Entangled in Teaching and Learning within Adult Higher Education:

A Life History Study of a Professor

by

Launa Gauthier

Mount Saint Vincent University

Halifax, Nova Scotia

April 2013

Abstract

I conducted a life history study of a professor of adult education that is situated in a context of higher education. In this work I examine the contextualized life experiences of Dr. Jake Roberts, a professor of adult education, in order to present an in-depth picture of who he is as a teacher, including the teaching practices he uses in the classroom. Life history methodology is appropriate for this study because it is broadly qualitative and involves collecting and reconstructing stories of individuals' lived experiences within broader contexts. Therefore, through the information gathered about Jake's life it is possible to gain insight into his individual experiences in the university in which he works. Telling Jake's story also allows me to understand teaching and learning in higher education more broadly. Two interrelated questions undergird this study. First, how do diverse life experiences shape adult education professors' views about teaching and learning, and their overall teaching practice? And second, what is the university's role in particular in supporting their teaching? These questions support the broader purpose of this life history work, which is to explore how adult education theory and teaching practices can provide leadership and guidance related to teaching and learning in higher education. This study also serves as an expression of personal critical reflection on the development of my own teaching practice, in relation to retelling Jake's story of entanglements in teaching and learning. I demonstrate this last purpose in the various personal narratives that I interweave throughout the work.

Acknowledgments

I wrote this story but many people have helped me to tell it. Dr. Ardra Cole, my supervisor, has supported me with an open-mind and an open-heart throughout the entire time I was working this on project. She was the first person (but certainly not the last) to instill the words of wisdom: Trust the process. My committee member, Dr. Gary Knowles, has challenged me to uncover the richness of my personal, narrative-way of knowing and to remain true to the story I wanted to tell. He helped me to realize that honouring this was integral to my being able to write this work the way I did. To both Ardra and Gary, thank-you for guiding me outside of the box and supporting my desires to represent my work in a form that felt truly authentic.

I have been entangled with many other souls along the way who have influenced my thoughts, my process, and most importantly my spirits. Justin, you have been an inspiration and a role model to me in many ways. You show me on a regular basis what it means to be truly engaged and dedicated to the work you love. In addition you helped me to keep this journey in perspective. Erin MacLean, soon to be my PhD partner but has long been my best friend and confidant; thank-you for endless conversations about my academic work and for being my perpetual cheerleader. To my classmates Ginger, Corrie, Scott, and especially John I thank-you for your support and conversations over coffee. You are all important individuals in my educational community and thus integral to my entanglements in learning.

Lastly, to my teacher, my colleague, and my friend, Jake: Thank-you for taking this learning journey with me and for sharing so much of your life story with me. More than anything, thank-you for entangling me in learning and inspiring me as a teacher and nudging me along my path to becoming an aspiring academic.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Entangled in Teaching and Learning

The professor stood in the centre of the room with a wide grin on his face. He clenched short pieces of white cord in his left hand. Enough for all of us. His eyes circled the room as he flipped the tops of the cord from side to side. He looked ambitious. So excited. Students couldn't get settled fast enough.

—We're going to learn to tie a knot

I could feel the confusion, thick in the air. One look around the room and all expressions said the same thing: tie a knot? But I can do this already. I had been tying my own shoes since the ripe age of four, as a mere mechanical necessity. Part of my routine for getting ready to go.

—A bowline knot, to be exact

He passed around the pieces of cord. One to every student. Each person also received a single sheet of paper. I looked down, skeptically, cord in one hand and pictures of the steps involved in tying a bowline knot in the other. The instructions were there but the class had free reign on how to proceed.

He gave a quick demo and told us a short story about "a rabbit, a rabbit hole, and a tree." His hands manoeuvred the cord in a specific flow. He'd done this before. He was an avid sailor. I listened to the story, trying to learn the steps to tie the knot the way he was showing us. Some people followed along, methodically weaving and twisting the cord, others referred to the pictures on the instructions sheet to tie their knots. I dove right in. I came up with a system for remembering the shapes the cord had to take to form the knot. Bunny holes and trees didn't work for me. I practiced the routine until I could do it flawlessly. I secretly wanted to impress him with quick acquisition of the task.

He floated around the room, from person to person. Checking our progress. Making comments. Giving a suggestion or two.

—You've got it! You're a genius!

I beamed. I mastered it quickly. And his praise was a direct shot of recognition to my ego. He continued to make the rounds.

—How are you doing there Sara? Did you try working on it with one another?

There would definitely be more to it than this—a catch. The lesson was still to come. I knew that this was not simply about mastering the bowline knot. This was a lifelong learning graduate class after all. Most of us in the class have had Jake as a teacher for a couple of courses prior to this one. We knew the way he taught. Jake always had a deeper meaning for everything. I quite

enjoyed this about his classes. I liked the way my head felt after classes like this—heavy and buzzing full of new information or a new way to think about something I never thought of before.

—"When do we ever learn by a process that is not like knot-tying?"

Ahh ha! The connection.

—"Learning to tie a knot requires a learner to engage in a twisting, turning dance with a piece of cord. [And] learning is a process of becoming entangled in the processes of life, of weaving our actions into the flows of existence.[1]"

This wasn't just an ice breaker in our first class. Jake was setting a challenge for us for the rest of the course for how we might want to think about learning. The knot was a metaphor for knowledge and the process for tying the knot was akin to the process of learning. He wanted us to make a connection with how our lives and our learning are entwined within the world – how we're all knotted up in our experiences of the various people, places, and things around us.

The knot lesson sparked my curiosity. Learning made sense to me in the way he explained it. What I initially saw as a task of simple necessity—tying a knot—actually helped me to conceptualize an understanding of the way I live and learn in the world: entangled.

The work that follows is rooted in the short narrative above. It is a true story of complex entanglements in teaching and learning that draws on the life history of Dr. Jake Roberts, an experienced adult education professor. Jake and I used a life history approach (see Appendix A for methodology) to guide a series of conversations and help him to tell his story of lifelong learning in the contexts in which he lived, worked, and learned. More specifically, I sought to understand how Jake's lived experiences have shaped his knowledge and long-standing beliefs, values, and attitudes about teaching and learning. In short, I wanted to know how Jake became the teacher he is today. On another level, through sharing his story, Jake articulated his individual expressions of the realities of teaching in the context of higher education. Telling Jake's story has, thus, allowed me to describe and interpret his individual efforts to understand teaching and learning in higher education. As a whole, this qualitative study operates on two

[1] The direct quotes used throughout variously come from the participant's writing, teaching, and my conversations with him.

levels by exploring the relationship between Jake and the larger institutional context in which he works. First I tell a life history account of Jake, an exceptional teacher who continues to learn about teaching and create contexts for deep and potentially transformative learning. Second, I examine the complex relationships between Jake and the broader university context in which he works.

To understand teaching it is imperative to first understand the teacher by listening to his voice. Over a series of conversations, I listened as Jake wove his life history into an intriguing tale about his interactions in his own environment and in the lives of family, friends, clients, colleagues, and students over time. Jake also talked a lot about how these relationships have contributed to the person and the teacher he is today. In the months following our last research conversation, I immersed myself in Jake's personal account of his life story. The entanglement theme emerged as the thread that ran through his lived experiences and connected them to his teaching. This entanglement theme is the foundation and plot line of Jake's story in this work. Further, I recognized a pattern in Jake's life as a teacher that exists for me as well. Jake and I share similar experiences of having had key social relationships that have supported our learning and our flourishing as individual teachers. In order to deepen this understanding, I explore the intricacies of my work as a teacher-learner as well as the kinds of entanglements that I have in common with Jake. Some personal narratives (denoted by italicized font), are reflections and recollections of my story as a lifelong learner and teacher and other narratives are reflections on the entanglements that have formed with Jake and me as a result of our student-teacher relationship. I suggest that examining a specific cross-section of entanglement, like one that occurs between teacher and student, is a way to conceptualize how as teachers we shape people and how we too are shaped by others.

Crossing Over: At Home in Adult Education

I am a graduate student in Lifelong Learning at a small university in Nova Scotia. Where I am now is not where I have always thought I would be. In 2008 I left a teaching position in an international school in Korea and returned home, to the east coast of Canada. I loved living abroad but I had grown tired of my high-pressured job and realized it was time for a career change. My return home was coupled with a strong "fish out of water" theme—reverse culture shock set in fast and I felt directionless. Armed with some solid teaching experience, and by the good graces of a family connection, I landed a month-long teaching position that was slightly out of my comfort zone: I was hired to be a facilitator for a back-to-work program for mature workers.

Fast forward two years later and I am sitting in a coffee shop on a Sunday afternoon armed with a highlighter and copious amounts of loose leaf paper. I was slaving over an introductory biology textbook. I felt determined; yet, my spirits were dwindling. It was the weekend after the first week of classes and I was barely keeping up with the review chapters that the biology professor covered in our 45 minute class that week. I was enrolled in a nutrition program and it was becoming apparent that pursuing another undergraduate degree was not for me. I was overwhelmed by the pace at which the professor was covering the material and, quite frankly, I was not interested in the passivity of teaching and learning these classes. I did not feel like I was learning anything of value, nor was I learning in ways that were personally meaningful.

I knew I wanted to pursue further education but I did not want to continue on the path to becoming a great scientist. I weighed my options and thought about the last job by which I felt engaged, challenged, and fulfilled. I quickly realized that the last time I had felt that way was

when I had worked with adults. My experiences in the short time where I facilitated the back-to-work program for mature workers was an introduction into the world of adult learning. Ultimately, this role altered both my career path and my learning journey along the way.

There was certainty in my step but an air of nervousness and self-doubt moved over me the closer I got to the door. My back was sweaty from the walk in. I wondered whether the wool-blend sweater dress and knee high boots that I chose for that day were the wisest wardrobe decision. I fidgeted. Pulled my dress down. Hiked up my tights. Smoothed my hair. Was I dressed too hip? Was I showing how young I was? Would I be respected, despite the fact that I was much younger than they were?

I leaned against the wall and took a deep breath. A couple of minutes passed before I approached the classroom door with determination. I had spent the evening before preparing the lesson for the day with my co-facilitator, John. He was a computer guru; a techie one might call him. John and I had been paired together to teach a class of 15 mature learners all over the age of 50. John was 55; I was 27. He had the technology background; I had the education background. However, nowhere on my skilfully-crafted resume did it indicate that I had experience as an adult educator.

—Morning John. I see you brought the rose.

Tips I had received from a recent facilitation training session were running through my mind. Treat them as equals and respect their experiences. Use humour but make sure they take you seriously. And most importantly, give them a chance to talk and tell their stories.

—Sure did! I think the participants will get a kick out of it.

I thought the rose was ridiculous. But it was his big contribution to the lesson, so I went along with it. I concentrated on other things: setting up our presentation, putting out materials needed for the day, and counting the minutes until break time. The participants filed in. Everyone exchanged good mornings and jovial smiles with one another. The journey was about to begin.

***

The person in possession of the rose had the floor. Mel was seated in the first chair to the right of John. John passed the rose to him to start off the last debriefing session. Mel looked around awkwardly and hid the rose under the table he sat behind. He did not particularly care for this part of the routine. He had a gruff expression on his face. The same as yesterday and the day before. A true curmudgeon if I had ever seen one.

—Well, you've renewed my faith in young people again. You've got a certain maturity for your years and well... you're not bad looking either.

I threw back my head in snorts of laughter. So did the rest of the class. I blushed, gave him a wink and thanked him for his comments. Our regular end of day debrief had, for some reason, turned into a session about me as a facilitator. Any worries I had about respect and age had long dissipated by this time in the course. Patiently, and in astonishment, I listened.

George followed. He twirled the slightly tattered rose between his left thumb and middle finger.

—Yeah. You're a great gal. A great gal, a hell of a teacher too. You were funny and you extended your friendship to us all unconditionally. I really liked coming here every morning.

I knew the group got along well over the course of the program. People came to class every day, cheerful and eager to learn. But I did not realize how much my presence and openness in our discussions had affected them. I was often caught up in the moments of teaching new skills and facilitating their time in class to really think about my own contributions.

Charlene took the rose.

—I just want to say that everyone comes into your life for a reason and there are not enough words to describe how thankful I am for having met you and the effect that you've had on my life.

Did she just say that? A lump formed in the back of my throat. I glanced around the room nervously, wondering what the others were thinking. I was dumbfounded. How did that happen? I was just being myself. I was simply doing my job.

***

There were many key moments during the six weeks I worked with this group of adults that signalled I was at home in what I was doing. I remember laughing a lot. Humour was a common vehicle that helped the group to bond and in some cases helped people to express a lot of emotion that came up with learning. Then there was that bubbly, warm feeling that I felt at the end of each session when participants would individually debrief the class on their learning experience from that day—over time this became a very valuable and highly anticipated part of the day. The participants found it to be important to have the chance to express their experiences in words (sometimes encased by intense feelings and emotions) to people who shared in those experiences or could relate to them. I learned that I touched lives. I realized that I could touch the lives of anyone and age is not a factor. More importantly, I learned that I could be a learner in a teacher's hat all at the same time.

As a lifelong learner I have had transformative moments inside and outside of the classroom that have brought me to new heights of understanding myself, others, and how I see the world. I have learned from my experiences that I enjoy working with others and learning collaboratively. And I need them as much as they may need me. Crossing-over other people's lives and forming knots and bonds with them along the way is not only how I learn, but it is how I have become who I am as a person and a teacher.

Why Jake?

Jake and I first crossed paths in the fall of 2010 when I was considering applying to the graduate program in which he teaches. Our initial meeting was short and it consisted mainly of a conversation about my learning interests and my experiences to date in education. Jake was intrigued by the story I shared about my learning history. He and I connected on a joint interest in history and shared enjoyment for teaching. Moreover, he was supportive when I said I wanted to tryout his introductory course before fully committing to graduate studies. He agreed with the plan and in addition he told me, confidently, that I would likely enjoy the program and want to continue after the first semester.

Although a week behind the other students, I was welcomed with open arms as a member of Jake's class. He ensured that I was connected with other students in the class in order to be prepared for the following group meeting. This gesture helped me to gain a sense of the kind of community feeling that I might experience in the degree program. Early on, I felt the intellectual conversations that Jake started in class to be both challenging and invigorating. I was keen to listen intently. Even today, his ability to spin a good story holds his students' attention and often helps to spark their own stories and ideas about learning. I always enjoyed how he peppered conversations in class with bits of humour and welcomed any outspoken wittiness that students contributed. This kind of rapport is important to me as a student.

Jake's classes often feel more like an adventurous inquiry than a typical university class. Learning is an accessible experience for each student because he designs contexts for learning that are safe, yet, interactive and often times exploratory in nature. Furthermore, he assigns meaningful work that I find deeply challenging and relatable to my prior learning experiences. Jake also regularly learns about new ways to use technology in the classroom and encourages his

students to explore these tools for learning as well. He designs a rigorous academic program in terms of the books students read and the kinds of questions he explores with the class. With Jake's guidance, feedback, and a lot of persistence, I found my own voice in my work and gained confidence in my abilities as an aspiring academic. I also felt in a safe space both on paper and in the classroom to assertively express my ideas without worry of feeling ostracized or judged.

In past classes, not all students have enjoyed the path Jake navigates in the classroom. Sometimes his teaching methods seemed too unconventional or unlike what most people have come to expect of formal education. On the contrary, I often felt a connection to how Jake worked in the classroom because I recognized some of myself in his teaching style and zest for challenging students' thinking and ways of knowing. The co-learning he promotes and the methods he uses to help cultivate students' experiences in the classroom are indicative of his beliefs in the dynamics of teaching and learning. Jake promotes a community-centered, participatory approach to teaching and learning in the classroom. He once described this approach as akin to a crew steering a sailboat and that each person has a role to play in moving the boat forward:

> Sailing and teaching are really a lot alike. Because [when you are sailing] the air is fluid and it's coming at you. You're watching for things to happen in the air, you see patterns on the water coming towards you and you are trying to pay attention to see if you can catch them. If you catch them just right, it just feels great because the boat leans over and then you just start taking off. The boat gains speed, you hang on to it and you tighten the sails and move them around. Then you're through it and the boat sort of relaxes. So teaching is the same kind of thing: you watch for that puff and then when it comes along you try to hold onto it and get something going. That's the interactive part of teaching

> that maybe is kind of hard to teach. I feel like it's a good thing for people to experience this in class with me, and for them to have a sense of how dynamic the teaching process is. Hopefully I'm demonstrating it, but then it's not just me who is steering the ship anymore either, we're all kind of crew on that sailboat. We're all trying to ride that puff of air.

Classes with teachers like Jake have contributed to my personal and professional development and to the overall value of this graduate school experience. I have a great deal of respect for Jake as a teacher and I consider him to be among the few exceptional teachers that I have had in my lifetime. I connected with Jake because, like other past influential teachers, he entangled me in learning. Furthermore, Jake expressed belief in my abilities, pushed me to grow intellectually, treated me with kindness, shared humour, and genuinely cared about my personal well-being both inside and outside of the classroom. Jake typically extends this treatment to all students and aims to entangle himself in his work and the lives of his students in a way that supports the flourishing of each and everyone one of us.

The Essence of Being Entangled

There is an adage that says teachers teach who they are in the classroom. In learning about Jake's lived experiences and knowing him as a teacher, I discern that who we are as teachers is a complex series of active entanglements of our lived experiences within various contexts and with the lives other people. Therefore an underpinning characteristic of the concept of entanglement is it is by its very nature an active, social process. Furthermore, culture and context are key factors that shape an individual's conception of knowledge, reality, and learning. For example knowledge is socially and culturally constructed, reality is created through activities with others, and learning is shaped by interactions with others. Learning is a social process rather

than a passive development (Kim, 2001). In essence, our entanglements are our relationships with the social world around us and include the contexts and the people with whom we co-construct our knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Individuals are in constant give-take relationships with the environments they are in and with the people around them. Each person is active in the process of becoming who they are, always moving forward and constantly interweaving the parts of themselves that they have to give to others and to the world. At the same time, individuals access and co-create new knowledge and ways of being from the people and contexts of which they are a part. In essence, it is through active entanglements that individuals shape the social world and the social world shapes them.

One way to conceptualize entanglement is to look at it as a process of interweaving of lifelines that individuals move along as they travel through life. According to Tim Ingold (2011) people actively construct and accumulate knowledge and come into being through movement along these lifelines. For example, to apply Ingold's theory to teachers would be to say that the teacher is her teaching: who she is as a teacher is who she has become along the way as she moves through life entangled in her environment. The author suggests that, through movement in being, individuals create a *meshwork* of growth and movement that is their world. The world is thus not made up of a series of connections but of a meshwork of interwoven lines that individuals create as they move along. This is a complex view, yet it highlights the deep, social nature of lived entanglements.

Without using the word entanglement directly, Etienne Wenger (1998) also conceptualizes the way our knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes are shaped as a social process. He asserts that people learn and construct identity through involvement in various

communities of practice of which they are members. A community of practice is a group of individuals who work together toward a joint endeavour or *practice* and they learn and form their identities as a result of their engagement with one another. As a community continues to work together and becomes entangled in the doing and being of their practice, the members develop *mutual engagement*, or the relationships and norms for the group. The group also forms a common understanding of the ties that bind them together (*joint enterprise*), which can be derived from shared experiences, similar histories, stories, and other ways of being entangled in the world. Finally, over time the community develops a *shared repertoire* of resources that helps to define their practice. These resources are a collection of activities, routines, words, tools, stories, symbols, concepts, and actions that a community uses to negotiate meaning about the world and the group's own identity. Individual members simultaneously negotiate their personal identity in relation to these interactions with the community as well. Wenger suggests that a person's life is an ongoing series of social interactions with others in communities of practice and their negotiation of meaning of those interactions. In turn, individuals learn and build the *self* over the course of a lifetime through negotiation with others.

For teachers, their entanglements in lived experiences within various contexts over time shape their knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes about teaching. Similarly, these entanglements are also processes through which an individual teacher shapes the knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes of others, including the students they teach. Take Jake and me for example. The stories represented in this work are primarily about his lived experiences; however, throughout the research process Jake (and his life history) and I have become entangled as student and teacher. Our entangled student-teacher relationship has contributed to shaping parts of my own evolving perspective on teaching and learning as a result. For example I have had key

experiences in my learning journey in graduate school that have involved working and conversing with Jake and others in the classroom that have sparked my curiosity and significantly influenced my thinking about adult education and lifelong learning. For instance, not only has this work emerged from ideas that I explored in Jake's classes but the central entanglement theme is also one of the predominant ways that Jake, himself, thinks about learning:

Jake: Imagine [learning] as kind of a process of entanglement. Our neurons are becoming entangled with each other in response to our ever-changing entanglements in the world and we become connected up [to each other].

Launa: Yes, I get that.

Jake: So the ways we are entangled—in social and cultural structures – get reproduced. For example, the extent that we become entangled in hegemony, and we end up without even knowing it or meaning to, reproducing that structure. So then [recognizing this] requires us to become critically entangled and understand more clearly, the nature of our entanglements and how those entanglements produce a particular kind of phenomenon. Then deliberately, through our self-conversations, we can begin to shift our entanglements so that we can begin to change the geography of other people's entanglements so that they are entangled in a way that leaves them with more capacity to actually begin to shift and build worlds that they choose. So then this is sort of the emancipatory or liberatory aspect of adult education of getting people to become critically conscious of their entanglements so that they can actually forge contexts where people are more open and more able to create a life where they're flourishing.

Launa: I think your description has sparked my understanding of entanglement. I can now take a small cross-section of what you're talking about and explore it. The purpose of this research project with you is to zone in on one of those cross-sections. And it's about how teachers' and students' lives are entangled. You and I are an example of that but also I have other examples of that in my lifetime, and so do you.

Jake: So even in our conversation here is challenging for me because I have to become more critically conscious of my very actions and how I'm entangled in the world.

Entangled in Teaching and Learning in Graduate School

Graduate students typically interact with professors in classes, on research projects, through writing, and perhaps in the occasional visit to a professors' office. Ultimately, for a student who is new to graduate school many first impressions and entry-level theorizing about

adult education as an academic field come from such interactions with professors. For example, students are directed to certain publications, attempt academic writing, and engage in particular discourse about adult education as a result of this student-teacher relationship. By and large, professors have a significant impact on the type of knowledge of the field of adult education that gets passed on to graduate students and how that knowledge gets represented and used in the classroom. The classroom is a place where students often engage with their professors' understandings and iterations of the purposes and aims of adult education as well as build on their own knowledge. On one hand, the classroom serves as a context for teaching and learning particular content and on the other it always has the potential to be a platform for teachers to advocate a personal agenda.

The Adult Education Professoriate

Like their students, the adult education professoriate come to their positions in higher education from a variety of contexts and diverse educational and professional experiences. According to Grace (2000), academic adult educators have provided leadership in professional adult education programs since the early twentieth century. At that time, universities in North America became more involved in adult education in order to "give structure and purpose to the education of adult educators" (p.66). In contrast to adult educators who work outside of higher education, adult education professors typically hold a doctorate degree and a commitment to the academic and professional side of the field of adult education. Be that as it may, adult education professors do not necessarily hold bachelor of education degrees nor are they typically certified teachers. As a group, they share a devotion to several years of academic study to a specific issue, or area of interest in the field of adult education. Griffith (1989) explains that academic adult educators have "a high regard for professionalism, specialized academic preparation for their

work, and a concern for the coordination of the field" (p.5). Additionally, professors of adult education who work in university settings are situated within graduate departments and work with a graduate student body who are pursuing academic studies in adult education: they are (as they have been historically known) the educators of adult educators.

