) can you observe in you and your perception about yourself as a person and a teacher since the beginning of the data collection period? Can you elaborate on how you think, feel and act differently than prior to participating in this research? If you have a sense that nothing or not much has changed, why do you think it is the case?
**Intuitive Activity:**

**Rationale:**
The “Guided Visualization” activity is meant to engage your tacit/intuitive/empathic way of knowing allowing for the exploration of connections and aspects between your personal life and the way you see yourself as a teacher in a less-constrained way than an interview provides. This activity will allow you to explore the use of an alternative intuitive technique so that - based on first-hand experience - you can subsequently reflect on the relevance and meaning of your experience of the visualization exercise in relation to your teacher identity. This alternative intuitive technique is meant to complement the more rational reflective/thinking process carried out in the journaling activities and interviews.

**Activity C/2: Guided Visualization (approximately 20 minutes)**
You will be provided with an audio-tape with a guided visualization activity. This activity is designed to allow you to have an intuitive experience followed by reflection on the meaning and significance of the experience and the information. The activity begins with a relaxation exercise followed by the guided visualization exercise.

You are asked to do the guided visualization activity on a regular basis throughout the data collection period. It is recommended that you do it once a week; it will take about 15-20 minutes.

In the guided visualization process you will be asked to write down two questions prior to the activity. These might be some burning questions / puzzling thoughts related to
- the general activities that you are working on for this research project; or
- the educational and professional experiences that you recall and reflect on in your autobiographical writing; or
- some beliefs, assumptions, perceptions about your teaching / teacher identity; anything that you are frequently thinking about (triggered by the activities and reflections) and can’t find plausible or satisfying answers to; or
- any feelings, emotions that the activities evoke in you and you want to know more about their significance related to the issues and topics you are reflecting on.

As you listen to the tape, please follow the instructions in it. Be open to receiving answers to your questions. Believe and trust that you will receive an answer. Let it happen. Acceptance is important. Write down any answers that come to your mind as you pose your first and second questions even though you may feel you are making them up. Do not evaluate.

You are asked to document the answers in journal for future reference. AFTER having completed the activity, put it aside and move on to doing something else. Later on, you might want to have a look at the answers again and reflect on them to see how you can make sense of the information. Write a short entry in your journal about this conscious reflection.
Relaxation Exercise
The relaxation exercise has been adapted from Fritz, R. (1994). *Technologies for creating: Basic course: Participant workbook.*

Sit comfortably with your back fairly straight, and your arms, hands, legs, and feet uncrossed. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and relax.

Begin to focus on your dominant hand. Allow a feeling of energy to build in that hand. Imagine that there is a dial that can dial the intensity of your concentration. The highest number on the dial is 7. And you are now at about 3. As the dial is turned up your concentration becomes greater, more focused and more intense. The dial is now on 4, and 5, and 6, and now the highest point of your concentration 7.

You now may be feeling a sensation in your hand. Allow this sensation to build. This sensation is caused by your conscious attention. At this point, shift your focus to the top of your head. And now your forehead, and now your throat, and now your chest, and now your stomach, left shoulder, right shoulder and now your dominant hand once again. As you bring your concentration back to your dominant hand, take a deep breath, relax and allow your focus on your hand to increase.

We are going to shift focus much more quickly now. Begin to focus at the top of your head, forehead, throat, chest, stomach, left shoulder, right shoulder, left foot, right foot, left knee, right knee, left hip, right hip, top of your head, left ear, right ear, left eye, right eye, nose, mouth, chin, neck, centre of your chest, stomach, and dominant hand once again.

Begin to focus on your other hand. Allow the energy there to build. Move your hands so that both palms are facing each other about 5 or 6 inches apart. Begin to concentrate energy into both hands. Imagine the space between your palms filled with energy as if you were holding a container of energy. As if you were lifting this container of energy, move your hands up to the top of your head and pour this energy over yourself. As you place the palms of your hands on the top of your head, allow the energy created by your concentration to flow throughout your entire body.

At this point allow your hands to return to their normal position on your lap.

Visualization Exercise
The visualization exercise has been developed by Emese Bukor.

