

Through the looking glass and into the classroom: A narrative inquiry into
student-to-teacher experiences of becoming and in-betweenness

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To my father, in loving memory

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to inquire into the experience and knowledge of preservice teachers in a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program using a narrative inquiry research methodology. This study explores experiences of two B.Ed. student participants, Tom and Carly, in addition to references to my own experience in the teacher education program. Through a narrative inquiry approach, each participant shares their stories in semi-structured interviews involving open-ended and guided questions on their experiences in deciding and becoming a teacher. The main research question asks about stories of in-betweenness of participants' experiences as they are educating themselves to become teachers. Subsequent questions explore experiences in the decision to teach and to enter teacher education; whether significant others influenced their decision or their continuous pursuit, and who these people are; and, how the image of a teacher and their role change after a practicum experience. The significance of this study may help inform those who are influential and engaged in the education of these individuals who decide to teach.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	8
My Narrative Journey to Teaching and Researching	8
Research Questions	15
Purpose of Study	15
Structure of this Thesis	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
Overview	18
Research Studies	19
Who becomes a teacher?	20
What factors influence the decision to teach?	22
What images surround teaching?	24
How does practicum experience affect the decision to teach?	27
Implications for this Research	30
Significance of this Study	33
Attrition: Keeping teachers in teaching.	33
Overcoming shortages.	34
Summary	35
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	36
Overview	36
A Description of the Program	36
Narrative Inquiry as a Research Methodology	38
Role of stories: A holistic approach.	39
Forming narrative knowledge.	39
“Meaningful” experience in finding voice.	40
Temporal nature of human experience.	40
Methodological landscape.	41
Framework for Narrative Inquiry	42
Critical event narrative.	42
Applying critical event narrative to teacher education.	42
Method for interpretation of texts.	43

Philosophical concept: In-betweenness.	44
Chapter 4: Research Method	46
Overview	46
Data Collection Method	46
Participant selection.	46
Criteria.	47
Interview method.	47
Why multiple interviews?	48
My role as engaged listener.	49
Broadening and burrowing.	49
Place.	50
Data Analysis Process	50
Transcribing.	51
Member checks.	52
Re-reading.	52
Coding.	52
Trustworthiness	53
Access.	54
Verisimilitude.	54
Transferability.	54
Storage of Data	55
Ethical Considerations	55
Overview of This Study	55
Chapter 5: Findings	57
Overview	57
Participants' Stories of Experience	57
Carly's Sense of Belonging.	58
New beginnings.	58
Confusing times.	61
Discovering practice.	62
Self-reflection.	64

Second-year surprises.	66
Looking back.	69
Tom’s Time-Consuming Trials.	70
Beginnings.	70
First-year woes.	72
Second-year angsts and surprises.	76
Try ... and try again.	78
Self-perspective.	79
Wrapping up: Ins and outs.	80
Chapter 6: Analysis	82
Identified Themes: Uncovering In-betweenness	82
Looking for structure: Show me how to teach.	82
Facing confrontation: Conflicts with pedagogical knowledge.	86
Practicum and becoming comfortable in the leadership role.	92
Dealing with constant changes and emotions.	95
Critically reflecting and self-transformation: Realizing in-betweenness.	99
Summary	104
Chapter 7: Final Thoughts	108
Answering Research Questions	108
Limitations of This Research	109
Recommendations for Future Research	111
Final Summary	111
References	113
Appendix A: Recruitment Email	123
Appendix B: Letter of Invitation	124
Appendix C: Participant Informed Consent Forms	127
Appendix D: Interview Guiding Questions	130
D1: Interview #1 with each participant.	130
D2: Interview #2 with Carly.	132
D3: Interview #2 with Tom.	134

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Chapter 1: Introduction

‘I see nobody on the road,’ said Alice.

‘I only wish *I* had such eyes,’ the King remarked in a fretful tone. ‘To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it’s as much as *I* can do to see real people, by this light!’

—Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

In Maxine Greene’s (1995) *Releasing the Imagination*, where she speaks about making choices in teaching, she says, “[T]he doorway to imagination ... is the possibility of looking at things as if they could be otherwise” (p. 16). As with any door, we can choose to either walk through it or not, and thus, perceive things differently in our daily-lived realities. For example, in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*, Alice unlocks the tiny door down the rabbit-hole to “the loveliest garden you ever saw” (1968, p. 28), and chooses to enter the world of imagination. In a similar analogy, students who enter a teacher education program open the door to possibilities of seeing the world of teaching as if it could be otherwise. In this chapter, I explore my own experiences as a Bachelor of Education student, which eventually led me to this research study and questions. Then I will state the purpose of this study and the structure of this thesis.

My Narrative Journey to Teaching and Researching

When I was about seven or eight years old, my father proudly announced to everyone at a family gathering that my best mark on my report card was in math. I can still hear my aunt exclaim, “Oh, she’s going to be a *professor* just like B—!” naming their cousin who happens to be a mathematics professor. It was from that moment I knew math would be a life-long passion.

When I was in high school, I took a course in physics, and as part of our assessments, we were to read and present a book on a topic in physics. Mine was on quantum mechanics. I still remember my presentation, all about the paradoxical cube, Schrödinger's Cat, and telling my classmates "you are a *you*-niverse" (Wolf, 1981). My presentation went very well, and afterwards I heard comments, such as "Oh, you should become a lecturer!" which was high praise coming from my classmates. This was the first time I had seriously considered teaching.

I moved to Nova Scotia years later, after obtaining an honours degree in mathematics and economics from the University of Toronto, and I got a job at a learning centre to help run their afterschool program where I "ignorantly" called myself a teacher. The learning centre, which was a private childcare facility for children from 4 months to 12 years of age, had a play-based philosophy that valued the environment and community around them. I worked with the older school-aged children between the ages of 8 and 12. When the director spoke to the children, she often referred to us as "teachers." The children at the centre gave me the nickname of "Dinah" (just like Alice's cat in *Wonderland*).

I had many responsibilities, most of which included planning, supervising, and facilitating activities for and with the children. I recall one afternoon when most of the children were engaged in various activities, I helped one boy with his math homework. I usually found time to tutor them in math, or help them with their reading or other special projects. I spoke to the boy's mother before he left, and mentioned we went through some of the questions he had. She told me, "Yeah, he waited to ask you because he told me that you would help him."

I decided then to enter teacher education, with supporting encouragement from my sister, and following my experience at the learning centre that left me wanting to become a "real" teacher, or at least recognized as one. The morning of my interview for the B.Ed. program, the

one that would decide whether I would get into the program or not, was on a cloudy day in early February. While I was driving to campus, I felt relaxed, and I remember thinking, *I got this*.

There were three other candidates there as well in the designated waiting area, which was a classroom with long tables and chairs for us to sit at. One of the administrative staff at the time started talking with us about the interview process. She asked one girl,

“Are you nervous?”

“Yes,” the girl replied.

At that point, I did not listen any further. I remember thinking that I was *supposed to be* nervous.

A few minutes later, a male professor came to the door and called my name. I got up and followed him to the interview room.

During the interview, they asked me why I chose secondary school teaching instead of just falling back on my recent experience with younger elementary-aged children. I explained that I was also a math tutor for students in grade nine right up to second year of university. I can recall one time I tutored a struggling grade 11 student in the last two weeks of her course. I spent hours with her, essentially preparing her for the final math exam. We sat at their dining room table and spent several evenings going through many examples. Although I knew she did not have a deep understanding, she did manage to pass her course, hooray! These experiences of helping learners learn math inspired me to enter the secondary program with a first teachable in mathematics.

I entered teacher education in the fall of 2012, with conflicting indecision, however, of whether to stay in teacher education or to pursue graduate studies in mathematics instead. I eventually decided to remain in education, in part due to my growing fascination with the philosophy of education. I found my cat’s meow. I remember one of our in-class activities for

my first-year philosophy course was an art project around the metaphor of *teacher-as-architect*. In small groups, we had to find a random object around campus and bring it back to class. With various art supplies the professor provided, we were to use the object to account for difficulties of teaching, and then explain our thoughts to the class. Our group found an old, wooden barrier, and it was amazing how our group collaborated and put all our ideas into this structure.

In another course, I worked with two other students on an assignment where we had to review an example of an Individual Program Plan [IPP] and as a group come up with recommendations of how to approach teaching this student. I was able to relate back to my experience as an afterschool teacher, because like this case study, I had worked with a boy with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD] and anxiety. It made me appreciate the prior teaching experience I had before coming to the B.Ed. program.

My first-year practicum experience was in a high school, a wonderful and busy experience teaching three advanced senior-level math courses. In my last two days of practicum, after five weeks of teaching, I suddenly realized my position of being in-between. I was observing my cooperating teacher as he took over one of the courses I was teaching. After a brief math lesson, which in my mind ended abruptly, my cooperating teacher said to one male student,

“Hey, why are you so quiet?”

“I have a headache,” the student replied.

“Well,” said the teacher, “it must be a very big headache because you have a *big* head!”

I was shocked at first. This was not my idea of bringing humour into the classroom. The student then suddenly turned to look at me. How could I respond? The duality I felt in caring for and wanting to be supportive of the students I taught, and my desire to support “teacher comradery,” yet realizing that my cooperating teacher was about to evaluate me, left me in an

“uncomfortable” quandary. I wonder if other preservice teachers feel this duality of being in-between.

As my coursework continued in my second year, I did not find the academic work particularly difficult or heavy in manual work (although my second math methods course begged to differ). For example, many of the assigned readings in my courses pertained to philosophies of classroom experience, differences in student learning, ideas of inclusivity, and so forth, which we discussed during our classes, either in small groups or as a large group in general. I remember one of these small group discussions we had in my advanced philosophy of education course. I was the only person in the group who had actually read the reading on Dewey that we were to have read before coming to class. As I was sharing my understanding of how I connected the ideas in the reading, I asked if anyone wanted to share their viewpoint, and one person turned to me and said, “Sure, Diana, you explained it right. You know what you’re talking about,” and she gave a little laugh, and left it at that. I felt frustrated that I was the one doing all the work and that others were just going along with what I said, not really caring if what I said made sense to them or not. Although it was an empowering situation, it is frustrating when preservice teachers do not play by the same rules they will expect of their future students someday.

On one particular afternoon during my second-year assessment course, someone made a comment during the class discussion, and I stopped for a moment, and thought to myself, did she say that in the other class this morning? As the conversation continued, someone else repeated word-for-word what he said in the earlier class. It felt like *déjà vu*. I began to wonder: were they just searching for participation marks, or were they really “stuck” on their ideas surrounding teaching? Later when I reread *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, I remembered this class discussion, when the Pigeon in the chapter “Advice from a Caterpillar” kept repeatedly insisting

that Alice was really a serpent after her eggs:

[T]he Pigeon went on, without attending to her; ‘but those serpents! There’s no pleasing them!’ ...

‘But I’m *not* a serpent, I tell you!’ said Alice....

‘Well! *What* are you? ... I can see you’re trying to invent something!’

‘I–I’m a little girl,’ said Alice, rather doubtfully....

‘A likely story indeed!’ (Carroll, 1968, pp. 74-75)

I wonder if by second year many students are just bored with the program, or if they just mastered the art of being “good” classroom students.

Unlike my first practicum experience where I had the freedom to apply my learning, my second practicum, where once again I was teaching three high school math courses, had me experimenting with someone else’s very different philosophy and expectations of how to teach; rules that my cooperating teacher *expected* me to follow. I did not doubt that I could teach, however, I often felt submerged in an episode of *The Twilight Zone* or *Doctor Who*. My cooperating teacher told me that the classroom had to be set up in single file rows of desks, and I found the seating plans were restrictive. One particular math course that I was teaching two sections of was all group work-based, it required students to work together. I recall countless times when students pushed their desks together to do group work, and my cooperating teacher would suddenly show up after class only to say, “Don’t allow them to push their desks together.” When my supervisor came to visit, I was told that my 12-minute lesson that day was too long, and that for “foundations math students, [I] shouldn’t be up there for more than three to five minutes.” So, my instructions became shorter, as my supervisor reminded me that she “taught foundations math students for over 30 years.” I wonder how other B.Ed. students cope with

someone else's pedagogy and the duality some of them must feel when teaching methods and expectations are very different from their own teaching philosophies.

In entering the M.A.Ed. program after graduating from the B.Ed., I often find myself in the same places, the same physical locations, as current B.Ed. students. I often overhear their conversations and see them interact with one another, and learn about their work ethics and attitudes towards their coursework and program. I remember one afternoon that I was sitting in the computer lab early in the first term when a hoard of first-year B.Ed. students clamoured in, rushing to get the last remaining computers. I could tell they were first-year students because several of them pulled out the familiar yellow text I used in my first philosophy of education course. As they were all talking to one another loudly, I assumed that they must know each other. One male student turned to the person beside him and asked which reading they were supposed to reflect on for today. "Never mind," he then said, "show me what you wrote." A few minutes later, this same student said loudly, "Here. I copied what you wrote. I just changed a few of the words around in this sentence." One can imagine the surprise I felt seeing this interaction, as if I ventured back into space-time. I began wondering if what they are experiencing is somewhat different or similar to what I experienced in the program.

Not surprisingly, these observations led me to this research topic in exploring experiences of preservice teachers in their in-between spaces of learning and teaching. It led me to question what it means to be a "teacher." What changes happen in their understanding of who is a teacher from the time they decide to enter and graduate from a B.Ed. program? I wonder what obstacles students encounter when trying to resolve differences with their preconceived notions of teaching. Maybe after spending many years as students in their own schooling, those who decide to enter teacher education face having to see things differently in the familiar place they once

knew, and soon discover as an unexpected, unfamiliar role in teaching. Maybe just like the key that Alice found for the little door (Carroll, 1968, p. 28), the key to the door to teaching is in unraveling and understanding preservice teachers' space of *in-betweenness*.

Research Questions

Maxine Greene (1973) states that to determine what is worthwhile, we cannot consult some public authority as to their “nebulous philosophy,” but we need to teach students to critically think and “to realize their own potential, to appreciate everwidening areas of experience” (p. 220). In this study I asked two preservice teachers to critically examine their own experiences of what it means to be a preservice and student teacher, from what prompted them to become a teacher; who they define as a teacher; and how this feeling and experience of learning to teach reflect their sense of being in-between.

In order to examine these experiences in this study I focused on the following research questions: What are the stories of in-betweenness as experienced by those in the student-to-teacher phase of their career? That is, what are the experiences of those who decide to teach, and how do their experiences change upon entering teacher education? Who are significant others who influence them? And, how does the role or idea of a teacher change with challenges student teachers face in adapting their pedagogical knowledge to their practicum experiences?

Purpose of Study

‘Found *what?*’ said the Duck.

‘Found *it,*’ the Mouse replied rather crossly: ‘of course you know what “it” means.’

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Exactly who is a teacher? Even the ancient Greeks philosophized about this question and re-conceptualized its “answer” many times according to viewpoints of time, place, and events

that shape education and its purpose. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote that everything is in constant flux (Graham, 2007, para. 14); always changing, in a state of becoming. Despite extensive research in teacher education and beginning teachers, few researchers feel the focus is on the experience of deciding to become a teacher and subsequent experience of entering and being in a teacher education program from the perspective of preservice teachers. With a strong emphasis on both preconceived notions and images of teachers, in an accumulation of understanding, or *wide-awakeness* (Greene, 1995), and knowledge through coursework and practicum, I explore understanding the philosophical question of who is a teacher from the perspective of those individuals who are starting out on the path to a career in teaching, and as they try to make sense of this in-betweenness in becoming teachers. Thus, the purpose of this narrative inquiry involves understanding experiences of in-betweenness of being a B.Ed. student as preservice teachers retell their story of experience. In turn, this may inform teacher educators directly involved in shaping their pedagogical knowledge and future teaching careers.

Structure of this Thesis

This thesis starts with an in-depth review of current literature in research into who decides and becomes a teacher, and at their perceptions and preconceived images of teachers and the teaching role. I then examine what factors affect the decision to teach, looking at what types of motivation influence someone to enter teacher education. Next, I look at what images describe who a teacher is, both in scholarly depiction and through prospective teachers' ideals, which are influential in how students perceive and experience teacher education. Then I explore how practicum experience, seen as the most influential and valued component of teacher education, affects the decision to teach. I end the review by considering implications and significance of this research literature for my study, and the value I foresee this study having in adding to the current

field of educational research.

Chapter 3 of this thesis outlines the qualitative research I undertake in this study; namely, what is narrative inquiry and its value to studying teacher education and to this study in particular. I then explain the framework and philosophical concept that I use in discussing participants' experiences in deciding and becoming a teacher.

The next chapter outlines the process of data collection, from selection of participants and criteria used in the selection, to types of data used in this study. Then I outline the process of handling data in analyzing and storing information. Chapter 4 concludes with an examination of ethical considerations for this research in protecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants and honest representation of their experiences.

Chapter 5 presents findings resulting from interviews and narratives collected from participants of this study, presented as detailed descriptions of their story of experience. Chapter 6 includes an in-depth analysis and discussion of findings in developing the philosophical concept of in-betweenness in examining how students re-conceptualize their images of who is a teacher through their changing contexts. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis stating suggested further study and limitations of this current study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

‘Let the jury consider their verdict,’ the King said, for about the twentieth time that day.

‘No, no!’ said the Queen. ‘Sentence first – verdict afterwards.’

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Overview

In October 2014, the Nova Scotia Department of Education released its report, *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*, where it highlights the need to “make high-quality teaching the norm in every classroom” (Minister’s Panel on Education [MPE], p. 24). The report upholds that the minister’s panel on education feel classes receive highly effective teaching; however, survey respondents of educators, parents, and concerned community members, representing all eight school board regions in Nova Scotia, feel otherwise (p. 24). Following the 1994 Shapiro Report, dialogue proceeds on “the importance of strong teacher preparation” in “ensur[ing] Nova Scotia schools have access to high-quality teaching” (MPE, 2014, p. 8). One expectation of new teachers is that they “be passionate about teaching” (p. 27), while their recommendation to teacher education programs is that they ensure “[t]eacher candidates are well prepared for the realities of today’s classrooms and the range of student needs” (p. 28).

With such an importance placed on preparing candidates in a teacher education program for realities of day-to-day teaching in our classrooms, little attention focuses on experiences of these soon-to-be teachers: What inspires someone to become a teacher? What factors influence their decision to teach? Once they are in the program, what experiences promote them to stay? How do they see the importance of educational theory as they move into their practicum experience? And what changes after practicum in terms of their image of a teacher? In this

chapter, I examine existing research studies done in the field of teacher education regarding preservice teachers' decisions to teach from the following: 1) who becomes a teacher; 2) what factors influence the decision to teach; 3) what images surround teaching; and 4) how does practicum experience affect the decision to teach? I then review implications and significance of this research for the current study.

There are several terms to indicate students enrolled in a teacher education program. For this thesis, the terms *preservice teacher* and *student teacher* identify those students enrolled in a B.Ed. program involving both theoretical foundations and methods courses in a university setting and practicum placement in a traditional classroom setting or alternative placement. The term "preservice teacher" refers to a person before they enter service in a job which requires training ("Pre-service," 2007); that is, those who are studying in the process of becoming teachers and obtaining a B.Ed. degree; while, the term "student teacher" indicates the student's participation in practicum as part of their formal teaching qualification ("Student teacher," 2015). Other terms used in this thesis are *prospective teacher*, *teacher candidate*, *B.Ed. student*, and when not ambiguous, simply *student*. In this review, I try to maintain the term the researcher(s) uses.

Research Studies

The reviewed studies disseminate experiences of teacher candidates through their recollections, perceptions, storying, narratives, and drawings of images they hold of teachers when they enter a teacher education program (for example, Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk, & Nguyen, 2015; Bruce & Ewing, 2012; Davis, 2013; Lim-Teo, Low, Wong, & Chong, 2008; Schutz, Crowder, & White, 2001; Whitbeck, 2000). In an extensive study of how students learn to teach, Wideen et al. (1998) find many discrepancies within literature where these learning to teach aspects are unclear and inconsistent (p. 130). Recent studies try to come up with a clearer

picture, but research literature on teacher education still shows that student teachers' initial conceptualizations of teaching come from their past personal experiences of schooling and through their experience in the teacher education program (Lim-Teo et al., 2008, p. 42).

Researchers, such as Malderez et al. (2007), examine student teachers' accounts of their motivation for entering teacher education, and their preconceptions and expectations of the program; while others investigate different aspects of preservice teachers' experiences, looking at students' development, their concerns, and their stress levels (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Capel, 2001; Head, Hill, & Maguire, 1996). With an aim to uncover how preservice teachers' perceptions of their teacher role change, researchers also look at differences between student teachers' initial perceptions of teacher roles and their subsequent perceptions after practicum experience (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008; Lederman & Gess-Newsome, 1991).

Who becomes a teacher? Most students enter a teacher education program assuming they know who a teacher is (Whitbeck, 2000, p. 129). From many years spent in schooling, a myriad of images of teachers, classrooms, and schools leaves a long and lasting impression on beliefs and perceptions of teacher roles and purposes of education (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002, p. 122; Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 2). Whitbeck (2000) states that many students envision themselves as teachers even before they start a teacher education program (p. 135). Belief that teaching is a "calling" has broad implications for the way in which they envision their future teaching roles; identified mainly with their associations with past and present educators, parental and peer influences, and reinforced through practicum experience in teacher education (Lim-Teo et al., 2008, p. 43). Some students, however, maintain a simplistic view of teaching through observations formed over an extended period of time (Whitbeck, 2000, p. 129).