Untangling Past Learning to Understand the Present

Many of the adult education professors with whom I have worked in graduate school have different professional training backgrounds from me; however, we share the similarity of being formal educators. I have encountered considerable variation in the types of teaching practices and approaches to learning employed by professors in this graduate program. Several of these learning experiences have been challenging and intellectually stimulating – I enjoyed meaningful and valuable opportunities to engage in academic content with my peers. On the other hand, there have also been times where I have felt disengaged in the classroom and conflicted about how I was learning. One of the causes that I attribute to this feeling is the influence that my professional teacher training has on the lens through which I filtered all of my teaching and learning situations.

When I began graduate work I had an educational tool box that was full of discourse on best practices, personal teaching philosophies, and articulated beliefs about student learning that I gained from my Bachelor of Education degree, seven years earlier. Naturally I applied this collection of knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes to my teaching practice throughout my professional career. Although that knowledge of learning theory and methodology has expanded overtime, I realize that the expectations I have for professors in graduate school in the classroom are connected to those that I have for myself as a teacher. I view my role as a teacher as helping each and every student that I work with grow, develop, and find meaning in what they are

learning. Committing to this teaching role means investing time and effort into creating a challenging context for learning and choosing content and support materials that are relevant to students in the class. I assert that talking to students and learning about their lives and interests is the cornerstone to helping them to have valuable and meaningful learning experiences. The encounters that I have had in Jake's classes, including reading a lot of impressionable, and somewhat radical literature on teaching practices (see Bracher, 2006; Brookfield, 1995, 2009; Wenger, 1998) have helped me to realize an additional purpose for teaching: I strive to take genuine responsibility for providing challenging, yet safe contexts for students to potentially experience transformation.

I have expectations that are deeply embedded in my own teaching and learning history; I hold my own teachers to these standards as well. For example, I often felt comfortable in graduate classes with professors who embodied a dedication to teaching and student learning similar to my own. However, I questioned what and how I was learning along with my professors' intentions when I felt little connection to a professor's teaching style and methods in the classroom. I felt at a distance from the professor and became disengaged in their classes as a result. It is from this position of understanding that I wanted to explore how such diversity in life backgrounds (including educational, professional, and employment experiences) shapes who adult education professors are as teachers and what they bring to their classroom practice.

For teachers, knowing what they bring to the classroom in terms of their knowledge, beliefs, values, intentions, and personal ways of knowing is a critical piece to understanding how their teaching impacts students' lives and learning. Knowing *how* these came to be is also a part of understanding for the purpose of change. By telling Jake's story and parts of my own, I suggest that to be an effective teacher is to be someone who entangles students in learning and is

aware of how their life is entangled with their students' in order to support their flourishing as individuals. In Chapter Two, I examine Jake's lived experiences, along with some of my own, in order to understand more deeply what it means to be entangled in teaching and learning. In this chapter I elaborate on Jake's entanglements in: a) his own learning preferences and personal ways of knowing; and b) the contexts that supported and hindered his learning. In Chapter Three I explore Jake's past and presents entanglements in teaching. I also examine the two main fundamental purposes of Jakes teaching: to support the flourishing of his students as lifelong learners and to embody the message adult education and lifelong learning are lenses through which to view the world. In Chapter Four I investigate how Jake's teaching has been shaped by past teacher role models and also how he, as a teacher, shapes his own students' lives. In Chapter Five I address the university context that Jake works in. The premise of this chapter is to describe the current climate of the university context and suggest a shift in perspective from the university as a place that emphasizes student experience to one that places adult (lifelong) learning at the forefront. Here I contextualize Jake's work in the broader intuitional realities that impact his role as an adult education professor. I explore how Jake maintains his authenticity to who he is as a teacher, within a context that supports his teaching but does not adequately support his views on learning in the university. Although this particular work will have an ending, the story itself will continue to perpetuate itself, as a continuously evolving learning journey. The lives represented in this work will go on continuing to shape and be shaped by their movement in the world and their activities as teachers and learners.

Chapter 2

Learning in Context

Don't
colour
outside of the lines
Line up
straight
Sit in
rows
Don't
talk out of turn
Follow
instructions
Be
creative
But
don't
colour
outside of the lines
Learn
this
Pay
attention
Listen
Raise
your
hand
Don't
let
your mind wander
Play
nice
Ask
permission
Don't
colour
outside of the lines
Good
girl

I learned to colour inside of the lines—literally and figuratively—at a very young age. I am uncertain that this notion to abide by the rules came from my upbringing at home as much as it did from the impressions that I received from formal schooling. I learned how to "do" school

well, like a lot of kids. I sailed through elementary and junior high school on the tails of my own self-discipline, independence, and zest for achievement and progress. Rarely did my parents have to intervene. When it came to doing my work and being accountable, I did not often falter. I loved to learn. I responded well to the way that learning was organized in grade school. In high school, I got by without any cause for concern. My ducks were always in a row, so to speak—I passed my classes with average grades, was involved in athletics, and I had a robust social circle.

It did not take me long to figure out that if I followed the rules and did well in school, I would gain the acceptance, affection, and recognition of my teachers. This was a reward for my achievements, big or small. Playing by the rules meant that I was good student but it also meant that I experienced learning in a very structured, linear fashion.

When I became a school teacher, a role that I conceived as being destined for since childhood, my formal schooling history followed me into the classroom. It was not until I stopped teaching and started working with adults that I began to peel away layers of habits and assumptions I had about learning. My old rules and systematic way of helping students to learn did not fit well in an adult education setting. Instead, I found myself navigating the unpredictable waters of contexts where meaning was born out of situated learning, personal ways of knowing, and relationality.

In my own practice, I strive to help my students to make connections to their own entanglements in prior learning by encouraging them to reflect on their experiences in the contexts in which they have lived and learned. I recognize that not all learning comes from following the "rules" of institutional education (including prescribed curriculum, best practices, and general, taken-for-granted assumptions about learning). I have learned, for myself, through a process of growth, development, and critical reflection, that truly transformative learning occurs in contexts where people can safely deviate from the "norms" that are deeply embedded in their memories and habits associated with the formal education system. These contexts are communicative and social in nature, and involve co-learning. Today, in my classroom, I do not put as much emphasis on how my students get there, but rather <u>that</u> they get there in the first place. The main objective for learning is learning itself.

Who a person is, what she knows, believes, and values comes from her socialization into various contexts throughout life. Consequently, social context and culture are key factors that shape an individual's entanglements in learning, including their conception of knowledge and reality. Sociologists distinguish between two types of socialization that take place in an individual's life as *primary socialization* and *secondary socialization*. Primary socialization occurs in childhood, when individuals learn the attitudes, values and actions that pertain to their

membership in a particular culture. Berger and Luckmann (1967) assert that secondary socialization "is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society" (as cited in Jarvis, 2011, p.13). In other words, individuals are constantly learning as they continue to entangle themselves in various social situations where they interact with other people. Jarvis (2011) claims "As the individual grows and matures within the context of social living, the person becomes, in part, a reflection of the sum total of experiences that the individual has in society" (p. 13). For example, the ways that individual teachers are entangled in learning throughout their lifetime is a product of their socialization in various cultures and contexts and is, ultimately, connected to who they are as teachers. According to Olsen (2008), over time, teachers continue to reconstruct themselves "in relation to others, workplace characteristics, professional purposes, and cultures of teaching" (p. 5). These social interactions are influenced by the nature of context be it cultural, political, professional, or educational, and are shaped by various socio-cultural factors including poverty, race, class, gender, and so on. Teachers continuously entangle themselves in a meshwork (Ingold, 2011) of dynamic social interactions as they form their identity and become who they are as teachers.

In this chapter I examine Jake's contextualized entanglements in his own learning in order to understand the nature of these entanglements and how they have influenced his teaching practice. The passages that follow elucidate a co-relation between Jake's early entangled learning experiences and preferences for learning and the contexts within which he lived, played, and went to school. As Jake's story of learning and teaching unfolds, it is apparent that there are distinct similarities between his learning in his younger years, his learning as an adult, and how he understands his students' learning experiences in the classroom today.

On the Prairie

"You know I really do believe that...this disconnect between the poverty of my learning in school and the richness of my learning out of school has constantly led me to value informal learning."

A seven year old boy stands wide-eyed in a doorway of a large house, gazing out at the prairie land of his own back yard. A makeshift bow and arrow hang from his right shoulder as he leans against the doorframe. "Ahhhh", he sighs. "Freedom."

Jake Roberts was secretly calculating how long he could stay outside. It was Friday, so he knew that his family would be going to the community hall for the talent show like they did most weeks. Jake was still racking his brain to try to figure out the mystery behind how he got home last week—he had gone to the show with a friend because his parents were busy that night and could not take him. He remembers how hot and sticky he felt when he was crawling around under the rows of benches in the hall. The boys in their own little world, in the safety of the adults above. The last thing he remembered was drifting off to sleep under one of the empty benches. He awoke the next morning, safe and sound, in his own bed at home. It seemed someone was always looking out for him around here.

One thing that Jake loved more than anything in his town was the openness of the prairie landscape. He was a country boy through and through. This rural environment had a natural richness that was different from the city from which his family had recently moved. He could roam around here, freely, with the other kids. They could play outside together, ride horses and scour the Coolies for artifacts, dinosaur bones and Indian relics. Out here, there was always something to explore; it was a place for his imagination to come alive.

Jake's backyard was home to the school playground and a four-room school house: he and his family lived in the town teacherage. The playground excited Jake; living in the teacherage did not. A couple of the young teachers who taught at the school lived with the Roberts family in the basement of their house. Jake despised this. It was weird to have them in his house. They even shared his family's bathroom! He grew tired of having to sneak out the door all of the time just to avoid talking to them. They were strict with him in school and he loathed having to encounter them at home as well. It did not help Jake that his father was their boss. Mr. Roberts was the school principal.

Mr. Roberts was strict with his young teachers and, in turn, Jake did not have it easy in the classroom. Jake's teachers treated him differently from most of the other students. They were mean to him. They were extra hard on him and expected a lot from him in class too. Jake ignored and internalized this treatment as much as possible, until he was able to escape to the great outdoors after school. He would rather be out building stuff, hunting gophers, and exploring the prairie than confined by the walls of that schoolhouse. The only teacher he liked was Mrs. White. She had been his grade two teacher and she was always kind to him in school. Mrs. White also helped Jake to learn to read, just like his mother had. But most important of all, she lived in her *own* house. She was really the only good one, he thought.

Jake did not like how his father knew everything about what he was up to. Being school principal made him privy to a lot of information about the local kids that most parents did not get. Mr. Roberts came from a very strict, working class family and his aspirations for being a teacher never impressed Jake's grandfather a great deal. It seemed to Jake that his father dealt with this contention by being a hard, authoritarian. Jake was well aware that the school was his father's domain.

Jake's mother taught him to read. Mrs. Roberts, a soft-hearted, no-nonsense school teacher often read the classics to Jake and his siblings. She raised her children with a compassionate, gentle hand. Mrs. Roberts came from a middle class family and had attended teacher's college before Jake was born. She started her early teaching career in a rural prairie town, much like the one they lived in now. Now she was working on an Indian reservation. Jake liked when people in the community called her 'Kookum' (wise grandmother). He looked up to her. He thought she was wise and strong, inside and out. She worked very hard to support the flourishing of her fellow community members. She was Jake's first teacher, not in school, but in life—the place where learning happened.

Jake learned things in school, but he thrived in the out of doors and learned much more from exploring on his own than sitting in rows staring up at a blackboard. From an early age, Jake was just putting in time in school. He had an air of rebelliousness in his attitude toward learning. Classes in school were boring but he learned to go along with the regular routine, like most of his classmates. His questions about his encounters in nature, outside of school, often had to wait until the end of the school day—there was little room for deviation from the formal curriculum in the old school house.

Unassuming, Unrestricted, and Open-Learning

Jake's early formal learning in school is indicative of what many students encounter in institutionalized educational today. Ultimately, structured learning like this is organized within the parameters of a prescribed curriculum and is typically recognized by external rewards such as credentials, grades, and diplomas. According to Schugurensky (2000), formal learning is "the institutional ladder that goes from preschool to graduate studies" (p.2). On the contrary, the terms *informal learning* best describe Jake's learning that occurred outside of the formal education system. Informal learning takes place in non-organized contexts of everyday life, apart from structured curriculum, and can be intentional or unintentional depending upon the individual's purpose and awareness of their learning at the time (Livingstone, 2001;

Schugurensky, 2000). For instance, Jake's most significant learning often occurred when he was exploring, playing, and interacting with nature on the open prairie.

Schugurensky (2000) draws on the work of Marsick and Watkins (1990) to propose three forms of informal learning that are differentiated according to a learner's intentionality and awareness. The first type of informal learning is self-directed learning, which is both conscious and intentional; a second example is *incidental learning* which is an unintentional by-product of other activities such as "task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or even formal learning" (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p.12). Lastly, the author discusses socialization as a form of informal learning that is neither conscious nor intentional and occurs as a result of an individual being inducted into a particularly society (Schugurensky, 2000, p.36). Jake's early learning experiences, as contextualized by his socialization into prairie life, can be seen as representative of what Marsick and Watkins (1990, 2001) refer to as *informal and incidental learning*.

Marsick and Watkins (1990) claim that incidental learning is closely connected to experiential learning. Proponents of experiential learning (see Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984) assert that the foundations of a person's learning is their experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour in their interactions with their environment. Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world, the environment plays a major role in shaping an individual's ideas and intentions, and an individual's ideas about the world are constantly shaped and reshaped through their experiences (Kolb 1984, p. 24). Dewey (1938) adds that learning is also grounded in experience and complemented by reflection. Furthermore, learning is a complex process where strategies differ from person to person.

Jake seemed to actively pursue learning in his everyday entanglements in his physical and social environment:

> If I was to think about the big shapers of my intellect that would be my living in this world of openness [where] we were constantly inventing things, taking things apart and putting them back together, and we were working with animals all of the time. I just [think] of that as what I was learning.

Experiential learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization and it can take place in an environment that is not highly conducive to learning. On the contrary incidental learning grows out of everyday encounters and is:

- integrated with daily routines;
- triggered by an internal or external jolt;
- not highly conscious;
- haphazard and influenced by chance;
- an inductive process of reflection and action;
- is linked to learning of others (Marsick and Volpe, 1999, p.5).

For Jake, living in the open context of the prairie meant a life outside of school that was rich with hands-on learning that he found to be an intellectually stimulating adventure. He actively entangled himself in learning and he discovered new ways of doing things and expanding his knowledge of the world that were personally meaningful to him. Moreover, Jake's formal schooling did not provide adequate opportunities for him to tap into his own personal ways of knowing.

"If I was to think about why I went to university, it was because I was at a university and had experienced it. School never prepared me for university."

Jake's first introduction to university life was when he was in grade seven. His father was pursuing a Master's degree at a university in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. For three consecutive summers, Jake and his family lived in a small university town while his father went to school. The town made an impression on young Jake right away: it was erupting with civil disputes and rebellious hippies that he found to be utterly fascinating. He wanted to emulate these characters to some degree. Moreover, the town had a lot of places for him to explore on his own.

Although it was not the open prairie, this new town offered him a way to learn and do things differently. Jake would nose around campus and spend hours perusing through the museum of natural history, all on his own. On occasion he even attended public lectures on paleolithic topics by himself. He loved this: it was unassuming, unrestricted, and open learning.

Jake's friends at the university were different from the kids back home. Their parents were going to university too. Jake noticed that these kids lived, thought, and engaged with the world differently than people back home. He felt confident about engaging with them on an intellectual level; he was an avid reader and he was interested in experimenting and exploring new ideas.

Jake's experience in this university town sparked a small disjuncture for Jake where he was left asking questions about his life in the prairie town back home. The people, the culture, and the environment here cultivated a side of Jake that he only ever experienced back home when he was exploring on the prairie. Jake loved the university and the way it stimulated his intellect, but it would be many years after that he would make the decision to pursue a degree.

Jake's experiences in the university town, are an example of what Jarvis (2011) refers to as secondary socialization. When Jake was exposed to a particular social culture—the university—he likely learned the actions, attitudes, and values that were a part of that university culture. For Jake, his experiences on the open prairie and in the university context played a major role in how he pursued learning and in his beliefs about himself as a learner, even at a young age.

Living a Paradigm

> There was sort of that split all the time in my life and it was quite important for me to handle those tensions [of] my class affiliation. I was much more comfortable with the values and the attitudes of the working class people.

Being entangled in learning is a never-ending process of interacting in context and making and remaking one's understanding of the world (Ingold, 2011; Kolb, 1984; Olsen, 2008). Learning is indeed a lifelong endeavour that takes root in an individual's early years and builds upon that foundation as a person moves through the world building and re-building their collection of knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes. Furthermore, various socio-cultural factors such as race, class, gender, and so on impact an individual's learning within context. These factors affect how a person forms the paradigmatic lens through which they view the world. The predominance of certain factors over others varies considerably from person to person depending on the contexts in which they are socialized.

Why are you *here Jill?*

—Because my parents said if I don't do good in university this year, they'd kick me out of the house.

How about you, Tyler?

—Well, I'm the first person in my family to go to university. I didn't do too well last year but I still want to get a degree. I guess the university is giving me a second chance.

Next...Emma?

—I partied too much in my first year. I just didn't care at all about doing school work or going to class.

And Tim? Tim? Tim, would you mind taking those ear buds out for this discussion, please? Can you tell us a bit about why are you here?

—First of all, I don't want to be in this class. I feel like I haven't been given a fair chance to prove that I can do well in university. I want to get a degree and become an English professor. I don't want to work in construction, like most of the men in my family.

I teach a course for students on academic probation in a small university in Nova Scotia. The class is designed to help students improve their academic skills and to contribute to their personal development for success in university. In the first class I ask students about why they come to university and they complete a written assignment that inadvertently gets to some deeper understandings of the personal history, perspectives, and assumptions that each student brings to the class. A few of the students have very focused goals of what they want their future degrees for

but the majority of students in the class come to university because it is what they think they should do. Some students finish the semester having experienced a complete turnaround in attitude and focus, and often highly improved grades. Other students end up reconsidering their choice for being in university in the first place. At least one student does not come back to school for the second semester.

These students are entering post-secondary education in a time where a highly credentialzed society is bombarding them with the message of the importance of getting a degree in order to obtain the best jobs. Unfortunately this message perpetuates a narrow perspective on learning and education that I see in a number of students on the first day of class. The reality of the matter is what society is expecting from students and how they are being socialized in their own homes, communities, and cultures is often at odds. Many of them do not have academic role models to help them see the intellectual value of pursuing higher education. I understand this on a personal level.

I am the only person in my immediate family to attend university. In my larger, extended family I am the fourth out of a total of 16 aunts and uncles and 29 cousins to obtain a MA degree. Needless to say, I had a lot of love and support but I did not have significant academic role models around me when I was growing up. I come from a small place in Eastern Canada that is near and dear to my heart, but where getting a job, owning a house, and ultimately raising a family are and have always been a highly valued part of the culture. Education fits in, for most people, as a security measure needed insofar as to enable them to live stable, albeit traditional lifestyles. I was socialized to absorb this message, yet somehow the perceived outcome became not good enough for me. There came a point where I realized that what was expected of me did not match the inner most desires and expectations I had for myself—the bar, as I could see it, was not high enough.

Contending with Split Messages:

The particular town where Jake lived during his teenage years had multiple social elements. It was somewhat of an industrial town and butting up against it was a rural population consisting of cattle ranchers, Indian reserves, and a few Hutterite colonies. There was an obvious division of social class.

Jake was raised in a middle class family, in a big house in the middle class part of town surrounded by all of the town's doctors, lawyers, teachers, and their kids. Some of these middle class kids became his neighbourhood friends. However, he felt most comfortable and accepted by his working class friends, despite the uncomfortable uncertainty he felt about some kids who were getting into trouble. Most of these kids' parents worked at local factories and were stereotyped as being "from the other side of the tracks." Still, Jake found a circle of friends amongst them.

Social class was the predominant socio-cultural factor that had a significant impact on Jake's learning and teaching within the contexts in which he was socialized as a child, youth, and adult. Mainly, the greatest impact came from tensions that Jake felt between his middle class upbringing and his working class associations with friends, co-workers, clients, and students. These tensions were strongly present in his younger years (his mother and father were from working class and middle class backgrounds respectfully), when he was in high school (he lived in middle class towns and associated with working class friends), and even later in his professional life (he worked jobs with and taught various classes of people). In the short narratives below, I explore the tensions that Jake faced with navigating the dimensions of his own class affiliation. I assert that some of the foundational knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values about teaching and learning that Jake has today have been shaped by his entanglements in multiple social dimensions.

A Vision for Change

After high school Jake started work right away. He took a position in construction and then eventually moved to job in a cement factory. Here he worked as a general labourer, side-by-side, with many working class men. Jake dabbled in welding and electrical work and even contemplated being an electrician apprentice.

After about a year of working on the factory floor, his managers offered him a position in the lab. They thought he had the capacity for more analytical, scientific tasks: jokingly, they called him *professor*. Jake enjoyed this experience at first because it got him out of the cold, dusty conditions of working on the factory floor. There, workers were not only making half the pay as people in a nearby cement factory but working conditions were poor and dangerous. Jake eventually came to the point where he was tired of seeing people getting sick and hurt on a regular basis. He had a vision for change:

> I went with another co-worker to the other cement plant in the city and met with the union people to try to figure out about how to organize a union. We started meeting with these guys regularly and talking to people back in the factory [about unionizing].

Jake and his co-worker were taking a big risk in attempting to organize a union and at one point they made the mistake of talking to one person who they suspected might go back and tell their bosses what they were up to. However, they were only in the planning stages and they were

neither informed nor organized enough at the time to announce to the bosses the possibility of unionizing. Jake was fired when he arrived for his next shift at the factory. The managers claimed that he was not doing his work.

Jake learned the hard way that there were considerable risks involved in the radical changes he was trying to make. His managers were not ready to face those kinds of transformations in the factory. There were, after all, plenty of people who would work for the offered wages and suffer the conditions that existed at the time. Most workers were scared of losing the job that allowed them to get by in life. Jake did not have the same fear; he wanted to make a change that would improve the working lives of his co-workers. He definitely did not believe that his managers would be so vicious and fire him completely.

By the end of his factory job, Jake was ready to go to university. His experiences in his role in the factory, and seeing that some of his working class counterparts were getting further education, helped him to realize that he was capable of going to university and that it was something he was interested in doing.

> By that point I knew I was smart. Because I had worked in the plant, I had a much better feeling about myself. Some of the other plant workers went to university and were getting good marks. So I thought I could probably do okay in university, if I just worked. I realized that was what was going on for me [in school before], was that I didn't work [hard].

After a year in university, Jake married his high school sweetheart and into a working class family. Jake invested a lot of time into his university studies. His interests were in anthropology, psychology, sociology, and biology. His life was far from easy at that time and sometimes he felt quite unhappy—there were tensions at home. As a result he put a lot of time and energy into studying. He graduated with a degree in psychology.

Finding a Better Way Forward

> I was a good social worker because I listened. I was able to handle stuff and I didn't react with too much rage. I usually was able to be compassionate and try to find a different, better way forward. I was also able to be tough when I needed to...you can't be [too] soft.

Shortly after university Jake took a job as a social worker. His first position was administering funds for people with disabilities. He quickly moved through the ranks to a position as an intake worker for social assistance. He then took up his most challenging job as an intake worker for child welfare.