Take a deep breath and relax. Take another deep breath and as you exhale allow yourself to relax even more. Imagine yourself in a warm place, like a beach. Begin to feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, feel the light breeze coming from the ocean, and hear the waves crashing on the beach. Notice how the ocean smells, how the sand feels under your bare feet as you stand on the beach, how the light breeze feels on your skin. Begin to walk along the sandy beach. Enjoy each step you take. Find that you can do this easily. As you walk along the beach, see a group of palm
trees in front of you. Continue to walk towards the group of trees, and as you come closer notice a tall, inviting palm-tree that stands out in the group. Look at this palm tree and begin to walk toward it. Walk up to it and sit down in the shade of this palm tree leaning your back against its trunk. As you stretch out your legs under the palm tree, imagine a wise person who you deeply trust and respect approaching you from the distance. Look at this person you deeply trust and become open to him or her. Imagine warmth and love between you and this person you trust. Ask your first question, then open your eyes and stop the tape while you write down the answer. When you have finished writing your answer, turn the tape back on.

Close your eyes again and continue to focus on your connection with the wise person. Become even more open to him or her. Begin to picture this person raising one arm so that the palm of his or her hand faces you. Imagine a ball of white light resembling a small sun being created in the palm of the wise person’s hand. Imagine a second ball of light being created in the centre of your being, whatever that phrase means to you. Imagine a ray of light emanating from the palm of the wise person’s hand and connecting that source with the ball of white light in the centre of your being. Concentrate for a moment on both points of light and the connection between both points. At this point ask your second question, then open your eyes and stop the tape while you write down your answer. When you have finished writing, turn the tape back on.

Close your eyes and continue to concentrate on your connection with the wise person and become even more open to him or her. Take a deep breath and relax your focus. Keep your eyes closed. Take another deep breath and as you exhale, relax. Begin to tense the muscles of the feet, legs, and hips. Tense, tense, hold that tension, and quickly relax. Begin to tense the muscles of your stomach, chest, and back. Tense, tense, hold that tension, and quickly relax. Begin to tense the muscles of the shoulders, arms and hands. Tense, tense, make two fists, hold that tension, and quickly relax. Begin to tense the muscles of the neck, head. Tense, tense, hold that tension, make a face, hold that tension and quickly relax. Take a deep breath and as you exhale allow any remaining physical tension to leave your body. Take another deep breath and as you exhale allow all emotional and mental tension to leave you. Take another deep breath and as you exhale allow yourself to relax even more. Now relax your focus and at your own speed come back to normal consciousness and when you are ready open your eyes.
Appendix D
In-Depth Interview Questions

First In-Depth Interview Questions

**Interview Theme:** The Development of the Professional Self

- educational experiences as a student (e.g., schooling and professional education)
- professional experiences as a teacher (e.g., teaching experiences)
- uncovering professional beliefs about good teaching/teacher and good learning/student

**Questions related to Educational Experiences as a Student:**

1. What memorable experiences do you recall from your early childhood? How would you characterize yourself as a young child? How did your parents or relatives characterize you as a child?
2. What is the most memorable experience for you as a primary school student?
3. Do you have an important memory from high school?
4. Can you recall two important things in which you excelled and failed (elementary and high school)?
5. In what way do you consider yourself successful or unsuccessful in those experiences?
6. Why do you think these memories stayed with you for a long time? What lessons did you learn from these experiences?
7. What significant experiences do you remember during your university studies and professional education? What was the “best” course you took? And the “worst” course? What factors played a role in calling them the “best” or “worst” courses?
8. How do you think these experiences influenced your views on teaching and learning?
9. Tell me about a positive and a negative experience in your language learning. How do you think your language learning has influenced your teaching?
10. Do you recall any influential people in your life? “Best” teachers or professors, coaches, etc? How have they influenced you? Do you recall the “worst” teacher you had? How have they influenced you?