The philosophical orientation of many prospective teachers' belief systems usually gravitates towards an idealistic, and often, euphoric mental image of a teacher (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008, p. 329). At times, this orientation represents a moral positioning, which includes strong idealistic and moral concepts of teaching, such as "feelings of empowerment," "everyone deserving equal chances," and "being an influence to a whole generation" (Younger, Brindley, Pedder, & Hagger, 2004, p. 249). Weber and Mitchell (1995) observe that these images are subject to reconstructions and reinterpretations in attempts to make sense of human experiences and in the need to communicate this sense to others (p. 21). Nevertheless, many candidates come into teacher education with firmly rooted images of themselves as teachers, and they carry high ideals and aspirations of the teaching profession (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 459).

Davis (2013) claims that preservice teachers use discursive language in describing their images of teachers resulting from their past and current educational experiences (p. 121). Due to experience and influence of others through their discourse about social norms and relationships with previous teachers, this discourse helps define the teaching personae, and explains "how the actor views the teaching act" (Davis, 2013, p. 121). Preservice teachers indicate that having the personality of a teacher make them more suitable to the career choice (Jugović, Marušić, Ivanec, & Vidović, 2012, p. 281); with belief that personality consequently influences work behaviour and motivation towards certain careers (Barrick & Mount, 2005, p. 360). Jugović et al. (2012) use the term *social personality* to link those individuals who are predominantly helpful, caring, empathic, and sensitive to the needs of others (p. 273). They find those who prefer careers that are intrinsically motivating, and what they deem as meaningful, regardless of job security or salary, also tend to be "agreeable and extraverted persons" (Jugović et al., 2012, p. 273), and individuals more likely to become teachers (p. 282).

From research literature, many candidates who enter teacher education assume they know who a teacher is (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Whitbeck, 2000). The teacher's personality becomes, in consequence, identifiable to the career choice (Barrick & Mount, 2005) and socially developed (Davis, 2013; Jugović et al., 2012). In sum, many student teachers view a teacher as someone called to the profession (Lim-Teo et al., 2008), and expected to play the part (Davis, 2013); indicating specific factors inspire the decision to teach.

What factors influence the decision to teach? Brookhart and Freeman's (1992) review of educational research uncover numerous reasons why candidates enroll in a teacher education program (p. 46). Some evidence links motivation to enter teacher education depending on the type of program they choose, although there is no clear pattern as to why (Hobson, Malderez, Tracey, & Kerr, 2005). The difficulty arises from the subjective nature of experience and beliefs where factors, such as "fulfilling a dream," family, or inspirational teachers, are motivations in pursuing a teaching career (Manuel & Hughes, 2006, p. 13). Manuel and Hughes (2006) note several studies examine motivations of prospective teachers which characterize roles that significant others play as a "persuasive force in the decision to teach" (p. 15). More than 70% of preservice teachers they surveyed acknowledge a significant teacher or mentor as influencing their decision to become a teacher (Manuel & Hughes, 2006, p. 15).

Some studies, such as Minor et al. (2002); Pop and Turner (2009); Schutz et al. (2001); and Timmerman (2009), investigate the emergence and importance of decisions and goals of pursuing a teaching career. During their interviews, Pop and Turner (2009) find preservice teachers are more prone to choose teaching if they perceive themselves as suitable and skilled enough to teach (p. 693). Their perceptions play a major role in their decision, or indecision, in pursuing a teaching career; enabling them to fully commit to teaching if they believe they see

themselves as enthusiastic and charismatic, and possessing skills and knowledge to be able to teach (Pop & Turner, 2009, pp. 692-693). Preservice teachers, therefore, view a career in teaching based on how they make sense of choices in other contexts of their life experiences, their beliefs, and expectations (Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 695).

Research studies into motivation as to why someone may choose teaching as a career delineate these factors as altruistic, extrinsic, or intrinsic motives; such as, out of a desire to work with children, or to make a contribution to the community (Younger et al., 2004, pp. 248-249). Some studies analyze preservice teachers' understandings of goals in relation to these different types of motivation for teaching in their commitment and their engagement in preparing for a teaching career (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014; Kelly, 2015; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Pop & Turner, 2009; Spittle, Jackson, & Casey, 2009; Watt & Richardson, 2007). For instance, Spittle et al. (2009) show intrinsic motivation increases performance later within the profession (p. 197). Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2014) find that preservice teachers state that the most important motive in becoming a teacher is involvement of expertise and challenge in working with children and adolescents (p. 70). Manuel and Hughes (2006) include personal fulfilment, enjoyment of subject, lifestyle, and working conditions as the most influential factors (p. 10).

Researchers, therefore, acknowledge a wide range of motives factor into the decision of becoming a teacher (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992, p. 46; Caires et al., 2012, p. 172; Spittle et al., 2009, p. 193). One model used in recent quantitative studies is Watt and Richardson's (2007) FIT-Choice scale, which identifies a number of factors influencing the decision to become a teacher (see for example, Eren & Tezel, 2010; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014; Jugović et al., 2012). Researchers claim that in using this model they can better understand individual perceptions of abilities and understandings of tasks required in being a teacher; in addition to

asserting other motivations for choosing teaching, such as a fallback career; or as distal socialization influences, including the influence of significant others and prior teaching experience (Jugović et al., 2012, p. 272).

In sum, factors that influence candidates to enter the teaching profession delineate in research literature as intrinsic, extrinsic, or altruistic motivations (Pop & Turner, 2009; Spittle et al., 2009; Watt & Richardson, 2007). Some factors include distal socialization influences from others as a persuasive force, or reconciling it as a secondary career option (Jugović et al., 2012; Manuel & Hughes, 2006). In understanding factors involved in wanting to teach, researchers conclude that prospective teachers view teaching as an optimistic and enjoyable career choice in fulfilling a dream (Manuel & Hughes, 2006), and being able to work with children (Younger et al., 2004); maintaining preconceived images that surround the profession.

What images surround teaching? Scholars use a wide range of imagery in describing teachers; for example, Socrates' *teacher-as-midwife*; James and Dewey's *teacher-as-artist/scientist*; Skinner's *teacher-as-technician*; Stenhouse, Elliot, and Pring's *teacher-as-researcher*; Eisner and Stenhouse's *teacher-as-artist*; de Castell's *teacher-as-strategist* (de Castell, 1988, p. 64); and Greene's *teacher-as-stranger* (Greene, 1973). In addition, images and metaphors that preservice teachers bring with them into teacher education "are deeply etched on their perceptual lenses" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 460). These preconceived images of teachers affect how they respond and experience teacher education and their teaching practice (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108). Their images of teaching, however, are often stereotypical (Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 303) and contradictory (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008, p. 324; Kelly, 2015, p. 12).

Hattingh and de Kock (2008) demonstrate that while prospective teachers enter a teacher education program with sophisticated images of teaching, their beliefs, based on their personal

and prior educational experiences, are often influenced by an interpreted social reality (p. 329). Several studies depict the struggle of B.Ed. students with their preconceived notions on the nature of teaching and learning, and the need to obtain pedagogical strategies (Bruce & Ewing, 2012, p. 76; Cam, 2015, p. 389; Jenkins, 2014, p. 313; Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013, p. 253; Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 695; Whitbeck, 2000, p. 135). In addition, Kelly (2015) states that there is disagreement about how students' perceptions of teaching change due to their curricular and student teaching experiences (p. 12). Some studies, such as Beltman et al. (2015), which examine the development of beginning preservice teachers' professional identity, find that preservice teachers perceive that, as teachers, they will conduct exciting learning experiences for their students, build positive relationships with them, and be confident as teachers (p. 225). Other studies establish that they are more enthusiastic than concerned about aspects of their teaching (Giannakaki, Hobson, & Malderez, 2011, p. 462), where their anticipation of teaching coincides with their experiences both of and in the classroom (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 458).

Researchers find conflicting evidence as to how B.Ed. students learn who a teacher is through experiences with previous teachers and significant others. Cheng, Chan, Tang, and Cheng (2009) report that student teachers believe that teachers are experts who hold a certain degree of accuracy in their knowledge (p. 323), and therefore, hold a certain amount of authority. Richardson and Watt (2006) note that the effect of mass media and the general public creates an image of teaching as a poor career choice (p. 27). Nevertheless, whether these images are composites of their experiences, or based on single individuals or events, they do not hold up in contemporary contexts (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 459). Cole and Knowles (1993) suggest that past schooling experience combined with relatively simplified or stereotypical portrayals of the teaching profession in mass media contribute to formation of disproportionate images and

expectations of teaching as a career (p. 460). As a result, students may restrict and somewhat narrow their conception of teaching and learning (Younger et al., 2004, p. 260), and believe teaching is a simple and rather mechanical transfer of information (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 143).

Many student teachers initially indicate a perceived necessity to undergo a self-transformation in taking on the role of, or changing into, a teacher (Malderez et al., 2007, p. 231). Timmerman (2009) suggests that student teachers project themselves, and identify with, the teacher role in relation to their perceptions of previous teacher role models (pp. 230-231). These relationships often influence their desire to offer other children similar experiences which they enjoyed (Malderez et al., 2007, p. 232); or in wanting to teach students better than in their own experience (p. 233). These experiences are a major source of inspiration in what personae they value and aim to emulate (Davis, 2013, p. 123; Lamote & Engels, 2010, p. 5). Malderez et al. (2007) discern that preoccupation with the notion of teacher identity prompt student teachers either to actualize an already recognized potential, or undergo a transformation of self in order to take on the part of a teacher (p. 230). Lim-Teo et al. (2008), however, find a substantial motivator in perceptual change in graduating B.Ed. students is a result of their interaction with “significant people” during the program (p. 48).

In sum, scholars and students create a wide range of images of teachers that surround teacher education (Cole & Knowles, 1993; de Castell, 1988). Although often stereotypical (Weber & Mitchell, 1996) and contradictory (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008; Kelly, 2015), these images, interpreted in a social reality (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008), form an image of what the experience of teaching will be like (Beijaard et al., 2004), and discern the recognized potential or transformation one must achieve in becoming a teacher (Malderez et al., 2007). Often, students say significant people during teacher education and practicum experience motivate this need for

perceptual change in becoming a teacher (Lim-Teo et al., 2008).

How does practicum experience affect the decision to teach? In comparison to minimal research done on their philosophical orientations, fewer studies examine interaction between student teachers' epistemological beliefs and their teaching practices (Schraw & Olafson, 2002, para. 6). Researchers state many preservice teachers believe that practicum experience is the capstone of teacher education programs (Kelly, 2015, p. 10; Standal, Moen, & Moe, 2014, p. 165). Teacher educators who view practicum field experience as the "vehicle for learning to teach" also view this time as an opportunity for teacher candidates to practice and apply what they learned during their coursework (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 156). Kelly (2015) claims encounters during this time of instructional and non-instructional experiences may affect an individual's decision of whether to continue pursuing a teaching career (pp. 10-11). In this respect, from the perspective of preservice teachers, practicum is the most valued and influential component in preparing to become a teacher (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 458; Kelly, 2015, p. 19; Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011, p. 54; Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000, p. 40).

Transition from preservice teacher to classroom teacher is not an easy one; often embedded within varying social structures, personal beliefs, knowledge, competencies, and identities (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008, p. 322). In their coursework, preservice teachers begin making judgements about school experiences, preparation processes, and the role of a teacher, which further develop in their practicum placements (Whitbeck, 2000, p. 131). These images of self as teacher strongly influence their teaching experience and attitudes toward educational change (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108). Researchers note that during their practice teaching, some student teachers experience a shattering of these images, especially when these images do not match their preconceived notions and previous experiences (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 457;

Mattheoudakis, 2007, p. 1282). They mark notable differences in student teachers' images of teachers before and after practicum (Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 307) as students critically examine their ideals, values, and commitment to teaching (Poulou, 2007, p. 102).

Campbell and Thompson (2007) suggest that preservice teachers' instructional behaviours and perspectives change during field experiences with "real" students in raising their concern levels, their understanding, and awareness of skills needed in their initial teaching experiences (p. 173). Caires et al. (2012) also note evidence that student teachers distinctly perceive their teaching practicum as a stressful and demanding period in their program (p. 172). Many candidates who enter teacher education find themselves not prepared for the emotional vulnerability involved in becoming a teacher (Malderez et al., 2007, p. 237). Although not clearly delineated in research (Malderez et al., 2007, p. 237), some studies note emotional responses felt during practicum experiences include such feelings as stress, anxiety, and uncertainty (Sadler, 2006, p. 217), especially in believing they will not live up to their own standards of becoming a good teacher (Younger et al., 2004, p. 250); indications of having negative emotions, such as feeling helpless, being aware of their shortcomings, anger, or feeling insecure (Pillen et al., 2013, p. 253); and feeling frustrated that students saw them as different from their "real teacher" (Sadler, 2006, p. 225). Some student teachers refer to their experiences as a roller coaster in finding balance in teaching and in how they envision themselves as teachers (Davis, 2013, p. 123).

Researchers say that taking on the role of student teacher leads to tension, confusion, contradictory messages, and conflict between various orientations (Head et al., 1996, p. 76; Kagan, 1992, p. 144; Pillen et al., 2013, p. 253; Wideen et al., 1998, p. 156). When confronted with realities and complexities of a teacher education program, Weber and Mitchell (1996) state

that preservice teachers become aware of the power experiences and social stereotypes have in influencing their current understandings (p. 307). They further point out that preservice teachers face difficulties in assimilating their pedagogical knowledge to their professional identities as teachers as their images of teachers still waver between the myths and realities of teaching (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 31). Confrontation with realities and responsibilities of being a classroom teacher, therefore, challenge or confirm their preconceived beliefs (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 158); leaving many students to change their standpoints and ideas about education and their teacher identity (Lamote & Engels, 2010, p. 4). Researchers say that, in this tension, students reexamine whether they are suitable as prospective teachers (Poulou, 2007, p. 102), as they synthesize their practical notions and ideal images of teaching (Standal et al., 2014, p. 175). During this time, student teachers often report feeling isolated from any support (Head et al., 1996, p. 81).

Bruce and Ewing (2012) also note student teachers find difficulties in describing how they apply educational theory into their practice beyond a few connections to lessons plans and teaching methods (p. 77). Student teachers often consider pedagogy taught in teacher education to be philosophical as it is abstract and far-removed from practical realities of teaching (Standal et al., 2014, p. 171). Even after becoming accustomed to content in the program and practicum, they still encounter uncertainty and doubt while reflecting on their personal experiences and perceptions of teacher roles (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008, p. 329). These misconceptions about the work teachers do emanate from prior personal schooling experiences and their university coursework, where results can potentially disorient, and lead some preservice teachers to encounter *mis-educative* experiences in the field (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 460). The term *mis-educative*, accredited to Dewey (1938), describes any experience that distorts or arrests growth

of further experiences (p. 25).

In sum, researchers agree that student teachers value practicum as the most influential component of their teacher education (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Kelly, 2015; Pendergast et al., 2011; Standal et al., 2014; Yost et al., 2000). Actual experience in the classroom, whether positive or negative, plays a determining factor in the candidate's decision to continue pursuing teaching as a career (Kelly, 2015). Practicum is an opportunity to apply educational theory into practice (Wideen et al., 1998); but, unfortunately, research indicates student teachers often face difficulties and uncertainties in their practicum (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008), and apply very little theory (Bruce & Ewing, 2012). The next section examines implications for the current study.

Implications for this Research

Understanding how student teachers develop their teaching personae, and supporting their efforts, is crucial in preparing them for their chosen professional roles (Davis, 2013, p. 124). Further research needs to contrast characteristics, motivations, perceptions, commitments, and satisfaction of undergraduate and graduate teacher education students (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 29), and look at ways to enhance and maintain motivation in future teachers (Spittle et al., 2009, p. 197). For instance, preservice teachers with different personality traits and motivation for becoming a teacher could require different approaches during teacher education training (Jugović et al., 2012, p. 282). Teacher education programs, therefore, play an important role in developing student teachers' self-efficacy and identity in teaching; however, there still exists a gap in research on the formation of these attributes in beginning preservice teachers as they enter teacher education and the impact the program has on their development (Pendergast et al., 2011, p. 46). In order to gain clarity on how instruction and practicum affect teacher ideals, research needs to document the evolution and adaptation of teacher ideas (Lederman & Gess-

Newsome, 1991, p. 453).

From the reviewed studies, researchers recognize the tendency to conceptualize student teaching experience as a time to experiment and reflect on innovative teaching practices, but often student teachers themselves report it as a challenge just to survive (Capel, 2001, p. 257; Sadler, 2006, p. 218; Wideen et al., 1998, p. 133). They claim many student teachers feel unprepared to face the challenges of real classrooms and schools (Kagan, 1992, p. 154; Wideen et al., 1998, p. 168); and as a result, they may not be able to foresee any problems they might encounter as teachers (Beltman et al., 2015, p. 239); or underestimate, or even recognize, the complexity of some teaching aspects or difficulties they may face (Lamote & Engels, 2010, p. 13; Younger et al., 2004, p. 259). Kelly (2015) suggests that a successful transition during practicum may help in developing an improved commitment to teaching and increase overall effectiveness in student teaching (p. 12). He notes that examining how and the extent to which students change during their training would provide valuable information to those individuals making decisions about student teaching placements, and in developing student teacher training experiences (Kelly, 2015, p. 19).

It is important for teacher educators to understand experiences of preservice teachers to enhance the program, even in traditional contexts and theoretical perspectives (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992, p. 37; Sadler, 2006, p. 219). For instance, Malderez et al.'s (2007) findings stress the need for curricula to explicitly focus on issues related to teacher and classroom discourse, and how to form and maintain cohesive and productive learning groups in the classroom (p. 240). Pop and Turner (2009) claim that a major implication to consider is to examine ways in which program preparation relating to effective teaching experiences scaffold preservice teachers' development of self-confidence, which can add valuable information to understanding

their mismatched beliefs and expectations concerning the teaching profession and practice (p. 697). They recommend that effective teaching experiences include learning to deal with emotions, developing positive attitudes toward the profession, and understanding realistic teaching practices (Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 697).

Even though preservice teachers may be aware of the importance of epistemological beliefs and educational philosophies, they do not regularly incorporate them into their teaching practice (Cam, 2015, p. 389). Researchers state that cultivating critical reflection skills with preservice teachers should be a primary mission of teacher education programs (Yost et al., 2000, p. 47) as these experiences continuously shape their beliefs and philosophies about teaching and learning (Minor et al., 2002, p. 117; Whitbeck, 2000, p. 131). This insight would enable programs to adjust to the learning needs of their students in permitting students to voice their thoughts and concerns within different points of the program, giving opportunity to explore the complexity of teaching practices, and invite them into conversation about their education (Campbell & Thompson, 2007, p. 164; Lamote & Engels, 2010, p. 16; Sjolie, 2014, p. 733). Attention on reflecting and discussing what impinges personal beliefs surrounding teaching and development of teaching identities may also shed light on subtleties and stereotypes that can inform the professional knowledge of teacher education (Weber & Mitchell, 1996, p. 312).

Several researchers claim that using quantitative methods is a limitation to their research (Caires et al., 2012, p. 165; Kelly, 2015, p. 19; Lamote & Engels, 2010, p. 16; Pillen et al., 2013, p. 256). They claim their analysis consistently depends on research participants' accounts of their experiences and perceptions, and therefore, their study may lack validity or creditability (Cheng et al., 2009, p. 326; Malderez et al., 2007, p. 237; Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 697; Standal et al., 2014, pp. 175-176). There is a need for further research using more qualitative methods, such as

structured interviews, observations, and case studies (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992, p. 52; Capel, 2001, p. 260; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014, p. 73; Standal et al., 2014, p. 176). For instance, interviews with research participants enable a deeper understanding of how they develop their professional identity (Beltman et al., 2015, p. 240), providing access to students' experiences of their goals in becoming teachers (Schutz et al., 2001, p. 300), and clarifying any discrepancies in their self-reporting (Campbell & Thompson, 2007, p. 174).

Significance of this Study

Researchers claim that in understanding individual preservice teachers' theories, the relationship between their epistemological beliefs and conceptions of teaching, and how they influence their own comprehension will better inform teacher education practitioners (Cheng et al., 2009, p. 321; Minor et al., 2002, p. 126; Whitbeck, 2000, p. 129). As teacher education programs play an important role in developing student teachers' self-efficacy, identity (Pendergast et al., 2011, p. 46), and knowledge of teaching, understanding their experiences may help to gain insight into how to retain teachers, and how to invite new teacher candidates into the program. I briefly discuss these below.

Attrition: Keeping teachers in teaching. Educational research examining issues of teacher attrition and insufficient recruitment of newly qualified teachers (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006, p. 1) find approximately one-third of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003, p. 3; Spittle et al., 2009, p. 191; Watt & Richardson, 2007, p. 168). Unfortunately, literature is unclear as to why students choose to teach and why many leave the profession after just starting their teaching career (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 31). They note that little research provides an understanding into motivation behind preservice teachers' decisions to choose teaching as a career, or to provide an in-depth analysis

on the relationship between their decision and commitment to teach (Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 683).