The role in child welfare suited Jake: he was great at talking to people and he had a sense of what it was like to live with many classes of people. Jake never felt intimidated by people on welfare, or by those who were in other poor social circumstances. He found excitement and challenge in helping people who would come in to apply for social assistance. But after some time, Jake found the job to be very stressful.

Jake had the sense that he approached his job differently from a lot of his co-workers. Many of them had experienced living in impoverished conditions, or were even clients, before becoming social workers. Although they shared a personal understanding with clients, sometimes Jake's colleagues used their positions to hold power over their clients. Jake resisted this behaviour. He and a few of his colleagues worked to see their clients' lives in a more complex way. He conceptualized that a history of being hurt or disadvantaged often played a large role in how people viewed their situation in life and in how they behaved. So Jake did as much as he could to provide people support so that they could get out of a cycle of harming others and harming themselves. He felt a personal responsibility to understand people on an individual basis.

Jake saw that he was dealing with the same problems over and over again with his clients. He thought if he could just bring people together; there may be a chance that he could help people to help each other. He brought his caseload of people together as a group and got them talking to one another. Coincidently, a common theme emerged: people's lives were plagued by stress.

Over time, the group started caring for each other and each other's children. Jake figured out how to put more services into the homes of his clients, in order to relieve some of the pressure that parents were enduring. Upon his clients' requests, he invited guests, such as health care practitioners, to talk with the group. He brokered connections between his clients and outside support people. By providing a safe, supportive context and a forum for discussion, Jake helped to cultivate a community of support amongst his clients.

Jake's work with his social work clients was a catalyst for his entry into adult education. He came across a text about adult education and community development in his pursuit of trying to understand more about how to help his clients. After a conversation with the author, who was a professor of adult education in the university near Jake's home, Jake was sold on the idea of leaving social work and pursuing further education in the field of adult education.

The situations described in the previous narratives create a picture of Jake as a navigator of the two different realms of the social classes with which he was affiliated. The tensions he often experienced in these contexts played a significant role in Jake's life and supported his learning about his own positioning in the world. Jake learned compassion for all classes of people and, as a result, he became an agent for change—he actively pursued opportunities to learn how to help improve the life circumstances of others.

Understanding and Supporting Learning

Learning is indeed a lifelong endeavour. Likewise, an individual's patterns and preferences for learning are grounded in their earliest experiences and continuously shaped by the contexts where they grow and develop. Through examining Jake's lived entanglements in his own learning it is evident that the social circumstances that surrounded his learning experiences helped to shape the kind of learning he pursued as a child. For instance, the open context such as the prairie town where Jake grew up is an environment that was conducive to supporting his exploratory nature. In turn, Jake made sense of his world through exploring it. As an adult, Jake thinks about the centrality of learning in his world and pursues learning much like he did when he was younger:

> I really have a strong commitment, but I'm a little like my puppy. I'm not resolute particularly. I sort of run out in a field and I grab a whole bunch of fresh-cut lawn clippings and I throw them about.... whatever is there in front of me ... that's the kind of learning that I [pursue]. I am constantly entranced by the beauty and complexity of the world, I really love it. I feel that the world is very rich and I'm passionate about it. But I see it all through this lens of learning. I've got this sort of guiding view and it's a learning view.

Today, Jake enjoys the opportunity to teach and finds the teaching process to be a platform for ongoing learning as well. In essence, the classroom is his own personal prairie—a place to openly explore and try things out; a forum for asking questions and engaging in conversations about learning. Jake often finds a community of learners in the classroom who are eager to share in this journey with him.

Jake knew from an early age that he learned best in contexts outside of formal schooling where he could experience the world with less restrictions and expectations placed on his

learning. Jake expresses disinterest in formal learning contexts that impede his willingness and eagerness to learn. As a teacher, Jake is very conscious of how context and the circumstances within support and/or hinder a person's learning:

> I constantly think about the things that enable or impede a willingness to learn or rather to move into and connect to a particular kind of context or body of material. I think a lot about openness and closed-ness to connecting to things. For example in my own life, I look at the things that I'm willing to try to do and to think about and the reasons why I am willing to do so. And quite opposite, I also look at the things that I'm not willing to do and the reasons why. This openness has to do with where I'm positioned in life. There are certain things that happen to us and places we are in life that both enable and constrain our learning. I think about the small things, like personal attributes, and big things like broad social patterns and how they enable or constrain opportunities for learning.

Jake's entanglements in various contexts and the social and cultural factors within, such as social class, both supported and hindered his own learning. These experiences also enable him to bring introspection and understanding to his students' learning today. For example, Jake's entanglements in his job as a social worker exposed him to the affects that poor social circumstances have on a person's quality of life. These same experiences gave him a feeling of appreciation for the richness that people can experience in life. Furthermore, his interactions with people from all walks of life have influenced his understanding of how social inequality causes havoc for people. Therefore, Jake understands the social inequalities that some of his students today might endure; this understanding is not purely academic: "I know what the smell and the

feel of poverty is like. I've been with people I love who are living in poverty. To this day I have a real strong sense of what poverty means."

Jake makes an effort to create learning contexts that are egalitarian, supportive, and safe. He treats students as co-learners and encourages them to explore the kinds of questions that bring their own learning histories, socialization, and enculturation into examination.

I see education as a vehicle that allows me to stand outside of the culture of a traditional upbringing and at the same time still recognize it as a part of who I am. Because I continue to actively pursue learning, I feel I am in a better place to challenge the conventions that I accepted for a long time and still struggle to accept. Moreover, because I pursue greater educational opportunities I am granted with new situations and relationships that help to shape and re-shape the perspective I have on learning.

In a sense, continuous learning catapults me into a new realm of understanding myself as a person, including my capabilities, and my interests. For example, in graduate school I have been working in a context where I am exposed to higher order thinking and learning processes and a community of individuals who constantly invite me into their own intellectual worlds. Here I grow on a personal and intellectual level, I expand the realm of a conventional upbringing and unlearn old ways of being and learn new ways of understanding and being in the world. I entangle myself in the experiences of and relationships with others within the social context of academia.

I try to give students many opportunities in the classroom to ask "why" and to challenge their own conventional perspectives of who they are and who and what they aspire to be in life. I invite them into a classroom community that is supportive. I offer opportunities for students to become actively entangled in each other's learning and in the processes of learning and socialization in the context of higher education. It is not that I want them to replace one reality with another, but rather, I hope to add to the multifaceted sum total of experiences that students have in their lives and to help them to broaden their perspectives on where they come from, and where they are going. Lifelong learning is the vehicle I offer to them for this.

On the positive side, Jake's openness, understanding, and personal curiosity makes him a passionate, compassionate, and engaging teacher to work with. On the challenging side, because Jake's own learning is very much exploratory and dynamic, he sometimes finds it difficult to help other people organize their own learning:

> It's kind of difficult because my learning isn't finished and I'm paying a lot more attention, perhaps, to the cut grass on the field than to helping people build a deliberate

> foundation to support their learning. I'm conscious of that, so I try to pay attention to helping people build a foundation. What are the things that I want people to experience? What are the things that I want them to read that will provide them with a basis to do further analysis throughout their lives and throughout their career? What foundational collection of experiences and understandings will serve them, into their future? I feel like I was lucky to be able to get those [foundations] and people treated me right in my own education and provided *nudges* along the way.

Jake's entanglements in his own learning have helped to shape his knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values about teaching and learning in adult education. He pursued learning in an exploratory manner and continues to value informal learning today. As a teacher Jake also recognizes that context has a great deal to do with supporting and/or hindering an individual's learning. One of his goals as an educator is for students not to simply learn how to *do* graduate school, but rather to become co-learners on a journey where they interact with colleagues and peers and think critically about how they are positioned to view the world. It is understandable that Jake is considerate of how people's life circumstances can significantly alter their world view, and their willingness and openness to learning—he has lived, worked, and socialized with many classes of people over his lifetime.

Chapter 3

Teaching and Being a Teacher

It was after the third class with Jake during this Master's degree that I realized a shift in my understanding of learning and the purposes of why I teach.

In my early teaching career I was socialized into a community of educators in the formal education system. We shared ideas about pedagogy, practice, student learning, griped about extra demands on our time...the list goes on. I dedicated my life's work to finding ways to engage students in curriculum content and meet specific, prescribed learning outcomes. As I got further into my career and thus more comfortable with the regular duties of a classroom teacher, I realized that there was more that I wanted to do for students than simply deliver subject matter. I sincerely wanted help each and every student to grow, to develop, and to find meaning in what they were learning.

I understand this zest for learning comes from what some of the admirable teachers I have had have modeled for me and encouraged in me all through grade school and into university. The commonalities among all of the educators who made an impact on me were: they modeled what it meant to love to learn, and they had a vested interest in my life and in what and how I was learning. In short, they entangled me in learning. I became a teacher because I wanted to entangle students learning and impact their lives as past positive teacher role models did with me.

I developed a view of learning in this degree program that is contrary to the predominant instrumental view of learning that is common in the university. Students are not simply empty vessels to be filled with knowledge; teachers can help students to be more self-directed and guided by interests and preferences, and more involved in determining their learning needs. As a teacher, I can perpetuate this agenda by creating opportunities for students to collaborate with others in the classroom. Just as teachers, like Jake, models for his students, I can demonstrate for students that learning is a lifelong endeavour and not simply a means to an end.

I now teach to help students to be the best versions of themselves possible. I teach to share what knowledge I have of the world. I talk with students, give them opportunities to question their assumptions, beliefs, values, but I try to make it safe for them to do so by asking these very questions of myself. Therefore, I teach to learn and to become a better version of myself in the process.

In the previous chapter I explored Jake's entanglements in learning as a child and a young professional in both formal and informal contexts in which he lived and worked. I established a link between his early learning experiences, the tensions he felt about his own

social class affiliation and some of the fundamental beliefs, values, and attitudes about learning and teaching that shapes who he is as a teacher. In this chapter I examine Jake's past and present entanglements in the classroom. The purpose is to continue to build an in-depth picture of who he is as a teacher and how his lived experiences have previously shaped his teaching and continue to influence his practice and how he understands his students' learning processes. I investigate two fundamental purposes of Jake's teaching in this chapter. First, Jake teaches in order to support the flourishing of his students as individual lifelong learners. Second, his teaching is where he embodies the message that adult education and lifelong learning are appropriate lenses for a person to envision their own life circumstances and the broader social circumstances that exist in the world today. Furthermore, the fundamental purposes of Jake's work are foundation for how he organizes opportunities for student learning in the classroom and for his own continuous development as a responsive teacher-learner. The overall premise of this chapter is to know Jake better as a teacher in order to understand the complexities of the profession of teaching in adult higher education. Again, to really understand teaching in adult higher education for the purpose of change, it is imperative to first know and understand the experiences of individual teachers.

Why Teach?

"The thing that really actually makes me happy is the teaching."

All teachers have a personal vision, or a central purpose for their life's work. For instance, that purpose could be enhancing student learning, transmitting knowledge of a particular subject, or it could be to enact a platform for social change. For some teachers, the sole purpose of their work could be to help students to become better versions of themselves. Ask any teacher: Why do you teach? And therein lays the root of their cause, an expression of their

assumptions, and often the focus of their efforts in the classroom. Acclaimed author and adult educator Stephen Brookfield (2009) refers to a personal purpose for teaching as an organizational vision of teaching or a *critical rationale*. According to Smyth (1986), a critical rationale is a "set of values, beliefs, and convictions about the essential forms and fundamental purposes of teaching" that is shaped and adapted according to the specifications of the learning context (as cited in Brookfield, 2009, p.15). In essence having a critical rationale for practice provides a teacher with a sense of stability and direction, and an overall sense of self as a teacher.

Like a lot of teachers, Jake's beliefs, values, and assumptions about his craft are embedded in a collection of entangled teaching and learning experiences he has had across his lifetime. The aspects of Jake's own critical rationale for teaching that are linked to his entangled lived experiences include supporting students' flourishing as lifelong learners and helping them to see the centrality of learning in all of life. Furthermore, these purposes are threaded together by some of the common themes from works of scholars such as Jürgen Habermas (1987), Paulo Freire (1970), Etinenne Wenger (1998), and more recently Martha Nussbaum (1997, 2011) who have had a strong influence on Jake's teaching and scholarship. For example, Jake organizes open classroom contexts for students to ask questions and engage in dialogue that helps them to learn more deeply about the subject matter and about the world in general. Individuals learn deeply when they are involved in processes and practices that engage them in making connections between current and previous learning, linking theory to experience, and making broad connections between learning contexts (Ramsden, 1992). One way that Jake supports deep learning is to cultivate classroom contexts that are *communicative* (Habermas, 1987) for the purpose of having students effectively coordinate their learning with one another.

Over time, Jake started to conceptualize the classroom as a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998).The classroom context is a setting where Jake and his students negotiate meaning in their learning and develop a shared history of learning together as they work toward common goals as a class. Wenger (1998) notes that *mutual engagement* or a common bond forms within the group as a result of such collaboration. Knowles (1980) refers to this type of bond as "a spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers" (p. 47). Creating these contexts can support students' entanglements in learning processes with one another and allow students to experience different levels of participation and engagement.

Learning Processes: A Reflection from Jake's Class

I sincerely felt that my learning progressed as I built upon previous learning experiences and was challenged to step out of my comfort zone in my inquiry. The content I explored in this course challenged some of the beliefs that were ingrained in me from past educational experiences. I particularly enjoyed having to put a sustained effort into the wiki project and appreciated the chance to learn a new form of technology. The wiki was an effective collaboration tool and good way to push people out of their comfort zones with learning (we are so accustomed to working face-to-face with each other). However, after experiencing collaboration via the web, I do see the value to learning in also meeting with people face-to-face. There are certain important connections that support learning that I believe people make in person and may not be found over the Internet.

It was important to the group that I worked with to have the opportunity to engage with one another in person. We found that the face-to-face time was essential in us finishing some of the tasks that we had to do and it magnified the feeling of accomplishment when we completed work together. Typically, there was an immediate joint feeling of accomplishment when we met in person that was not as easily felt through our web-based work. I agree with Wenger (1998) in that these instances of mutual engagement within a community of practice can be a vehicle for sharing ownership of meaning. I felt more disconnected with certain group members. I attribute some of this disconnection to having little to no face-to-face contact with these people. Exclusive face-to-face interaction does enhance the value of collaboration and the work that is accomplished but when intermixed with opportunities for technology-based interactions, I think powerful group dynamics can also be fostered.

As a learner, being invited to participate (and collaborate) at different levels and through various forums is important to me. The balance between in-class work (discussion, collaboration, small-group work) and virtual work (the wiki) allowed me to tap into learning in different ways. I felt that there was ample opportunity to both utilize the strengths I have and also to slide back to the periphery and let others take the lead. For example, in the beginning of

this inquiry, I had an inclination to volunteer to write the scientific method portion of our wiki assignment. As a teacher, I was most familiar with this systematic method and organizational style as an approach to program planning. Nonetheless in order to plan a community of practice-based program, I had to step out of a very structured, logically built box. I learned that my strengths would serve the group better if I stepped back from taking the lead in one part and stepped up to the challenge of another. In reality it was easy to think radically and envision an emergent, community of practice that Wenger suggested but it was a bit more challenging when it came to putting those thoughts into practice. Abandoning the security of structure in organizing and planning was, for me, a welcomed step out of my comfort zone.

Supporting Students' Flourishing

Jake contributes to the flourishing of his students as learners through his teaching. In essence he wants to help students to thrive, to do well, and to grow as informed and empathetic individuals. Part of this vision involves enhancing students' capacities to think critically about their positions in the world and to become aware of their connectedness with other learners. For instance, in one of his more recent lifelong learning classes, Jake introduced the theoretical work of philosopher and classicist Martha Nussbaum (1997, 2011). Jake is interested in Nussbaum's capabilities approach to understanding human development. More specifically, he emphasizes how adult education can contribute to enhancing people's capacities in the following capabilities outlined in Nussbaum's (2011) work: life; bodily health; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation (living with and toward others); other species (again, being able to live with and toward them); play; and control over one's political and material environment.

Nussbaum's (1997) earlier work on cultivating humanity and world citizenship is an affective conceptual framework for understanding how Jake contributes to his students' flourishing. Here Nussbaum argues for world citizenship and *cultivating humanity* as a central norm for liberal education. She refers to cultivating humanity as:

> However we order our varied loyalties, we should still be sure that we recognize the worth of human life wherever it occurs and see ourselves as bound by common abilities and problems to people who lie at a great distance from us. (p.9)

Jake articulates a similar mission in his own position as a teacher, scholar, and lifelong learner:

> I sort of take on the notion of an organic intellectual, as someone who struggles on behalf of, not any particular class, but on behalf of people as learners, anyone as learners... just *people* as developing beings. That's who I care about. It doesn't matter what group they're in. And I think that there is a lot of willingness to ignore it – peoples' flourishing – for the sake of particular kind of narrow objectives. I think that's bad.

In her theorizing about education, Nussbaum (1997) indicates three central capacities that educators need to help students to develop in order to be sensitive and informed world citizens. These three capacities connect well to the deeper learning experiences that Jake tries to support in his classroom. First the author suggests that educators have to build student's capacity for critical examination of themselves, and their own cultures and traditions. Educators also need to work with students to enhance student's capabilities to see themselves as human beings who are bound to all humans through a common thread. This common thread to which Nussbaum refers is a collection of similar problems that humans face regarding mortality, basic survival (food and shelter), property, and planning in their own lives. I postulate another way to conceptualize the bond that Nussbaum defines is to understand people as bound together by their entanglements with one another in various lived experiences, including their experiences of the problems the author suggests. Finally, educators need to help students to develop their capacity for narrative imagination and to feel empathy and put themselves in another's place.

Jake's investment in building supportive and communicative contexts in the classroom and his modeling of the very beliefs that guide his practice is, in essence, an investment in his students' learning, or synonymously, his students' flourishing as individuals. Another way he supports learning is how he strives to make his classes more than just a transmission of knowledge, by communicating with students and giving them space and opportunity to share and create knowledge together and with him:

> When I'm making the plan for the class, I try to imagine a context that would be conducive to supporting people in learning in ways that I think will be really helpful to them. When I'm in the throes of the class and paying attention to how it's unfolding, I try to take advantage of things like a conversation, a moment of excitement, or an example that someone has raised in the class and [I]try to really support it.

Setting Foundations for Learning

The theoretical underpinnings of the kind of learning that is most explicit in Jake's classroom can be conceptualized as a meshed perspective of both humanistic learning theory and social learning theory. A humanistic perspective on learning emphasizes human nature, potential, emotions, and affect. Learning is a function of motivation, and involves the learner's capability of making choices and taking responsibility for his/her own learning (Tisdell & Taylor, 2000). Self-directed learning is an example of a popular adult education concept that is grounded in humanistic learning theory.

Like many adult educators, Jake aims to support students and help to enhance their capabilities in becoming self-directed learners. Self-directed learning has been deemed by some scholars as a natural way of life (Brockett & Himestra, 1991). Furthermore, the central feature of self-directed learning is "the primary responsibility is on the individual learner for planning,

carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p.41). According to Merriam's (2001, p.9) comprehensive review of the adult learning literature, the goals of self-directed learning are:

- development of the learner's capacity to be self-directed (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991)
- fostering transformative learning through learner critical reflection (Brookfield, 1986; Mezirow, 1985)
- promoting emancipatory learning and social action (Brookfield ,1993; Collins, 1996)

Jake does not assume that all learners who come to the classroom arrive as fully-developed self-directed learners. Instead, he helps students to enhance their capabilities to become increasingly more self-directed over time. For instance he reaches out to his students in graduate school who express interest in going on to do MA theses, or later, PhD degrees. Like many professors, Jake adopts a mentoring role with some of his students and invests additional time and energy outside of the classroom to help guide students on these independent, more self-directed learning trajectories. In Chapter Four I will discuss more about Jake's role as mentor for his students.

According to Knowles (1975), the role of the educator in self-directed learning is to help the learner to learn rather than to educate them. This position subsumes a context where instruction is predominantly learner-controlled rather than directed solely under the authority of the teacher. A common argument for the benefits of self-directed learning is that learners have more time to think through and structure their learning in ways that are meaningful and relevant (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990; Knowles, 1980). Furthermore, some scholars who study self-directed

learning assert that giving-over learner control in the classroom can also support students in becoming more independent learners (Merriam & Cafarella, 1991, p. 53).

Contrary to the above arguments, the longstanding debate about learner control in the classroom (see Brookfield 1986; Candy, 1991; Garrison, 1992; Knowles, 1975), suggests that it is not an all-or-nothing issue. Fundamentally, learning and readiness for learning will undoubtedly differ from student to student in each diverse learning context. For example, it cannot be assumed that all students are internally motivated to learn the subject matter of particular courses. Teachers meet many students who are simply attending classes for the purpose of obtaining a credential, or some alternative external reward. Therefore, teachers cannot assume that deep and engaged learning is a goal for all students. Also, life circumstances matter. Learners enter the classroom with varying life experiences and learning histories that invariably shape their learning in the classroom. In some cases students may even interpret learning that comes from these life experiences as negative which may in turn create a barrier to their future learning (see Merriam, Mott, & Lee, 1996). Finally, some students are highly dependent on a teacher to provide a structure and a foundation for learning. This is especially true in situations where the learner has little experience with particular content and is looking for guidance in engaging with new material (Merriam, 2001). Jake experiences these situations with students in his own teaching practice and explains the importance of instructor involvement in providing a foundation for learning:

> I try to get a balance between talking and demonstrating my engagement with the material and encouraging their engagement with the materials. I would say that I'm a much more productive prof now. Early on I was probably too facilitative and as a result my students didn't get the serious kind of engagement with the content that they

> [expected to]. I provide a lot of structure [now] and I feel that it is the best way for people to learn. I really see the results of that [structure] and how my students progress in their learning, so I'm convinced that it's important.

Building Bridges: Social Learning in Jake's Classroom

The common thread that runs through Jake's account of his classroom teaching and also the literature on self-directed learning is that, in a formal instructional setting, the self-directed learner still needs *others* in order to learn. Therefore Jake supports students' individual learning endeavours, but he ties in a very distinct social aspect to learning as well. His role as someone who creates an environment that is conducive for learning in the social context of the instructional setting is an important one.

Self-directed learning is positioned in a humanistic perspective; however, the organized learning within Jake's class is more effectively conceptualized within a social learning framework. This framework places individuals, as learners with relatively differing degrees of self-directedness, in a bigger, socially constructed picture in the classroom. The underlying assumptions emerging from social learning theory is that learning occurs when learners are entangled in some or all of the processes of observation, modeling, and mentoring in their immediate environment. According to Merriam and Cafferalla (1991), "Learning is a function of the interaction of person, the environment, and the behavior" (p.139). For example, students learn a lot from Jake in his classes, but they also learn from working with each other, and observing one another in the throes of engaging with the subject matter. The personal narrative on pages 41-42 is a reflection on such collaborations in Jake's class. These interactions are three types of human cultural learning (a more specific form of social learning) that developmental and educational psychologists Tomasello, Kruger, and Ratner (1993) respectfully, refer to as:

instructed learning, *collaborative learning*, and *imitative learning*. Fundamentally, humans are capable of social learning because we are able to understand others as intentional beings, and are capable of empathy and identification with other people. Hence, humans are able to learn, not only from each other, but *through* each other (Tomasello, 1999).