**Questions related to Experiences as a Teacher:**

1. Tell me about your formal professional education to become a teacher and your initial experiences as a teacher (i.e., the facts about your professional education and a list of workplaces).
2. What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses in the initial years of teaching? How do you think these experiences influenced your views about teaching and learning? How have your strengths and weaknesses changed over time?
3. Have you had any other work experience besides teaching that may have affected your teaching style or teaching philosophy? In what way? What factors have played a role?
4. What are your “best” and “worst” teaching experiences?
5. In what way were they good or bad?
6. What was the “best” lesson or activity that you taught? What was the “worst” lesson or activity that you had? What factors played a role in success or lack of success?
7. What characteristics do you think a good language teacher has? What makes language teaching efficient and successful in your opinion?
8. How do you think the above-mentioned factors and/or experiences affected the development of your teaching philosophy and your beliefs about a good teacher / teaching?
9. Can you summarize briefly your teaching philosophy?

Questions related to the Guided Visualization:
1. Tell me about your experience with the guided visualization technique? How many times have you done it to date?
2. How do you feel about doing this activity (any negative feelings, discomfort, etc.)?
3. How do you feel about the answers you have received?
4. How have you made sense of the information you received during the activities?
5. What connections can you see between the intuitive activity and your rational reflections/journaling?
6. Have you noticed anything different since you have been doing this activity?

Second In-Depth Interview Questions

Interview Theme: The Development of the Personal Self
- personal life experiences (e.g., childhood, family, friends, and significant other people)
- uncovering personal beliefs that may be connected to professional issues

Questions related to personal experiences:
- Tell me about your memorable childhood experiences.
- What is the “best”, most cherished childhood experience you remember? What factors play a role in making this experience positive in your memory?
- What is the “most unpleasant” memory from your childhood? What factors make this experience unpleasant for you?
- What lessons do you think the “best” and the “most unpleasant” experiences have taught you about yourself?
- Can you tell me about your feelings and memories related to significant people (e.g. parents/caregivers) in your life?
- How did you perceive these important people as you were a child?
- What “positive” and “negative” characteristics do you think you inherited from each of them?
- What relationships do you see between your life and the missing element in your parents’ (caregivers’) life? How do you think you carried on fulfilling any of the “unfulfilled” dreams of your parents/caregivers?
- How would you characterize your relationship with your siblings (if any – or closest friends)? Did you find any traits in them that frustrated you? Why do you think they were frustrating for you at that time? How do you think the frustrating quality of your sibling has mirrored any of your own issues that you had in yourself?
What character traits / qualities do you find most important / desirable and admirable in your best friend / in people who are close to you?

Can you tell me about your past preoccupations? How did they influence your beliefs about yourself in your personal life? What did you learn from having those preoccupations? How do you think these past preoccupations may have influenced your beliefs and views about yourself as a teacher?

What “things” would you like to change about yourself at the moment?

How do you think you can attract some new alternatives to change your old preoccupations? Why do you think it would be desirable for you to do this? How would having the new alternatives in your life make you feel about yourself? How do you think having the new alternatives in your life may affect your perspective of who you are as a teacher? How would you benefit from having those new alternatives in your professional life as a teacher?

Questions related to the Guided Visualization:
- Tell me about your experience with the guided visualization technique?
- How do you feel about doing this activity?
- How do you feel about the answers you have received?
- How have you made sense of the information you received during the activities?
- What connections can you see between the intuitive activity and your rational reflections/journaling?
- Have you noticed anything that changed in you or affected you since you have been doing this activity?

Third In-Depth Interview Questions

Interview Theme: The Re-Construction of Teacher Identity
- Finding relationships between personal and professional experiences
- Re-Connecting personal and professional selves and beliefs
- Synthesizing and re-constructing personal and professional selves

Questions related to the re-construction of teacher identity:
- How do you think your early childhood experiences have influenced the way you perceive and think of yourself as a person and as a teacher?
- What connections do you see between the way you saw your parents as a child and the way you see your values, beliefs, aspirations, personal and professional relationships at present?
- What connections can you notice between your life experiences (personal and professional) and who you are as a teacher? How are your beliefs, assumptions and perceptions of yourself reflected in your teaching practice?
- What issues, characteristics or patterns do you notice both in your personal and professional life?
- In what way do you think significant people in your personal and professional life have contributed to the way you see yourself as a teacher (development of your teacher identity)?
How do you interpret the relationships between ‘seemingly’ negative experiences and your beliefs and perceptions of yourself as a teacher? In other words, how do you think your ‘seemingly’ negative life experiences have influenced the development of your teacher identity?