Researchers suggest that many preservice teachers come into teacher education with traditional ideas about education, basing their assumptions on stereotypes and norms, and giving little thought to individual needs or understandings (Marks, 2010, p. 188), and that the profession may not appeal to them in everyday reality (Timmerman, 2009, p. 230). While stress and other difficulties in teaching may result in absenteeism and teacher turn-over (Head et al., 1996, p. 75), some studies note discrepancies in preservice teachers' experiences in practicum and teacher education (Ballantyne & Packer, 2004, p. 300; Pop & Turner, 2009, p. 697) that may account for why some preservice teachers reconsider pursuing teaching as a career (Kelly, 2015, p. 12).

Overcoming shortages. In attracting people into a career in teaching “in a climate of escalating teacher shortages” (Watt & Richardson, 2007, p. 168), governments are attempting to improve teacher recruitment and supply, restructure teachers' work, and reform teacher education and professional development (p. 197). Teacher shortages and attracting qualified teachers differ from country to country, as well as from one domain to another (Eren & Tezel, 2010, p. 1416; Korthagen, 2004, p. 78; Watt & Richardson, 2007, p. 198). For instance, Croatia is facing recruiting challenges of qualified candidates into the profession, as well as dealing with an aging teacher population (Jugović et al., 2012, p. 272).

Nova Scotia is also facing difficulties with supporting novice teachers, and improving hiring and induction processes to provide employment opportunities (MPE, 2014, p. 29). Understanding motivations for choosing teaching as a career has implications for teacher education planning and curriculum design, teacher recruitment, and government policy decisions (Watt & Richardson, 2007, p. 167). Eren and Tezel (2010) indicate that in gathering prospective

teachers' reflections on their motivations, beliefs, and aspirations for teaching may shed light on why these shortages linger (p. 1416).

Summary

The literature review focuses on understanding who becomes a teacher; what factors influence their decision to teach; what experiences influence them to stay in the teacher education program; how do they see the importance of educational theory as they move into their practicums; and what changes after practicum in terms of their image of who is a teacher.

With such an importance placed on preparing candidates in a teacher education program for realities of day-to-day teaching in our classrooms, little attention focuses on experiences of these soon-to-be teachers—what inspires someone to become a teacher, and what factors influence their decision to teach and stay in teaching. Recent studies try to come up with a clear picture, but research literature on teacher education still show student teachers' initial conceptualization of teaching come from their past personal experiences of schooling as students, as well as through their discoveries in the teacher education program; which they then integrate into their first years of practice (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 132).

A myriad of past and present images of teachers persists as models and metaphors for candidates as they enter a teacher education program. Differences between their preconceived notions of teaching and who is a teacher to the reality which they awaken to in the program are enough to leave students in tension, and struggling to decide if teaching is really the right choice for them. Problems of attrition and trying to keep teachers in teaching beyond the initial five years of teaching, and overcoming shortages of teachers who enter into the profession and teacher education, are a struggle that many countries, including Canada, are now facing.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

‘I quite agree with you,’ said the Duchess; ‘and the moral of that is – “Be what you would seem to be” – or if you’d like it put more simply – “Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.’”

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Overview

This study involves storying experiences of preservice teachers in their transitional role from student to classroom teacher with the purpose of extending existing knowledge in the field of teacher education. Understanding mis-educative (Dewey, 1938) and preconceived notions of who a teacher is captured in the stories of experience in the B.Ed. program. This chapter takes an in-depth look into the methodology of *narrative research*, and provides an overview of narrative understanding of experience, how narratives create and interpret meaning, and its importance within this study. This chapter also outlines the framework and philosophical concept I use to analyze research data. To provide some context I begin with a brief description of the teacher education program in Nova Scotia.

A Description of the Program

This section briefly explains the recent format of teacher education in Atlantic Canada. The basic goal of the program is to provide students with opportunity to develop skills, knowledge, and philosophies to become an educator through learning methods, pedagogies, inclusive, and reflective practices. There are two options of programs: elementary and secondary school teaching. The elementary school program looks at a broader range of subject matter adapted towards younger school-aged children (ages 5 to 11); while, the secondary school

program divides preservice teachers into two teachable subject matters for older students (ages 12 to 18). Both programs give students opportunity to work in a classroom setting during two practicum placements, one set in each year of their program. The traditional program is two-years in length, with an in-depth look at current curriculums, content knowledge, various pedagogies, the classroom environment, and other issues surrounding student experience. Students develop their critical and reflective thinking, and build foundational knowledge towards development of professional growth. As students come to the program having “done” school, and often hold strong standpoints and opinions on how school *should* be, reflective practice offers students opportunity to assimilate or accommodate their growing knowledge of the educational system and their future role in it.

Classes are generally small to allow closer development of interpersonal relationships between university teachers and preservice teachers; while mimicking typical classroom sizes in both elementary and secondary schools that students may encounter. Small class sizes allow for a greater interaction among students; and classes are generally activity- and discussion-based, designed to give students opportunity to explore different pedagogies, and to encourage a broadening of perspectives and standpoints in understanding classroom environments and issues. Studies focus on current research and educational theories, but discussions also surround students’ own experiences and traditional methods still found in schools today. Students are to come to class prepared, read assigned readings, complete all coursework, participate in classroom activities and discussions, and successfully complete practicum placements. All programs lead to teacher certification by the province’s Department of Education and a Bachelor of Education degree by the university.

Narrative Inquiry as a Research Methodology

Webster and Mertova (2007) state that using narrative inquiry as a research methodology provides a rich framework for researchers to investigate multiple ways human beings experience the world (p. 3). Narrative inquiry is the study of stories, but more importantly, of experiences as storied and the meaning people place on events that happen. Commonly referred to as *narratology* within the entire field of study, various academic disciplines, such as history, philosophy, and educational research, use the storying process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2; Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 471; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 1). Narrative inquiry as a qualitative research methodology thus enables researchers to study and characterize phenomena of human experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2) as the way in which human beings make meaning of their experiences through telling and retelling of stories; which Webster and Mertova (2007) say makes it versatile to issues of complexity in cultural and human centredness (p. 1).

Generally, narrative research involves listening to and recording stories of people's experiences within a certain phenomenon. Stories appear as historical accounts, fictional novels, fairy tales, autobiographies, and stories people tell about themselves and their experiences in everyday conversations (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 471). They can unfold, for example, through anecdotes, gossip, documents, journal articles, and media (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 7). In collecting and recording these stories as research data, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest using one, or a combination, of the following: field notes; journal records; interview transcripts; observations; storytelling; letter- and autobiographical writing; documents, such as newsletters and class plans; writing, such as rules and principles; pictures; metaphors; and personal philosophies (p. 5).

The next sections explore why and how using narrative inquiry as a research

methodology can provide insight into studying experience and knowledge, with particular emphasis on preservice teachers in a teacher education program.

Role of stories: A holistic approach. Lewis (2011) states that stories are central to human understandings, and without these stories “there is no identity, no self, no other” (p. 505). Stories provide us with a sense of the whole, creating “powerful narrative tellings,” which build up from rich data sources centering on a particular phenomenon (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 5). Unlike other methods that only communicate understandings of subjects and phenomena under study at particular points and omit “intervening” stages, narrative inquiry depicts a holistic picture of the experience (Webster & Mertova, 2007, pp. 3-4); and then retells participants’ stories holistically in their complexity and richness of description (p. 2). In educational research, reflecting within complex and changing contexts of teaching opens oneself up to “descriptions of the whole” (Greene, 1995, p. 12), which would allow a more holistic picture to emerge of the experience and understandings of B.Ed. students in this study.

Forming narrative knowledge. McEwan and Egan (1995) claim that narratives account for the history of human consciousness that “marked our development as thinking beings” (p. ix). This sense of consciousness, or awareness, which Greene (1995) calls wide-awakeness (p. 35), is an integral part of making meaning of what we see and experience. Moreover, Lewis (2011) states that, aesthetically, our embeddedness in the generative and creativity of stories form and inform our understanding of reality (p. 507). We relate our stories of events that happen to us through language and words; and through this repetition, storytelling narrates ways of knowing and being (Lewis, 2011, p. 505). Using language is a way in which we structure our thinking (Lewis, 2011, p. 505) about the world and our experiences.

Webster and Mertova (2007) state that narrative inquiry realizes a philosophical change

towards the postmodern, with an emphasis on the individual, in the awareness of how experience and culture influence our construction of knowledge (p. 4), as we bring our own baggage of past life experiences to any situation (pp. 28-29). Similarly, for preservice teachers, being a student is a key role in their knowledge of schooling, and they bring those experiences with them to the teacher education program. As such, choices that they make and their resultant actions come from their individual *narrative knowledge* (Olson & Craig, 2005, p. 169). Narrative knowledge is a form of “story or representation used to give an explanatory or justificatory account of a society, [or] period” (“Narrative,” 2003). This connection of forming knowledge through experience admits narrative as a research tool in keeping with contemporary learning theories (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 20).

“Meaningful” experience in finding voice. Polkinghorne (2007) suggests evidence collected from stories do not need to determine events as they actually happened, but should support personal meaning of the experience (p. 479). Narrative researchers, therefore, examine the way people express meaning from their experiences through stories they relate about a significant phenomenon or event in their lives. Increasingly, educational researchers turn to stories of teachers to attend to beliefs they have about themselves (Korthagen, 2004, p. 81). The meanings expressed in these narratives also take into account discursive practices and social relationships that realize lived experiences (Britzman, 1991, p. 1). In this study, I attend to stories of preservice teachers’ experiences; which implicitly requires the presence and capacity of myself as the researcher to listen (Britzman, 1991, p. 1), allowing participants to find their voice in this research.

Temporal nature of human experience. The *temporal nature* of human experience describes the progression of events happening over time, with each event or thing having a past

we remember, a present as it appears to us now, and an implied future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 29). In narrative research, as in philosophy, temporality connects the past, present, and future, where every narrative text concerns itself with “what has been, what is now, and what is becoming” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 145-146). Time, or temporality, therefore is a key feature of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 29) in keeping with Dewey’s theory of continuity of experience (p. 50); which states that every experience takes something from past experiences that modifies the quality of present or future experiences (Dewey, 1938, p. 35).

Methodological landscape. A *methodological landscape* is a conceptual structure that sets the scene in which research occurs, explaining context and events in which participants are placed (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 107). Time, place, and events are key elements in explaining this structure (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 104). Within research, every step happens at a particular time, adding to the plot or unfolding of events (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 107). Place describes the concrete physical and topological boundaries within the inquiry landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 51). The research environment, for instance, has the purpose of familiarizing the reader with the context of the research (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 107). Each event then occurs at specific times and places, and creates plotlines of the research (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 107), used in the attempt to capture stories of experience (p. 107).

In sum, narrative inquiry as a research methodology uses a framework of storying phenomena of human experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Through construction and reconstruction of personal stories, the versatility and complexities of human centredness emerge (Webster & Mertova, 2007) as these stories unfold in multiple forms and as research data (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Narrative inquiry provides a holistic

approach (Webster & Mertova, 2007) in an aesthetical embeddedness of language and words (Lewis, 2011); as a postmodern philosophical position (Webster & Mertova, 2007), with the capacity to express and support the meaning of the events experienced (Polkinghorne, 2007). The following section explores the framework I apply in using narrative inquiry in the field of teacher education.

Framework for Narrative Inquiry

Critical event narrative. Webster and Mertova (2007) describe *critical event narrative analysis* as an approach using stories of human experience in the research of teaching and learning (p. ix). They identify it as an approach to “see a way through” (p. ix) in understanding vast experiences related within stories. They state that we recall life experiences through specific events, called *critical events*, which are instrumental in changing or influencing our understanding (p. 71). Therefore, a critical event is the story a person tells when they experience a change in their understanding, or come to a different worldview (p. 73). These critical events refer to time, challenge, and change; where over time, our memories refine and discard “unnecessary detail,” keeping only those of changing and lasting value (p. 74). Similar to a story recounting memorable and impressionable events, critical events also reflect memorable and impressionable stories (p. 87).

Applying critical event narrative to teacher education. Using a critical event narrative provides a better understanding in the realm of teaching and learning; and, for instance, may assist in generating more appropriate teaching tools and techniques (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 16) through examining the ways in which narratives shape and inform practice (p. 27). It may provide a lens in understanding changes in experience, or transitions, B.Ed. students undergo in developing their understanding of who is a teacher, how they identify themselves as teachers,

and how their narrative knowledge influences their teaching role. Webster and Mertova (2007) use the term *change experience* to define this transition (p. 74). For example, a change experience happens when the storyteller encounters difficulty in integrating their idealized worldview with the reality of their experience (p. 75).

Method for interpretation of texts. The narrative approach is an interpretive and analytical form of storytelling where parts of the story configure a “whole” that interweave and interconnect life events (Cooper & Hughes, 2014, p. 29). To provide rich, thick descriptions, narrative researchers need to move beyond data collection and analysis to unravel vast and complex social context of human behaviour and interaction (Cooper & Hughes, 2014, p. 30). Cooper and Hughes (2014) say that using a *hermeneutic interpretation* allows the individual to reflect inwardly, and address, negotiate, and confront cultural or traditional values in which they live (p. 29). Philosophical hermeneutics holds that the interpreter encounters a text with prejudice, unable to transcend their own historical and situated embeddedness, where interpretation acts as a conversational dialogue, and meaning is the product of this interaction (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 483). We do not need to verify the meaning participants disclose through methodical procedures of empirical sciences (Schwandt, 2001, p. 193) as understanding and interpreting are the same (p. 193). Hermeneutics, therefore, provides a way of relating philosophical thought to educational research paradigms (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 5), providing a framework situated between a modernist and postmodernist view (p. 6). The interest lies in perceptions of reality, enabling researchers to interpret how we come to our understanding based on epistemological concepts of truth (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 6). For this reason, I interpret participants’ narrative texts using a hermeneutic philosophical approach in this thesis.

Philosophical concept: In-betweenness. Greene (1973) describes how taking a stranger's standpoint in lived-reality is to inquire and wonder about the world in which one lives as if seeing it for the first time, or as if returning home after a long time away (p. 267). In this way, she refers to a learner as a newcomer where their focal interest is in ordering materials of their life-world after a discontinuity when suddenly the familiar appears strange (Greene, 2004, p. 140).

In the same way, Webster and Mertova (2007) argue that critical events capture the unforeseen, and provide perspective to make the “familiar strange” (p. 100). They reference the familiar-strange concept to the works of Bruner and the Russian formalists, where aspects of familiarity and unfamiliarity play a significant role in stories (p. 100). For example, in the beginning chapter of *Through the Looking Glass*, Lewis Carroll plays on the familiar-strange theme when Alice notes differences in her familiar drawing room while looking in the mirror above the fireplace:

Oh! I do so wish I could see *that* bit! I want so much to know whether they've a fire in the winter: you never *can* tell, you know, unless our fire smokes, and then smoke comes up in that room too – but that may be only pretence, just to make it look as if they had a fire. (1968, pp. 193-194)

Similarly, student teachers find themselves in familiar, and yet unfamiliar, surroundings and landscapes of a school classroom and in their becoming role as a teacher. Researchers often note student teachers face struggles between tradition and change (familiar and the strange). For instance, Britzman (1991) refers to these dichotomies as “tensions between knowing and being, thought and action, theory and practice, knowledge and experience, the technical and the existential, the objective and the subjective” (p. 2) where they “shape each other in the process of

coming to know” (p. 2). In this thesis, I refer to the student-to-teacher experience as “in-betweenness” in examining the transitioning role, or change experiences, in becoming a teacher.

Chapter 4: Research Method

nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, ‘Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!’ (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural)

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Overview

The critical event framework introduced in Chapter 3 consists of four parts: processes (which I call *research method*), negotiation (*ethical considerations*), risks, and results (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 104). In this chapter, I discuss the first two parts, research method and ethical considerations. Thus, I present the research method for documenting experiences of current and recent B.Ed. students in an understanding of their journey in deciding to become a teacher. I start with discussing the data collection method of selecting participants for this study, criteria used in the process, and the interview method. Next, I describe how I analyze research data, and how it supports trustworthiness of the research. I then discuss implications for ethical consideration.

Data Collection Method

In this section, I discuss the research tools used in data collection of this research, and the structure (or methodological landscape) in which the research takes place in reference to time, place, and event (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 104).

Participant selection. According to Polkinghorne (2005), in any qualitative research, trustworthiness of its findings relates to selection of viable sources to promote a deepening of understanding of experiences into which the researcher is inquiring (p. 141). Thus, done purposefully, selection of participants also explains how and why (p. 141) we chose these

particular sources. I contacted potential volunteers for this study through an email sent to their Faculty of Education office. The recruitment email, found in Appendix A, asked for volunteers willing to share their story of their experience in the B.Ed. program in at least two interviews.

The following section explains the criteria used in selecting participants for this study.

Criteria. I selected or excluded potential participants using the following criteria:

- 1) Participants were a full-time Bachelor of Education student during the 2015-2016 academic year at a university in Nova Scotia.
- 2) They were, at that time, in their first or second year of study in either the elementary or secondary school program.
- 3) Participants were willing to talk freely about their experiences.

Selection was on a “first-come, first-served” basis, strictly in the order they volunteered and met the above criteria. Two participants took part in this study. With no intention of being exhaustive, their narratives illustrate how their stories interweave into the student teacher’s understanding of who a teacher is, and their experience of in-betweenness. As I selected participants, they received a letter of invitation outlining the study (see Appendix B), and a copy of the informed consent forms (see Appendix C, and section on “Ethical Considerations”).

Interview method. Hatch (2002) states that using interviews brings to the surface what is often hidden and taken for granted and is one way researchers can uncover structures of meaning that participants use to organize their experiences and make sense of their lived-realities (p. 91). In this thesis, I conducted semi-structured interviews to address relevance to the research questions of this study in exploring meaning participants placed on their experience in deciding to become a teacher. I used guided and open-ended interview questions, which appear in Appendix D of this thesis. In inquiring into critical events, Webster and Mertova (2007) say

open-ended questions invite participants to engage in storytelling (p. 85), and aid in reflecting and recall of these events (p. 86). Flexibility in guiding questions also allow for digressions, and for the interview to move in the direction participants take it; allowing the researcher to use probes and follow-up questions to elaborate or clarify aspects of the stories told (Hatch, 2002, p. 95; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 87).

Greene (1973) states that we do not ask questions to provide answers about facts, behavioural guidelines, or to enhance aesthetics awareness, but rather to arouse wonder about how we interpret events and experiences (pp. 10-11). To this end, each participant received a copy of the interview guide prior to the first interview after consenting to participate. I suggested participants write down their thoughts and responses in preparing themselves for the interview, using the initial set of interview questions as a guide. The purpose was to help initiate the reflective process and to serve as reference during the interview of what they would like to discuss. I gave them the option to submit their narratives as part of the research data. Although neither participant brought their narratives to the first interview, they both engaged in the interviews and in ongoing communication with me throughout the study.

For this study, I conducted two interviews with each participant, each approximately a half-hour in length, allowing for time between respective interviews. I audio-recorded all interviews. Interview transcripts then became a part of the ongoing narrative records (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 5), and used to interpret meaning of participants' experiences of in-betweenness.

Why multiple interviews? In order to study experience, data should derive from an intensive exploration with a participant (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138) to collect a series of full and saturated descriptions of the phenomenon under study (p. 139). I developed this inquiry with

more than one interview with each participant. My purpose was to establish a comfort level with the participant so that they reveal and focus on meaning of their experiences, as opposed to only initial recall of memories. In spacing interviews, I enabled participants to reflect a little deeper on what they said, and if they felt they communicated enough meaning and detail to the experiences they related. In engaging in more than one interview, participants benefited in being able to relive their stories and to imagine themselves in new ways, and to change their practices or ways of being in the world (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 9). With a deeper awareness of their stories through retelling their experience, they may also begin to shift and change these stories as they go about their everyday realities (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 9) and forward into their teaching careers.

My role as engaged listener. In the previous chapter, I discussed how the researcher has the capacity to listen. Openly listening and carefully attending to participants' responses, I assist in ensuring that the reader hears each participant's voice, and that the resultant text is not primarily of my own creation (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 482). Webster and Mertova (2007) suggest that carefully listening to stories that people tell provides researchers with valuable data in revealing, in its own way, the critical events involved (p. 87). As participants spoke of their experiences as preservice teachers, my role became the engaged listener, where I guided participants to *burrow* and *broaden* their responses in their interviews.

Broadening and burrowing. In narrative inquiry, analyzing and restorying the quality of narratives refers to broadening and burrowing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 11; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 87). Broadening is a generalization of a person's character or social description (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 11; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 87), whereas burrowing avoids generalizations, and focuses on the event's emotional, moral, and aesthetic

qualities (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 11). Burrowing also reflects on the meaning of the event in attention to present and future considerations (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 87). In interviews, a burrowing question asks participants to go deeper into their responses, while a broadening question asks the participant to expand on their response to a particular story (M. Olson, personal communication, November 1, 2016). I used both broadening and burrowing questions in my interviews.

Place. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) define *place* as where events occur, characters develop and live their stories, and where cultural and social contexts constrain and enable roles (p. 8). In the context of research, place is the descriptive account of the setting of the research (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 95). I held all face-to-face interviews on the university campus where participants are/were doing their teacher education, following the same logic of how place plays an important part in any story. Familiarity of place, therefore, in itself may help trigger memories, and bring forth feelings and responses that may be difficult to recall in a different setting. Although I believe that conducting these interviews somewhere else, such as their place of practicum or teaching, would create a different discourse, and although interesting, is beyond the scope of this research. Thus, semi-formal interviews on their university campus allowed privacy for individuals to relate their stories, and creates for the reader the setting for the experience of being in teacher education.