I mentioned previously that Jake intentionally tries to cultivate communicative contexts (Habermas, 1987) in the classroom for a community of learners to flourish as individuals and also develop together. Jake's classroom can be conceptualized as a form of community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), where learning is situated or embedded in the ongoing experiences of the learners as they work with others in the same environment to create meaning around their learning processes together. *Situated learning* is a characteristic of social, participatory processes and not solely a cognitive function that is independent of the physical world. Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that to situate learning means to entangle learners in the cognitive and behavioural processes used by experts in a workplace (or field of study) to accomplish tasks, build skills, and create knowledge. For instance, Jake aims to make the classroom a gateway to the field of adult education by providing suggestions, guidance, and opportunities to help students entangle themselves with various socio-cultural practices of adult education and in particular, graduate adult education. These socio-cultural practices include the ways individuals interact with the self and their environment, for example through thinking, communicating, acting, and forming values. Therefore, entanglement with the field of adult education may take the form of reading, writing, dialogue and discussion in any given classroom situation. Ultimately, the goal of bridging the classroom context and the larger adult education field is for students to transfer the knowledge and learning from the classroom to the realm of their respective adult education-related practices (Stein, 1998).

According to Wenger (1998), a positive side effect of working collaboratively is that learners form a common bond centred on a shared understanding of the similarities that tie them together as a group (mutual engagement). This bond looks, feels, and is enacted differently in every group because group dynamics are uniquely configured depending upon the individual members and their personal learning histories. An additional benefit for students can be a cultivated sense of ownership in their learning and a feeling of belonging and commitment that comes from community involvement (Handley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006). Wenger (1998) adds that this sense of mutual engagement is an ideal context for the creation of knowledge. He explains that individuals can explore new ideas (even if they are radical ideas) without feeling intimidated or embarrassed because "there is a strong bond of communal competence along with a deep respect for the particularity of experience" (p. 214). Jake safely explores critical ideas about adult education with his students in these classroom contexts:

> [I] try to imagine how to actually engage students [in] a process that would help them understand the world more deeply. And [I] help them understand adult education as, inevitably, a political kind of process that either works to sustain the oppressive status quo or adult education as kind of an emancipatory force, an emancipatory practice.

In the classroom community, students work together with the teacher to reflect on, negotiate, and redesign aspects of the class according to what emerges from their personal experiences and shared histories. Likewise the ongoing negotiation and redesign features of a community of practice imply that some element of flexibility must also exist in the classroom in order for learning to emerge. Although Jake's classes are bound to a certain extent by institutional realities of the university (such as having a course syllabus, regular schedule meeting times, and grading schemes) and the reality that students need some guidance and

direction in their learning, there is flexibility in how the class operates. For example students take part in class discussions whereby they often direct the ebb and flow of conversation, they have freedom and choice on class assignments, and they have opportunities to engage in conversation with each other outside of class (in person and through the use of technology such as email, blogs, and wikis). In addition, if learning is assumed to be emergent from social processes in the classroom then it implies that instructional processes that accompany learning have to be somewhat organic as well.

There is no perfect formula for best practices or set of prescribed objectives for supporting emergent learning in a group context. There are certainly practices that work well but these practices need to be developed by teachers on an individual basis and on a class-by-class level. Ultimately the dynamics, the individuals, and the physical environment of each class will differ considerably. According to Jake, it is presumptuous to assume that there are best practises for emergent learning in the classroom:

> There's an assumption with *best practices* that there's an existing external array of things to do. But it really isn't best practices, its best *insights*. We have to build best practices in every class that we're in and it's nothing ahead of time that's going to be able to say what should happen.

Embodied Wisdom in the Classroom

In terms of personal learning about teaching, I have thought very critically about how I have been taught to view designing (curriculum and contexts) for student learning. I recognize that I put a lot of trust in the university system in regards to learning, the same way I (and my parents) would have in the public school system when I attended grade school. It is quite common for students to put their faith in experts (for example, curriculum designers, professors, and teachers) to determine what they learn about any given subject and the best ways to learn it. A big problem is that in many university classes it is simply not customary for students to be part of planning their learning. I know now that this is not always the most appropriate approach, nor is this amount of control over dissemination of knowledge that experts have beneficial to student

learning. In fact, it is incongruous that single individuals can design learning experiences for students without even knowing who the learners are and what their needs might be!

An interesting subject for critical self-reflection is to look back on how the Bachelor of Education program that I attended aimed to prepare me for a teaching career. I do not give credit to the program for whether or not I became an effective teacher who is capable of entangling students in learning because I think that is something that comes from within each individual and their desire to become a better-skilled professional. The fact that the B Ed program I attended prepared me to plan, teach, and address student learning according to an objective-driven scientific paradigm is very clear to me now.

Education programs are predominately designed to prepare new teachers to reproduce a system that has been historically prescribing a specific reproductive type of learning for many decades. This same system sustains itself by perpetuating particular kinds of researcher-defined best practices for teachers to implement in their classrooms. In the past, I felt like I had been bullied to a certain extent to adopt these best practices in the classroom. The situation was, somewhat, oppressive. It bothers me to think that so many grade school teachers and program planners have to comply with curriculum structures that foster such prescriptive learning when it may not be suitable for all learners.

Educators have to be willing to involve others in the planning process, including learners themselves. I think that this type of participatory program planning is crucial in order to get to the root of what learners needs are and to have programs that genuinely reflect those needs.

Jake describes his teaching and learning in the classroom as a *somatic* or *embodied* experience. Matthews (1998) refers to somatic learning as the "embodied experience of being and doing" (p.237), that is, a way of knowing that involves the construction of experiential knowledge through involvement of the senses, perceptions, and mind/body actions and reaction. Jake's development of some of his knowledge base for teaching is in fact, an embodied process that occurs in situ:

> The sailing analogy is what I would stick with. I learned to sail by the feel of it and I learned to teach by the feel of it. It's an embodied practice; teaching is a physical act, a physical practice and not just an intellectual thing. I end up tired, it strikes my body and you're up moving around, shifting things, and using body language. We use our bodies as a way of creating a context as we move around.

Jake's understanding transfers to the methodological choices he makes in structuring learning in the classroom so that students experience learning in a holistic and embodied manner. Jake uses multiple deliberate techniques to get conversations started in the classroom. He aims to make students' learning experiences physical, and anecdotal or allegorical so that people are working symbolically in the class. For example, he may have students move around the classroom to collaborate with each other, read a thought-provoking passage, discuss a recent news event, or he tells an interesting story that students can relate to. On one occasion, Jake even brought a preserved cat brain in a jar into the class in order to get students to think about brain structure, learning, and human connectedness to other species in this world. Jake used each of these creative tactics to ignite students' interests, have them relate to personal experiences, and thus engage students in conversations about lifelong learning. He refers to these discussion starters as "like pushing off onto the water" when sailing—it is what he does to get the class going in the ebb and flow of conversation. Sometimes his strategies work well; sometimes they fall flat because of a certain group dynamic. Nevertheless for Jake, student learning is always the desired outcome regardless of what kind of sailing day it is: "I worry about the final outcome of it all and whether or not people feel in the end that they've learned something."

Avoiding Authority

Jake sat alone at one of many cramped desks in the room. He shuffled the papers in front of him. Nervous and dry mouthed, he was unsure of how to start. He was determined to let them decide the course of action for today—he would simply guide the flow of conversation when he needed to. The last thing he wanted was for them to think he was some kind of an authority figure. After-all, they were supposed to be self-directed and their needs should be the driving force behind what goes on in the class.

Students filed in. They sat at desks in and around where Jake sat, some of them conversing with each other about the class they had just come from. Jake engaged in conversation with the guy to his right, about the program the guy was taking at the college. At the same time he was lending

his ear to multiple conversations that were happening in the room. One student grew increasingly impatient:

—When's this prof going to show up anyway?

They looked around the room at each other. One guy checked his watch, prepared to evoke the traditional 15 minute rule known to college students everywhere: no instructor, no class. Two girls to Jake's right whispered about whether or not they were in the correct room.

—Well he's been here for a while.

Jake spoke out from his position among them. Students looked at Jake with slight disbelief. Some tensed up and felt embarrassed about their instructor having been there the whole time during their conversations. They were caught off-guard and did not like it. What was he doing just sitting there, acting like one of them?

Jake perceived his role in the classroom as facilitative in some of his earliest experiences teaching adults in community college and university. At the start of his career he aimed to be more of a friend to the students than an authoritative figure. Ultimately, Jake wanted to downplay his responsibility for being an authority and was worried that he would be someone who "disrupts and interferes with people's learning." Mark Bracher (1999) takes a psychoanalytic approach to understanding the different ways how teachers attempt to negate their authority in the classroom. The author gives examples such as teachers acting like a student in the class, or teachers being forthright about their position of power in hopes that students will recognize it and choose to ignore it. For example, in his early teaching days Jake, influenced by Habermas (1987), used various dialogical approaches in the classroom that allowed students to discuss and expose issues of power in the class, and more broadly in their learning. Jake aimed to put students in a position of empowerment to learn and to direct their learning experiences in the classroom; however, these classes often went off on tangents that were not necessarily productive for students' learning.

Bracher (1999, 2006) also asserts that it is impossible for teachers to shed their authority because they are powerful objects of *transference* for their students. At the root of the author's iteration of the transference theory is that the primary reason that humans are motivated to act in particular ways is that they seek to maintain and enhance their identity. In essence, humans are continuously seeking recognition—to be appreciated and valued by others. Bracher (2006) claims that individuals often expend a considerable amount of energy on seeking recognition and controlling recognition from other people. They do this because identity recognition is a dominant, basic human need. Transference is an example of this directed behaviour and occurs in a classroom situation when "students seek recognition from authority by adopting certain alien identity contents they believe the authority approves of and abandoning, suppressing, or rejecting elements that are integral to their selves but that they believe the authority disapprove of " (Bracher, 1999, p.80). Likewise, the presence of student transference can also have a reciprocal affect and work to feed the identity needs of the teacher at the same time. According to the author, transference can actually have a negative influence on students' identity development. Ultimately, Bracher's work is a call to action for all teachers to be aware of how identity needs direct and motivate their own teaching and learning behaviours as well as their students' behaviours in the classroom.

When I examine the roots of the beliefs that I have about teaching and learning, I find there is a positive co-relation between the teachers that I admire, what they did in class, and how it shaped my learning experiences. The teachers that I admire most are those who helped me to feel recognized (by investing in me and what I learned) which in turn, made me feel like I mattered. Their commitment to student learning and well-being showed in their attitudes toward students as individuals, and teaching practices in the classroom that were active, engaging, creative, enthusiastic, and interesting. This was the cornerstone of my positive learning experiences and development as a lifelong learner.

I suppose that is why I believe that as a teacher I bear some of the responsibilities of ensuring students' learning experiences are positive and engaging. By investing in my own teaching practices and thus taking some responsibility for student learning, I am sending a message to

students that they matter and that I am trying to recognize their learning and developmental needs.

I also know that these teaching behaviours circle back to my own identity needs and need for recognition. In a way, I want students to have the kind of positive learning experiences that I had and continue to have as a student when I interact with professors that I admire in university classes. This is probably why I also am so conscious of the effect that ineffective teaching practices have on me: they do not meet the expectations I have for myself as a teacher nor do they feed the learning needs that I have.

Ineffective teachers' practices clash with how I identify with myself as an effective teacher who entangles students in learning. Perhaps when I am engaged by a professor that I respect and admire it feeds my identity need for being recognized as an effective teacher—I connect with these teachers because I agree with and I am drawn to their practices because they align with my own philosophy of effective teaching.

Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) offer another explanation for why it may be difficult for teachers to downplay authority in the adult education classroom. The authors claim that the classroom is a *microcosm* (p.389) of the social contexts in the world in which hierarchical power relations that order the outside world are fully present and enacted. Therefore, although teachers like Jake attempt to treat adult learners as equals, their presence and role as a facilitator or teacher will naturally reproduce hierarchical power structures that privilege some people over others (hooks, 1994). According to these sources, an attempt to down-play or avoid power relations in the classroom is, essentially pointless, because of the reality of how classroom roles are socially constructed. It seems more realistic for teachers to be aware of such issues and perhaps attempt to find balance between being too facilitative and too authoritative in the classroom.

Today, Jake reflects on his early teaching experiences with understanding and critique that comes from years of classroom encounters and reflection on who he is as a teacher and what kind of teacher he strives to be. Jake is more aware of his position in the classroom in relation to

the power dynamic that exists. This awareness is fundamental to his ability to make the classroom an environment that is conducive to learning.

> I don't think that I was handling the power dynamics of my classes as well as I wanted to. I wasn't playing enough of a leadership role in the classes and I was acting more as a facilitator and not as what I understand as a teacher [to be]. I always wanted to include people and probably erred the other way that I didn't provide any kind of sufficient structure or context for people and they were just at a loss in my class.

So what led to Jake's transition from whom he was then to who he is now as teacher? A probable explanation for this shift during his early years of teaching is that there seems to have been a point (likely in classroom situations described above) where Jake realized that his meaning system for understanding his teaching was not congruent with what he was experiencing in the classroom. Jarvis (2011, p.80) contends that this *disjuncture* or "discontinuity between biography and experience" is where the learning process begins. He asserts that at points of disjuncture, an individual begins to feel the need to learn. It is likely that this was the place where Jake started to ask questions of himself as a teacher, his practices, and what it meant for students to learn:

> I gradually started thinking more about what it meant to have students learn and what kind of role I should be playing in order to engage them in serious kinds of learning. I realized that I had to talk a lot more. I barely ever talked or lectured but I found that when I did talk and lecture, my students actually really learned from it.

It is logical to assume that Jake went through a period of reflection at this disjuncture and as a result wanted to learn more about his teaching for the purpose of improving his practice. One

explanation, according to Fromm (1949) is that it is the very nature of the human condition for individuals to want to establish harmony between themselves and the world (as cited in Jarvis, 2011, p.80). When an individual experiences a situation where there is no harmony, they essentially begin to ask questions and find ways to improve their skills in order to feel a sense of balance once again. From this perspective, learning occurs as individuals attempt to master the disjuncture they feel and solve the problems they encounter in their experiences in the world.

According to Jarvis (2011) another probable explanation for learning is that it is related to an individual's entanglement of the social circumstances they are in and their own biography. Therefore, it is also possible that Jake dealt with this disjuncture in his teaching situation because he has a history of responding to disjuncture in an active manner—as a child and throughout his adult life, he has been an active agent in his own learning. For example, Jake often pursued learning independently when he wanted to learn or felt he needed to learn more about a certain phenomenon. Basically, Jake's entangled experiences in prior learning have played a significant role in shaping his learning as a teacher and in how he solves problems and continues to pursue learning as a teacher.

Learning is at the Heart of Teaching

Who Jake is as a teacher today has a lot to do with his interest in learning, his embodied learning as he goes along in the classroom developing insights along the way. He is also the teacher he is today because of his commitment to improving his craft as part of his own lifelong learning endeavour. Jake establishes best insights in the classroom because he is a responsive, teacher-learner. He comments: "I try to learn all the time. I think about it [teaching] all of the time. I *feel* [emphasis added] like it's my job. I think you're learning as you're teaching too."

Just as scholarly reading, writing, and social interactions with students and colleagues help professors to inform their own knowledge, teaching is an important vehicle through which professors acquire knowledge and learn as well. Boyer (1991) asserts that "…good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners…" (p.11). When faculty are teaching, they are also working to transform and extend their own knowledge as well. Furthermore, faculty can model learning for students through demonstrating their own curiosity, passions, commitments, and even mistakes as ways to show students *how* to learn (Andre & Frost, 1997; Brookfield, 2006). From a theoretical position, modelling behaviours (including mistakes) denounces the traditional notion that students' minds are empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge. In practice, modelling behaviours takes learning beyond the simple transmission of knowledge, and encourages a collaborative endeavour.

Jake embodies the centrality that he believes learning plays in the world through his work in the classroom. He organizes a learning community amongst students that is safe, communicative, and collaborative. In addition, Jake aims to empower students to see lifelong learning as a lens through which to view their own personal circumstances and the social circumstances of the world in general. Jake asserts, "That's the kind of thing I try to communicate in that lifelong learning class."

Learning from the Past

In this chapter I highlighted Jake's past and present entanglements in teaching and learning. I stressed the fundamental emphases of Jake's teaching as expressed in terms of how he views and supports his students' learning in the classroom. When I explored some of the theoretical underpinnings of Jake's work more closely, a picture of Jake as a teacher emerged. He is an educator who is concerned with his students' flourishing as learners and has an explicit

devotion to promoting lifelong learning as a lens through which to view the world. Jake embodies his teaching purposes by creating communicative communities in the classroom where students can experience deep learning. Coincidently, his own flourishing as a learner and teacher is supported in the classroom as well.

There is an evident connection between Jake's entanglements in his learning from childhood through to his job experiences before graduate school with his practice of giving over control to his students in the classroom. His entanglements in the various social dynamics of this particular collection of learning experiences were significant shapers of his non-authoritarian style in the classroom when he first started teaching. For example, Jake was used to rebelling from the norms of traditional, formal learning from an early age. In Chapter One I told of Jake's personal preference for exploratory, informal and incidental learning. Jake also rejected the authority of prescribed learning in school. He needed to explore and navigate with little restriction placed on how and when learning happened; therefore, it is logical that Jake sees benefit in students playing a significant role in directing their learning in the classroom. I postulate that this belief is linked to what Jake means when he says that he does not want to be someone who interferes with people's learning.

Chapter 4

To Shape and be Shaped

Mrs. A

—Is everything okay at home?

My seven year old imagination was running wild. Why would she need to take me out of the classroom to ask me this question? I did not know what to say. There was nothing going on at home at all. I leaned against the double doors leading outside to the playground. I looked down at the floor. Across the long corridor. Up the side wall where we lined up for recess. Every nook and cranny I could find. Except into her eyes. Tears welled up in my eyes. I shuffled from foot to foot.

I...I...just...forgot

The words came out, interspersed with sobs. I took a deep breath and my chest settled in relief of having just told the truth. Then a thought crossed my mind: how many recesses would I have to miss for this? That's what usually happened when she took kids outside of the class for a chat.

10 Minutes Earlier

My heartbeat quickened. I opened my blue homework folder, being careful to cup my hands around my writing to create a protective shield from nosy Christine in the next row. I glanced down at the page. My stomach sank. I forgot again. Second time that week. One forged signature and one blank line. There it was written: math page 42; reading 15 minutes; go over spelling list and then... nothing. No Mom, no Dad. I did not want to let the teacher down. Better to write Mom's name myself then.

The teacher caught me in mid-act. A gentle hand on my shoulder told me she was behind me. She asked to see me outside the classroom. This was the first time I had ever been sent out to the hallway. It seemed like everyone was looking at me. I got up, embarrassed and fighting back tears. I did not want to disappoint her; I was a good student. I loved writing stories, reading novels, and singing O'Canada at top volume with the rest of the students after morning announcements. And I always did my homework.

She seemed to think there was more to the situation but there was not. How could I make her understand? I rushed to get my homework done last night because Ben and I had a tree fort to finish in the back yard. Ben, my next door neighbour and best friend since we have been old enough to play together. His parents always signed his homework.

I looked up. Met her brown stare. Her smile was unexpected. After all, I was in trouble was I not? I was still crying. She hugged me. Right there in the corridor. It felt like it did when I hugged Mom. Things were ok. I did not have to tell her anything more. She mumbled something

about having a chat with my parents. The burden was off my shoulders and I felt relief that she was not angry or disappointed. The intimidation I felt instantly melted away.

I would never forget that hug. I would eventually go on to give it to a student or two of my own. Passing along in a single gesture of compassion, my understanding, and love to a student in need. These days it's not always a hug, it's sometimes a conversation, an extra ten or fifteen minutes after class, a smile, or even a joke in passing. And no doubt a little bit of Mrs. A. goes with these gestures as well.

A wonderful aspect of being a teacher is the opportunity to interact with students across time and space, over the span of a teaching career. Teachers play a significant role in shaping the lives and development of their students as learners both inside and outside of the classroom. This kind of influence is one of the many implicit, by-products of teachers' entanglements with students. In essence, teachers and students' lives constantly intertwine in the classroom where they share and co-create knowledge together, or outside of the classroom in advisory and/or mentoring situations. For example, Jake's life work as a teacher has been shaped by his own entanglements in learning and teaching experiences that have formed the fundamental purposes of his craft along with the knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes about student learning that he brings to the classroom. Jake's purposes for teaching are enacted through his interactions with students when he creates contexts that support their individual learning and development and when he invests time in working with students outside of the classroom.

In this chapter I tell a part of Jake's story that gets to the heart of this research: to ascertain entanglement in teaching and learning as an expression of the perpetual shaping of lives. I explore how Jake's role as an educator and mentor affects his students' learning experiences. The purpose is to understand more deeply the nature of entangled student-teacher relationships. I suggest, (similar to the narrative above) that Jake's past teacher role models have had a significant impact on who he is as a teacher and on his teaching practice. I also assert that it is possible that Jake actually perpetuates his past entanglements with positive teacher role

models in his own actions as a teacher and role model to students. How he was shaped (by his own role models) and how he shapes his students' lives seem to be quite closely connected. One approach to examining this relationship is to look at how Jake has experienced student-teacher entanglements in the past. Therefore, in this chapter I explore Jake's past entanglements with positive teacher role models as they pertain to who he is as a teacher today. Throughout his story, Jake characterized his role models as key people who gave him *nudges* along his lifelong learning journey. These nudges appeared in Jake's story as pieces of advice and/or opportunities that directed his decision making and increased his confidence in his abilities to pursue a particular educational path.

In this chapter I also examine the nature of Jake's entanglements in his students' learning through the lens of gratification. What does he like to see happen with his students' learning? What brings him gratification? Closely related to this theme is Jake's articulation of what he wants the impact of his teaching career to be. Studying these two conceptions of Jake's teaching together has the wider implication that understanding teacher gratification can be an indicator of the type of learning contexts that teachers seek to create in the classroom. These contexts for learning are sites for student-teacher interaction and essentially are how each becomes entangled in the other person's learning. In essence, the larger purpose of what Jake works toward each day is to become entangled with students in learning.

Becoming the Teachers We Admire

Jake's first and most memorable role model was not a teacher from school: she was his own mother. Mrs. Roberts was always kind and supportive of Jake, regardless of any situation he found himself in throughout his life. Jake attributes a lot of who he is as a teacher today to what he witnessed from his mother's interactions with others as a teacher and how she was perceived by people in the community. Jake sees his mother as a role model and as someone who he is a lot like:

> I think I'm like her…kind of soft hearted but still kind of not too wimpy. I feel it's best to be a kind, compassionate person but someone who is strong enough to do stuff and not just everyone push them around.

A fundamental way that individuals form their identity and become who they are is through social interactions and the relationships they build with other people. For educators, these entangled associations with past and present role models also contributes to how they see themselves as educators and to how they practice in the classroom. Research on teacher development suggests that an individual's impressions of prior teachers influence the kind of teacher that individuals aspire to be (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Sexton, 2004), and the kind of teacher they want to avoid becoming (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). Similarly, Taylor (2003) suggests that qualities of prior positive teacher models typically mirror present descriptions that adult educators have of ideal teachers and how they see themselves as teachers. These sources converge on the premise that a portion of teachers' identity and teaching behaviours comes through continuous intake of knowledge and social behaviours about teaching and learning that they have picked up over the course of a life time from various influential teacher role models.

Planting Seeds for Learning

High school was another time where Jake recalled being very uninterested in his day-to-day classes in school. His marks were not great but it was mainly because he did not feel engaged in school and it took a toll on his motivation. He often worked along day-to-day with dutiful indifference. Mr. Johnson was Jake's grade eleven chemistry teacher and he saw through Jake's disengagement and he challenged Jake to do better.