- Can you characterize the way you usually think of yourself/the way you usually feel about yourself/the way you usually perceive yourself as you act/express who you are in social situations?

- What connections can you notice between the way you think about yourself and others (i.e., your thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions), the way you feel about yourself and others (i.e., your feelings, emotions, sense of self in relation to yourself and to others), and the way you act and express yourself (i.e., your actions) in social situations with others?
  - How do you perceive the relationships among these three factors (i.e., thinking, feeling, and acting/expressing yourself) with one another?
  - Are they all usually in sync, some of them in sync, or are they usually (or sometimes) out of sync?
  - What does your sense of being in balance/in sync depend on? Can you give examples of being in sync (or in “flow”/in balance) and out of sync for each factor (i.e., thinking, feeling, and expressing yourself)?

- Can you explain how the reflective process over the past several months has (or hasn’t) contributed to uncovering some previously ‘hidden’ or less conscious beliefs, assumptions, perceptions about yourself? How do you relate to becoming aware of these things? What was the most important or significant impact of the reflective journaling on you?

- What have you learned about yourself by going through the autobiographical journaling process in the past six months?

- What differences (even very subtle ones) can you observe in you and your perception about yourself as a person and a teacher since the beginning of the data collection period? Can you elaborate on how you think, feel, and act differently in any subtle way than prior to participating in this research? If you have a sense that nothing or not much has changed, why do you think it is the case?

- How can you make sense of the process you have gone through?

- How have the interviews (the issues discussed and potential insights discerned) contributed to your understanding of yourself?

- Have you noticed any impact of the reflective process on your teaching and your relationships with your students and colleagues?

- Do you see any change in your beliefs, perceptions, and perspectives in how you perceive yourself as an individual and as a teacher now as opposed to the beginning of the research process? Can you give me an example from your professional or personal life that represents any of these (subtle) changes?

Questions related to the Guided Visualization:

- Tell me about your experience with the guided visualization technique?
- How have you felt about doing this activity?
- How have you felt about the answers you have received?
- How have you made sense of the information you received during the activities?
- What connections can you see between the intuitive activity and your rational reflections/journaling?

- Have you noticed anything that has changed in you or affected you since you have been doing this activity?

- What benefits have you noticed while doing the intuition activity over an extended period of time?

- Have you noticed any recurring themes, issues in your questions in the visualization activity?

- Have you noticed any recurring theme, issues, advice, and guidance in the answers you received?

- What was the tone of the answers? How did the tone of the answers make you feel?

- How do you feel/perceive your intuitive side?
  - Did you notice and follow your intuitive hunches, thoughts and feelings in your life prior to participating in this research project? Can you give some examples?
  - Have you noticed any subtle changes in the way you notice (and act upon) your intuitive thoughts, gut feelings, hunches, etc. since your participating in this research project?
  - How has your relationship to your intuition changed over time, during the data collection period? Can you give some examples?

- Summarize and reflect on what you have learned altogether from doing this activity.
Appendix E

Questions for the Corroboration of Portrayals

To validate the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the portraits I returned the drafts of the portrayal to each participant to seek their assessment for it.

Points to consider for assessment of the portrayal:

- How accurate and comprehensive is the depiction of experience altogether?
- Is there anything you want to add, modify, or delete in it? (Anything that could potentially identify you in any way)

Questions to reflect on for the “corroboration of experience” interview:

- How can you capture the whole experience of your participation in this research with one word, or phrase, or a metaphor? If you could use one word/phrase/metaphor for your experience of participating in this research, what would it be? Think of something that could symbolize the process and -maybe- the result (at this point in time) of your research participation.
- How does reading your portrait make you feel about yourself?
- Any “new” things, changes, insights, experiences that you deem important to share with me since the last interview?
- How do you experience and interpret the changes in your perception and understanding of who you are as a person and a teacher as a result of your research participation?
- Any “final” words about the most important things you learned about yourself by participating in this research?