Data Analysis Process

Webster and Mertova (2007) claim that an important feature of narrative is that it can help readers explore complex problems, much as a story unfolds its characters, relationships, and settings (p. 4). The unfolding of events, or plot, describes the relation of collected data to the research process (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 96). In the previous chapter, I noted that storied

texts are not reenactments of truths or factual occurrences of events they report, but evidence of personal meaning of the author. The aim, therefore, of an interpretative analysis of storied texts is to enhance the reader's understanding of the meaning expressed, just as a commentary uncovers and clarifies the meaning of a text (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 483).

Narrative researchers do not just listen and record participant stories, but also share and re-story their own narratives, and lay them alongside participants' stories to add dimension and attentiveness to lived experience (Keyes & Craig, 2012, p. 25; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 88). For this reason, I began my analysis with my own narrative reflection of my journey into and from teacher education, which I presented in Chapter 1 of this thesis, highlighting some of my own critical events in being a B.Ed. student.

During the research process, I kept a research journal, which included notes recorded after each interview as another record of impressions and information about participant's reactions, further questions to ask in subsequent interviews, as well as any awareness of bias on my part as researcher, in keeping with a hermeneutic philosophical approach. As Hatch (2002) says, research journals are reflective tools of the process, "and keep track of the human side of the research experience" (p. 114) helping to fill in information during coding and analysis stages. Along with the research journal, I also used the following in collecting and analyzing data from participants: transcriptions of audio-recorded interviews; member-checks after each interview; and, memos of ongoing communication with participants. The following sections list a step-by-step process for the analysis of collected data.

Transcribing. I audio-recorded and transcribed all interviews. These audio recording of conversations allow researchers to explore the complexity, multiplicity, and reflexive nature (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 112) of the experience under study. I also made memos during

transcribing to allow me to adjust protocols, and to remind me of topics I wanted to explore further in follow-up interviews (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 144). These memos served as additional data, noting intonation, pauses, emphasis, and pacing of participants, which could be important in interpreting meaning of their experiences.

Member checks. After transcribing each interview, I did member checks, sending a copy of the interview transcript to the participant. Schwandt (2001) states that member checks are an important procedure for corroborating and verifying data to meet the criterion of confirmability (p. 155). In this way, trustworthiness of the research comes from the confirmation of participants of their reported stories of experience (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 99). Thus, after transcribing each interview for this study, the participant received a copy of their transcription, where I asked them for verification of their wording and intended meaning, allowing them to review and make any changes he or she may want to make in it, and as indication of their ongoing consent. Once each participant approved their transcript and any modifications made, I began re-reading all transcripts together in parts, individually, and as a whole.

Re-reading. Clandinin et al. (2006) say that multiple readings of *field texts* (in this case, interview transcripts) create a temporal space of the way the participant stories themselves in their recollected memories during interviews, such as memories of their childhood, school experience, and teacher education (p. 114). I re-read all texts at this point to get a sense of interpreted meanings from my participants, allowing me to record impressions in my research journal. This process also helped identify critical events and find *narrative threads* that run through each interview in preparing for coding.

Coding. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that while re-reading, narrative inquirers begin to narratively code texts; for instance, the names of people and places where events occur,

storylines that “interweave and interconnect,” gaps and silences in transcripts, emergent tensions, and occurrences of continuities and discontinuities become possible codes (p. 131). During coding, I gave each transcribed event, and each episode within the event, a unique identifier (Webster & Mertova, 2007, pp. 96-97). Each identifying tag is page and line numbered, with the core purpose that the reader can trace it back to its source (p. 97). I coded data for this research using the MAXQDA program. All codes, then crosschecked with the co-supervisors, strengthen the trustworthiness of the analyzed data.

In analyzing, I arranged coded segments as critical or *like* events (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 78) in keeping with the critical event approach described in the previous chapter. A like event repeats context, method, and resources used in the critical event, but with different people, and is useful in confirming and broadening issues arising from critical events (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 78). Identifying like events also aid in looking “for common threads across individuals and situations to examine the living and telling of multiple versions and variations” (Olson & Craig, 2005, p. 166) of participants’ stories.

Trustworthiness

Narrative inquiry concerns individual truths, rather than identifying generalizable and repeatable events (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 89). Reliability of research data, therefore, is the dependability, or *trustworthiness*, of notes and transcripts in narrative research (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 89); and is the coherence and persuasiveness of the data (p. 93). In this study, member checks corroborated and verified the accuracy of data and transcriptions. In the following sections, I discuss three criteria for trustworthiness met in this thesis: *access*, *verisimilitude*, and *transferability* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 104).

Access. Access provides the reader with contact with research data where they can easily trace the data back to its source (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 96). Access, therefore, is the availability and representation of research notes, transcripts, and data on which the researcher bases the findings (p. 94). The coding of data, such as described in the previous section, provides the access to support the analysis of this thesis (p. 96).

Verisimilitude. Narrative research does not hold claim to exact truths of statement of events or happenings, but aims for verisimilitude; that is, results of the data have an appearance of truth or reality (Schwandt, 2001, p. 271; Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 4). They are believable. Webster and Mertova (2007) state that there are three aspects of verisimilitude for narrative research: 1) research and reports should resonate with experience of the researcher; 2) reporting should be plausible; and 3) it is possible to confirm truth of accounts through similar events (p. 99). In using critical event narrative analysis, assigning data into categories of like events verify verisimilitude of the critical event presented (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 78).

Transferability. Transferability in narrative inquiry is a way in which the researcher provides sufficient evidence to allow someone to apply findings in a different setting (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 101). The aim of narrative inquiry, therefore, is not to prescribe general applications or conclusions, but to offer a chance for the reader to imagine their own uses and applications of these experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 42). Harkins (1997) states that details in the descriptions of participant's experiences provide a greater opportunity for these experiences to resonate with the reader (p. 61). A richer description of participants' experiences through open-ended questions on a structured framework enhances reproducibility and strengthens reliability of the study (Harkins, 1997, p. 59). In this research, critical and like events describe the context of the inquiry, and provide richness of detail and accessibility to readers,

making application possible in other settings (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 101).

Storage of Data

I stored all data collected for this research as computerized files on the university's server under password protection, and notified my participants and co-supervisors of moving or using data elsewhere. I also saved all downloaded audio-recordings on the university server as password protected files, and kept all data until the successful defense of the thesis.

Ethical Considerations

The method I used for obtaining informed consent from participants follows the outline of the university's policy of ethics. Each participant signed consent (see Appendix C) at the beginning of the first interview, signifying his or her willingness and ableness to participate in this research. Participants also signed consent in the case where they submitted their narrative as part of research data.

To ensure confidentiality of data and anonymity of participant's identity and information, I coded or changed all names, places, and any identifiable information that could expose their identity. I also made participants aware of storage and disposal of data, and ensured them that only the student researcher (myself) and co-supervisors of this thesis accessed the data. At this time, I also promised to be truthful and honest about the representation of participants and their data, emphasized through member checks and ongoing discussions with them.

Overview of This Study

This current study involved a narrative inquiry into experiences of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students in their decision and experiences in learning and becoming teachers. Through using the storytelling process, participants explored and reflected on their experiences of what it is to be a B.Ed. student, and how their experiences might re-conceptualize their image of who is

a teacher. Described as the experiences of in-betweenness, this research examined time, place, and event, and explored why someone chooses teaching, and their preconceptions of who is a teacher; their experiences in their coursework and practicum placements; and, how student teachers, through difficulties and challenges, deal with these experiences that affect how they view a teacher's role. This research study also explored significant others who played a part in the participant's decision to enter teacher education, as well as those who influenced them throughout their program, and may influence their image of a teacher.

Each participant took part in two interviews; each approximately half-hour in length, giving them opportunity to reflect deeper into their understanding of their experiences and changes into becoming a teacher. Member checks, done after each interview, verified the accuracy of transcripts, and allowed for any changes participants might wish to make, allowing them to become co-constructors of research data in keeping with a narrative approach. Two volunteers participated in this study.

Interpretation of data used a hermeneutics philosophical approach, which takes into consideration that the student researcher's own experience and understanding may influence interpretation of data. I used a critical event narrative framework, specifically designed for educational research, to examine experiences of participants involving their understandings, or worldviews, as part of their interpretation in re-telling their story.

Chapter 5: Findings

‘Who are you?’ said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, ‘I—hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.’

‘What do you mean by that?’ said the Caterpillar sternly. ‘Explain yourself!’

‘I can’t explain *myself*, I’m afraid, sir,’ said Alice, ‘because I’m not myself, you see.’

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Overview

In this chapter, I attempt to describe who the participants of this study were at the time of their interviews, in the current state of their change experiences and narrative knowledge of teaching. Even as Alice remarks, “what is the use of a book ... without pictures or conversation” (Carroll, 1968, p. 23), I use words of the participants from our conversations in their stories of experience in how they illustrated themselves and their experience of becoming a teacher.

Participants’ Stories of Experience

Following is a detailed description of the participants, Carly and Tom, in their retelling of their story of becoming a teacher, their transition of in-betweenness and narrative knowledge of teaching. Each storied description is not an attempt to describe them socially or to distinguish gender experiences and differences. Each participant encountered teacher education with his/her own experiences, interests, goals, and abilities. Each have different backgrounds, and construct their own meaning in his or her own way. The stories that Tom and Carly chose to tell are shaped by their personal narrative and practical knowledge of their experiences, and how they constructed their understanding of what it means to become a teacher.

Just a brief note about the citations I used: direct and indirect citations of participant's words throughout this thesis use the following notation:

(first initial, interview number, page number in transcription of interview).

For example, the citation found on page 3 of Tom's second interview is: (T, 2, p. 3). All other citations follow APA formatting. I begin with Carly.

Carly's Sense of Belonging

New beginnings. As she sat in the middle of her grade 11 English class with her classmates, Carly thought to herself, "I kind of want to be a teacher one day" (2, p. 2). How weird, she reflected, "I would be teaching students like myself" (2, p. 2). Although she knew she *always* wanted to become a teacher (1, p. 2), she still felt this was a "very meta-moment" where she contemplated teaching in a classroom while still being a student herself (2, p. 2).

After graduating from high school, she took a year off before entering university (1, p. 14) to decide on a major. "I kind of knew [what I wanted to do], but I wasn't locked into it" (2, p. 16). "I kind of figured myself out for a year" (2, p. 16). She spent a lot of time watching her favourite TV series, *Criminal Minds* (1, p. 14), and it reinforced an idea she had since high school. Carly had really liked her high school biology teacher (1, pp. 13-14), and she remembered her teacher had talked about psychology in class. She recalled her teacher had said, "psych was a very hard discipline to get into at the beginning, and that you would enter in your first year of class, and would be terrified" (1, p. 14). It was then that Carly decided she would take a major in psychology with a minor in women's studies (1, p. 2; 2, p. 4). You see, "[My biology teacher] was a really nice woman. I loved her. She was very encouraging" (1, pp. 13-14) Carly explained. It was because "She's the best. She *knew* you could do it. And she made you feel like you could do it too" (1, p. 14).

In her first year as a psychology student at university, Carly attended an undergraduate English literature conference, where she “signed up to volunteer at the front desk” (2, p. 2). She fell into conversation with one of the other volunteers:

“What do you, well, want to do here, when you’re done here? What is your goal?” (2, p. 2) the girl asked Carly.

“I think I want to be a teacher” (2, p. 2) Carly replied.

“Oh, you can do that with psych?” (2, p. 2) the girl asked.

Carly found out soon afterwards that she could not (2, p. 2), as psychology was not a recognizable teachable (1, p. 2) in secondary schools in Nova Scotia. It was important to her to do well and have the right requirements because she already knew which teacher education program she was hoping to attend (1, p. 3).

So, it was then in her second year of her undergraduate degree, Carly “switched to English” (2, p. 2). “I guess one of the bigger prompts was that my ... intro to literature prof in my first year told me that I was actually good at English” (1, p. 2). Thinking that English might be a worthwhile pursuit, she exclaimed, “[T]his is amazing. I can actually *do* this” (1, p. 2). She also switched her women’s studies minor for sociology (2, p. 3). “I had to give those up to take on English and sociology so I could teach English and social studies” (1, p. 2), keeping her on track to her goal in secondary school teaching. After finding it to be a difficult program anyway, Carly was actually relieved in discontinuing her studies in psychology, however, she “miss[ed] women’s studies sometimes” (2, p. 3). She recalled how in her “first year of women’s studies, we were talking about how there’s no women’s studies courses in high schools. They don’t exist. It’s not something you can study” (2, pp. 3-4). Nevertheless, “I think what I did learn I can use..., ‘cause I mean, I’ll be qualified to be a *history* teacher” (2, p. 4). Carly could envision

herself in her future teaching career, where, “I want to get into a school and teach women’s studies, because that’s just as valuable” (2, p. 4).

In the meantime, Carly was pursuing secondary teacher education with teachables in English and social studies (1, p. 2), where she was in her final year of study at the time of her interviews. She decided on secondary teaching because she said she was uneasy around younger children (1, p. 2). “I’m not good with children” (1, p. 2) she laughed. “I don’t know how to talk to them” (1, p. 2). At her recent job, she worked alongside teenagers, and Carly thought, “[T]hey’re just people to me; I don’t have to worry about it” (1, p. 2). All the same, she worried about what it would mean to be a secondary school teacher: “I’m not good at standing in front of the room lecturing; that’s not my style” (1, p. 6). She wondered, “[W]hat am I going to do when I get into high school, when I have to stand in front of the room, lecture, and do all this stuff?... I don’t find that engaging at all” (1, p. 6).

Her transition into teacher education was perhaps easier than most, as her boyfriend at the time was already a B.Ed. student in his second year of study (2, p. 6). “[S]o,” Carly acknowledged, “I knew exactly how everything was going to go down from day one” (2, p. 7). He told her, “[T]his woman, she’ll teach from this book.... And when this guy tells us that we have to do this for an assignment, he *really means* it’s as open-ended as it seems” (2, p. 7). Then he told her to “stop freaking out” (2, p. 7). “Just figure something out” (2, p. 7) he said. During her first week on campus, however, she discovered this was not going to be as easy as she thought. “[W]e did a *big* orientation day ... and there was just *so* many people.... I’m never going to know half of these people” (1, p. 3). Feeling overwhelmed, Carly exclaimed, “It was so crazy!” (1, p. 3). On the second day, she sat in the auditorium while university officials explained the program and their expectations (1, p. 3). When “the seminar profs told us that you need to get

at least an 80 to pass the course” (1, p. 3), Carly panicked.

[A]t the time, I thought they meant an 80 in every single class whatsoever; you could not get below an 80 on *anything*! So, I was terrified just sitting in that auditorium, thinking, I’ve got to be the most perfect person who has ever existed on this campus in order to even *pass*. (1, p. 3)

After actually attending classes, and now looking back on her first year, she calmly boasted, “No, this is fine; you got this” (1, p. 3).

Confusing times. “[F]or *English*, it seems like it’s all so subjective” (1, p. 2) Carly said, about the required first-year English methods course. “[A]nd that was terrifying. Well, do they [students] know *this*? What’s their base-level? What’s grade 11 supposed to be in comparison to grade 10?” (1, p. 2). She felt, “I didn’t really learn what I needed to be *in* an English classroom” (1, p. 2). She assumed “that they’re supposed to learn formal language, but what does that mean?” (1, p. 2). She felt confused, “And that was really terrifying” (1, p. 2) she repeated. As “I looked at the social studies curriculum and everything, and it’s: you do the World War II, then you do Cold War, and this is how you *do it*” (1, p. 2), it all seemed straightforward. “It’s like the disconnect between theory and classrooms is too wide” (1, p. 13).

There were other issues as well; Carly heard other students complaining, “I wish I knew structure!” (1, p. 4). She admitted, “[A]t the beginning I, too, wanted that structure” (1, p. 4). But as the term progressed, she realized this was not going to happen. “[O]nce I started going, I realized there is no structure” (1, p. 4), leaving her to reflect on what this may mean. “You know how there’s all those different colours but we humans can only see some of them?” (1, p. 4) she asked. “[F]or teachers,” she said, “a teacher’s way of teaching might be all these certain colours, but then another teacher might be a different set of colours, and you can’t put a limit on these

colours because there's just so many of them" (1, p. 4). From what she learned in her courses, she concluded, "[E]very single person can teach in so many different ways that you can't teach us how to be structured because we are going to create our own structure as we go" (1, p. 4).

Creating her own structure, however, had not been easy, as Carly often felt torn on assignments (1, p. 9). For example, for one of her assignments she needed to create a "school kit," and she "was having trouble figuring some stuff out" (1, p. 9). "Before I [had] always been very ... [adamant on creating] lesson plans. I have a safety net. So, you *sit* and make your own lesson plans" (1, p. 9) she explained. However, she had difficulties with this assignment, so she decided to approach her professor to ask for advice (1, p. 9). The professor told her, "You can use stuff from the Internet. Go nuts; I don't care. Don't reinvent the wheel" (1, p. 9). When Carly took her professor's advice, she "actually started looking at other people's lesson plans and other people's resources" (1, p. 9). "Oh my god," she exclaimed, "there was a whole world that I [had] just been ignoring and that I can actually use" (1, p. 9). She found that not only did this help with this particular assignment, "It's actually given me some ideas for some other stuff, which is, really *great*" (1, p. 9) she said, amazed at the amount of information she found. "It's like a whole network. Utilize it" (1, p. 9).

Discovering practice. "I'm going to be placed in a room alone at some point, and I don't know what I'm doing" (1, p. 6) Carly thought. At the beginning of her practicum, she sat listening to her cooperating teacher say to the class, "[Y]ou're going to be doing some text features, you know, this and that" (2, p. 13). Carly did not understand what was happening, because "at that point, I didn't know what text features *was*. So, that was terrifying" (1, p. 12). Quickly, she pulled out her cellphone, searched *Google*, and tried to gain some understanding as to what the class was doing (1, p. 12). Coming back to the University in January, she questioned,

“Why didn’t I already know that? Why didn’t I know that this is how you learn text features, and you do that in grade eight?” (1, p. 12). The following practicum term, it happened again:

[I]t was in the middle of her [cooperating teacher’s] unit, both times the practicum started, and she was in the *middle* of it. And so they were talking about things that I don’t know if they were called something different when I *was in school*, or if I just forgot the term. (2, p. 13)

Carly laughed, “I have no idea what they were doing. So, I’m just sitting there, googling terms on my phone while they’re actually doing stuff” (2, p. 13). Carly suddenly lowered her voice, and whispered, “Oh god, I feel like such a fraud” (2, p. 13).

On one particular day, two of her students found her eating altoids at her desk (1, p. 11).

“What are you doing? What are you eating?” (1, p. 11) one of them asked her.

“Oh, they’re cinnamon mints” (1, p. 11) Carly replied.

“Oh, can we have some?” (1, p. 11) they asked.

“They’re really spicy,” she answered, “you’re not going to like them” (1, p. 11).

She then watched as these two boys began eating the mints: “You can barely eat two of them without your mouth starting to burn, and they were *popping* three or four at a time. They went crazy with these cinnamon mints” (1, p. 11). On the last day of her first-year practicum, towards the end of class, she asked the two boys to stay after class (1, p. 11).

“Why? What did we do? What-did-we-do? Are we in trouble?” (1, p. 11). The boys started “freaking out,” (1, p. 11) because Carly never asked anyone to stay after class before.

“No,” Carly replied to the boys, “I just need you to stay” (1, p. 11).

After class, she surprised each of them with “their own tin of mints” (1, p. 11). At that moment, “one of the kids starts crying, *straight on crying*” (1, p. 11) she said, astonished. Then, “[T]hey

both hugged me, which was unexpected, because they're teen boys; they don't... *hug* adults, unless they *have to*" (1, p. 11). Wow, she thought, "[T]hey actually *care* that I'm here, that I'm in this room. I'm not just some *adult* who's there to boss them around. They actually care that I have a presence near them.... That was... yeah" (1, p. 11).

Her university supervisor came to visit the classroom from time to time, and offered advice on her teaching: "My supervisor was very: *Stand in front of the room and lecture—that is how you teach*" (1, p. 6). She would often say to Carly, "[Y]ou need to be at the front of the room, and you need to be go-go-go. They need to be listening to you 100% of the time" (1, p. 12). In a hushed voice, Carly said, "She thought I was *quiet*, and... yeah," she gasped, "[s]he did not... like me that much" (1, p. 12). On the other hand, her "co-op teacher was *opposite* of that" (1, p. 6). She would say things like, "*[Y]ou don't need to do that,*" Carly said, "which is what we've been taught in school" (1, p. 6). Her cooperating teacher held to a pedagogy more connected to her own, "Activity-based learning I think is what I've always described my pedagogy as" (2, p. 12). For example, her cooperating teacher "almost *never* lectured to them [students]" (2, p. 11). Instead, she would say things like, "Okay, this is background information on the book we're reading. Here's some information on whatever historical event we're discussing" (2, p. 11). Afterwards, "[I]t was *completely*, free-range. They would all be working, and then I would just be roaming in-between the seats just making sure they were on-task" (2, p. 12). That, Carly stated, was "perfect" (2, p. 12). However, to make matters worse, at the end of her practicum, her supervisor "got into a *fight* with my co-op teacher about pedagogy" (1, p. 12).