—You know, you're doing pretty well in chemistry, Jake.

Yeah, I guess so.

—But I heard you're not doing so well in everything else.

No I can't stand it, I hate it. I just hate school.

—It does not make sense to me that you can do this well in chemistry and do badly in everything else. You are just not working in hard enough everything else. You know if you worked you could probably do well in all of your classes.

Yeah well maybe, but I'm just not interested.

—Well, you have to think about it because I think you should go to university. I think that you have what it takes.

Jake had thought about university. In fact he enjoyed his experiences at the university where he went with his father while Mr. Roberts was completing his Master's degree. He knew he liked university, but never really thought of himself as capable of going. He had not been getting good grades in high school and never truly felt that he had earned the grades that he did get. He enjoyed chemistry because he could try things out, explore, and experiment. But he was more interested in hanging out with his friends and in the work he did on the farm than what he did in his classes at school.

Jake felt dubious about what Mr. Johnson was suggesting but nevertheless his teacher had planted a seed. He helped Jake to realize that he was smart and that he was capable of going on to university if he chose to. It just took someone to believe he could and Jake started to believe the same.

Jake's story revealed a number of additional influential teacher role models from his prior educational experiences. The individuals that are highlighted in Jake's life history are the people who had the greatest impact on his educational experiences. They are teachers who shaped his impressions of what it means to be an effective teacher— those who entangled him in learning. Jake's influential teachers also introduced him to types of theory and styles of practice that helped to shape the foundations of his own teaching practice. Jake identified prior teacher role models as having all, or a combination of some of the following characteristics: challenging, compassionate, critical, interested in students' personal development, nice, not wanting to impose a particular perspective mature, open-hearted, open-minded, smart, strong, supportive, unassuming, and willing to act as a co-learner with students. Furthermore, there are connections

between Jake's descriptions of the characteristics of his past teacher role models and his own beliefs about learning and the expectations he holds for his students in the classroom.

Developing a Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

During his undergraduate and graduate years in university in Western Canada, Jake took classes from a number of professors who influenced his educational path significantly. Dr. Choi, Jake's undergraduate anthropology professor, introduced Jake to the theories of Karl Marx. Jake took a number of classes from Dr. Choi—his passion for theory inspired Jake. Jake loved Dr. Choi's classes; he hung on every word when the professor talked about Marxism. His course readings were intense and lectures were content heavy. A lot of other students were intimidated by the level of work required of them but Jake read a lot outside of class, namely books on Marxist theory, in order better understand what Dr. Choi was talking about in class. Jake loved the challenge. He was developing an alternative perspective on the world that was both critical and more radical from what he ever learned in school in the past.

Jake was also taking an interest in psychology and studying the works of Freud during this time. He took a student research position with Dr. Smith, the head of the Theoretical Psychology Centre at his university. Jake had a lot of respect for Dr. Smith who in turn considered Jake to be a very capable student both as an assistant and an academic. Jake produced academic writing that Dr. Smith found to be original and thoughtful and saw great promise in Jake as a student of psychology. He wanted Jake to pursue graduate work with him; however, Jake had the desire to move on, finish university, and get back to work.

When Jake eventually decided to attend graduate school he pursued his Master's degree in adult education. He met various students and professors in his program with whom he formed a close bond. These people also gave him the nudges he needed to get started as a graduate student and keep him feeling challenged along the way: "I didn't really have a clue about what it was going to be but the people I encountered there, both the students and the professors, really convinced me that I was making the right choice."

Jake worked with a couple of professors to whom he attributes having significant influence on his theorizing about adult education in his graduate work. One professor, Dr. MacLean, was a historian who introduced Jake to the works of Paulo Freire for the first time. This work would later influence the premise of Jake's Master's thesis:

> I liked the whole idea of dialogue and I liked how [Freire] said that learning and education were political; but, I didn't really like that he was justifying his pedagogy by saying that it's our ontological vocation to act in particular ways as adult educators. I wanted to replace this theory with my understanding of Habermas' normative framework [of communicative action] which is that we educate because of how are communities are.

Jake's official thesis supervisor was Dr. Cooper, a strong theoretical Marxist scholar and a great supporter of the direction Jake was pursuing in his work with Habermas' theory. He pressed Jake

to become much more rigorous around his philosophizing and theorizing and encouraged Jake to read extensively around the work he was doing on Habermas' theory in relation to adult education.

Dr. Cooper encouraged Jake to attend and present his work at various national and international conferences while he was in graduate school. He started out nervous and unsure of his capabilities. He wondered whether or not people would make sense of his theories and take him seriously. He felt like an impostor; like he did not quite belong in the circle of academics in which he was participating. After a couple of these jittery conference experiences, Jake's confidence in his own abilities as an academic grew: "It was the first time I really had a sense of myself as somebody who could just talk and make sense of something. People really liked it, so that felt good. It made me feel like I could do academic work."

By Jake's third year of his Master's degree, when he was doing a lot of heavy theoretical work and presenting at conferences, he knew that he had the kind of interest and academic rigour it took to do a PhD. He entered his PhD studies to work with a number of professors and peers who inspired his academic pursuits further. Jake took a lot of classes from professors who were also Marxist scholars. He was challenged by them. They pushed him to argue, to write well, and to develop the depth and breadth of his repertoire of theoretical and practical knowledge.

Guiding an Academic Journey

Jake really spoke with conviction about what he believes are the true purposes of lifelong learning. He has a strong belief in the capacities that human beings need in order to live a good life. I appreciated being able to brainstorm with him about how this all might look in a course. I see that Jake makes strides in little ways, with bringing his agenda for lifelong learning into his teaching. He spoke with appreciation in that the graduate program is so open that he has the freedom to design the kinds of courses we were talking about. It made me think that maybe, working towards small changes from within is just as good as changing a whole structure itself.

Sometimes people do not respond to radical change, but if it can be done softly (like in teaching, with certain books, conversations, and how students are encouraged to learn) then little victories can be had and slowly progress is made and change begins to occur. I realize that I want to be part of working from within in a non- oppressive way. That's how I want to work for the field of adult education. I aim to do the kind of work that Jake does. He has also inspired me to follow what my heart is telling me—effective teachers do that to you—but I also started to see much more clearly the impact that I want my teaching to have on the world.

One look at a syllabus for any of Jake's classes hints at the kind of experiences that students can expect to have under his tutelage. His classes are also evidence of the connection between his core beliefs about learning and his expectations for his students and some of the experiences he had and valued as part of his own education. In one particular Master's level

course that he currently teaches, Jake guides his students on an academic journey of exploring the processes of human learning. Students read approximately four or five books throughout the semester and are encouraged to make cross-disciplinary connections between biological, anthropological, sociological, psychological, and educational perspectives on learning. Jake understands that it is highly beneficial for students to develop a depth and breadth of knowledge on human learning. Such knowledge structures are imperative for developing a critical lens through which to view adult learning and the various contexts where learning takes place.

Most of Jake's current students enter graduate school without a lot of experience with reading, conceptualizing, and talking about the kind of critical theory that they are exposed to in adult education. One of Jake's main goals in the classroom, however, is to give students opportunities to experience deep learning and connect theory and practice. *Deep learning* can be defined as a collection of processes and practices whereby an individual makes connections between current and previous learning, links theory to experience, and makes broad connections across learning contexts (Ramsden, 1992). Jake has high expectations of his students but he does not leave them to fend for themselves in navigating the paths of theory and practice in adult education. He frequently challenges students to think critically and he entangles himself in their learning processes in class discussions, in one-on-one conversations, and in writing. He aims to push students' intellectual limits so they move from a vague understanding of learning in the world, to a more rigorous in-depth one.

There are similarities concerning Jake's beliefs about learning and his expectations of his students with his own entanglements in learning with his prior teacher role models. Many of Jake's educational role models peaked his interest in the kinds of theory that underpins the theoretical perspective of his own scholarship and teaching practice. These individuals also

influenced his soft, yet radical, approach to teaching and helping students to transform their thinking about learning. First, there is a link to the academic rigour that Jake experienced in his undergraduate years with professors like Dr. Choi. The professor demonstrated to Jake the qualities of what it meant to be a strong intellectual, and a well-read Marxist scholar. Jake's own challenge of reading copious amounts of Marxist literature outside of class hints to the sources of his notions that it takes a kind of deep reading, engagement in conversation, and understanding in order to experience the kind of integrative learning that he values today. Additionally, Jake developed and extended his understanding of some of the theory that he grappled with in his undergraduate degree as a result of his entanglements with teacher role models and his classmates in graduate school. Professors like Dr. MacLean and Dr. Cooper challenged Jake to write effectively and argue confidently about his own learning. In similar vein, Jake aims to give his students similar opportunities to get entangled, deeply, in their own learning:

> I always perceived myself as a teacher who is successful in getting students to work, to think, and to learn. I am comfortable that students are learning a lot in my classes. I am always interested in students working hard and so I always put quite a bit of pressure on them to do meaningful work. I try to get them to read deeply and widely. I give students quite a bit of stuff to do and so I feel like I am an effective teacher in terms of giving students lots to think about and to learn.

Jake's own entanglements in learning during his university years connected him with various teacher role models who had significant influence on his acquisition of critical theory and his understanding of the radical dimensions of adult education. He attributes his theoretical understandings of the works of such theorists as Karl Marx, Paulo Freire, and Jürgen Habermas to the exposure he had via his professors in his undergraduate education and his classmates,

professors, and academic colleagues in graduate school. Jake's entanglements with various teacher role models who nudged him along his educational path have also influenced the kind of expectations Jake has for his students, the level of engagement he encourages with his students, and the depth and breadth of knowledge he hopes his students to acquire in graduate school. Jake's story of entanglement in learning, including the influence of his past teacher role models, has shaped who he is as a teacher. In a larger sense, Jake is a product of these lived experiences with others—he has incorporated pieces of his learning experiences with them into his identity and practice as a professor of adult education.

The Impetus of Gratification

One of the predominant themes in Jake story was his expressions of the situations in his teaching that bring him gratification in his work with students. What brings him gratification is tied to the central emphasis of his work; it is connected to why he teaches, and invariably tied to how he shapes students' learning. Jake feels fulfilled as an educator when he sees evidence of students growing, learning, and blossoming in their thinking. He looks for gradual changes in people, more specifically an on-going deepening of students' understanding of the potentials of adult education to work in all different kinds of ways and that they are using adult education terms, theory, ideas to explore their own lives. For Jake, one of the more rewarding aspects of teaching is when his students go through big transformations in their degree program that seem to radicalize their thinking:

> I've always been excited by people who come into the program who aren't activists and who are radicalized by their experiences in the program. They come in and they're people who don't really have this on their radar particularly. I just love it when I see people come in [to the graduate program] one way and leave another way. That's the thing that is just

> so gratifying. And once and a while there's a person that's just sort of like lighting a powder kick and that makes me so happy.

It could be argued that sometimes a teacher's actions are guided by a desire to elicit responses from students that bring them gratification. In a sense, teaching then becomes both an act of self-fulfillment and one that can also contributes to the flourishing of individual students as lifelong learners. Seeking gratification also has potential negative effects if, for example, a teacher is unaware of why he does what he does in the classroom. This idea connects back to the earlier discussion in Chapter Three about teachers recognizing their own need for recognition as a basic human need, and about the how they seek satisfaction for these in their teaching. On the other hand, Jake could see the importance of this guiding role because of his own experiences of good teacher role models in his own education. An important consideration is then: can teachers support students' learning without having expectations of how that learning is actually going to unfold or whether it is going to unfold in a way that accords with the teacher's own particular personal needs?

Within this theme of gratification, Jake also expresses his hopes and dreams for his own teaching career. When asked about the kind of legacy he wants to leave, he responded accordingly:

> I don't know if I would care if people identified the legacy as my legacy. But I really hope that at the end of the day that I've made some kind of positive difference in the lives of students and in the world. I really don't need to have it directly associated with my name. I already feel that I'm conscious of making a difference and whether or not students particularly see it as me who's done it; I don't really care as long as the

> difference is made. In general, I'm hoping that students feel after they've been in a class they have a deeper appreciation of teaching and learning and its place in their life.

Students in Jake's classes entangle themselves in learning in to varying degrees; therefore, Jake's teaching shapes his students' learning in different ways. For instance, some students in class take reproductive or *shallow approaches* to learning (Ramsden, 1992, p.47) and likely focus on memorizing and internalizing knowledge but they do not necessarily understand how their learning is connected to previous learning or to experience. These students might appear to be learning on the surface (like students in many students in higher education) but their sights are set on obtaining credentials and not on the deeper implications of their learning. A second group of students that Jake sees in his classes are people who are primarily concerned about praxis. In adult education the term praxis is used to describe a theory, or lesson that is enacted or put in to practice. Most of these students would typically be mainly concerned with the applicability of what they learn to their respective adult-education practices. Finally, there is a group of students that, as a result of their entanglement in the graduate program and Jake' s classes, decide that they want to pursue adult education and lifelong learning as a course of academic study. Jake enjoys building connections with this particular group of students that develop a passion for adult education and lifelong learning. Jake plays an influential role in their early experiences graduate school and hence there is likely a significant shaping effect at play for both Jake and these students. Jake teaches because he enjoys sharing a common interest and passion for lifelong learning with others—it brings him a great sense of gratification:

> I'm just thinking of a few people who light up and those are the people who I invest quite a bit of time in. I'm hoping that this group of people will sort of continue to grow and

develop and spread this sort of sense of the power and potential of lifelong learning as it should be.

Being a Mentor

In some cases, as indicated by the commentary above, Jake invests time into supporting individual students in developing their potential as academics and helps nudge them along their respective academic paths. Jake assumes a mentorship role with these students. According to McLaughlin (2010), in an academic setting, "a mentor is seen as a role model, someone the student wants to emulate professionally" (p. 873). Galbraith (2003) contrasts the mentor role with the advisory role that faculty play. The author explains that, while advisors are short-term contacts that provide information and guidance, the mentor/mentee relationship is built on more long-term, intricate, and personal interactions between the two people. In essence, a mentorship role is the vehicle through which Jake entangles himself in his students' lives. His one-on-one work is also how he carries out one of the central purposes of his teaching, which is to support the flourishing of his individual students.

Knowing the Entanglements of the Teacher-Student Relationship

Jake's teaching is the vehicle through which he is entangled in his student's learning experiences, some of which are transformative learning experiences. His own lived experiences in teaching and learning, including with his own past teacher role models, are examples of how teacher and student entanglements can essentially be passed along from generation to generation of teachers and learners. The narrative at the beginning of the chapter, along with Jake's story of entanglements with role models of his own, illuminates an intricate teacher-student relationship that many teachers and students in general find familiar. This relationship is indeed one of the greatest gifts of teaching. Teachers and students can shape and be shaped by each other's lives

through an ongoing evolution and perpetuation of a meshwork (Ingold, 2011) of interactions with each other.

I explained the nature of Jake's entangled teacher-student relationships through the lens of gratification in his teaching. This analysis suggests that it is important for teachers to pay attention to how teaching brings them joy, in order to gain a deeper understanding of their craft. Ultimately, such an understating also translated into a vital message about the how teachers have an impact on students' lives.

Chapter 5

Envisioning the University as an Adult Learning Context

I'm out of breath by the time I get there. And I'm carrying too many things as usual, including two cups of coffee from the cafeteria on the first floor. Five flights up. A better alternative to the dreadfully slow elevator. It is as old as this building. The sight of the plain concrete walls in the stairwell gives off an institution-like feel. A little bit of paint would brighten things up. Nothing like the administrative building up the hill where my RA office is.

I arrive at the wrong end of the corridor, on the wrong side of the building, once again. I have been attending this university for a year and a half and one would think that I would have a sense of the layout of this main academic building by now. I literally walk in circles trying to find my destination, every time. A simple little reminder comes to me: the water is at the front of the building. The large body of water across the highway and the train tracks that run parallel to the entrance of the university. Jake's office faces the water.

I circle back around to the correct side of the building and past students hovered over laptops in clusters of small study cubicles. Some are sitting on old couches and chairs that could use a reupholstering job. Class sizes are small here, at least compared to the larger universities downtown. I scurry past open classroom doors with professors standing in front of the class and students sitting in rows of desks, some of them taking notes, others checking one of their numerous electronic devices for an "urgent" incoming text or Facebook post. There is a general look of disengagement in the people in the back row and alertness in the students sitting in the front row. During exam week this hallway is crowded with students sporting backpacks and headphones, pacing the floors and "cram-talking" with one another. They eagerly await entry into the large auditorium or classroom where they will vie for grades that may put them closer to that hard sought-after degree.

I think about downstairs, on the fourth floor where the education classes meet. Those classrooms seem so crowded to me with their large groups of soon-to-be teachers sitting around tables. Seeing them takes me back to my own teacher education training. I spent countless days with other budding teachers sitting in a classroom gabbing about our recent internships. The room I sat in seemed like an exact replica of the one I pass on my way to the fifth floor, although my experience as an education student was in another time and in another place. Some things never change, I suppose.

There is a line of faculty offices that runs along a corridor facing the front of the building. Like many universities, these offices are grouped by department or subject discipline. However, in Jake's case, his colleagues' offices are located down on the fourth floor with a lot of the other education professors and closer to the main education office. How did that happen? I immediately think about what I know about adult education in higher education and its history as a marginalized department, often on the fringes of education departments. The displacement of these offices sends a scattered message about our program.

I am always surprised by how few doors are open when I walk down this hallway. Perhaps some faculty are on sabbatical. Maybe some prefer to work from home on non-teaching days. Who knows? Silos. This is what a friend once described it to me as. I see some doors are open and I can never seem to stop myself from peering in. Invariably I see faculty hunched over at their computers, working away. So much to do, so little time. Book-lined shelves and piles of paper taking up space on desks and tops of industrial-grey filing cabinets. They all have them.

Jake reaches his office a couple of minutes after me. He obviously took another route because I did not see him in passing. I was standing there alone long enough to scan the bulletin board beside his door, for the updated information on the new PhD program. He's got a lot on his plate. We exchange cheerful hellos and he thanks me for the coffee, while jiggling the key in the lock on his door. He invites me in to take a seat on one of the chairs at the small table beside one of the bookshelves. He quickly checks his voice mail on his office phone, and scribbles something in pencil on a yellow post-it. I get the sense that he is not here every day this time of year. The room has a lived-in feel, it's busy with the artifacts of the life of a professor—pictures, degrees on the wall, coffee cups—it is cozy. It feels comfortable and welcoming.

The university in which Jake works is a small liberal arts institution with a dedication to a personalized approach to student learning, flexible programming, and community connections. In addition, features that make the school unique to the Atlantic Canada region are its commitment to supporting the advancement of women and that it upholds a tradition of social responsibility sought through critical thought and engaged action. Academic freedom, accountability, creativity, engagement, professionalism, and respect comprise the list of values that round out the character of this institution. Furthermore, the university operates under the guidance of a vision of liberal education that characterises small liberal arts schools across North America. According to the Association for American Colleges and Universities (2012) a liberal education is:

> An approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as

> well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings (para.1).

On the university's website there is an explicit reference to a commitment toward becoming an environment for transformative learning. At the same time, it is not surprising that there is no clear articulation of transformative learning nor how, in practice, the university aims to support transformative learning experiences for students. Instead, like in many other facets of higher education today, the broader focus appears to be on producing competent, resourceful, and skilled human capital to keep the global market economy alive and flourishing. The instrumental view of learning that seems to bolster the university's vision fits the above global market agenda well. Dirkx (1998) explains that to hold an instrumental view of learning is to see learning as a process of adapting to the needs and demands of a broader social context. This vision gives way to an accompanying set of priorities which aim to focus on the number, variety, and quality of social experiences for students to choose from. However, such an agenda begs the question as to whether or not the current focus is conducive to supporting transformative learning or if priorities need to shift and a clearer vision of learning needs to be articulated.

The university sells a particular brand of educational experience so it can remain a competitive institution in the global market economy. Moreover it does so by focusing on the product it sells and on keeping students in school. For instance the school claims leadership in various areas of education such as such as flexible education, professional studies, arts and sciences, and applied research. This particular message serves two ends. First it alerts students—the consumers—to the fact that they have multiple programs (product) from which to choose. This message also has a second, more implicit, purpose which is to give the university a

competitive edge amongst other schools in the region. The rise of services that are designated to support student retention is another indicator that the university is deeply focused on promoting student experience. For example, like most schools in North America, Jake's university continues to implement services that are designed to support students' educational and social experiences for the purpose of student retention. Expanding counselling and academic support services and creating extra courses that students can take to improve their GPAs are examples of such services. However, according to researchers Arum and Roksa (2011), enrolment actually has little to do with learning. Their research illustrates that learning and engagement are two fundamental factors to students staying in school and finishing their degrees. Although retention-related services may be beneficial to students' social and personal development, which, arguably, could contribute to their learning, they do not necessarily add to the depth and quality of what and *how* students learn.

In this chapter I assert that a serious paradigm shift is needed in how teaching and learning is conceptualized and supported in the university in order for the institution to be an environment for transformative learning. The university can be a context that changes students' lives and enhances their critical thinking skills and sense of social responsibility. I suggest that to be such a context requires conceptualizing the university as a place, where *adults* come to *learn*.

For the remainder of this chapter I will refer to transformative learning as deep and *potentially* transformative. In a subsequent section I explain that transformative learning is a potential outcome of higher education, but that educators cannot assume that students will undergo transformation, nor whether this will occur in the classroom. I also claim that to be a transformative learning environment means first understanding the principles of how adults learn. Furthermore, university educators need to provide a certain quality of classroom context

where deep and potentially transformative learning could actually occur. I will first describe the current climate in higher education, including the current student body and the expectations placed upon teaching professors in their jobs. I will then move into a discussion about the university as an adult learning context and suggest ways that educators can support transformative learning by creating specific contexts in the classroom that are built on a set common adult learning principles. I conclude once again with Jake, whose life and life's work has been described in detail up until this point. I explore how he is entangled in the various institutional processes that surround his academic work. I also elucidate how Jake remains authentic to the views, principles, and values about teaching and learning that he has as an academic with more critical/radical views on student learning.

"Quality" Higher Education Today

There is a long standing vision of universities as institutions that are fueled by goals of gaining status and obtaining funding through research initiatives. According to Currie (2009), "Total research productivity of Canadian universities, both in terms of numbers of papers published and in terms of impact, is strongly related to total federal granting council funding" (para.5). Academics experience this reality as part of the expectations for research and publication placed on them by the institutions they work for and the scholarly fields they are associated with. An active research program makes up one-third of an academic's job responsibilities alongside of teaching and contributing to university service. Byrne (2010) notes that, in a study done by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, it was reported that seventy percent of university faculty surveyed at six Canadian universities say the institutions they work for actually value research over teaching. Therefore in most institutions, the pressure

to research and publish is heightened by a reward system that makes it difficult to obtain tenure and promotion without a good publication record.

Although the demand for highly productive faculty research agendas is still alive and well today, the academic market is demanding more. Multiple stakeholders, such as governments, businesses, and even universities themselves, are concerned about the quality of academic programs and their capability in meeting the manpower needs of the global market economy. In this climate most universities are faced with a call to action of sorts, to provide verification of what students are learning and accountability for overall institution-wide educational quality. As a result, university professors are also facing increasing pressures to change their teaching practices to meet the needs of students who view learning as a product for purchase. Competition and capital gain has meant that credentialism, as opposed to intellectual pursuit for its own sake, dominates higher education (Axelrod, 2002). More than ever, students today are motivated to obtain as many credentials as possible to gain an edge over their peers and obtain a job in a highly competitive and goal-oriented society that continues to raise the bar.