Self-reflection. Classroom management was something that Carly felt she lacked (2, p. 10). She realized this the day one of her students decided he was not going to listen to her: "I actually still remember [this as] the first time I got angry at the student" (1, p. 8) Carly began,

hesitantly. “I wanted him to sit down, [but] he was *not* sitting down” (1, pp. 8-9). Some of his classmates told him, “Yo, go sit down,” but he just replied, “[I]t’s not cool enough” (1, p. 9). At that moment, Carly said in a firm voice, “[I]t’s not cool. Go sit down” (1, p. 9). The boy sat down (1, p. 9). Relieved, she thought to herself, “I did that. That was kind of amazing” (1, p. 9); however, she “felt really bad afterwards” (1, p. 9). “I’ve never been a confrontational person,” she declared, “I’m the kind of person if one person starts getting angry, I should back right off!” (1, p. 8). Somehow, “[O]ver the course of my practicum I learned that it’s not that I’m not a confrontational person, it’s that I pick my battles, and if I need to stand up, I *will*” (1, p. 8).

Among the other things Carly found out about teaching was, “I now know that you make the lesson plans” (1, p. 14). “It’s not... a book handed down to you that, you know, okay, let me show you how to do this” (1, p. 14) she said. “I realized there is no structure because *every single teacher* is so different, and so, you can’t put a structure on something that’s not bound by that kind of [thing]” (1, p. 4). Now finding that there was no *official* book, “it’s interesting seeing that you have the control, you make the difference” (1, p. 15). You see, she said, “It’s not this is what you’re doing in the 10th grade, and this is what you do in the 12th grade, and you know there’s no control of it.... It’s that, if you are a good *teacher*, you can make the class *good*. It’s on you” (1, p. 15).

“I think teachers are parents, in a way” (1, p. 15) Carly mused. “They want the best for their kids. They want their kids to grow and succeed” (1, p. 15). She reasoned, “[P]art of it might be you want your kid to grow so much that they don’t need you anymore” (1, p. 15). “And you’re trying so hard with them, and you *put* so much effort and creativity and everything” (1, p. 15). She saw it on *Pinterest* all the time: “[Y]ou’ll see people make these *insane* lunchboxes for their kids” (1, p. 15) she said. “Well teachers, teachers will put this insane *effort* into their lesson

plan for the kid” (1, p. 15). “And so,” Carly concluded, “we don’t give birth to them or raise them or anything; *but* in a major part for a year we do” (1, p. 15).

She recalled sitting during one lecture, listening to her professor and thought, “They’re always telling us longer than 20 minutes and they’re not paying attention to you. Longer than 20 minutes, and, hey, they’re done, you’re done” (2, p. 11). Stunned, Carly questioned, “But that’s not something we need people to take into consideration when talking to *us*?” (2, p. 11). Take for example the fact that “I’m a fidgeter. I have trouble sitting still for long periods of time if I’m just sitting there listening to someone. I can’t; my concentration just *goes*” (2, p. 11). Carly laughed, “I wish they all practiced what they preach a bit more because I’m probably not the only one like that” (2, p. 11). She could not believe that they were “*literally* telling us that it’s not a good way to teach students; and we’re still students. We’re still learning” (2, p. 11).

Second-year surprises. “Don’t be something you’re not” (2, p. 9) said her professor during one of his lectures this term. What a relief, Carly thought, “Everyone is always so worried about fitting into the mould of good teacher that they won’t stop to think that maybe who they are is a good teacher. It’s not one size fits all” (2, p. 9) she appreciated. “[Y]ou never thought [you had] that much creative outlet over what you learned” (1, p. 14). Carly tried to recall her own high school days and about the things she was learning back then: “I know I had the same teachers for the 11th and 12th grade, and I can’t honestly tell you what book we read in the 11th grade” (1, p. 14), as she tried to remember her English classes. “And I know we watched a movie in 12th grade,” she added, “and I could not remember anything else from those two years.... I don’t think you really care either” (1, p. 14).

One of the surprising things Carly saw happening that year was “the whole network thing,... it’s a lot of group work so far, and not everyone gets along” (1, p. 9). This situation

made working on group assignments and participating in small group discussions a challenge: “[I]t’s really difficult sometimes managing all the different personalities ‘cause some people *have* to be the one who makes all the decisions; they *have* to be the one in charge” (1, p. 9) Carly said. “And we’re in a program that’s filled with leaders, so that’s not always the best to manage,” she gasped, “sometimes you just get really frustrated” (1, pp. 9-10). “[J]ust because I’m always near headstrong people, there are other people in the program who might actually think that what I can do is cool too” (1, p. 17). “[A]t the end of the day, you just step back and go: look, listen, if they’re so adamant that they do this, then let them do this” (1, p. 10). Her frustration built as she continued: “If they want to take on *all* this extra work, then let them take on all the extra work. You know you tried, you know you did it. And you can’t help someone that doesn’t want help” (1, p. 10).

One of her class assignments was a presentation involving an activity, and Carly had a chance to walk around and check on their progress (2, p. 2). She “noticed ... two of the people weren’t really writing anything down” (2, pp. 2-3), so Carly decided to approach them (2, p. 3).

“[H]ow are you two doing? How’s it going?” (2, p. 3) she asked them.

“[O]h, you know” (2, p. 3) one of them answered.

She ended up helping them on their activity (2, p. 3). Bewildered, Carly realized that she “just totally flipped into teacher-mode right there” (2, p. 3). In fact, the two students noticed as well and commented,

“[Y]eah, I know, you look different when you are in teacher-mode. You can tell you’re in teacher-mode when you slip into it” (2, p. 3).

Carly whispered, “[T]hat’s so weird” (2, p. 3).

“I don’t know it’s really hard to explain” (2, p. 15) Carly commented later. For instance, “[W]e’ll

be sitting there and we'll be talking, and ... [when] someone asked a question about doing something," Carly immediately replied, "I don't know; you'd have to go and ask your principal" (2, p. 15). At this moment, she "stopped there for a second" (2, p. 15) and thought, "You would never have said that two years ago. You sound like such a teacher right now. And it's weird" (2, p. 15). She realized the effect the B.Ed. program had on her demeanor, as now she acted more "teacher-like": "It's like it just shifted my mind set towards all this stuff that they expose for teachers to be here" (2, p. 15). For instance, she realized that she enjoyed working with younger children:

I prefer junior high kids. I haven't really taught high school kids yet, but I prefer the younger ages so far. And I think that they're the same way. So, many of them don't sit still either.... I give them the option that if they want to stand or if they want to move around, move around. If they don't, then let them sit. (2, p. 12)

The day her second-year cooperating teacher messaged her "asking me if I could *meet* with her in the next couple of weeks to talk about my practicum" (2, p. 5), Carly panicked. She decided to approach a fellow B.Ed. student who had this same teacher the previous year, asking him for advice (2, p. 5):

"What does that mean? This is so ominous. What do I do? Is this *bad*, or is she just trying to meet with me?" (2, p. 5) she asked him.

"[I]t's probably nothing. She probably just wants to talk to you about practicum. Nothing you did. She just wants to talk to you" (2, p. 5) he said.

"[O]h *sure*" (2, p. 5) she replied.

When she did meet with her cooperating teacher, her meeting went well, and they "more or less mapped out" exactly what she would be teaching during her practicum (personal communication,

December 15, 2016). “[I]t’s nice knowing what they’re doing so that I know how [to] *build* off of it. So, I know what she’s doing right now so I can build my unit” (2, p. 13).

Looking back. “I feel like I knew after I graduated from my English degree I could have gone teaching in Korea, and I would have been fine. I wouldn’t have needed any sort of teaching [degree]” (2, p. 15). As she pondered further, she said, “And I probably *could have*, but at the same time, I don’t think that I would have known what I was doing” (2, p. 15). From here, “I’ve come up with my safety list of places I’m going to apply to” (2, p. 17) she laughed. The impact of the teacher education program on her awareness of becoming a teacher, however, was something difficult for Carly to express (2, p. 15). “I think it also helps that I’ve [*laughs*] aged in the last two years since I’ve been here. So, I also *matured* a bit from where I was then” (2, p. 15). It was not something that Carly noticed, because “I’m so wrapped up in trying to *be* the teacher, that how I look is just completely over my head” (2, p. 3). At times, “[When] I think about myself, I still feel like I’m *in* high school let alone teaching *it*” (2, p. 2). On the verge of completing her final term of coursework and heading for her practicum, Carly was startled in saying, “I guess my image of *myself* as a teacher still hasn’t quite caught up to reality yet. I know, I think, other people might see me as [a] teacher...” (2, p. 2) as her thoughts drifted off. Of her growing sense of becoming a teacher, she said,

One of the things they like to tell us is that there are good teachers and there’s *great* teachers. And so I like to think I’m a good teacher, maybe? At least, edging into good. But I’m working on my way to becoming *great*. And that’s going to be a constant. I could be teaching for 20 years, and I still won’t be a great teacher because I’ll always still be working towards that goal. (2, p. 8)

Working towards becoming better is something that Carly will work towards throughout her

education in whatever subject matter or grade level; something that Tom was also beginning to experience. I now turn to presenting Tom's narrative.

Tom's Time-Consuming Trials

Beginnings. Today was a day that things turned around for Tom. There was a looming work-to-rule and pending strike of teachers in the province: "Ah, the *strike thing*.... you know, personally, if the teachers go on strike that's a *bad* thing for me. But I did vote, because I'm a sub, right?" (1, p. 11) Tom said proudly, realizing that his vote would have an effect on his future career as a teacher. "So I did vote, I did vote *yes*, because long term all of these things are going to impact me" (1, p. 11). It was not always this way, but "now that I've been in a school more than as a student teacher, I can understand better what they're fighting for, where maybe before I listened to the news, and ... [thought], teachers got it easy" (1, p. 11).

Tom was a recent graduate from the elementary teacher education program. It was a long road to get his B.Ed. degree, taking time off between degrees; and six years after deciding to become a teacher, he entered teacher education (1, p. 10).

Before his journey into teaching, when he was just 19 years old, he volunteered in a government funded program (1, p. 2), volunteering "every three months ... in a different community" (1, p. 2). "[O]ne of my placements was at an elementary school," Tom said, "[a]nd I worked with a bunch of kids" (1, p. 2). "I didn't know what I was doing!" (1, p. 2) he laughed. "[I]t's really just an *accident* that I got placed in this *school*" (1, p. 16). While there, Tom "worked with a girl who was visually impaired" (1, p. 16). "I helped this little girl with her gym class" (1, p. 16) he said. He also worked with a young "immigrant [student] with his English" (1, p. 16), showing him things like, "here's how you spell this word, or whatever" (1, p. 16). "I was 19 [years old]," he admitted, "I didn't know anything; you know, I couldn't *teach* him" (1, p.

16). It was mostly “hanging out with kids, which I would never have expected myself to enjoy” (1, pp. 16-17) he said, surprised.

He then moved on to work in summer camps and an after school program (1, p. 2) where he noted that part of his responsibilities “[involved] a plan, very general, but not like a lesson plan. Never a lesson plan” (2, p. 4) he explained. He spent his time scheduling activities and playtime for the children in his care: “Often we had a theme of the week; we did activities about the theme, but it wasn’t *explicitly* like teaching” (2, p. 4). Tom noted the difference in the two situations in working with children as dependent on the time he spent with them, describing it as “Facilitating play as opposed to facilitating learning” (2, p. 4).

He then transitioned into working once again in an elementary school, where “I did *that* for two years” (1, p. 2) he said, proudly. He got this job through his mom’s friend who was an Educational Program Assistant [EPA] (1, p. 2). “[Tom], we’re looking for male EPAs” (1, p. 2) she told him. “[T]here’s a little boy who doesn’t react well with women” (2, p. 26). So, Tom “applied on a whim” (2, p. 26), and got the position in an elementary grade five classroom. “The teacher that I worked with ... she was awesome” (1, p. 10). “[I]f it wasn’t for her, I’d probably ... wouldn’t even be here” (1, p. 11). This was the first time Tom considered teaching. “I probably wouldn’t even bothered with doing the B.Ed. if it wasn’t for her” (2, p. 10).

However, Tom needed to get an undergraduate degree first, so he decided to go to university “because I figured that would be a quick path, you know I had to get a bachelor’s of something” (2, p. 27). He decided on getting a Bachelor of Music (1, p. 2), after which Tom continued on course to a career in teaching.

He applied for the “Bachelor of Education” (1, p. 2) at his chosen university, where he decided to do his teacher education in the elementary school program. “I already worked for two

years in an elementary school system,” Tom explained, speaking of his prior experience, “so I kind of knew what the ballgame was all about” (1, p. 4).

First-year woes. Knowing “each professor had their own viewpoints and experiences” (1, p. 4), Tom thought, “that I wasn’t [or wouldn’t be] surprised by anything” (1, p. 4). His first impression on walking into teacher education, however, he said, “I found it.... was just a little cliquier [*sic*] than I was expecting right off the *bat*” (1, p. 3). Then he realized people in the program were not all getting along, and this unfriendliness troubled him throughout his experience in the program. “[H]onestly, I found the biggest challenge that I had during this program was the cliquiness” (1, p. 8) Tom conceded. “People sat there every time,” he said, pointing to a spot at the table, “and if you sat there too, you got the *look*. I mean. I don’t care, so I sat there, too, sometimes just to see what happened” (1, p. 8). With surprise he noted, “You know, a lot of people already knew each other” (1, p. 3).

This situation created challenges throughout his program in working with others as Tom explained, “[Y]ou know, the peer-support group ... [had] not existed” (1, p. 8). “Other people are going to have other ideas. And it’s hard to get that if people are tuned out, or not even able to tune in” (2, p. 10). Baffled Tom said, “So I don’t know. I don’t know. I thought that was difficult” (2, p. 10). Trying to listen in class was sometimes a challenge: “[T]here’s some groups of people who would just chit-chat, and they would be hard to sit beside because they would be talking to each other” (2, pp. 9-10). “I’m trying to take notes. I want to learn. I want to listen to the prof, even if, you know, it’s boring” (2, p. 10).

For his assignments, his professors sometimes “would break us up into groups, and then we would have to teach something to the rest of the class ... as if the class of students we were teaching were a class of grade six, or whatever” (2, p. 11). That is what he and some other

students in his group were to do that day—teach a planned lesson, while “the rest of the class ... were pretending to be grade six” (2, p. 11). Tom let in a big inhale, noting, “[We were] delivering the project,... [and being] gun-ho in their delivery” (2, p. 11); and then Tom noticed others in the class who were supposed to be listening to their presentation “who were pretending to be grade six [students], or whatever, would often tune out” (2, p. 11), while they were presenting. He thought, “Well it would work out well” (2, p. 11), but he felt, “because they [those not presenting] weren’t going to get marked,... it didn’t matter [to them]” (2, p. 11). “So that sucked!” (2, p. 11) Tom exclaimed. “[T]hey figured it wasn’t their grade; it was [ours,] the people who were presenting” (2, p. 11), and that explained why they were not paying attention to his presentation. Quietly, he said, “So they would tune out, and it wouldn’t matter” (2, p. 11). “[W]hen you’re a young adult, and you’re in a room full of young adults,” he sighed, “you’re not going to tell them to stop talking” (2, p. 12). Being stuck, Tom realized, “[Y]ou’re not going to do all those things that you would do in a classroom, just ‘cause they’re your peers, and not your students” (2, p. 12). The situation would be different “[w]hen you’re in a classroom, and you’re dealing with a student who doesn’t want to participate, there are ways that you can make *that* happen in real life, whatever approach you want to do *that*” (2, p. 12).

He discussed this situation later with his girlfriend, who was a junior high school teacher (2, p. 12). “I feel like, as kids get older, [in] talking with her,” Tom surmised, “the junior high kids, they’ll just get up, and wander around, and not participate in a group project” (2, p. 12). On the other hand, Tom remarked, “[W]hen you’re in grade three, [and] you’re learning about lions, and someone has to draw the picture and someone has to [make] the little clay model, and it’s all *fun*, that’s different ‘cause most of the kids will participate” (2, pp. 12-13).

“You know the coursework and real life don’t really have a lot to do with each other,”

Tom commented, “outside the filing cabinet where I need ideas for a math lesson” (1, p. 17). In his math methods course, Tom kept hearing things such as: “Here’s a bunch of math lessons. Here’s how you use the curriculum. Here’s how you look at this resource. This is what this is. Here’s 500 activities for teaching fractions” (1, p. 17) with many resources, but no indication of how it fits into “real” teaching. “[I]t seemed like a lot of the coursework here was aimed at like: you are going to deal with kids; you need to know this *before* it happens” (1, p. 13). Everything Tom was learning seemed it was for some distant-time. Even in the two math method courses he had to take, it was “not so much [repetitive]” (2, p. 17), meaning it was not the same information in both courses (2, p. 17); however, professors were piling on vast amounts of information, “you’re just so *exhaustive*.... It was just *so much*” (2, p. 17). For example, Tom explained,

elementary math is elementary math in your first year and in your second year [of teacher education]. If you can’t do long division, maybe you should figure something else out to do. If you don’t understand fractions, that’s something you do at home. It shouldn’t be taught *here*. (2, p. 16)

Tom already knew the basics of mathematics. “I’m not here to learn how to learn fractions; I’m here to learn ... how to *teach* fractions” (2, p. 16) he insisted. “[T]he easiest way to do that is to *do it* with someone who’s there to help you, a mentor, in a room of kids. That’s the best way to do that” (2, p. 16). In a real classroom, Tom said,

you’re not going to try *five different English methods*, or teach seven different ways to *infer* in your practicum. You’re going to *focus* on the *one* that your teacher uses. I don’t need seven different ways to teach inference when I’m going to get to my practicum, and teachers are going to be like: *Here are the materials I use. Here’s what works for me... blah, blah, blah*. (2, p. 17)

Because “I don’t need the specific frameworks that are available *everywhere else*. Because when I’m in my *real life*,... I’ll have access to that stuff *still*” (2, p. 17). Tom was certain that the pedagogy and skills available for a teacher to teach, “[i]t’s not going to go anywhere. It’ll still be there” (2, p. 17), and he will be able to rely on networking and sharing of information and strategies with others. “I’ll be able to ask people for *specific* advice about *specific* issues that I’m having” (2, p. 17).

Aside from his math courses, Tom adamantly admitted that he enjoyed his philosophy course, another required course in his program, “[I]t was awesome” (2, p. 19). However, what he liked about the course “probably has more to do with the prof that taught it” (2, p. 19) rather than the course material. “[I]t was mostly because she was an *awesome individual*.... [S]he was great. Yeah” (2, p. 19) Tom reminisced. He went on to say, “[S]he was just funny. And, she was caring. She knew a lot about approaching a situation from different viewpoints, which I sometimes have difficulty doing” (2, p. 19). Because “she’s very open-minded, and she *did* encourage discussion” (2, p. 19), these attributes helped to make the classroom experience pleasurable: “I don’t know ... maybe she’s channeled Mary Poppins or something ... but, everyone seemed more or less focused, and able to contribute” (2, p. 19).

“I didn’t really participate much outside [of class]” (2, p. 7) Tom admitted. He sometimes would go to the university pub on Thursday afternoons after class to meet up with classmates (2, p. 7). “I didn’t go [too often],” Tom recalled, “I found it difficult, so I didn’t go every time” (2, p. 7). He admitted, “It was because it was cliquey. You would go, and it would be just like five tables of people, [and] hard to join in when they’re actively involved with each other” (2, p. 7). Surprisingly to him, he found students in the secondary school program were more welcoming (2, p. 7), which he thought was “bizarre” (2, p. 8). Through these conversations, he learned that

“it didn’t seem like anyone had more or less work than anyone else from the *scholastic* side of it” (2, p. 9). Then again, Tom said, “[S]chool is school” (2, p. 9).

Unfortunately, the academic work he did in teacher education contrasted strongly with the work from his other degrees. In comparison, “For this degree I read a lot. I had to do a lot more reading than I did in my ... music performance degree, which ... [was] not really a text-heavy kind of thing” (2, p. 6). “I didn’t really have a whole lot of experience reading academic papers or *even* writing” (2, p. 6) he disclosed. “[I]n my undergrad I might have wrote [*sic*] only four papers.... So, I mean, for me, coming in, that was jarring” (2, p. 6). “Yeah, I was oftentimes, pretty grumpy to be here” (2, p. 5) Tom chuckled. On further thought, he noted, “I think, for most people, it wasn’t a big deal, if they were used to writing a paper [and] reading academic texts” (2, p. 6).

For the most part, Tom enjoyed writing reflections, a component of most courses in the program. “It all depends. And I can’t tell you what it depends on” (2, p. 22) Tom declared. “I think the ones that I got the least out of were the ones: *at the end of class, write a reflection,*” Tom offered, especially as “I haven’t even had time to *digest* this yet!” (2, p. 22) he exclaimed. “I need to process what just happened. Maybe not everyone is the same, but for me to do that, the *immediate* reflection, does not work for me” (2, p. 22).

Second-year angsts and surprises. “[I]n my second year, I just feel like every prof was giving gigantic assignments,” Tom commented, “which is, *okay*, but they just seemed to all come at the same time, every time” (1, p. 8). Exasperated, he admitted, “[T]hat was the only time that I’ve been totally swamped. It was ridiculous” (1, p. 8). The pressure of multiple large assignments in a short time span left Tom little time to connect ideas: “I feel like they’re throwing ... a bunch of stuff.... whether it was useful or not” (1, p. 4).

Tom took a course in English as a second language [ESL] (1, p. 17); however, he could not relate this course to his previous experience in working with an immigrant student. He found the material to be on “how you approach it. It wasn’t so much dealing with how to make sure you’re not offending this person” (1, p. 17). “You can read a book about it, but it’s not going to be the same thing. You just got to do it” (2, p. 25). He found,

the more informative things are just like learning how to ... [deal] with a really brutal class on a really bad day when you’re cranky. Like figuring out how all that works is more formative than exploring hands-on math activities in a roomful of 20-somethings. (2, p. 25)

For all that, “There was a science [methods] class I took” (1, p. 7) said Tom, “that resonated with me” (1, p. 7). “The professor “made us read an article ... called ... ‘Value of Messing About,’ or whatever” (1, p. 7). Excitedly, Tom explained, “[B]asically it [the article] said just screw around and have fun. I’m into that” (1, p. 7). “That was an *aha*-moment,” (1, p. 7) Tom exclaimed. “You know you could make it seem like you’re doing... a game or an activity as opposed to, you know, deliberate learning, which is, still what it is” (1, p. 7).

With school, there is always an aspect of continual change, and Tom found himself dealing with changes in his coursework during the program: “[I]t was about a month into the [math methods] course, or maybe two months, we *switched* teachers” (1, p. 13). He found the two instructors to be very different from one another: “[T]he teacher that we *initially had*,... she was a researcher *as well*, and she was teaching how to teach, and I just can’t handle this” (1, p. 13). The new instructor “who’s been in the classroom for 30 years or however long” (1, pp. 13-14) when she came into the classroom, she would tell them things like, “This is what you need. Here it is. This is what you do. This is how you set it up” (1, p. 14). He found the same

discontinuity with “other professors who were primarily researchers, as opposed to [being] teachers who taught forever and then come to the university” (1, p. 14).

As a critical moment for *me*, the learning I got from that was if I’m going to do this then I need to *do* it. If this is what I’m going to be doing, I need to *do it*. It’s not a ‘learn out of the book’ job. It’s a ‘learn by doing’ job. (1, p. 14)

Try ... and try again. Nevertheless, “I had a really hard time in my second practicum” (1, p. 18) Tom admitted. He had difficulties in communicating with his practicum teacher. He would not describe it as “personality issues, but just she was one way, and I was another way; where I want to mess around like I said earlier” (1, p. 18). He found “all of the feedback that I got back was *negative, all the time*. So, I was confused by that. And there was nothing I could do, to do the *right thing with this person*” (1, p. 10). Tom did not understand: “Whether I was bringing in my own ideas and doing my own thing, or whether I was doing this person’s thing, just was wrong, all the time. I was *always wrong*” (1, p. 10). “That was confusing” (1, p. 10) Tom repeated. “[N]o one is wrong all the time” (1, p. 10). “I want to be open—open ended, open minded, you know. Chase the ideas when it comes up; where my practicum teacher was not” (1, p. 18).

Fortunately, Tom connected with others during his practicum experience (2, p. 13). He benefited from the support from other teachers in the school. He learned a lot through his conversations with them in the staffroom, for instance (2, p. 14). On the reverse, Tom was not sure how they saw his presence in the school: “[M]aybe I wasn’t as *useful*, but... I don’t think that anyone would ever say: *ah, he’s just a student teacher, I’m going to ignore this person*” (2, p. 14). From the many things that Tom learned during his practical experience, he noticed, “[T]here’s a *vibe* that you can pick up off a teacher, like you know [it’s there]” (1, p. 9). “Some

of them [teachers] have it, some of them don't; and the ones that have it are the ones that are really *good*" (1, p. 9) he explained.

Self-perspective. On reflecting on his own self-perspective in becoming a teacher, Tom replied, "I don't know, but I hope I'm always changing" (1, p. 12) he laughed. "[I]t's a different role in the classroom, a different role with *children*" (1, p. 6) he explained in relation to his previous experiences before the B.Ed. program. Tom figured, "When [you are working in a] summer camp situation, you are more of a part of a machine keeping things running smoothly instead of operating the machine, if that makes sense?" (2, p. 2). "[T]he role you play is different," Tom said once again, "I mean ... as a teacher, you're more of a leader, up front, keeping the gears moving" (2, p. 2).

His changing role from student to teacher, he saw it as "becoming comfortable with the authority role" (1, p. 12). He found his experiences demanding and frustrating, and being the "authority figure" now was not always easy: "I'm finding difficulty with ... how much I need to be the boss" (1, p. 6). For example, "I'm finding that I don't really like [constantly telling students]: *You sit down. You do your homework*" (1, p. 6). "I'm not really into that as *much*, even though coming in, I knew that it was a part of it" (1, p. 6). "I *want* kids to go and make a mess, and *yell* if they feel like yelling" (1, p. 12); however, "that doesn't contribute to the classroom environment, so I *can't* let that happen" (1, p. 12). When it came to "[c]lassroom management stuff, I feel like it's hard to be the boss" (1, p. 12). To become more of an authority figure, Tom believed this included, "tuck[ing] your shirt in, wear[ing] the tie" (1, p. 9). In "dressing" like a teacher, "I felt more like my dad.... [and] I felt uncomfortable, but I've been doing it ever since, and now it's not uncomfortable" (1, p. 9). "[M]aybe it helps with the crowd control aspect 'cause they see you more as an authority figure because you're dressed like what they expect an

authority figure to dress like” (1, p. 9) he supposed. In any case, “Crowd control was a part of being a teacher” (1, p. 6). However, this was one aspect Tom said, “I’m not *enjoying* that as much. You know, I want to make the fart jokes, too, with the kids who are being disruptive” (1, p. 6) he chuckled.

As far as emulating any ideal teacher, “I can’t really pinpoint any individual,” Tom said, “any specific teacher outside of this one teacher that I worked with” (1, p. 15), referring to the grade five teacher he worked with prior to getting his bachelor’s degree in Music. “I mean part of what made her such an awesome teacher was the amount of *care* that she put into it, and how much she cared for the kids” (1, p. 15). Yet, “I can’t just hold up one person and put them on a pedestal and say, *I want to be like them*” (1, p. 16). In his viewpoint, Tom adamantly stated, “It’s not how that is. You know, I don’t want to be like one person. I don’t want to do things the way one person does it” (1, p. 16).

Wrapping up: *Ins and outs.* “You know if I’m going to stand by my [philosophy] *you gotta do if you’re gonna do it,*” Tom said, “you [just] got to do the time, the two years [of the education program]” (2, p. 26). It is only “then you can figure out how it is, how being a teacher works for you, or how it’s going to work” (2, p. 26). Overall, Tom said, “[W]e could have done more practicum, and less classroom” (1, p. 2). Tom believed “that extra half year of classroom work was not as useful as that extra half year of practicum, by a long shot” (1, p. 18). In his opinion, “[T]here’s no need for that second semester of class—you know, third semester of classroom work. You know, just not required. Put us in the practicum. Get us going” (1, p. 19).

One of the things Tom regretted about the program was not taking the opportunity to do a music practicum. “I didn’t get a chance to do that,” Tom said, regretfully, “[a]nd I didn’t really *want* to do that at the time, but I think that it would probably have been useful” (2, p. 15). As

Tom was in the elementary program, both his practicum placements were in general elementary classrooms, regardless of majors; however, Tom believed, that if he “made some noise ... [he] would have gotten it” (2, p. 15), but, “I just didn’t care to *ask* at the time” (2, p. 15).

Tom also regretted not taking French immersion that would lead to “some kind of French certification” (2, p. 15). “I speak enough French that it would be... [possible]” (2, p. 16) he said, even though “it might be a bit of work on my part, but it wouldn’t be an issue to make that happen” (2, p. 16). Tom brushed it off in saying, “I don’t want to get into it... so who cares. I did it. It’s done” (2, p. 16) he laughed. He realized that it did not have anything “to do with the program I took. It’s just me; not exploring the options that were available” (2, p. 16).

When I asked him what he learned about himself as a teacher during his time in the program, Tom answered, “That’s a big question” (1, p. 6). “[W]ell, I’m not sure what kind of teacher I want to become yet,” he laughed, “I’m still working on that... I don’t have an answer” (2, pp. 24-25).

Working two jobs, one as a substitute teacher, he acknowledged the influence of working alongside a grade five teacher as an EPA, prior to his teacher education experience. “I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for her” (1, p. 11) he added sotto voce. “No one in my family is a teacher” (1, p. 16). She “was definitely” (1, p. 11) the one who influenced him to go into teaching; other than that, “I mean, I guess, everyone had a favourite teacher, but ... they were not cool enough to influence me to go to do this” (1, p. 11).

I feel like I need to do a lot more teaching to be prepared to teach.... School doesn’t prepare you [for] what the reality of it *is*. It kind of shows you some ways it could be, in an ideal situation but it’s not real. You know, I’m going to have to spend five years doing this to have an idea. (1, p. 5)

Chapter 6: Analysis

‘Contrariwise,’ continued Tweedledee, ‘if it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be; but as it isn’t, it ain’t. That’s logic.’

—Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

Identified Themes: Uncovering In-betweenness

As Carly and Tom created their own teaching personae (whether influenced by others or not) and built their pedagogical knowledge to become the teacher they envisioned, their student-to-teacher experiences shared some like events, or common themes. They both faced an internal struggle, a sudden realization of things that were once familiar, now strange, and reached spaces of irresolution, the space of in-betweenness. Here, in these spaces, reflection begins.

In-betweenness, as I describe it, is not necessarily a positive or negative experience, but the experience of transformational learning, the point when individuals realize the necessity to reflect in making choices between what they *knew* and the *new*. In *Democracy and Education* (1916/1944), John Dewey calls this space the “twilight zone of inquiry” (p. 148). Here, learning to encounter the familiar and the strange is to consider different viewpoints and different ways of being. In the following sections, I provide an in-depth analysis and discussion of findings in how Tom and Carly re-conceptualized their images of who is a teacher through their changing contexts and spaces of in-betweenness.

Looking for structure: Show me how to teach. Many students like Carly and Tom enter teacher education expecting an *official* book to tell them how to be the teacher, what Carly called the “book handed down to you” (C, 1, p. 14). From the beginning of her interviews, Carly stated that the program did not give her the knowledge and skills she felt she needed to be able to teach a junior/high school English course (C, 1, p. 2). She expressed her confusion as to the

“curriculum ordering,” not understanding what students’ prior knowledge should be, and what outcomes and skills they should learn in each of her classes. She felt overwhelmed in not understanding the learning comparisons of each grade level (C, 1, p. 2). She felt her teacher education courses did not answer these questions explicitly, and the flexibility in the English curriculum methods, in particular, surprised her.

Carly struggled with the idea of not finding the structure as she expected from the program. She noted that other B.Ed. students in the program made similar comments (C, 1, p. 4), and created the sense that she was not alone in her confusion. She posed that, as “*every single teacher* is so different” (C, 1, p. 4), it is difficult to obtain a (single) structure “that’s not bound[ed]” (C, 1, p. 4) to encompass all aspects of teaching. She used a metaphor of a colour spectrum, between colours that “we humans can only see” (C, 1, p. 4) and those that are hidden. A “set of colours” (C, 1, p. 4) would be a set of teaching strategies or qualities, ways that a teacher can be. From Carly’s explanation, part of becoming a teacher then involved finding your own composition of colours, and acquiring a place on this structure of “teacher” with its own make-up of qualities of teaching.

Although Carly recognized multiple ways of being, she struggled with the confusion as to what belonged, or what she needed, in her “colour spectrum” of teaching. She was stuck on the idea that she needed to obtain a particular “colour,” or way of teaching, that made her immovable and resistant to change and new ideas, and to opening the door to other possibilities (Greene, 1995). Being aware of the importance of “fitting into the mould of good teacher” (C, 2, p. 9), she demonstrated the difficulties students face in falling outside of the expected version. Clandinin et al. (2006) note the awareness among beginning teachers of being the *wrong* kind of teacher and the “consequences of falling outside the acceptable story of school: bad evaluations,

difficult classroom assignments, possible transfers, and, for beginning teachers, no renewal of temporary teaching contracts” (pp. 61-62).

Carly had difficulty understanding how structure could come from within and emerge from her own narrative knowledge, not be imposed. In her belief that to be a “real” teacher she needed to “stand in front of the room, [and] lecture” (C, 1, p. 6), Carly worried about how she would manage becoming a teacher when she did not find this method to be an “engaging” way to perform the act of teaching. Was she to become someone she disliked in order to become a teacher? She reflected back to significant teachers she had in high school and noted that they were not like that. Did that still make them “good” teachers?

Korthagen (2004) states that the essential qualities of a good teacher “may be different depending on the context, and perhaps it is even impossible or pedagogically undesirable to formulate a definitive description of ‘the good teacher’” (p. 78). Nevertheless, Tom and Carly both expressed their need to reconcile their ideas of what becoming a good teacher entailed.

From the onset, Tom felt overwhelmed with the different possibilities of teaching. He found too many options and alternatives that detached him from the version of teacher that he settled on early in the program. For instance, he referred to the ineffectiveness of having multiple ways of teaching fractions or inferring, as he believed that once he got to his practicum he would only need the *one* method that his practicum teacher used (T, 2, p. 17). Tom resisted any recognition of feeling in-betweenness, and rejected alternatives as too many options. He experienced discontinuity in a sense of confusion rather than seeing these alternatives as possibilities of how to be in the classroom.

Tom recognized that all teachers were different, and that some carried a “*vibe*,” a quality “that you can pick up off a teacher;” however he markedly pointed out that not all teachers were

“good,” saying “the ones that have it [vibe] are the ones that are really *good*” (T, 1, p. 9). Tom’s description of vibes is equivalent to Carly’s idea of teacher qualities as colours. Like Carly, Tom also expressed confusion over how to attain the “right” vibe to his teaching. He meticulously described one of his presentations where he prepared a lesson plan, and his classmates, “pretending to be grade six [students]” (T, 2, p. 11), were being disruptive and not listening. In his need that “it would work out well” (T, 2, p. 11), Tom realized that to get the situation under control, it meant confronting his peers. He felt stuck, in-between, knowing that they were not “students,” but a room full of adults, and “you’re not going to tell them to stop talking” (T, 2, p. 11), even as he acted the part of a teacher during his presentation. His awareness of this presentation not being a “real” situation (sixth grade classroom) left him confused about how to regain his bearing, whereas “there are ways that you can make *that* happen in real life, whatever approach you want to do *that*” (T, 2, p. 12).

He related his experience in this “mock-teaching” assignment, which amplified and described his difficulties in relating to others in the program. I listened to his frustration as Tom disclosed the tension he felt in not being able to find his voice, or vibe. He expected his classmates to pay attention while he presented his ideas. When he found they were not, he continued to be angry and frustrated.

Researchers note that many students already have ideas of what teaching and learning in school *should* look like (Minor et al., 2002, p. 122; Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 2), however this viewpoint is from the perspective as students. Both Carly and Tom came into teacher education with a familiarity with school, and described similar, “traditional” beliefs, as they spoke about the form of school and the act of teaching. Much as Wideen et al. (1998) describe as a simple transfer of information (p. 143), both Tom and Carly made references to the teacher standing in

front of the room, lecturing, and keeping things moving (C, 1, p. 6; T, 2, p. 2). Entering teacher education meant they suddenly found a very different context where they were no longer able to stay “safe” behind the student’s desk, choosing not to participate. Their standpoint now was front and centre, “keeping the gears moving” (T, 2, p. 2).

Greene (1995) states that “each person’s reality must be understood to be interpreted experience—and that the mode of interpretation depends on his or her situation and location in the world” (p. 19). Carly and Tom both placed importance on being in this specific place in order for them to enact their teaching role. A public school, such as the place of their practicums, for them created the context and environment where they saw themselves enacting their roles as teachers. They expressed the idea that place was significant as to whether teaching and learning were happening. The duality they faced in seeing this place as both the place of their learning and as the place of their teaching created a changing context in their in-betweenness. This change meant they needed to reconcile the difference between the old ways of seeing the classroom to their new perspectives as teachers, finding a new way of being in finding a “structure” on how to be in the classroom.

Facing confrontation: Conflicts with pedagogical knowledge. Unlike conformity, Tom and Carly dealt with balancing and finding common ground in search for relational meaning in what they expected to learn, what they did learn, and how they applied it to their own teaching. Malderez et al. (2007) note that relationships students have with educators often influence the desire to mimic similar situations or to improve upon situations in the case of bad experiences (pp. 232, 233). Carly and Tom chose to either assimilate or accommodate information, or chose to become non-receptive to pedagogical content knowledge. When Tom and Carly realized the ambiguity and unclarity between their preconceived notions of teaching and what they

discovered about teaching, in their spaces of in-betweenness, they arrived at an awareness of making a choice between the familiar and the strange.

As they storied their journey as B.Ed. students, they revealed how their narrative knowledge guided them into the choices they made as students and as student teachers. They made choices based on experience or familiarity. For Tom, choosing the elementary program was in part due to his experience in working with children in that age group in summer camps and afterschool programs (T, 1, p. 3) and in an elementary classroom as an EPA (T, 1, p. 2). For Carly, it was about connecting to the past, in her awakesness in the middle of her grade 11 English class when she realized she would like to become a teacher (C, 2, p. 2) and from the suggestion from her professor that she was “actually good at English” (C, 1, p. 2). School was familiar to each of them, however, they both revealed that what teacher education told them about school led to disconnect from their prior knowledge and experiences.

The elective courses that Tom chose, such as an ESL course (T, 1, p. 17), arose from his experience, for example, when he worked with a visually impaired student, or when he helped an immigrant student with his English (T, 1, pp. 16-17). In his experience he noted difficulties he had in not knowing how to teach, or how to better help the student with his spelling (T, 1, pp. 16-17). He was surprised that the ESL course was “mostly ... [on] how you approach it” (T, 1, p. 17), on the theories and techniques of teaching English. He could not clearly indicate what he expected the course to be like. Possibly, he needed clearer examples on how to interact with learners or how to deal with difficulties they may have. He felt that “read[ing] a book about it” (T, 2, p. 25) would not help him deal with actual situations; yet, it seemed he could not pull his experience forward into his new knowledge. His philosophy of “[y]ou just got to do it” (T, 2, p. 25) seemed to be contrary to the pedagogical content knowledge he received, and for the most

part, he resisted accommodating this (theoretical) version to his narrative knowledge.

As they gained new perspectives, even in contradiction to their version of ideal teaching, these encounters of the new and unfamiliar required them to adapt and realize a new way of being. When Carly tried to recall her own high school English class and what she learned, she was surprised at how little she could remember, such as not recalling what book they read, or movie they watched (C, 1, p. 14). She submitted in saying that as a student, you did not really pay attention to those details, “I don’t think you really care either” (C, 1, p. 14). Her experience in teacher education surprised her in realizing, “[Y]ou never thought [you had] that much creative outlet over what you learned” (C, 1, p. 14).

Carly and Tom were able to identify one particular pedagogical method that worked best for them as learners and incorporated it into their teaching philosophy. They both seemed to resist suggestions of using other methods and practices. This “best method” was either familiar to their own (schooling) experience, or familiar with their own style of learning. Wenger (1998) states, “[O]ur perspectives on learning matter: what we think about learning influences where we recognize learning, as well as what we do when we decide that we must do something about it” (p. 9).

Carly came into the program with preconceived notion that to be a “real” teacher she needed to maintain a traditional teaching image and questioned, “[W]hat am I going to do ... when I have to stand in front of the room, lecture, and do all this stuff?... I don’t find that engaging at all” (C, 1, p. 6). Encountering this discontinuity, she experienced in-betweenness—between who she was as a student and the role she assumed she had to embrace. The new knowledge seemed to contradict what she already knew, the old forms. Moving to a new territory in being the teacher as opposed to a student, Carly was reluctant to let go and move forward with

the new, in a different way. She gave examples of the theory-practice disconnect (C, 1, p. 13) where she found her university instructors did not “all practiced what they preach” (C, 2, p. 11). She became frustrated when told, “[T]hat it’s not a good way to teach students” (C, 2, p. 11), but continued to see it happen in her classes. Carly said that sometimes she felt she was still in high school (C, 2, p. 2), and she was unable to distinguish herself from the students she will be teaching, still stuck in-between thinking like a student and as a teacher.

Although Carly said structure cannot be applied to teachers (C, 1, p. 12), she seemed to feel she needed more structure in her subject area knowledge, which she continued to express throughout her interviews, as she found a disconnect with her pedagogical needs and what she was learning. She did not seem to move beyond being directed to self-directed learning, such as looking up curriculum documents or lesson plans on her own. Class time, as Carly saw it, was the time to receive explicit instructions on how to use the methods she learned so that she would be better prepared once she reached her practicum. When she found this did not happen, she became very unhappy, especially with her English methods courses. She assumed her lesson plans needed to be original and that she needed to do everything on her own, which often left her feeling torn on assignments (C, 1, p. 9). Following rules kept her on track of expectations. She needed to organize and plan according to these expectations, keeping her within the parameters of the expected version of “teacher.” The explanation from her instructor to look elsewhere and broaden her thinking (to search the Internet for ideas on lesson plans) moved her to new ground.