There are growing pressures from society, including communities, government, business, and incoming students for universities to provide a quality education—students have to be employment-ready when they graduate. In Europe the situation is similar to here in North America. For example Fallows and Steven (2000) conducted a study at the University of Luton in the United Kingdom (UK) that examined the university's respond to a call for employment-ready graduates from the U K National inquiry into Higher Education and Employment Division of the Department for Education. The authors report that employees are looking for students who "not only have specific skills and knowledge, but with the ability to be proactive, to see and respond to problems creatively and autonomously" (p. 76). They explain that "All the predicted

trends in the world of employment suggest that these pressures will increase" (p.76). The former statement is evidence that, although the current student body may seek an education that leaves them employable at the end of their degree program, the world continues to demand critical thinkers and creative problem solvers as well. Hainline, Gains, Feather, Padilla, and Terry (2010) also support this claim and suggest that the challenge for institutions of higher education is "to provide a career-relevant education that also produces critical, enlightened thinkers and lifelong learners" (para. 9). However, it is troubling that, in universities shifting their priorities to meet economic demands that come with this challenge, there has been a noticeable increase in focus on student social experiences and a decrease in engagement of students and professors from the "deep and intense learning that traditionally characterized higher education" (Côté & Allahar,2007, p. 9). Studies done by scholars such as Arum and Roksa in their book *Academically Adrift* (2011) support such concerns about the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. The authors' data on the general academic competence of undergraduates confirms that students today are exiting many North American universities with unacceptably low levels of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and even basic written communication skills.

Universities across Canada are promoting visions of excellence in teaching and learning as a strategic goal in response to the pressure to produce work-place ready individuals who are also intellectually competent and capable of higher order thinking and problem solving. The growing number of universities that have commissioned internal faculty committees to examine the quality of teaching and learning in their institutions is evidence of this response to pressure. For more than two decades, Canadian universities have made strides in shifting focus to improving their commitments to teaching by revising institution vision statements to include a teaching focus, increasing attention to teaching excellence through teaching awards, offering

various faculty development initiatives and through developing teaching and learning centres to support faculty teaching. Although these factors may signal a shift in rhetoric from teaching-centred to student-centred teaching, many analysts still question the quality of student learning and faculty teaching in university classrooms.

A Call for Student-Centered Learning

The current student body is more diverse in ethnicity, age, learning needs, and have different expectations of their educational experiences than did the collegiate groups in the past. For example, at the small university where Jake teaches, the student body is comprised of approximately four thousand full-time and part-time students representing some fifty-four different countries. Likewise, in terms of age distribution, it is not uncommon to have 17-year old students sharing classrooms with 50-year old students and individuals of every age in between. Furthermore, the school also offers some of its programs through distance education and through cohorts of special interest groups. As the student body and the contexts for learning are constantly changing, university professors are now, more than ever, being held accountable for using teaching practices that optimize student engagement and student-centred learning. Hainline et al. (2010) stress that "Different modes of teaching must take advantage of students' various learning styles as student populations become more ethnically and economically diverse" (p. 7). Many believe that instructors play an important role in student learning and thus a commitment to teaching is vital to the quality of learning experiences that students have in university. As a result, teaching professors across all disciplines have been encouraged to take up a commitment to teaching (along with their research) and take initiatives to improve their practices to ensure they are student-centred.

There is a significant amount of empirical research on teaching and learning that indicates a paradigm shift from an emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on student learning in higher education. These studies have contributed to a greater understanding of how faculty teach and its relationship to student learning (see Biggs & Tang, 2011; Chickering & Gamson, 1991; Goodman, Magolda, Seifert, & King, 2011; Ramsden, 1992). Specifically, many current studies in the literature on teaching twenty-first century students favour various student-centred practices for professors to use in order to transform their approaches and move them away from traditional lectures. Researchers that study student-centered teaching methods claim that undergraduate students today expect the use of interactive technology, engaging activities, collaborative learning, immediacy and connectivity, flexibility in grading, clarity of guidelines and expectations, frequent feedback on work and progress, and practices that address stress and academic ethics in their university classes (Dede, 2005; Howe & Strauss 2000; Oblinger, 2003; Skiba & Barton, 2006).

Investing Time into Teaching: An Atypical Reality

Universities are looking to professors to use some of the above techniques to improve their teaching practices and ensure they are student-centred. Yet, academic faculty have several competing, time consuming factors in their roles in the university that hinder their devotion to improving teaching. For example it is well known that faculty are under intense pressure to meet institutional demands for research productivity. The perennial reward system still prevails even in teaching-intensive institutions where faculty are granted the choice to take a teaching route to earning tenure and promotion. For example in Jake's workplace, faculty can choose a tenure and promotion evaluation process that requires demonstrated evidence of long-standing teaching excellence, written scholarship and publication on teaching, and contributions to teaching-related

innovations in the university (such as e-learning, workshops, course design etc.). Despite having this choice Jake still faced the familiar restraints of the teaching-research dichotomy when it came to applying for promotion because his research record "wasn't as strong as some of [his] colleagues' research records." It is imperative that universities adequately address this reward structure that privileges faculty research over teaching because it hinders faculty teaching improvement efforts.

A second time consuming factor for faculty is the high expectations they face to make significant contributions to university service. For example, Jake claims that he spends anywhere from ten to fifteen hours per week doing administrative work and serving on faculty committees related to teaching and to academic governance. As Jake explains "There is quite a significant demand on faculty time to keep the university running." In addition, faculty have teaching-related duties outside of the classroom that take up their time. Examples of these duties include grading, invigilating exams, holding office hours to meet with students, and playing various advisory roles. Collectively, the many facets of the job leave faculty with little time or incentive to improve their teaching. Jake seems to be somewhat of an exception to this, that despite sharing in the competing demands of the university that take up at least half of his total work time, he still chooses to make teaching a priority—this why he makes for an appropriate example to draw on in this research.

The reality that faculty have little time to improve their teaching could be an explanation for the number of sources offered to them to provide a quick fix for improving the practical side of teaching practice. Such resources include books, articles, online works, and in-person faculty development initiatives as well. These sources are attractive because they offer faculty explicit, observable outcomes that might make it seem like they are improving their teaching (see for

example Boice, 2000; Svinicki &McKeachie, 2011). A quote from Boice's (2000) description of his book *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus* sums up this point as well: "By following its practical, easy-to-use rules, novice faculty can learn to teach with the highest levels of student approval, involvement, and comprehension, with only modest preparation time and a greater reliance on spontaneity and student participation" (np). In a similar vein, it is typical for some university faculty development programs to respond to institutional pressures by providing teaching support such as instructional technologies or course design advice, that are easy to learn and to implement. Quite often these instructional design strategies follow an accountability model that insists upon predictable behavioural objectives that can be assessed and measured. However, these quick-fix and superficial approaches do not necessarily take into consideration the learning environment and the fail to meaningfully address the importance of supporting contexts that are conducive to deep and potentially transformative learning. These ameliorative measures prove, at best, meagre in their effectiveness and, at worst, just another time drain.

The wide availability and promotion of quick-fix resources for teaching also hints at another teaching-related issue in higher education. There is a lack of preparation of many university faculty members (aside from professional programs like education) for knowing how to teach. A recent Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario study reports that many university instructors have minimal or no formal training as teachers (Britnell et al., 2010). In this study, almost all faculty surveyed (93.3 %) reported learning how to teach through a "trial and error" or "learn by doing" approach (p.20). According to Scott and Scott (n.d.) "Universities prepare scholars for their research pursuits through higher degree programs but preparation for teaching is limited" (p. 1). Similarly, Knapper (2010) asserts that faculty's conceptions of good teaching is likely highly variable and frequently associated with their own experiences as a

learner. The author claims that many faculty likely rely on knowledge of instruction gained from observing their academic mentors in graduate school rather than drawing upon evidence-based practice. This evidence suggests that a shocking majority of university faculty enter the classroom without any sound, research-based principles to base their teaching on, let alone principles that are connected to fostering deep and potentially transformative learning for a distinct adult student body.

Shifting Gears: The University as an Adult Learning Context

Adult education has the philosophy, theory, and knowledge of practice to support a vision of transformative learning in the university that also reflects the principles of liberal education listed at the beginning of this chapter. Adult education is grounded in the purposes of serving the individual and society, which connects well with the university's mission to help students to develop a sense of social responsibility and to empower and prepare them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change on an intellectual and practical level. Merriam and Brockett (2007) echo this point and claim "Like other professional fields that strive to serve individuals and society, adult education is ultimately concerned with practice" (p.236).

Adult educators, including those in higher education, are typically concerned with a set of commonly-held adult learning principles to guide their instructional practice and to create supportive and potentially transformative learning contexts in the classroom. A number of sources suggest a common set of principles that are indicative of adult learning (see Brookfield, 1986; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). These sources suggest that:

- adults have diverse learning needs, preferences, backgrounds, experiences and skills;

- adults learn in environments that support sharing experiences, critical reflection;
- adults value being able to participate in planning their learning;
- adults learning needs to be meaningful to their life situation and in some cases, have practical implications;
- adults are motivated by a variety of factors;
- and adults' "self-concept moves from dependency to independency as individuals grow in responsibilities, experience, and confidence (Brookfield, 1986, p. 38).

Moreover, there is a prominent body of adult education literature that provides a solid foundation of studies that connect adult learning principles in theory and in practice to transformative learning. This literature base is an appropriate place to look for a way to articulate a vision of deep and potentially transformative learning in the university and a vision for practice that also matches the principles of liberal education.

A Context for Deep and Potentially Transformative Learning

Cranton (2002) provides a comprehensive summary of the transformative learning process. She claims that when an individual, through some event, becomes aware of "holding a limiting or distorted view" (p.64) there is potential for transformative learning. This view that the author refers to encompasses the individuals' system of beliefs, values, assumptions, and so on. She explains further "If the individual critically examines this view, opens herself to alternatives, and consequently changes the way she sees things, she has transformed some part of how she makes meaning out of the world" (p.64). Or put another way, transformation occurs when an individual's view on some aspect of the world is changed by a learning experience.

There are a number of examples of foundational perspectives of transformative learning theory that have been studied and critiqued widely in the theoretical and empirical literature (see Boyd, 1991; Daloz, 1986; Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1991). These theoretical variations differ primarily on the grounds of what each scholar assumes about the learning process. For example Boyd (1991) sees transformation as individuation or becoming aware of ones' self. On the other hand, Freire (1970) claims that transformation involves individual emancipation and social consciousness-raising. Another distinction by Daloz (1986) is transformation occurs as a result of an individual transitioning through developmental phases in life. Finally Mezirow (1991) sees transformation or, more specifically, perspective transformation, as making meaning of one's experiences through critical reflection.

Mezirow's (1991) iteration of transformative learning is the most well-known theories in adult and higher education. The author names three interconnected components that are central to the process of transformative learning: the centrality of experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse. Essentially, when learners engage with discourse, it enables them to reflect critically on their experiences and question their assumptions, beliefs, and values that are embedded in those experiences. According to Taylor (2000), when these three components are present, individuals revise their interpretations of experiences or form new interpretations—this process can lead to transformation. For the purpose of this research, I align the subsequent sections of this chapter with the literature base that draws on a Mezirownian perspective of transformative learning.

Despite the named differences of the theories discussed above, each is linked by a number of common assumptions. For example each of the above theories underscores the importance of a dialectical relationship with self and the social world as part of the learning

experience. According to his review of all four iterations of these transformative learning theories, Dirkx (1998) contends that it is through dialogue, critique, reflection, and action individuals (and societies) can be freed from the coercive forces that prevent actualization of their full potential. Thus transformative learning is a necessity for "both personal and social change as a means for enhancing freedom within our lives" (p.9). Second, the multiples works emphasize the prominence knowledge construction as a social process of meaning making within adult learning experiences. Adults are not passive receptacles for knowledge; but rather active agents in constructing, reconstructing, and co-constructing knowledge with others. In addition, for learning to be meaningful, it must be significant and valuable to the learner, or to a group of learners. Finally all four authors assert that it is imperative to view a person and their learning processes within the broader social, political, cultural contexts in which their lives are lived. These contexts have a shaping effect on what and how individuals come to learn but also on the meaning that they attribute to what is learned and how it is learned.

The common themes that link the various perspectives on transformative learning also accord well with the principles of liberal arts education. For instance, the liberal arts principle of student empowerment and social responsibility can be realized by fostering student dialectical relationships with the self and the social world through critical reflection and dialogue. Both of these practices can be built into students' learning experiences. Furthermore, educators can foster contexts that support transformative learning and help students do deal with complexity, diversity, and change in the social world. Dirkx (1998) asserts that transformative learning is "essentially a way of understanding adult learning as a meaning-making process aimed at fostering a democratic vision of society and self-actualization of individuals" (p.9). Regardless of the theoretical perspective, creating contexts for potential transformative learning can be an

appropriate approach to promoting an adult learning-centred focus in liberal arts institutions in higher education.

The transformative process itself is a bit of an enigma; it is not one-size fits all in terms of what constitutes transformation for an individual learner and for when transformation occurs. The variances have implications for liberal arts institutions and educators who wish to foster transformative learning in the classroom. Individuals are continuously going through processes of change and development in their lives as part of their entangled relationships with the self, others, and the contexts in which they live. Similarly, students enter into teaching and learning situations at various readiness levels for opening up and critically examining their own belief systems, values, and assumptions. It is presumptuous for educators to assume that transformation occurs for all students, even if certain contextual supports are in place in the classroom. Transformative learning may occur independently of the learners' relationship with an educator and their influence on the learning process or it may not occur at all. Dirkx (1998) conceptualizes the educator's role as one of attending to these processes of change that are already at work within individuals. He states "It is best to view our role as one in which we enter, for a time, a journey that is and has been ongoing within the individual and collective lives of those with whom we work" (p.11).

Creating Possibilities for Transformation: A Teacher's Role

With such variance in perspective on what constitutes transformative learning, it is understandable that there be multiple stances on the role of the teacher in the transformative learning processes of students (Cranton, 2002; Dirkx, 1998, Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Yet there is consensus amongst sources in the literature that it is difficult to identify how and when transformation happens with students—it is a very personal and individually-experienced

phenomenon that can be triggered by any positive or negative event. Therefore there can be no best practices or special techniques that foster transformative learning. For example in Chapter Three, Jake gives the advice that teachers need to develop best insights for teaching on a class-by-class basis. Essentially, a teacher's role in the potential transformative learning experiences of their students will depend upon his/her own theoretical perspective. On the other hand, there is a sizeable body of empirically-tested instructional literature that offer suggestions that teachers in higher education (and a variety of other contexts) can use to foster contexts where students have the potential for transformative learning.

Cranton (2002) suggests that teachers can teach as though the possibility for transformation is always a part of the classroom experience for students. Moreover, the author claims that "teaching for transformation is setting the stage and providing the opportunity" (p.69.) Taylor (2000, np) adds that fostering transformation means the "promotion of the ideal conditions for rational discourse". These conditions include contexts for students that are safe, open, and trusting (Cranton, 1994, 2002; Taylor, 2000). Students also need to have access to accurate and complete information and to develop an awareness of personal and social contextual influences (Taylor, 2000, n.p.). Promoting student autonomy and collaboration is another factor that can be built into student's learning experiences that can potentially lead to transformation (James, 1997; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2000). Instructional practices that include activities that that empower students to explore alternative perspectives and also critically assess their guiding value system, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and overall worldview in order to identify those parts that are problematic are also important (Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 2002; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). These opportunities might involve experiential activities such as role play or story telling using physical objects, critical reflection, reflective discourse analysis,

creating activating events and opportunities to act on those revisions (Cranton, 2002; Dirkx, 1998; Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow &Taylor, 2009). Setting the stage for transformation requires faculty to be open to the possibility that learning will likely emerge from the learning experiences described above. Furthermore, as I stated in Chapter Four, faculty need to be committed to modeling the behaviours that they expect of students because they have a significant shaping effect on students' learning.

Remaining Authentic

The discussion today with Jake about adult education and lifelong learning in the university stirred my emotions—mainly frustration—about the university. Our talk also made me see that I wanted to unite with him and teach alongside others like him to promote lifelong learning and to change people's ideas about how learning is promoted in the university.

I felt empathy for Jake because I see him on a sort of soft crusade, but he seems all alone. He is respected and valued for his knowledge about good teaching, but sometimes brushed aside for his ideas about how we learn. Learning is supported by various facets of life and study: biology, sociology, geography, psychological and they're all entangled (as he puts it); however, the institution seems to value only certain points of view on learning—cultural, psychological, and behavioural for example. It really makes me wonder about what the university understands as supporting teaching. Do they only support certain ideas about methodology? Or particular perspectives on student learning? It seems with Jake that the university appreciates his methods, but does not fully support his underlying theories about how adult learning in the university. Do they not realize that the two are interconnected?

In previous chapters I describe Jake as a teacher that fosters deep and potentially transformative learning in the work he does in the classroom. I also assert that Jake embodies the principles of liberal arts education his work with students. Jake is a teacher who believes deeply in creating opportunities for students to interact with one another, to learn from one another, and as well he supports students' independent development as self-directed learners. Jake is a faculty member who takes teaching seriously. He thinks about his own teaching constantly and works to develop his craft in ways that help him to better support the kind of deep and integrated

knowledge structures that he believes students should acquire from their experiences in university. It is also quite clear that Jakes teaching style and beliefs about student learning are different from most mainstream university teachers. The question is then, how does Jake remain authentic and true to his own deep-set beliefs about adult student learning in the university context he works in?

> I've been serving on committees in the university and I've been acting as someone who is paying more attention to learning in the university and the university as an adult learning context. It's been really interesting for me to do that because on one hand people see me as having expertise and making valuable contributions, [and on the other hand] there is a lot of resistance to the insights of adult education and some of [its] radical dimensions such as teaching learners as autonomous and self-directed or seeing education as potentially oppressive.

The university is a context where many support an instrumental view of learning that I defined at the beginning of this chapter. An instrumentalist perspective views knowledge as outside of the learner and it is something to be taken in through the process of learning or adaptation to outside needs and demands of society (Dirkx, 1998). In a sense, if the primary purpose of higher education is to produce workplace ready individuals, then the university is actually a microcosm for the work world. If this is so, then so is the idea of the university as a context that reproduces the power structures contained within that world. Furthermore, teaching and learning are processes that are also entangled in these structures of authority. For example, I quoted Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1998) in Chapter Three in a discussion about the classroom as a place in which the hierarchical power structures of the social world are reproduced in the social roles that teachers and students assume in the classroom. There is a great deal of resistance

to the idea that when people participate in the university system, they often enact a teaching and learning agenda that is entangled in these power structures. Jake claims that people resist challenge structures that provide them with a sense security and a feeling of gratification:

> Universities are fraught power contexts. People are getting certain kinds of things from it. I think people get money from working in a university, so it's a job. They [also] gain social status from the university. There are reasons for preserving certain kinds of ways for doing things. We become concerned about success in the university, things like promotions and tenure. Often times, those [concerns] shift us into doing things that aren't all that helpful to our students. The focus on grades for example, rather than evaluations and feedback. A focus on controlling curriculum instead of curriculum that's open and facilitative of people's learning. A focus on memorizing, or shallow forms of learning is reproductive. It reproduces a particular order and inculcates particular kinds of disciplinary structure in students that I don't think is all that healthy or helpful.

Understanding the university as an adult learning context that supports deep and potentially transformative learning requires a drastic look at how learning happens and is fostered in higher education. Jake and some of his colleges in adult education address these notions of reproductive power structures that are embedded deep in the university. The adult education graduate program is a platform to expose students to such a critical stance on learning and the university. The mission of this graduate program, along with exposing students to methods and experiences of teaching adults, is to "sharpen students' critical awareness of the ways lifelong learning contributes to the production and reproduction of social and cultural structures and, reciprocally, the ways those structures enable and constrain lifelong learning

processes" (quoted from institutional website). On the other hand, taking such a stance puts the program on the fringes of the university.

> Within the faculty of education we're outside on the edge. We protest, we scream and yell about adult education not being in the school system. In faculty meetings they talk [a lot] about teacher training and, you know we're not just a faculty that trains teachers for work in the school system.

It seems as though the university is just not ready to approach learning in this manner. For example, Jake shares his ideas about learning in the university in his service work on academic planning committees related to teaching and learning. Despite his efforts, this vision of putting learning first and concentrating our efforts on helping students to form deep, interconnected knowledge structures (a process that can be potentially transformative) is often outright criticized.

> I think part of it is kind of this radical view...their view would be much more sort of bureaucratic, pragmatic and also we have to be responsive to the students who are consumers of what we're doing. So we have a learning plan that's going to sell our institution to people who are going to buy good learning. It's making clear the value of the credential we provide. The learning aspects of it, I find, are [diminished] and so as an adult educator in the university this is sort of my struggle. I feel like I've got lots of interesting perspective, but I'm in a context that's difficult. But I do my bit. I keep going to these committee meetings.

Is it that this view of teaching and learning (as reproducing power structures) is so deeply embedded in the ongoing actions and vision in the university that people do not notice it or are

unwilling to acknowledge it? Is that why, perhaps, teachers like Jake, despite their talents in the classroom, are marginalized or deemed idealistic?

Jake has developed his teaching over time and his efforts have been recognized by people in the university. On occasion he leads teaching-related professional development workshops for his colleagues where he shares his knowledge and new ideas about teaching adult learners with others. Jake has also been awarded recognition by the university with an award for his teaching in the past. And as mentioned previously in this chapter, Jake was also granted tenure and promotion based on his substantial teaching record. It is fair to say that he is recognized and respected as someone who has a lot of expertise as a teacher and also given the space and freedom to pursue his own agenda in the classroom.

> One of the ways that this university supports my teaching is that it doesn't really ask me to teach to a recipe. I have a lot of autonomy so that my vision, even if it is political, is not particularly opposed. I can do very radical things in my classes and as long as I'm not hurting anybody particularly, then people don't question it. I actually have quite a bit of so called academic freedom. I've had a lot of opportunity to act very politically in my courses [and] in my program and develop something that can be quite radical and transformative.

Continuing to Open Doors

—So have you decided to do it?

Yes. I know now that it is something I want to do. I want to apply to do a PhD.

—That's great, Launa. I'm glad you're considering it.

No, not considering, I'm doing it. I'm one hundred percent doing this now.

***

I was struggling with figuring out what I wanted to do after I graduated from this degree. I was even contemplating giving up this thesis work and doing a shorter project instead. Why would I go through all of this lengthy process if I'm not going on to do academic work in the future? I became very career-focused, a bit distracted from the project so to speak, despite the fact that I treasured this project. I loved the fact that I got to delve into a topic that I was so keen on an interested in: teaching. I started poring over career books and completing online personality inventories with the hope of discovering the exact path that I could follow once I had a MA degree in hand. I laughed off talk of me doing academic work. Even with people who knew my capabilities well—my partner, my best friend, Jake, some academic supervisors and other peers. I danced around the notion of taking this education yet another step further.

The truth is, I didn't want to feel like a sell-out. I feared having to compromise my own values in order to make it in the world of academe. I heard so many stories of young academics who have had to compromise their own passions in order to pursue research agendas that suited a certain competitive career path or felt intense pressure to publish for the sake of building their CVs. And how about those departmental politics that positioned senior faculty over junior faculty? Finding a way to be a part of a greater academic conversation and still remain authentic to who I am and what I believe as an educator seemed inconceivable to me.