Like Carly, Tom came into teacher education claiming he knew what the “ballgame was all about” (T, 1, p. 4). For Tom, school (or teaching) only happens in school, and adamantly stated, “[S]chool is school” (T, 2, p. 9). His previous experience involved occupying children and “hanging out with kids” (T, 1, p. 16). Even on reflection, Tom noted the difference as

facilitating play, in place of learning (T, 2, p. 4). His disconnect with his experiences and learning continued to manifest throughout our conversations. He advocated that learning should be fun, such as having students work in groups and making clay models of lions (T, 2, pp. 12-13). He later immersed himself in the philosophy of “messaging about” (T, 1, p. 7), but failed to make the connection of learning through play as learning through experience (Dewey, 1916/1944, pp. 194-195). He appreciated hands-on learning, and valued the part of Dewey’s theory of learning by doing, believing also that learning (and teaching) should be relevant and practical.

In his coursework, Tom gained knowledge of various pedagogies and methods to use in his future teaching career, but he did not find relevance in these methods or their relation to “real” school (T, 1, p. 5). Tom did not find that his instructors connected course materials in any meaningful or practical way, but felt they loaded him with as much information as possible. It was up to Tom to make it useful for himself. Like Carly, Tom wanted to be given specific directions in using what he learned, although in contrast, Tom wanted only a singular method to use, and one preferably used by his practicum teacher. Nevertheless, unless the pedagogical content knowledge within the program did not conflict with Tom’s prior narrative knowledge, he seemed to assimilate what he found suitable, adding to his existing knowledge. When it contradicted his narrative knowledge, Tom was opposed to accommodating the new ideas, and became defensive against adjusting to those ideas that did not fit with his existing ideas of teaching.

Despite his familiarity with elementary schools, Tom found difficulties with the coursework. He noted that the B.Ed. program expected an ability to be familiar with the level of academic reading and writing that he was not familiar with, where Tom admitted, “[C]oming in,

that was jarring” (T, 2, p. 6). He noted that with some students, who obtained different undergraduate degrees, it might not be a difficult component of the program (T, 2, p. 6). Unfortunately, for Tom, because of his performance-based background during his Music degree, academic reading and writing were a challenge, leaving Tom feeling disconnected with the theory of his university courses and his prior experience of working in a classroom. For him, it made sense to do the practice, dismissing theory, and possibly compromising not understanding the underlying meaning behind the practice. Without the why, Tom may have missed understanding why a particular practice was suitable for some learners or learning experiences and not others. This part of practical theory was complicated with the fact that Tom’s ability to understand academic text was limited.

Once Tom and Carly reached their second-year of study, this unfamiliarity took on a new familiarity with a gain in their pedagogical content knowledge, only once again to encounter discontinuity and in-betweenness. They both found confusion in the volume of material in their programs. Tom was astonished that the program prepared you for some future time, “[Y]ou need to know this [content] *before* it happens” (T, 1, p. 13), when what he wanted was the information and practices that he could use to be successful in his practicums. With the pressure of multiple large assignments in a short time span, Tom felt “totally swamped” (T, 1, p. 8), with little time to connect ideas, or to figure out how this material fitted in with his understanding of the curriculum that he would be teaching. His coursework was not specific, or detailed, enough for him to apply it to his narrative knowledge of teaching. Yet Tom felt that *of*-classroom time was too long in comparison to *in*-classroom time (T, 1, p. 19). Cole and Knowles (1993) state that preservice teachers’ experiences of and in the classroom coincide with their anticipation of teaching (p. 458). Tom felt the immediate skills of what he would use in his practicum was what

he needed to learn. Somehow, the future would take care of itself through practice.

Carly felt upset over what she thought was missing in her studies and confusion over concepts discussed in her classes: “I know that they’re supposed to learn formal language, but what does that mean?” (C, 1, p. 2). She claimed that it was too “subjective” (C, 1, p. 2), and that her instructors did not explicitly explain the “base-level” of understanding. She felt confused, and this confusion carried on into her practicum, leaving her to question, “Why didn’t I already know that?” (C, 1, p. 12).

Both of them expressed that their courses were too theoretical and not related to their lived experiences. Sjolie (2014) claims, “The perception that teacher education is too theoretical and that much of the theory that is taught in teacher education is irrelevant has almost become regarded as a truism” (p. 729). Further, “Given this familiar narrative, and given some of the negative associations in our language and culture that treat theory as something dry and boring (and opposite to practice), it is not surprising that teacher education is widely criticized” (Sjolie, 2014, p. 730). From each of their experiences, Carly and Tom came to a new understanding that caused them to pause and reflect, realizing that teaching may be somewhat different from what they expected.

Practicum and becoming comfortable in the leadership role. Practicum was a time of discontinuity for Tom and Carly, as they needed to fit, or apply (Wideen et al., 1998, p. 156), pedagogical content knowledge to meet new expectations of cooperating/practicum teachers and university supervisors. They found themselves in-between what was now the *new-familiar* in university pedagogical content, and the strange (and once-familiar) context of school practicum placements and teachings. What they discovered during their practicums conflicted and disconnected them from the teaching philosophies they began to develop throughout their

coursework. Carly's image of herself as teacher related to a metaphor of *teacher-as-parent*, where caring and being supportive were characteristics that were important to her. Tom's image tended towards *teacher-as-practitioner*, where he placed value on hands-on experience in learning and teaching. Nevertheless, both alluded to being a "real" teacher meant they were leaders by default (C, 1, p. 10) and anticipated taking on a more authoritative role (T, 1, p. 12).

Carly's image of teacher-as-parent arose from her inclination to her social studies teachable. Her references to family and the support of others as being a part of a community came out in various ways throughout her narrative. Her imagery extended to teachers being a part of that family, saying, "I think teachers are parents, in a way" (C, 1, p. 15). In what Jugović et al. (2012) call a social personality (p. 273), Carly exhibited a helpful and caring persona, and a sensitivity to the needs of her students in relating her experiences in our discussions. She further illustrated her own sense of caring in her will to never give up on trying, transplanting this attribute to her students during her practicum. In what she felt was just monitoring the "on-task" work of her students, Carly expressed this method as her preferred way of teaching (C, 2, p. 12), and stated it "was *opposite*" (C, 1, p. 6) to the expectation of being the leader up at the front of the classroom.

Carly declared she was not a "confrontational person" and picked her "battles," standing up if, and when, she had to (C, 1, p. 8). When she encountered the situation where she told the student to sit down in a firm voice, she took away his privilege of moving around the classroom. The recognition of feeling "really bad afterwards" (C, 1, p. 9), she noted her space of in-betweenness. Encountering a choice, this situation had her reacting in contradiction to her own philosophical beliefs of learning, in which she said, "[M]any of them don't sit still either.... I give them the option that if they want to stand or if they want to move around, move around. If

they don't, then let them sit" (C, 2, p. 12).

Between what she believed as her philosophy of teaching and what she assumed her supervisor expected of her, Carly felt an impasse, an in-betweenness, as to what she should do. Her teacher education courses told her to develop her own sense of teacher and to think about how she wanted to be in the classroom. Carly enjoyed working with students, but she found her first-year practicum difficult with conflicting teaching philosophies and feeling as if she failed to meet the expectations of others. Carly's initial hesitation in her abilities to teach came from her preconceived notion of teaching, such as alluding to standing in front of the classroom and lecturing, which conflicted with what she found engaging as a student (C, 1, p. 6). She found herself torn in resisting the pedagogical content knowledge of her university supervisor who she thought supported a more traditional form of teaching. Carly felt upset by her supervisor's advice, and felt her "*opposite*" (C, 1, p. 6) viewpoint was the reason why she thought her supervisor "did not... like me that much" (C, 1, p. 12).

This discontinuity carried on to her experiences and difficulties in dealing with others during her coursework. Carly expressed the importance for her to find her voice, allowing her to examine her own version of being the teacher. Finding her voice, however, was a challenge. Her experience in the program did not give her many opportunities to play the leader role in her courses. Her idealized version of the perfect classroom, where everyone collaborated when it came to rules and how they engaged with one another, contrasted to what Carly saw happening in the B.Ed. program, where "not everyone gets along" (C, 1, p. 9). She attributed it to "managing all the different personalities" (C, 1, p. 9) where she felt exasperated that some people always "have to be the one in charge" (C, 1, p. 9).

Becoming a leader meant playing a different role for Tom as well. As a teacher, he said

he needed to stand up front and keep the gears moving (T, 2, p. 2). He expressed difficulty in assuming the necessary “boss” role, feeling uncomfortable in constantly telling students, “*You sit down. You do your homework*” (T, 1, p. 6).

Tom continually felt frustrated during his practicum in that he could not connect his and his practicum teacher’s ideas about teaching. He seemed sure of the pedagogy he preferred, which his practicum teacher continually discouraged, and left him feeling invalidated in his choices. Being “useful” (T, 2, p. 14) and doing the “right thing” (T, 1, p. 10) were criteria Tom described as the scale to which others judged him in his role as student teacher, the idea which Wenger (1998) speaks of as legitimacy (p. 101). Wenger (1998) states that “newcomers must be granted enough legitimacy to be treated as potential members” (p. 101). This experience left Tom feeling that he did not belong. He felt an impasse with his second-year practicum teacher who did not allow him to “[c]hase the ideas when it comes up” (T, 1, p. 18). He seemed to want to enact the role of teacher-as-practitioner, and yet he felt he was *always* wrong. It seemed that the tension between them, as Tom described, had something to do with his inability to assimilate her ideas into his practice teaching. His practicum teacher confused him, to where Tom had a lot of self-doubt on how to do “the *right thing with this person*” (T, 1, p. 10). Even the options that he thought he knew and were familiar he believed were not “right.”

Both Carly and Tom described situations in which they felt they needed to be different, a new “right” way of being the teacher to meet expectations of their cooperating/practicum teachers and university supervisors. Nonetheless, these situations also caused both of them to experience discontinuity and in-betweenness of being that was different from their inherent teacher personae, developed throughout their coursework, and their own philosophy of teaching.

Dealing with constant changes and emotions. Once Tom and Carly came to know inner

workings of being a teacher, they entered some confusion and discontinuity in their ideas of teaching. Cole and Knowles (1993) note that the image one held of teachers shatter once student teachers are faced with the reality of teaching (p. 457); and as I illustrate, when the once familiar becomes seemingly unfamiliar. Lewis (2011) states:

In teaching, there are always and everywhere moments of not knowing what to do. No amount of teacher training, planning, or experience can provide that knowledge for such moments; there are no referent points, no landmarks, only you standing on the prairie enveloped by the expansive sky called teaching. (p. 509)

Several researchers note that the role of a student teacher during practicum placements takes on confusion and tension, and often deals with contradictory messages and conflicting orientations (see Head et al., 1996, p. 76; Kagan, 1992, p. 144; Pillen et al., 2013, p. 253; Wideen et al., 1998, p. 156). Carly and Tom found it created conflicts within them between what they wanted, what they learned in their coursework, and in dealing with the somewhat different expectations of others.

In their coursework, they experienced conflicts in emotion over assignments and in dealing with others. Confusion was one of the emotions strongly indicated by both of them throughout their experiences in their programs. Tom noted his appreciation for the open-mindedness of his philosophy of education professor (T, 2, p. 19), which involved understanding that different people have different perspectives and points of views (T, 1, p. 4; 2, p. 19), something he confessed to having difficulties with sometimes (T, 2, p. 19). In the situation of his practicum, he felt confused by the conflicting orientation between himself and his practicum teacher. He portrayed that he was open-minded in wanting to “[c]hase the ideas” (T, 1, p. 18), and where his practicum teacher was, in a sense, close-minded to his suggestions. They

conflicted in their understanding of Tom's role in the classroom.

Tom also felt a sharp disconnect with some of his peers during his coursework. To Tom, they seemed unfriendly towards himself and others who were not a part of their group, often referring to the term "clique." Curious to see what would happen, he sat with them sometimes, saying he did not care, "[Y]ou got the *look*" (T, 1, p. 8). Nevertheless, throughout our conversations, I got the sense that Tom did care. Although he said he came into the program with no expectations, Tom still assumed everyone would be on friendly terms (T, 1, p. 3). He claimed students were disrespectful in class, and that he needed to circumvent certain groups of students if he wanted to learn (T, 2, p. 10). He indicated that others in his B.Ed. classes "would often tune out" (T, 2, p. 11) while he was speaking, which impeded on his gaining a sense of confidence and distracted him from focusing on his learning. He did not want to feel like he did not belong, and yet at the same time, he had difficulties connecting with others.

Even with Carly's claim that she knew what the program was all about before she entered teacher education, she still stated confusion and used the word "terrifying" (C, 1, p. 3) to express her hesitancy in her initial understanding on what was expected of her. She revealed the gap between what she knew and in becoming the "most perfect person who has ever existed on this campus" (C, 1, p. 3) in order to succeed. Later through reflection and experience in the program, she brushed off her in-betweenness by saying that she was "fine" (C, 1, p. 3).

Carly once again used the word "terrifying" (C, 1, p. 2) in expressing her confusion over the base-level understanding of curriculum in her English methods course, and feeling torn over some of her assignments. During her practicum, Carly experienced confusion over the lesson on text features her cooperating teacher explained to the class (C, 1, p. 12; 2, p. 13). She expressed her sense of in-betweenness as "terrifying," and feeling like a "fraud" (C, 2, p. 13) in relating her

experience of not understanding the specific content of her cooperating teacher's lesson. She questioned why this material was missing from her teacher education coursework. Jenkins (2014) states that preservice teachers "struggle with understanding the specific content delivery of the experienced teacher's lessons" (p. 313). When they become comfortable with basic pedagogies in their own teaching, preservice teachers will learn to shift to "observing pedagogies in relationship to students and subject matter content (Jenkins, 2014, p. 314). Carly believed however, that professors took for granted prior knowledge, such as being aware of curriculum and the order of learning (C, 1, pp. 2, 12; 2, p. 13), and felt her difficulties lied in not having a complete picture.

Like Tom, Carly also had difficulties in relating to some of her peers in the B.Ed. program. For those with whom Carly had not built a relationship of trust and familiarity, she felt they stood in judgement of her, not giving her a chance to voice her ideas. She described them as "headstrong people" (C, 1, p. 17) who always "*have* to be the one in charge" (C, 1, p. 9). Not feeling as though she could voice her opinion, Carly felt angry and frustrated.

She continued to feel uncertainty into her second-year of studies, notably in her discussion of panic and the concern she felt when her second-year cooperating teacher asked to meet with her. Suddenly confronted with an unexpected event, she asked, "What does that mean? This [situation] is so ominous. What do I do?" (C, 2, p. 5).

Davis (2013) stresses the importance of learning from the student teacher about how they develop their teaching personae, and supporting them in their efforts, "so that we might prepare future teachers who make carefully considered choices about their self-presentation and who feel comfortable in their roles as teachers" (p. 124). Both Tom and Carly experienced discomfort and uncertainty while developing their teacher personae and in learning how to relate to others in a

new way. Dealing with this emotional “roller coaster” (Davis, 2013, p. 123), also meant finding a way to balance the sometimes-conflicting judgements and accompanying emotions with their new ideas of teaching.

Critically reflecting and self-transformation: Realizing in-betweenness. The importance of self-understanding is shaped through narrative and reflection of oneself and in the relationships one has with others. For the most part, both Carly and Tom expressed some independence in finding ways to learn what would fit (either accommodated or assimilated) into their narrative knowledge of teaching. They mentioned people they could talk to for solutions to dilemmas. Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, and Turner Minarik (1993) state relational knowing, knowing through relationships, “retains an element of selves and knowledge [of] becoming” (p. 8). In their narratives, Tom and Carly each described a teacher who influenced them in some way and helped form the image of “teacher,” from whom they drew a personality, attitude, or pedagogy of teaching that inspired them to work toward the teacher they would become. In each of his/her own practical narrative knowledge, they acquired the qualities of being a “good” teacher through their own schooling, learning, and interactions with these teachers.

Tom’s relational knowledge of teaching and learning arose from the experience he valued in working with children, as well as his bachelor’s degree in Music. His own learning experience was in performance, actively engaging in doing the learning as opposed to other traditional, or non-traditional, methods. He spoke of the grade five teacher he worked with as being the person to inspire him into teaching. He did not discuss how she ran the classroom, her methods, or interesting activities she did with them. It was her caring and her encouragement that gave Tom confidence to pursue a teaching degree (T, 1, p. 11). He also ranked caring as an important quality to teaching when he mentioned his philosophy of education professor, who was also

funny and caring (T, 2, p. 19).

Carly mentioned her high school biology teacher as someone who indirectly inspired her into teaching and who encompassed her idea of ideal teaching qualities. As Tom, she also enlisted teacher's qualities of being a caring individual, someone "really nice" and "encouraging" (C, 1, pp. 13-14). As Carly described her experiences of teaching in the classroom, she maintained these qualities of encouragement and caring towards her students.

Both Carly and Tom's preconceived images of teachers influenced their choices of the particular program they entered, and in how they spoke about teachers, those that inspired them to become teachers themselves and those they met during their teacher education. These preconceived images of teachers helped influence who they wanted to become or teacher qualities they wanted to emulate.

Relational knowing, according to Korthagen et al. (2006), embraces a student teacher's learning (how powerful, useful, and meaningful it is to them) and its relationship to the teaching that created (or inhibited) that learning ... [and needs] to be specifically linked to the learning of their students when they are in the role of teacher. (p. 1026)

What Tom and Carly learned as students and how it translated into their own student teaching influenced their views of themselves as teachers. Carly stated that her image of herself as a teacher seemed strange, unfamiliar. She related her story of a presentation where she helped two of her classmates with the activity she presented them. Her peers told her about changes in her appearance, telling her she "flipped" (C, 2, p. 3) into teacher mode, much as you put on some kind of "teacher" cardigan. Carly felt astonished by their suggestion, saying, "[T]hat's so weird" (C, 2, p. 3). Although she said she was not there yet, Carly stated similar sentiments and said she

did “think I’m a good teacher, maybe? At least, edging into good. But I’m working on my way to becoming *great*” (C, 2, p. 8). Realizing her peers noted she “flipped into teacher-mode” (C, 2, p. 3), or that she looked “different when ... [she is] in teacher-mode” (C, 2, p. 3), Carly was able to reflect on realizing a new way of being.

As Greene (1973) notes that in order for us to become aware of self-transformations, we must suspend our ordinary ways of perceiving and pose questions: “The individual has to be jolted into awareness of his [or her] own perceptions, into recognition of the way in which he [or she] has constituted his [or her] own life-world” (p. 132). Lim-Teo et al. (2008) claim a substantial motivator in perceptual change in graduating B.Ed. students is from their interaction with significant people during teacher education (p. 48).

Likewise, Tom related his self-perception to include his attire, where at first he “felt uncomfortable” (T, 1, p. 9), but maintained that a certain dress made him look “more as an authority figure because you’re dressed like what they expect an authority figure to dress like” (T, 1, p. 9). Relating to his in-betweenness, Tom knew that to look the part of the teacher meant adjusting to others’ expectations. He related his uncertainty in assuming the leadership role in the classroom, where he assumed that leadership meant discipline and “[c]rowd control” (T, 1, p. 6). Still a kid at heart, Tom joked about wanting to “make the fart jokes, too, with the kids who are being disruptive” (T, 1, p. 6), but realized that being a teacher meant you needed to act differently.

Dewey states that we learn from experience, but he cautions that not “all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (1938, p. 25). “Continuity and interaction in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience” (Dewey, 1938, pp. 44-45). In adjusting to the balance between the old and the new, at times,

Carly and Tom found that learning in the changing environment of teacher education and practicum to be “odd” or unfamiliar. Becoming a teacher means moving to the other side and seeing things differently through the looking glass of teaching. Virginia Woolf (1947) writes that “to find everything so strange that nothing is surprising.... It is to be Alice in Wonderland.... [and] Through the Looking Glass. It is to see the world upside down” (p. 71). In learning to teach, Britzman (1991) states it

is not a mere matter of applying decontextualized skills or of mirroring predetermined images; it is time when one’s past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension.

Learning to teach—like teaching itself—is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become. (p. 8)

Their reflections during their interviews on their self-transformation were a realization of a change experience for both Tom and Carly. Webster and Mertova (2007) indicate that change experiences are usually felt afterwards (p. 74), a sort of realization after reflecting on what happened. Tom’s change experience came as an awareness after graduating from the program and being in the field of teaching. In having the opportunity to vote in support of teachers in the recent unrest in the education system (T, 1, p. 11), Tom became aware of the bigger picture. He placed importance on having his voice heard and having a say as to the future landscape of teaching.

Reflections were nothing new to either Carly or Tom. In their teacher education programs, they wrote many reflections, in various forms, in most of their courses. Tom related one such form of reflections, the *exit-slip*, typically done at the end of class as an immediate reaction, which he did not agree was a valid form of reflecting and expressed his concern that it

was not helpful to him in his narrative knowledge of teaching (T, 2, p. 22). Tom suggested that this sort of “think on your feet” reflecting created a sense of in-betweenness that did not give him the “time to digest” (T, 2, p. 22) the material or allow enough time and space to think.