***

We had been sitting in his office for over an hour, wrapping up our very last interview that I needed for this research. I wanted to bring it up—the conversation I wanted to have with him for a long time. I felt that this was an appropriate time since the interviews were over and we had established a solid trust during the process. I've grown to see him as a role model, a person who doesn't play the same kind of game as the rest.

***

I know I want to be an academic because I love the work I do and I think that I am most challenged and excited by the opportunities I have to change lives, and change people's thinking about teaching and learning. Moreover, I want to give students the opportunity to potentially experience the kind of learning that I have here, learning that has transformed the way I see the world and my role in it. I see myself speaking about this stuff, writing about it too. Passing along the message of lifelong learning—what I've learned and continue to learn. But I worry…

—Worry about what?

Playing the game. How do I remain authentic to what I believe and value as an educator in the academic world? I admire that about you and that's what I would aspire to be.

— For a young academic like yourself going through, there is ways of doing it. I think people get sort of stirred up into it but it's possible to get through this whole thing authentically. It isn't easy. It does cause grief. It's caused me grief as I've struggled through getting tenure and promotion. I feel that I deserve to be a full Prof. even though I didn't take the same route as other people. I feel like I'm where I should be.

You're right. That's it right there. To me that's worth it.

—Honestly it's possible to be here and do good work without going that route. I mean I think I prove it. I don't have this massive CV. I just kind of stuck with small little things and tried to be as authentic as I could and as helpful as I could to students, to colleagues, and to the field. I'm not a big writer, I haven't published a lot. I've published good stuff, the important stuff. Quality.

***

I was really thinking about what it is I want to do and I can't picture any other job where I could expand and grow my own knowledge and be stretched all the time, but also work and teach and help change people's ideas about the world. The answer I felt, was that just to be and do what I believe in. Be that person in the university, the critic. It does not matter because when it comes down to it, it is all about working with students and the hope that I can help them to think about the lenses through which they view teaching and learning. Jake has helped me to feel proud about the views I have on teaching in a university and the roles that I play or could play. He is, in essence, leading by example. I too, want to open those doors.

A way that Jake maintains authenticity as a teacher in a university by acting as someone who opens doors to another complex and sophisticated dimension of how teaching and learning are understood in the university. He contributes to a greater conversation about teaching and learning in higher education by bringing to the conference table and to the classroom, new ways of thinking about learning, about how and why teachers teach. In essence, he takes a soft-radical approach and helps people to walk through these doors. Yet it remains difficult for him to get people in the larger university context to walk through these doors—there is such a history of power and hierarchy embedded in the university structure that he is met with reservation and sometimes, outright rejection for any ideas that oppose this system. However, entangling himself in in the university context, most notably with students in his classrooms, is one way that his message gets across and slowly influences change—one class and one student at a time.

Onward: A Need for Change

The student body in higher education is, indeed, made up of adult learners; however, most of the teaching that occurs in higher education is not based on an understanding of how adults learn. Rather, it seems that the university upholds an instrumentalist conception of

teaching and learning in a rapidly changing climate in higher education. As a result, many people are left wondering why students (and arguably teachers) are not experiencing more deep and engaged learning. Institutions are pressed to meet the demands of the marketplace and institution-wide visions of teaching and learning have changed to be more student-centred. Furthermore, there has been little evidence about how institutions like Jake's plan on supporting adult learning and further, how they will become a context that is potentially transformative. Moreover, the university's adhesion to the principles and values of liberal arts education is slipping as a result.

The credential game that professors, students, and the university at large play is not conducive to promoting deep and potentially transformative learning. Can students, who are focused primarily on getting an *A*, be open to the possibility of being changed by what they are learning? Teaching and learning are being implicitly treated as a business exchange and universities seem to be operating in ways that make them oblivious to structures that are in place that hinder student learning. Traditional, instrumentalist views of learning and teaching approaches that are based on trial and error are perpetuating shallow approaches to learning in the classroom. Certain supports have to be in place in order to have a commitment to deep and potentially transformative learning, especially more effective support for faculty teaching. Universities however are focused on implementing student services that enhance student experiences and continue to increase its demands of faculty in terms of research outputs and service commitments that they are left with little time or inceptive to improve their teaching. Finally, if the university wants to be an environment that fosters deep, potentially transformative learning, and one that accords with the principles of liberal arts education it requires a shift in focus that encompasses student experience in its goals of supporting *lifelong learning*.

Making this shift in Jake's university may not be as difficult as it may seem. One need not look further than the abundance of adult education literature and the graduate program on campus for potential leadership and guidance in how to support adult lifelong learning. It is here, on a daily basis, that teachers like Jake, put the principles of adult learning into practice. If universities want students to develop the necessary critical thinking and problem solving skills needed to be active, responsible citizens *and* workplace ready, it is imperative that educators in the university system support classroom contexts that are built on an understanding of sound learning principles and use practices that help adult learners to flourish, learn, and possibly experience transformation.

Chapter 6

Moving Forward

> We are at our best when we make our lives and our search for meaning available as a resource for another's learning. To be a teacher means more than to be a professional who possesses knowledge and skills. It is to have the courage to enter into a common search with others (J.H. Westerhoff, 1987, p. 193).

In a way I am sad that our interviews will come to an end soon. But also I see that Jake and I have taken a step toward a shared understanding of one another as teacher and student, entwined in each other's lives of learning and making sense of the world. We have been deepening our entanglement throughout the past few months although I have not really realized this until now. The power of story has helped. Sharing narratives of experiences and discussing how our experiences are similar is a powerful part of our exchange. Making sense of these experiences through a process of sharing also entangles us. As a result I feel a bond. I feel that I have a clearer, yet more complex vision of myself as a learner and a teacher.

Adult education professors are a diverse group of individuals, much like the graduate students that they work with inside and outside of the classroom. As a group, these faculty members hail from a variety of socio-cultural contexts, and have had diverse educational and professional experiences that have led them to a career in the field of adult education. In most university settings adult education faculty are situated in graduate departments within broader education departments; however, over time, adult education faculty have struggled with advancement from the periphery of education departments to more legitimate positions of value within higher education. This is an ongoing challenge that many adult education professors grapple with as part of their day-to-day work in the university. In some cases the professors with alternative views from the mainstream understanding of how learning should be supported are often deemed idealistic or even radical.

The university is a context where the adult student body come to learn on a daily basis. Yet, the university's concern with student experience serves a quality assurance agenda more than it meets the needs of adult student learning. For example, teaching supports that are available to the faculty typically rely on an accountability model that insists upon predictable behavioural objectives that can be assessed and measured. On the contrary, adult education can provide a conceptual framework, a theoretical foundation, and a practical platform for adult learning, teacher improvement efforts, and even a reformed learning-centered vision in higher education. The field has a distinct focus on practice, but it is not typically looked to for leadership or guidance on teaching–related matters in higher education.

Some universities, such as the small liberal arts university that Jake teaches in, profess an explicit vision of being a context for transformative learning. In reality this vision is not being enacted in the university at large. On the other hand, in this inquiry I highlighted the adult education program in Jake's university as a place to look for examples of deep and potentially transformative learning. Jake is one individual who witnesses transformative learning in his program and in the classroom on a regular basis because he is a teacher who fosters contexts that are conducive to critical thinking, dialogue, participation, and the emergent nature of the learning process.

Many adult education professors put sound principles for teaching adults into practice every day. Ultimately they can be considered role models for what it means to teach for deep and potentially transformative learning; however, their voices are not adequately represented in the literature in adult and higher education and in the university itself. For example there is little known about their roles as teachers and academics in higher education. Nor is there great deal known about how they came to be the teachers they are and the influence this has on their

classroom practice when working with adult learners. The aim of this work with Jake was to gain his individual perspective as a professor of adult education in order to understand more about teaching in adult higher education. I also aimed to highlight Jake's experiences as a way to conceptualize a leadership role for adult education in providing direction and guidance in university-wide teacher improvement initiatives that adhere to an adult learning vision in higher education.

In this work I focused on understanding the personal, professional, and contextual factors that influence the teaching practices of Dr. Jake Roberts, a professor of adult education who teaches in a small liberal arts university in Nova Scotia. I used a life history research approach (see Appendix A for description of methodology) that elucidates how Jake's lived experiences, in context, have shaped him as a teacher. More specifically, I sought to understand how Jake's lived experiences have shaped his knowledge and long standing beliefs, values, and attitudes about teaching and learning. This qualitative study operated on two levels by exploring the relationship between Jake and the larger institutional context in which he works. First I developed a life history account of Jake, an exceptional teacher who continues to learn about teaching and create contexts for deep and potentially transformative learning. Second, I examined the complex relationships between Jake and the broader university context in which he works. The main theme of entanglement emerged from a close analysis of Jake's life history and also from my own self-reflection on the two-year student-teacher relationship that I have with Jake and as part of the conversations that guided this life history research.

Key Findings from Jake's Lived Experiences

Being entangled in learning is the nexus of the teacher-student relationship. And these relationships are created and recreated over a teacher's life time as they intertwine themselves in

the lives of students with whom they share ideas and learn. For instance throughout this inquiry I referred to my own student-teacher relationship with Jake as an entangled co-learning process. What we each bring to the relationship is a personal history of learning that has shaped the set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours that are deeply embedded in our own past entanglements that we have lived and experienced in various contexts across our lifetime. As both teachers and learners Jake and I have each been entangled in the social world and have co-constructed our knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes about teaching and learning. In relation with one another and with all of our attached learning "baggage" we, as teacher and student together, create the teaching/learning world.

In learning about Jake's lived experiences and knowing him as a teacher I theorize that an effective teacher is someone who entangles students in learning. Moreover, effective teaching is developed over time through practice and reflection on the interplay of teaching and learning contexts and the how the individual makes sense of their entanglement in those contexts. Like all teachers, Jake had lived entanglements in teaching and learning situations that have contributed to his diversity as an educator in the classroom. Jake found that by learning about what he brings to the classroom in terms of his own knowledge, beliefs, values, intentions, and personal ways of knowing is a critical piece to understanding how his teaching impacts his students' lives and what they are learning:

> A lot of what we've talked about has informed my thinking about what this program is about, what my role is in it, what role I play as an intellectual, and how I'm interacting with and shaping the lives of students. So it's really good to actually have an opportunity to think back on things and see where I've come from and how I've gotten to where I am.

I have been able to recognize the things that are good and some of the things that haven't been so good and things that I want to fix. It's been really very interesting.

There is an abundance of well-known research in adult education that explores the use of using narratives as a tool for adult learners to use for critical reflection and sharing experiences (see Dominice, 2000; Karpiak, 2000; Rossiter & Clark, 2007; Rossiter, 1999, 2002). In addition to this collection of sources, I have realized through this research process that when teachers share their own appropriate narratives of lived experiences with their students, it helps to balance the natural power structure that exists between the two in each and every classroom. An excerpt from my research journal helps to explain this phenomenon, from the student's perspective:

Jake has a lot more "practical" field experience than I ever thought he did. He never really shared a lot of that with our class—I think, in retrospect, he should! I felt the playing field level as this interview progressed and the more I got to know the whole person, the better I could relate and the less he felt like the other to me. I know that I feel a more real, person-to-person connection with him after learning about his background. Before I had an image of him as a professor and as someone above me, even though he never deliberately treated me that way. I think that many people have been socialized to put teachers/professors or other people of authority on a pedestal—this is so ingrained in our up-brining and experiences with formal teaching and learning. I think that the reality of this socialization makes it hard for teachers/professors to shed their authority and see students as equals and be seen by students as equals.

The tales that teachers tell are important because they are constantly in the process of entangling themselves in the lives and in the learning processes of other people. Sharing relevant and appropriate clips of a life history is a way that adult education professors and their students can find commonalities with each other. Similarly, this connection could possibly enrich the value of learning as a social activity in the classroom community. On the other hand, it could be argued that professors sharing personal narratives may hinder the classroom environment. It is possible to run the risk of becoming too teacher-centred, which could result in students disengaging from learning altogether.

Jake told a story of his ongoing development as a teacher-learner. Multiple findings that come directly from Jake's story can serve as points of critical reflection for other adult education faculty to understand what it requires to be entangled in teaching in learning. One point for critical reflection is for individual faculty members to be able to conceptualize their own entangled teaching and learning experiences. Based on Jake's story I theorize that part of developing as a teacher involves a teacher knowing how they are entangled in teaching and learning over their life time in order to track their development as teacher-learners. Knowing how these views and behaviours came to be is also a part of understanding for the purpose of change and improving their craft.

There is a deep connection between Jake's entanglements in various contexts, the socio-cultural factors within those contexts, and two aspects of his teaching: the classroom environments that he creates and his understanding of student learning. First, the contexts that Jake experienced in his early life —home, school, community, and even landscape—impacted his lifelong preferences for learning and his appreciation for informal learning. For example, it is no coincidence that Jake values informal learning as much as he does because he learned best as a child by exploring and experiencing contexts outside of formal school. Closely connected to the actual contexts Jake experienced is the impact that his social class affiliation had on his understanding of teaching and learning. For instance it was not a surprise to find that Jake's experiences living, working, and socializing with various classes of people over his life time has left him with an understanding of how certain social circumstances can support learning while other circumstances hinder learning. As a result, Jake is a teacher who thinks it is important to create safe, exploratory contexts in the classroom. He creates contexts where a diverse group of students can experience collaboration, dialogue, and deep, potentially transformative learning.

In Jake's story I also found that his contextually-shaped, lived experiences in teaching and learning undergird the fundamental purposes of his teaching practice. That is, there is an evident connection between the nature of Jake's past contextualized entanglements in learning and teaching and his intentions in the classroom. From Jake's story, I discern that the classroom is often where he embodies the fundamental purposes of his teaching. These purposes included supporting the flourishing of his students as individuals—to do well, to grow, and to transform—and demonstrating and communicating his beliefs in the centrality of learning in the world. One of the primary ways that he demonstrated these purposes was through his own continuous development as a responsive teacher-learner. Jake discusses his own learning about his craft and his field with his graduate students. In addition he models the kind of deep and ongoing learning he expects from students through demonstrating his own curiosity, passions, commitments, and even his mistakes in his learning.

It is also shown that understanding Jake's lived entanglements in teaching and learning and my own entanglements with Jake is a way to highlight, and honour, the interconnectedness of the teacher-student relationship. Each individual's learning is shaped by the other. It is possible to see how both lives have been shaped by the behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and values that prior teacher role models have demonstrated through their interactions with one another. I suggest that as teachers Jake and I both seek to perpetuate the relationships we have had with past positive teacher role models with our own students. For example, in Jake's story I examined situations in the classroom that brought him gratification in teaching in order to see how he shape's his students' learning. In Jake's case, he found the positive reactions that he received from students who were deeply engaged, and in some cases transformed by his classes, to be profoundly gratifying. According to Jake, these students were the most enjoyable to work with

and thus he invested time and energy into supporting their learning in the classroom and in mentoring them in their academic endeavours outside of the classroom. Therefore understanding what brings him gratification in his work with students, is a good indicator of the type of learning situations that he aims to create in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Jake shapes his students' lives and their learning, and vice versa, as a result of the co-learning that takes place inside and outside of the classroom.

In order to develop as responsive and effective teachers who are entangled in teaching and learning, adult education professors need to be aware of their own unique entanglements in teaching and learning over time. First, faculty need to look critically at the various contexts and the socio-cultural contextual factors—such as class, race, gender— within those contexts that have influenced how they have been entangled in learning and teaching in their lives. A second related point is that faculty need to be aware of how the fundamental purposes of their teaching are formed through these past teaching and learning entanglements. The primary assertion here is that the fundamental purposes of teachers' work is the basis for how they create and organize opportunities for learning in the classroom. Knowing how their entanglements in teaching and learning in various contexts have shaped their perspectives on learning and how to support learning can and thus lead teachers to understanding the roots of why they adopt certain teaching methods in the classroom. Additionally, a portion of a teacher's identity and teaching behaviours come through continuous intake of knowledge and social behaviours about teaching and learning acquired over the course of a life time from various influential teacher role models. Adult education professors can better understand the impact that they have on students' learning (and their lives) if they reflect on how they were influenced by their own prior teacher role models. Professors can benefit from asking questions about which beliefs, behaviours, attitudes, values

and so on, that they are perpetuating with their own students and whether or not these are conducive to supporting student learning or hindering student learning.

Implications for Universities

The institutional realities that exist within the university context where Jake works say a great deal about where priorities lay in higher education. These realities speak to the importance of recognizing and supporting entangled teaching and learning. I have found that the university does not adequately support the kind of potentially transformative learning that it envisions, nor does it provide sufficient support for adult education professors (and other faculty as well) to learn about their entanglements in teaching and learning. Therefore in this section I address a couple of questions that arise from this study. Namely, how can adult education (the literature base and its practitioners) provide leadership and guidance in teaching and learning in higher education? And what shifts would this require in higher education and in the literature on teaching in higher education in order to support this endeavour?

To start, it is incumbent upon universities to examine how adult education departments and the faculty are positioned within the larger institutions themselves. Jake's story confirmed what I have learned from adult education literature about the marginalization of adult education in higher education; however, future practice should not be legitimated by past practice. Instead of keeping adult education departments on the fringes of larger education departments, institutions can to consider looking to adult education for leadership and guidance related to teaching and learning.

Adult education professors, like Jake, who show a dedicated commitment to being entangled in teaching and learning in higher education, have the potential to provide leadership in the areas of teaching practice and in articulating a university-wide vision for adult learning.

Furthermore, the field's focus on practice and deep literature base on transformative learning makes it a suitable source of support for a context that seeks to improve teaching and ultimately the overall quality of student learning. In addition, the field offers sound learning principles and teaching methods that are designed to support learning contexts that empower adult learners to discover what it means to be aware, critical, and expressive in order flourish as active and responsible citizens when they graduate. The principles that describe adult learning can be reference points for liberal arts universities to better articulate and adhere to their visions of liberal arts education.

Universities need to support more research about teaching amongst adult education faculty if they wish to pursue such initiatives with adult education professors and their departments. There is little known about adult education professors within higher education, let alone research in to how they teach and their intentions for their practice. A review of the literature revealed that research on teaching practices done by academics in adult education tends to favour the experiences of adult educators in other realms of the field outside of higher education (for example see Dirkx & Spurgin, 1992; Menges & Rando,1989; Pratt,1992, 1998; Taylor, 2003). However, such studies support conclusions that examining beliefs about teaching is an effective way to gain insight into adult educators 'actions in classroom.

Specifically, more research that is similar to this inquiry that explores how professors of adult education build the fundamental purposes of their teaching that guides their practice would be useful. Further work that looks at if and how adult education professors embody the principles of adult education in the classroom would be helpful for universities in articulating what it looks like to foster deep and potentially transformative learning. Universities would then be better prepared to support faculty who wish to put adult learning principles into practice.

In addition, studies that explore beneath the surface of adult education faculty's teaching can assist university administrators in understanding how individual faculty respond to the institution realities of teaching in the university. After all, if social circumstances shape a person's entanglements in teaching and learning then what about current university contexts might be actually hindering teaching and learning? Having this knowledge will assist institutions in confronting the predominant attitudes and values that could be hindering the way that some faculty work and the degree to which their opinions, needs, and concerns are valued in the university. Additionally, listening to faculty members' stories would be a first step toward addressing the numerous factors that exist in the present university structure that prevent faculty from learning about their teaching. This is a key step to being able to provide faculty with sufficient teaching development efforts that move past superficial approaches to classroom instruction.

Honouring Entanglement

I am plagued with how to write this story and represent the richness of our conversations. How do I convey the emotional entanglement that comes from sitting with another person and hearing their uncut, unedited story? Nothing put on paper will ever be the same. Perhaps what goes on paper can be in honour of the entangled process that we got to go through Jake and I conversed about his life, his teaching, and his learning…and as it turns out, my learning as well.

The goal has changed for me. I no longer have to complete a research project in order to prove to myself that I can do it. The goal has become to represent one life, entangled with another life as a way that I learned about teaching and learning. I will use this work to show my deep thinking about the kind of teacher and academic I want to be. I want my work to be a story of unravelling the tangles that make up who I am as a teacher (and learner) and who Jake is as a teacher and learner in order to provide direction to the kind of teachers and academics we seek to become.

In this story I am speaking to new graduates, new academics, and new teachers. I also want to send a message to experienced faculty about the value of sharing about their own entanglements in teaching and learning. Such interaction can inspire and provide direction for younger faculty for thinking about their futures. There is beauty in these connections. There is powerful impact that they have on students' lives. I am searching for a place to become this teacher and academic that I envision but I am not in this alone, I am a part of something much bigger—teachers before me and those who will come after me. And the story goes on.

References

André, R., & Frost, P. J. (Eds.). (1996). *Researchers hooked on teaching: Noted scholars discuss the synergies of teaching and research (1st ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Arum, R., & Roksa, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago.

Association of American Colleges and Universities (2013). *What is liberal education?* Retrieved February 4, 2013, from http://www.aacu.org/leap/what_is_liberal_education.cfm

Axelrod, P. (2002). *Values in conflict: The university, the marketplace, and the trials of liberal education*. Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Boice, R. (2000). *Advice for new faculty members: nihil nimus*. Columbus, OH: Allyn and Bacon.

Boyd, R. D. (1991). *Personal Transformations in small groups: A Jungian perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Boyer, E. L. (1991). The scholarship of teaching from scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate. *College Teaching*, 39(1), 11-13.

Bracher, M. (1999). Transference, desire, and the ethics of literary pedagogy. *College Literature*, 26(3), 127.

Bracher, M. (2006). *Radical pedagogy: Identity, generativity, and social transformation* (1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Britnell, J., Brockerhoff-Macdonald, B., Carter, L., Dawson, D., Doucet, L., Ever, F., Hall, S., Kerr, D., Liboiron-Grenier, L., McIntyre, G., Mighty, J., Siddall, G., Wilson, J. (2010).

University faculty engagement in teaching development activities phase II. Toronto, ON: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario

Brockett, R. G., & Hiemstra, R. (1991). *Self-Direction in adult learning: Perspectives on theory, research, and practice.* Routledge Series on Theory and Practice of Adult Education in North America. New York, NY: Routledge

Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Brookfield, S. (1993). Self-directed learning, political clarity, and the critical practice of adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 43(4), 227–242. doi:10.1177/0741713693043004002

Brookfield, S. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher (1st ed.).* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. (2006). *The Skillful Teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom [E-reader edition]*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from http://msvu.eblib.com.www.msvu.ca:2048/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=448873

Byrne, C. (2010, November 12). Ontario professors rewarded more for research than. *The Spec*. Retrieved December 11, 2011, from http://www.thespec.com/news/ontario/article/275758--ontario-professors-rewarded-more-for-research-than-for-teaching-study

Candy, P. C. (1991). *Self-Direction for lifelong Learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22 (1), 5-12, 18. Retrieved December 12, 2012, from http://www.jstor.org.www.msvu.ca:2048/stable/10.2307/1177300

Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1991). *Applying the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education (1st ed.)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D., & Connelly, M. (2004). Knowledge, narrative and self-study. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (pp. 575-600). Dordrecht, NL: Springer.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 249–305. doi:10.2307/1167272

Cole, A. L. (April, 1994). Doing life history research—in theory and in practice. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, (pp. 1-28), New Orleans: LA. Retrieved December 10, 2011, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED371005

Cole, A. L. (1999). Teacher educators and teacher education reform: Individual commitments, institutional realities. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 24(3), 281-295. Retrieved August 8th, 2011, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1585876.

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2000). *Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2001). *Lives in context: The art of life history research*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Collins, M. (1996). On contemporary practice and research: Self-directed learning to critical theory." In R. Edwards, A. Hanson, and P. Raggatt (eds.), *Boundaries of Adult Learning: Adult Learners, Education and Training*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Connelly, F. M. and Clandinin, D. J. (1994) Telling teaching stories. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *21(1),* 145-158.

Côté, J. E., & Allahar, A. (2007). *Ivory tower blues: A university system in crisis*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto.

Cranton, P. (1994). Self-Directed and transformative instructional development. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 65(6), 726–744. doi:10.2307/2943826

Cranton, P. (2002). Teaching for transformation. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,(93*), 63–72. doi:10.1002/ace.50

Currie, D. (2009, December 7). The wrong way to fund university research. *University Affairs*. Retrieved from http://www.universityaffairs.ca/the-wrong-way-to-fund-university-research.aspx

Daloz, L. A. (1986). *Effective teaching and mentoring*: *Realising the transformational power of adult learning experiences.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dede, C. (2005). Planning for neomillennial learning styles: Implications for investments in faculty and technology. In D.Oblinger & J.Oblinger (Eds), *Educating the Net generation* (pp. 15.1–15.22). Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE. Retrieved January 31, 2011, from http://www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd ed.),* (pp-1-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Dirkx, J. (1998). Transformative learning theory in the practice of adult education: An overview. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 7, 1–14.

Dirkx, J. M., & Spurgin, M. E. (1992). Implicit theories of Adult Basic Education teachers: How their beliefs about students shape classroom practice. *Adult Basic Education*, 2(1), 20–41.

Dominice, P. (2000). *Learning from our lives: Using educational biographies with adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Fallows, S., & Steven, C. (2000). Building employability skills into the higher education curriculum: a university-wide initiative. *Education + Training*, 42(2), 75-83. Retrieved on November 27th, 2011 from http://www.emeraldinsight.com.www.msvu.ca:2048/journals.htm?articleid=837628&show=abstract

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Galbraith, M. (2003). The adult education professor as mentor: A means to enhance teaching and learning. *The New York Journal of Adult Learning*, *1(1),* 9–20.

Garrison, D. R. (1992). Critical thinking and self-directed learning in adult education: An analysis of responsibility and control issues. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 42(3), 136–148. doi:10.1177/074171369204200302

Goodman, K. M., Magolda, M. B., Seifert, T. A., & King, P. M. (2011). Good practices for student learning: Mixed-method evidence from the Wabash National Study. *About Campus,* 16(1), 2–9. doi:10.1002/abc.20048

Grace, A. (2000). Academic adult education in Canada and the United States (1917-1970): A chronology of their emergence and a conspectus of their development. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, 9,* 65-78.

Griffith, W. S. (1989). Has adult and continuing education fulfilled its early promise? In B. A. Quigley (Ed.), *Fulfilling the promise of adult and continuing education*. New Directions for Continuing Education, 44. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The Theory of Communicative Action (vol. II).* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Hainline, L., Gaines, M., Feather, C. L., Padilla, E., & Terry, E. (2010). Changing students, faculty, and institutions in the twenty-first century. *Peer Review*, *12*(3), 7-10. Retrieved on December 12, 2011 from http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-su10/pr-su10_Changing.cfm

Handley, K., Sturdy, A., Fincham, R. & Clark, T. (2006). Within and beyond communities of practice: making sense of learning through participation, identity and practice. *Journal of Management Studies,* 43(3), 641–653. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00605.x

Hatch, J. A. & Wisniewski, R. (1995). Life history and narrative: questions, issues, and exemplary works. In J. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (Eds.), *Life History and Narrative*, (pp.113-136). New York, NY: Routledge

Hiemstra, R., Sisco, B. (1990). *Individualizing Instruction: Making learning personal, empowering, and successful*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials rising: the next great generation*. Toronto, ON: Random House.

Ingold, T. (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description*. New York, NY: Routledge.

James, P. (1997). Narrative and cultural change: Enabling transformative learning for adults. *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, 37, 135-143.

Janesick, V. (1994). The dance of qualitative research design: metaphor, methodolatry, and meaning. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp.209-220). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Jarvis, P. (2011). *Adult learning in the social context [E-reader version]*. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptiID=958219

Johnson-Bailey, J. & Cervero, R.M. (1998). Power dynamics in teaching and learning practices: An examination of two adult education classrooms. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 17(6),* 389–399. doi:10.1080/0260137980170605

Kagan, D. M. (1992). Implication of research on teacher belief. *Educational Psychologist*, 27(1), 65–90. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep2701_6

Kim, B. (2001). Social constructivism. In M. Orey (Ed.), *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology*. Retrieved January 12, 2012, from http://relectionandpractice.pbworks.com/f/Social%20Constructivism.pdf

Knapper, C. (2010). Changing teaching practice: Barriers and strategies. In J. Christensen Hughes & J. Mighty (Eds.), *Taking stock. Research on teaching and learning in higher education (pp. 229-242). Kingston, ON: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University.*

Knowles, J. G. and Holt-Reynolds, D. (1991). Shaping pedagogies through personal histories in pre-service teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 93, 87-113.

Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers*. New York, NY: Association Press.

Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: from pedagogy to andragogy*. New York, NY: Association Press.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation (1st ed.)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Livingstone, D. W. (2001). *Adult's informal learning: Definitions, findings, gaps and future research.* NALL Working Paper #21–2001. Retrieved January 17th, 2012 from http://www.nall.ca/res/21adultsifnormallearning.htm.

Matthews, J. C. (1998). Somatic knowing and education. *The Educational Forum*, 62(3), 236–242. doi:10.1080/00131729808984349

Marsick, V. J., and Volpe, M. (1999). The nature of and need for informal learning. In V. J.Marsick and M. Volpe (eds.), *Informal Learning on the Job*, *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* 3. San Francisco, CA: Berrett Koehler.

Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E. (1990). *Informal and incidental learning*. London, UK: Routledge.

Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E. (2001). Informal and incidental learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 89, 25–34. doi:10.1002/ace.5

McKay, J., & Kember, D. (1997). Spoon feeding leads to regurgitation: a better diet can result in more digestible learning outcomes. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 16(1), 55–67. doi:10.1080/0729436970160105

McLaughlin, C. (2010). Mentoring: What is it? How do we do it and how do we get more of it? *Health Services Research*, 45(3), 871–884. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6773.2010.01090.x

Menges, R. (2000). Shortcomings of research on evaluating and improving teaching in higher education. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, (83), 5–11. doi:10.1002/tl.8301

Menges, R. J., & Rando, W. C. (1989). What are your assumptions? Improving instruction by examining theories. *College Teaching*, 37(2), 54-60. Retrieved December 7, 2011, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27558333

Merriam, S. B. (2001). Andragogy and self-directed learning: Pillars of adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2001(89), 3–14. doi:10.1002/ace.3

Merriam, S. B., & Brockett, R. G. (2007). *The profession and practice of adult education : An introduction*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S. (1991). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Mott, V.W., & Lee, M. (1996). Learning that comes from the negative interpretation of life experience. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 18(1), 1–23. doi:10.1080/0158037960180101

Mezirow, J. (1985). A critical theory of self-directed learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 25, 17–30. doi:10.1002/ace.36719852504

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice* (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 74, pp. 5-12.) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Mezirow, J., & Taylor, E. W. (2009). *Transformative learning in practice insights from community, workplace, and higher education* [E-reader version]. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptiID=469114

Muchmore, J. A. (2002). Methods and ethics in a life history study of teacher thinking. *The Qualitative Report*, 7(4). Retrieved December 14th, 2011, from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR7-4/muchmore.html

Nussbaum, M.C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Nussbaum, M.C. (1997). *Cultivating humanity: A classical defense of reform in liberal education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Oblinger, D. (2003). Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials: Understanding the "new students." *EDUCAUSE Review*, 38(4), 36-40. Retrieved October 12th, 2011 from http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm0342.pdf

Olsen, B. (2008). Introducing teacher identity and this volume. *Teacher Education Quarterly, Summer,* 3-6.

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(3), 307–332. doi:10.2307/1170741

Pratt, D. D. (1992). Conceptions of teaching. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 42(4), 203 –220. doi:10.1177/074171369204200401

Pratt, D. D. (1998). *Five perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing.

Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London, UK: Routledge.

Rossiter, M., & Clark, M. C. (2007). *Narrative and the practice of adult education*. Malabar, Fl: Krieger Publishing.

Rossiter, M. (1999). A narrative approach to development: Implications for adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50(1), 56.

Rossiter, M. (2002). Narrative and Stories in Adult Teaching and Learning. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved February 10, 2013 from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED473147

Schugurensky, D. (2000). The forms of informal learning: Towards a conceptualization of the field. NALL Working Paper #19–2000. Retrieved February 10, 2013 from http://www.nall.ca/res/19formsofinformal.htm.

Scott, D.E., & Scott, S. (n.d.). *Effective university teaching and learning.* Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/files/provost/Scott&Scott-EffectiveUniversityTeachingandLearning.pdf

Sexton, S. (2004). Prior teacher experiences informing how post- graduate teacher candidates see teaching and themselves in the role as the teacher. *International Education Journal 5(2)*, 205-214. Retrieved September 12, 2011 from http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v5n2/sexton/paper.pdf

Skiba, D. J., & Barton, A. J. (2006). Adapting your teaching to accommodate the Net Generation of learners. *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, *11*(2). Retrieved October 7, 2011, from http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume112006/No2May06/tpc30_416076.aspx

Stein, D. (1998). Situated Learning in adult education. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education [no.195]*. Retrieved from http://ericae.net/edo/ed418250.htm

Stoll, L. (1999, January). *Realising our potential: Building capacity for lasting improvement*. Keynote presentation to the Twelfth International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement. San Antonio, Texas.

Svinicki, M. D., & McKeachie, W. J. (2011). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers.* Independence, KY: Cengage Learning.

Taylor, E. (2000). Fostering Mezirow's transformative learning theory in the adult education classroom: A critical review. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 14(2), 1–28.

Taylor, E. (2003). The relationship between the prior school lives of adult educators and their beliefs about teaching adults. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 22*, 59–77. doi:10.1080/02601370304828

Tisdell, E. J., & Taylor, E. W. (2000). Adult education philosophy informs practice. *Adult Learning*, 11(2), 6–10.

Tomasello, M. (1999). *The cultural origins of human cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tomasello, M., Kruger, A. C., & Ratner, H. H. (1993). Cultural learning. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *16(03),* 495–511. doi:10.1017/S0140525X0003123X

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity. New York: Cambridge.

Westerhoff, J. H. (1987). The teacher as pilgrim. In F. S. Bolin & J. M. Falk (Eds.), *Teacher renewal: Professional issues, personal choices*, (pp. 190-201). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (1991). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Appendix A

Research Methodology

Scope and Purpose of this Study

This research is a life history study of a professor of adult education and is situated in a context of higher education. In this work I examine the contextualized life experiences of an individual professor of adult education in order to present an in-depth picture of who he is as a teacher, including the teaching practices he uses in the classroom. I provide some insights into what it means to teach in adult education programs in a university context and I articulate an example of exceptional teaching in higher education. Two interrelated questions undergird this study. First, how do diverse life experiences shape adult education professors' views about teaching and learning, and their overall teaching practice? And second, what is the university's role in particular in supporting their teaching? These questions support the broader purpose of this life history work, which is to explore how adult education can provide leadership and guidance related to teaching and learning in higher education. This study also serves as an expression of personal critical reflection on the development of my own teaching practice, in relation to retelling Jake's story of entanglements in teaching and learning. This last purpose is demonstrated in the various personal narratives that are interwoven throughout this work.

A Life History Research Approach

I employed a life history approach as the primary research method for examining the life of a professor of adult education. Life history research is a method for studying individuals' experiences in particular contexts and its uses in the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology dates back to the early part of the 20th century. More recently researchers in other disciplines have used this methodology to study the complexities of teaching (see Cole

&Knowles, 2001, for a more detailed list of disciplines). In the field of Education in particular, multiple studies have been conducted from life history and other narrative perspectives to explore the history and evolution of teaching beliefs and practice (e.g., Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Cole, 1999; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Muchmore,2002; Rossiter, 1999; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Muchmore (2002) asserts that "life history and ethnographic approaches are consistent with the belief that teaching is a complex, personal endeavour shaped by influences beyond those which can be identified through rating scales, surveys, and narrowly focused observations" (p.15). For the purpose of my work with Jake, I aligned my life history methodology and guiding principles with those outlined in the work of Cole and Knowles (2001).

A prominent feature of life history study is that through such work it possible to gain insight into the human experience in order to understand a particular context. Life history methodology is broadly qualitative and involves collecting and reconstructing stories of individuals' lived experiences within broader personal, historical, social, political, cultural, and/or institutional contexts (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). According to Cole (1994), "Life history research aims to understand life as lived in the present and as influenced by personal, institutional, and social histories" (p. 3). For example one of the major contextual focal points in my study is the university where Jake works. Writing about Jake's lived experiences in teaching and learning naturally led a discussion about how he navigates his role as an academic in higher education. In this work he talks about how the university context both supports his teaching, and hinders his personal view on the institution as an adult learning context. Hence, the life history perspective has allowed me to describe and interpret individual efforts but has also

helped me to articulate a story about teaching and learning in the broader context of higher education.

As a life history researcher I have to be mindful of the guiding principles of the approach. Cole and Knowles (2001) note that in life history research, it is imperative that researchers foster the development of relationality, mutuality, empathy (through reflexivity), care, sensitivity, and respect all throughout their work. These guiding principles ensure that the researcher is accountable for doing what she can to honour the "complexity, fluidity, and ever-changing boundaries" (p.27) between researcher and participant. Moreover, negotiating the research process with the participant, developing empathy through reflexivity (by regularly acknowledging one's position as researcher) in order to operate from a position of care, sensitivity and respect for those involved and the process itself are also key to this method.

Life history work begins as a conversation between the researcher and participant and continues as a jointly constructed journey. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claim that in qualitative research "there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual" (p.18). Therefore, my research involves Jake's narration of his own life story in relation to my research purposes and it also about my process of making meaning of his story through my own lens. My inquiry is, in some ways, a reconstruction and expression of my own experiences. Cole and Knowles (2001) describe this eloquently:

> Life history acknowledges not only that personal, social, temporal, and contextual influences facilitate understanding of lives and phenomena being explored, but also that, from conceptualization through to representation and eventual communication of new understandings to others, any research project is an express of the elements of a researcher's life history. (p.10)

I maintained a reflexivity journal throughout the duration of my research as a space to explore my own development as a life history researcher and co-participant in this study. I used this journal to I examine my awareness and connectedness to the research experience and my understanding of the life experiences that Jake shared with me. Many of the narratives that are included in this study, in italics, are pieces of writing that I took from my reflexivity journal.

Choosing Jake

Due to the in-depth nature of this study, I chose to work with one adult education professor in order to describe and interpret his individual efforts to understand teaching and learning in higher education. I chose a set of criteria for this inquiry that helped me to identify someone who:

a) Is an experienced full-time, adult education professor in a university;
b) Has a commitment to teaching and student learning;
c) Is interested in exploring his own teaching practice;
d) Is open to tapping into his own life histories to explore teaching and learning;
e) Can commit to several hours of conversation and observation;

I am a graduate student in the Lifelong Learning graduate program at a university in Nova Scotia and have established a good rapport with a number of faculty members here. After deciding to focus on adult education professors in university, it seemed natural to look to my own department to invite participation for my study. My decision to invite Jake to work with me was based on a preliminary conversation that I had with him about my proposed study. He immediately expressed interest in the nature of my research and exerted a willingness to work with me to create his teaching and learning story. Jake not only met all of the criteria I stated

above but moreover he and I have familiarity with working together and a level of trust and respect for one another that provided a solid foundation for our research partnership.

Information Gathering

Life history researchers typically collect qualitative information through various methods including interviews (called *guided conversations*), exploring context, collecting artifacts, and through ongoing reflexivity and responsiveness (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Likewise, despite the common tendency in research to assume that more is better, life history research aims for quality over quantity in terms of the numbers of participants represented in a study. Cole and Knowles (2001) state that "in life history research we are opting for depth over breadth, and the aim in participant selection is not population representativeness" (p.62). The primary methods for collecting information for this study were multiple guided conversations between the researcher and the participant, observation of the participant in a teaching context, and collection of artifacts related to the participant's teaching.

Guided Conversations/Interviews

Guided conversations are similar to ordinary conversations between friends or colleagues. The researcher typically prepares pre-planned topics and open-ended questions that are used to guide the conversations along the path to the central aims of the inquiry. The broader list of topics that I prepared in advance included: personal and career history, experiences in the university context, commitment to teaching and learning in adult higher education.

Jake and I met in his workspace for a total of five, one to two-hour guided conversations over the months of May and June in 2012. I created a subset of open-ended questions that went along with the above broad topics to guide our conversations. I added additional open-ended questions to the main list of questions as the interviews progressed and new avenues for

conversation opened up in the subsequent weeks (see Appendix B for final topics and questions). I negotiated this list of topics and questions with Jake before each conversation in order to ensure mutuality and commonality in our inquiry and so that he and I were both aware of the nature of discussion for each conversation. I reminded him at various stages that he was free to refuse answering any questions, or stop his participation at any time—this never became an issue; Jake was comfortable, open, and eager to pursue the planned topics and questions.

A Life in Context

Cole and Knowles (2001) assert that "life history researchers need to have an in-depth understanding of the focal context within which participants' lives are situated but the context itself is not the "unit of analysis"; context is a reference point, an essential backdrop that helps us understand an individual's life and experience." (p.79). This work represents contextual information derived from: context-related questions in guided conversations; reviews of relevant literature; reviews of context- related documents such as the institutional website and the institutional teaching and learning plan; and from time spent in the university where Jake works. Jake was not teaching during the semester when I was collecting information, so it was not possible to observe him in action in the classroom at that time. Therefore, the observational information that is represented in this work comes from two sources: my own past involvement as a student in Jake's classes and a teaching development workshop that Jake led and I attended. Hence, I relied on my own recollection and reflection on my experiences in Jake's classes, documents I have from his classes, and writing samples that I did in class, for writing about the kind of information that I would normally gather from direct observation. In end I still gathered observational information that was similar to what I outlined in Appendix C.

Collecting Artifacts

Janesick (1994) refers to qualitative research as an "elastic process" (p.211), meaning that things continue to emerge and direct the researcher to the best tools and paths to take along the research journey. This work is indeed representative of an emergent research process. I did not know the kinds of artifacts that would be available to me ahead of time but Jake graciously volunteered the following artifacts and documents that supplemented the literature in this study and added to my understanding of his teaching and in the context of the university:

- Professional CV
- Family photo book (also contained letters and commentary)
- Personal copies of his publications
- Copies of publications he found to be influential on his work
- Course syllabi from current courses
- Samples of student work from past courses taught
- Personal website
- Documents pertaining to the institutional context

Literature Base and Analysis of Gathered Information

I initially conducted a review of theoretical and empirical literature in order to map the terrain of the literature base for my study and to inform a general focus of my inquiry. In the end I interwove appropriate literature from studies in higher education and adult education throughout this entire work. I derived the final themes that are discussed in this work directly from analysis of my conversations with Jake and the additional contextual information that I reviewed during the analysis process.

According to Cole and Knowles (2001), how a researcher approaches the information analysis phase of her life history research is directly related to the strength of commitment she

has to the intersubjective nature of the researcher-participant relationship. Thus, some of my analysis naturally occurred during the conversations I had with Jake as I navigated our interactions and responded to his answers. Another form of analysis took place when I spent time transcribing, reading, and reflecting on the information I collected. As part of this analysis process, I read and re-read the interview transcripts until I had a clear picture of the participant and the life story told. I constructed overarching themes from the information that related to how Jake has been entangled in teaching and learning over his lifetime and how these experiences, in various contexts he was a part of, shaped his knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes about teaching and learning. Additionally, I engaged with the information I gathered through a reflexivity journal that I kept throughout the research process. This final work integrates all of the above information analysis opportunities and tells an accurate story of Jake's life, a story that also reflects the central purposes of my study described above.

Appendix B

Topics and Questions for Guided Conversations

1. *Early Life and Learning Experiences*
    a. Tell me a bit about where you grew up. What was it like to live there and go to school?
    b. What are some of your earliest learning memories that you can recall?
    c. What and/or who were some of the key influences on your learning at an early age?
    d. What are some of the characteristics of your early teachers that you can see in yourself now?
2. *Personal and career history*
    a. Tell me about your work, prior to being an adult education professor.
    b. What was your sense of responsibility to your clients during your work as a social worker?
    c. Tell me about your trip to Europe, during your undergraduate years.
    d. How and why did you decide to enter graduate school?
    e. Tell me about the career plan that you had for yourself when you entered graduate school. Did you know you wanted to be an adult education professor when you began graduate studies?
    f. Describe the key individuals who had significant influence on you in graduate school? How did they influence your career decisions over time?
    h. Tell me about making the transition from your prior work context to the university? Why did you make the move to working in the university?

i. What were your connections to the field of adult education when you first started working in the university?

3. *Experiences in the university context*

a. Can you tell me about your early experiences in working in a university? Tell me about starting the adult education program at your university.

b. What was your theoretical understanding of adult education when you first started working in the university?

c. What is it like for you to be an adult educator in a university?

d. What are the expectations of you, your roles and responsibilities? How are these different from your roles and responsibilities outside academia?

e. What is your sense of relationship between adult education department and other departments and with the university itself?

f. What are some of the main issues and challenges you face as an adult education professor in the university?

g. If you could re-design the program that you teach in, what would it look like?

h. How does the university support your teaching?

4. *Commitment to teaching and learning*

a. How would you describe your commitment to teaching and learning?

b. Do you have any significant mentors or major influences in this area?

c. What is the central emphasis that you give to your work? How did you come to this perspective?

d. How does teaching and learning play out in your overall role as an academic?

e. How have you been able to extend beyond the traditional norms of university teaching?

f. Tell me about your teaching: your goals, hopes, and dreams. What kind of impact do you want your teaching to have for students? What do you want the effects of your teaching career to be?

g. How do you inform your own teaching practice?

h. What do you believe good teaching practice to be? How did you come to believe this?

i. How do you think/feel your students respond to your teaching style?

j. How important is it for you to leave a legacy for students in adult education?

5. *Reflections on the Research Process*

a. Tell me your general thoughts and opinions about sharing your stories and being involved in this life history research process.

b. How has this experience made you think about yourself as a teacher? How has it made you think about your classroom practice? Being an academic?

c. What do you think about using your own narratives, or parts of your story, in your classes as a way to connect with students? What are other ways that you get to know your students?

Appendix C

Observation Guidelines

The following list of questions will be used to guide my observations of the participant's classroom teaching. The purpose of these observations will be to examine the kinds of practices the participant uses in the classroom and to examine the ways in which this person interacts with students in this setting. Furthermore, these observations will be used as the basis for subsequent conversations about the participant's teaching.

1. How does the participant interact with students it the classroom? How are students treated (e.g. as adult learners)?
2. What is the atmosphere of the class like?
3. How is the class structured (e.g. content delivery, time on tasks, learning activities)?
4. What is the participant's teaching approach in this particular class (e.g. teacher-led, participatory, multiple approaches)?
5. What values, beliefs, attitudes does the participant emphasise with students, in terms of what they are learning and how they are learning?
6. How does the participant acknowledge students' own beliefs, values, and attitudes about learning?
7. What kind of personal agenda might be being played out in the classroom? Is it forthcoming or hidden?