Dewey’s notion of experiential experience, or “learning by doing,” involves the component of reflective practice on the experience: “Such reflection upon experience gives rise to a distinction of *what* we experience (the *experienced*) and the *experiencing*—the *how*” (1916/1944, pp. 166-167). Without reflection, it was easy to be “caught up” in the experience: “I’m so wrapped up in trying to *be* the teacher, that how I look is just completely over my head” (C, 2, p. 3). As they progressed through their programs, some of the familiar and expected things Tom and Carly discovered about teaching were not as they remembered from their own schooling experience. During their programs, they developed a new-familiarity of schooling, and through reflection, chose to assimilate, accommodate, or reject the new knowledge with their old-familiarity of school. At various points, such as once they reached their practicums placements, this cycle started again, where the old pulled them away from the now new-familiarity of teacher education, and left them once again to find a new way of being.

Carly stated that after graduating from her English degree she thought that she could teach in Korea without needing “any sort of teaching” (C, 2, p. 15). Now with her new understanding of what teaching involved, she realized that “I don’t think that I would have known what I was doing” (C, 2, p. 15). This sudden recognition of what was “really hard to explain” (C, 2, p. 15), Carly found herself in a moment of in-betweenness of what she thought she knew (the familiar) and what she needed to know (the strange) in order to teach.

After discovering a pedagogy that relieved her of “standing in front of the room lecturing” (C, 1, p. 16), Carly began to develop her sense of confidence in her ability to learn to

teach and in her relations to others. She related the discussion she had with some of her peers where she felt comfortable in offering advice in “you’d have to go and ask your principal” (C, 2, p. 15). In this moment, Carly was astonished that she was able to give this advice, surprised at her confidence and knowledge of knowing where to look for answers. This moment of astonishment and realization was a moment where Carly’s in-betweenness lead her to reflect on her self-transformation, and the relationships she built with others.

Tom’s idea of the teacher he was becoming was not clearly defined, or fixed, as he put it, “I hope I’m always changing” (T, 1, p. 12). Not yet realizing how his choices and these changes developed his sense of *self-as-teacher*, he noted that the process continues even after he received his teacher certification. Greene (1995) states that:

To be yourself is to be in process of creating a self, an identity. If it were not a process, there would be no surprise. The surprise comes along with becoming different—consciously different as one finds ways of acting on envisaged possibility. It comes along with hearing different words and music, seeing from unaccustomed angles, realizing that the world perceived from one place is not *the* world. (p. 20)

In-betweenness is the moment when we “stopped there for a second” (C, 2, p. 15). Hollingsworth et al. (1993) state that “relational knowing could provide a space to help resolve the tension between acquiring knowledge of what schooling presently is and what it should or might be (the lived world and the theoretical world)” (p. 10). The construction and re-construction of Carly and Tom’s narrative knowledge of teaching are embedded in this relational context.

Summary

Wenger (1998) states, “Our experience and our membership inform each other, pull each other, transform each other. We create ways of participating in a practice in the very process of

contributing to making that practice what it is” (p. 96). From the transition from the familiarity of their own student experience to the unfamiliar in entering teacher education and teaching, in-betweenness involves finding familiarity in seeing different perspectives and different ways of being. The struggle of the student-to-teacher experience not only involves acquiring teacher knowledge, but for Tom and Carly, it also meant resolving spaces of in-betweenness, where things became familiar once again. This chapter examined the emerging themes of in-betweenness of Carly and Tom’s experience in teacher education during critical moments in their learning to become teachers.

They discovered multiple possibilities in ways and being a teacher. No one told them in a very precise and singular manner how to be *the* teacher, and in similar ways, this openness and multiple possibilities of being confused them from what they expected. Tom resisted any recognition of feeling in-between, rejecting options; while Carly found solidarity, noting she was not alone in her confusion as to the lack of “expected” structure. They both related examples in their narratives to demonstrate their understanding of the multiple ways of teaching and the difficulties in sorting out the “right” ones. Their imagery of teacher came from familiarity and meaning.

Tom’s narrative strongly reflected the influence of his experience in working with children prior to his teacher education, yet he failed to find relevancy to his actual lived experience in the classroom in his coursework. He often felt frustrated in the amount of material and lack of connections he made. He created the imagery that professors “threw” material and left it up to students to sort out, and he felt frustrated when he needed to make his own decisions. Tom chose to ignore other possibilities, sticking to his preferred, or familiar, pedagogy, one that related to his prior experience in the classroom. He felt stuck doing coursework where the

pedagogical content knowledge in his courses conflicted and did not hold relevancy to his actual lived experience in the classroom.

Carly's experience of in-betweenness described in the "teach what you preach" situation created a duality in what she saw her professors did in her classes and what she was advised to do as a teacher. Still in the mind frame of being a student, Carly had difficulties in moving beyond her thinking to that of a teacher while in her coursework.

Practicum carried its own discontinuities for both Tom and Carly. Tom could not find a middle ground with his practicum teacher, and noted that whether it was his own way of teaching or mimicking his practicum teacher, she would find fault in what he did. Not finding a solution, Tom felt frustrated with his practicum experience. Carly felt stuck, in the middle of ideas and expectations on teaching of her university supervisor and her cooperating teacher. She felt a discomfort and impasse when she confronted the student, telling him to return to his seat, while her own philosophy allowed movement in learning in the classroom. In a similar way, they both demonstrated their need for validation, approval in what they did. Noting words such as useful, right, confused, jarring, wrong, uncomfortable, terrifying, and ominous, Carly and Tom dealt with constant changes and emotions during their programs and practicums, sensed in-betweenness. Conflicting orientations, philosophies, and instructions, created a hesitancy and confused space of in-betweenness and being for them.

This chapter examined how Tom and Carly encountered in-betweenness in light of their change experiences and new understandings they related in their interviews. Both their stories of experience revealed how they became self-aware, or wide-awake (Greene, 1995), and how they learned to think critically, to question, and become mindful of thoughts and practices. In their sense of in-betweenness they came to realize the need to develop their own voice, while

considering new perspectives and opinions of others. Their interactions with others, as well as connections and experiences encountered between theory and practice, provided the medium to reflect on new ways of being and understanding. From their experiences, Carly and Tom were able to take on their own discoveries and journey into becoming teachers. In dealing with uncertainty, discontinuity, and doubt, they both found solutions while gaining insight into the complexities in transitioning from student to teacher. From discontinuous experiences and growing knowledge of teaching in their programs, both Tom and Carly found their own philosophy of learning and teaching. In subtle and implicit ways, they both described how they came to recognize the influence of their experiences and people prior to their programs that helped them shape their growing knowledge in becoming teachers. They described how the people they encountered, theories they learned, and connections they made during their programs formed their relational knowing in each of their educational settings.

Chapter 7: Final Thoughts

The Red Queen shook her head. ‘You may call it “nonsense” if you like,’ she said, ‘but I’ve heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!’

—Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

As Korthagen et al. (2006) state, “If teacher education programs genuinely focus on the student teacher as learner, then it is the ability to analyze and make meaning from their experiences that matters most” (p. 1030). The knowledge that student teachers develop is not new to teacher educators, therefore, who does the learning is what really matters (Korthagen et al., 2006, p. 1030). In this final chapter, I explore the remaining two parts of the critical event framework: results and limitations (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 104), as well as further recommendations for future study. I begin by re-iterating the research questions of this study.

Answering Research Questions

Once again, the research questions of this thesis are: What are the stories of in-betweenness as experienced by those in the student-to-teacher phase of their career? What are the experiences of those who decide to teach, and how do their experiences change upon entering teacher education? Who are significant others who influence them? And, how does the role or idea of a teacher change with challenges student teachers face in adapting their pedagogical knowledge to their practicum experiences?

Carly and Tom’s stories of in-betweenness were presented and analyzed in answering the above research questions in the preceding two chapters. In a (methodological) landscape where student teachers find themselves in the middle, the student-to-teacher experience, conceptualized by me as in-betweenness, is not necessarily a negative or positive experience of learning, but experiences that arise through the transitioning in the act of becoming, and in the movement and

changing roles of student to teacher. In-betweenness, therefore, is the experience of being in-between, and in this research, the experience of transitional change experiences in learning to teach and graduating as teachers.

Both my participants had significant teachers that influenced them in their decision to enter teacher education, and continued to influence them during their program. Both teachers also inspired their choice in particular program in teacher education, but as Hobson et al. (2005) note, there is no clear pattern as to why students choose their particular program. The participants both gave heart-felt responses when speaking about this influential person, and how years later, this person is still fondly spoken of and is credited as being the reason why they chose their particular program and went into teaching. Significant teachers as mentors “represent the history of the practice as a way of life. They are living testimonies to what is possible, expected, desirable” (Wegner, 1998, p. 156). Tom and Carly also spoke about other significant teachers, instructors, supervisors, and peers during their program who helped them become aware and discover specific qualities within themselves that inspired a philosophy of “teacher” that they aspired to. In the next section, I discuss the limitations of the current study.

Limitations of This Research

Polkinghorne (2007) states that there is a “disjunction between a person’s actual experienced meaning and his or her storied description” (p. 480). Defined as in-betweenness, this disjunction reflects the struggle of the familiar and the strange, or what we knew and the new. Webster and Mertova (2007) point out that we realize change once we are distanced from the experience, much as Dewey (1938) reminds us of the continuity of experience. What we remember and what we chose to tell may create this disjunction.

The timing of the interviews meant that I did not learn about Carly’s second-year

practicum. Tom chose not to relate his experience of his first practicum. My own inexperience as an interviewer was another limitation. Deeper probing, or prompts at critical points in their retelling may have revealed more details in some of their stories. Did my lack of experience contribute inadvertently to what Webster and Mertova (2007) call a “narrowing view of the data” (p. 114)?

The participants’ stories are re-stories, in that they are relating their stories after their experiences, having had time to reflect and figure out what parts of the story were important to them, and place judgements upon these reflections. Participants’ stories are the impressions that their experiences have left behind. The purpose of this study was not to verify the truth of each of their stories. It is the hope of this researcher that each participant was honest in his or her retelling. Although I took precautions to make the participants comfortable in relating their story; for example, being in a familiar environment, chit-chatting before the actual interview process, and engaging in multiple interviews to develop a comfort level with the researcher in relating these personal experiences; they may have still withheld some critical information. Even with anonymity assured and maintained, we are nevertheless human. Wanting to be seen as competent teachers, they may have been reluctant to voice certain critical experiences with a researcher and fellow teacher.

Even though I verified the accuracy of each text with the participant, my articulation of the texts may be somewhat different from how they were related to me. For sake of privacy, clarification, omitting pauses, correcting grammar, and fitting their words into the flow of writing, this may have changed the way the story was told. However, even with my honest attempt to hold the accuracy of each related story as told to me by my participants, the reader may get a different impression from the co-created texts of the way I have related them here.

Recommendation for Future Research

‘Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?’

‘That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat.

‘I don’t much care where.... so long as I get *somewhere*’

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

I would enjoy interviewing Carly and Tom in five years, capturing their stories of in-betweenness in getting their teaching certificates and their first teaching contract. Further recommendation for research along the lines of this current research could explore the experience of further participants at various points during the course of their teacher education program, revealing the transitioning into further critical events, and the sense of in-betweenness as fluid, or in constant flux as Heraclitus stated. Likewise, it would be interesting to look at teacher educators’ stories and their perspectives of students’ experiences in learning to teach. There is a need to look more closely at how teacher education programs shape teacher identity with examining a larger group of students, considering that many students come into the program with varied preconceived images about teaching and learning.

Final Summary

‘*Must* a name mean something?’ Alice asked doubtfully.

‘Of course it must,’ Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: ‘*my* name means the shape I am – and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.’

—Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

The future is perhaps unwritten: “We plan as best we can; we do our best; the precise results we never beforehand can know. The event is forever uncertain” (Kilpatrick, 1963, p. 62). At the point where a preservice teacher asks, “What should I do?” is the point where reflection

begins and we enter a space of in-betweenness. Similar to looking into a mirror and examining what is there and to critique what it means, critical reflection allows learners to hold the mirror to themselves and reflect on their own perceptions and experiences. Greene (1973) wrote that in determining educational ideas in our consciousness of our becoming a teacher and learner, “Our objective in recalling them is not to disclose sacred writs of immutable ideals but to consider the inventiveness with which human beings have made sense of the diverse constructs they devised for thinking about themselves and about education” (p. 71).

Becoming a teacher is more complex than simply asking, *What do I need to do to become a teacher?* It requires knowledge of subject matter and of pedagogical strategies, but also a deep sense of understanding of learners and the way in which they learn. Even in a teacher education program, the learners are people just like Tom and Carly, who question what it means to them to be a teacher, experiencing in-betweenness at various places and contexts throughout their programs. Korthagen et al. (2006) state that “what they experience as learners of teaching dramatically shapes their views of practice” (p. 1026). Experiencing in-betweenness as we are learning, and especially for those who are learning to teach, is an important part of this experience. The interplay between the familiar and the strange is a way in which Greene (1995, p. 16) says we learn how things could be otherwise. Seeing things in an unfamiliar light can add perspective and challenge our way of thinking and being.

There is a transformative power in learning to become a teacher, cultivating leadership skills and critical thinking, and collaborating with others to develop effective teaching and learning practices. In a teacher education program, there is an opportunity to investigate the world of teaching and how to “fit in,” strengthening practice, knowledge, and research skills, in preparing preservice teachers for their future roles.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Email



Dear Student:

My name is Diana Seselja and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. I am currently conducting research on the experiences of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Becoming a teacher is an important decision. From initially knowing you want to become a teacher to graduating from teacher education, you experience ongoing changes. Throw in a practicum placement and becoming a teacher is not easy and often challenging. This process of learning to learn and learning to teach can be accompanied with the feeling of being “in-between” – being a student and being recognized as a teacher.

I am exploring, and hope to explore with you, the experience of being in a teacher education program, and your changing ideas and images of who is a teacher as you transition into becoming a teacher.

Here's the Info:

Voluntary participation will be on a first-come, first served bases in response to this email. It is asked that if you wish to participate that you are/were:

1. A full-time Bachelor of Education student during the 2015-2016 academic year.
2. Enrolled as either a first-year or second-year student in either the elementary or secondary school program.
3. Willing to freely share your story about your experiences. You will be asked to participate in at least two interviews, each approximately a half-hour in length.

If you are interested in this study and wish to take part, please send an email to the Student Researcher at:

diana.seselja@msvu.ca.

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation



Participant Information for Master's Thesis Research

Title: Through the looking glass and into the classroom: A narrative inquiry into student-to-teacher experiences of becoming and in-betweenness

Student Researcher:

Diana Seselja

Graduate Student, Masters of Arts in Education (Educational Foundations)

Mount Saint Vincent University

Cell: (902) ***-****

Email: diana.seselja@msvu.ca

Thesis Research Co-Supervisors:

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St. Francis Xavier University

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*

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Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to inquire into the experience and knowledge of preservice teachers in a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program using a narrative inquiry research methodology. As a participant, you will be asked to share your story of your experiences in deciding and becoming a teacher.

The Research Process

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in two to four interviews. Prior to the first interview, you will receive a copy of the interview questions to help you prepare and collect your thoughts. In preparing for this first interview, you are invited to write down a few words as a narrative (story) of your decision or experience in becoming a teacher; your experience in the education program or in your practicum placements; why you want to become a teacher; how has teacher education prepared you in becoming a teacher; or in answering the interview questions. This is optional and not a requirement in participating. All that is required is your participation in at least two interviews. If you wish, you will be invited to submit your narrative to be used as part of the research data. Each interview may take approximately half an hour in length in which we will explore the question of who is a teacher according to your experience and interpretation. All interviews will be audio-recorded for transcribing and data analysis purposes. All transcribed material will be verified with you for accuracy and for any amendments you, as the participant, may wish to make with the data collected. If you wish, the researcher will maintain ongoing communication with you to address any questions or concerns throughout this process. The results of this study will be used in the final thesis and defense, and may be further used in future presentations or publications to peer reviewed journals.

Who Can Participate in this Study?

Anyone who was enrolled in a full-time Bachelor of Education program at a local university during the 2015-2016 academic year as either a first-year or second-year student, in an elementary or secondary school program. The participant must be willing to freely share their story about their experiences.

Possible Benefits/Risks

The potential benefit of participating in this study is to have the opportunity in your own words to tell your story about becoming a teacher and your experience in the Bachelor of Education program. Through this process, you may gain a new understanding or awareness of the meaning of your experiences in becoming a teacher. There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study, but if at any time you feel uncomfortable, data collection may be stopped or amended.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All information that is provided will be kept confidential. Audio-recordings will be transported under lock box until they are downloaded onto a secure computer, transcribed and reviewed; at which point, they will be deleted from the recording device. All information will be kept under password protection on a secure server. Participant's name and all personal information will not be identified in any reports, presentations, or publications. Every effort will be made to keep your identity and personal information private. However, you need to be aware that if there is any information causing the researcher to feel anyone is subject to abuse or neglect or is engaged in illegal activities, the researcher will have the responsibility to report this to the proper authorities.

Withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The participant has the right to withdraw from the study up to one month after their last interview. Please note that withdrawing from the study will not negatively affect your relationship with the university or the program you are in. This study does not in any way relate to any university program. However, at any point until one month after the last interview, the participant may choose to have any or all information removed from the study. One month after the last interview, data will be stripped of identifiers and be unable to be removed from the study.

Questions

Please feel free at any time to contact any of the people on the front contact page of this letter about your concerns or questions about this research study.

If you have any questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone not involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the University Research and Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office at 902-457-6350 or by email at research@msvu.ca.

If you wish to participate in this study, please fill out the forms below and provide the following formal consent. This portion of the letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Appendix C: Participant Informed Consent Forms



Participant Informed Consent Signature Page

For Master's Thesis Research: Through the looking glass and into the classroom: A narrative inquiry into student-to-teacher experiences of becoming and in-betweenness

I, _____, have read the explanation about this study. I hereby consent to take part in this study. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study up to one month after my last interview. I understand that the data collected for this study is to be used for thesis research and for future publications and/or public presentations. Once the thesis has been successfully defended, all of the original data will be destroyed. At any time during the data collection and up to one month after the last interview, I can contact the researcher and withdraw from the study and the data relating to me be destroyed; after that time data will be stripped of all identifiers and be unable to be removed from the study. I understand that the personal information collected for this study will remain confidential at all times.

Signing below indicates I understand the information on this form, have considered the implication of my participating and am willing to give consent to participate.

Participant's Signature

Date (day/month/year)

Researcher's Signature

Date (day/month/year)

Consent for Permission to Audio-Record the Interviews

I, _____, consent to the audio-recordings of all the interviews. I hereby consent to them being used as part of the research data. I understand that this is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the information found in these recordings up to one month after my last interview; after that time data will be stripped of all identifiers and unable to be removed from the study. I understand that the data collected will be used for thesis research and kept until the thesis has been successfully defended, and may be used in future publications and/or public presentation. I understand that the personal information found in these recordings will remain confidential.

Participant's Signature

Date (day/month/year)

Researcher's Signature

Date (day/month/year)

Submission and Consent for Narrative of B.Ed. Experiences

I, _____, have submitted my written narrative of my experience in the B.Ed. program to be used in this study. I hereby consent to it being used as part of the research data. I understand that this is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the information found in this narrative up to one month after my last interview; after that time data will be stripped of all identifiers and unable to be removed from the study. I understand that the data collected will be used for thesis research and kept until the thesis has been successfully defended, and may be used in future publications and/or public presentation. I understand that the personal information found in this narrative will remain confidential.

Participant's Signature

Date (day/month/year)

Researcher's Signature

Date (day/month/year)

Summary of Results

Please check one of the following:

Please send me a summary of the results at the end of the study to the following email address: _____

Do not send me a summary of the results at the end of the study.

Appendix D: Interview Guiding Questions

D1: Interview #1 with each participant

During this interview, I would like to discuss your experience(s) of deciding to become a teacher, and your experiences in the teacher education program, both in your coursework and in your practicum.

Deciding to teach

Tell me about your experiences of being in the teacher education program. What has your experience as a B.Ed. student been like?

Tell me of a particular (or several) experience(s) that you had in deciding to become a teacher.

Teacher education

Think back to your first days of teacher education. What is your most vivid memory of coming to teacher education?

Prompt: Did anything stand out?

Has teaching been what you expected? Why/why not? What did you expect before coming to teacher education?

Probes:

Do you feel sufficiently prepared to teach? Why/why not?

Where (or who) do you go to for information or advice about what or how to teach?

What have you discovered about yourself as a preservice teacher and about your own development in becoming a teacher? Did anything surprise you?

Prompt: Were there any *aha*-moments during your program, either at the university or during your practicum? Can you describe it/them?

Probes:

What were some of the challenges you faced during your program?

How did they shape your understanding of teaching?

Practicum

Relate some examples of learning in practicum that are particularly memorable. In your practicum, how do you feel about how others have perceived your role as a student teacher?

What challenges do you think you will face (or have faced) during your student teaching experiences?

Prompt: Were there times when you felt confused or torn? Can you tell me about it/them?

Looking back

Can you talk about some of the teachers who inspired you in your education? Do you feel differently about them now that you are/were in teacher education and have done some of your own teaching? How would you describe a teacher now?

Prompts:

Have your experiences changed your perception of yourself as a teacher? In what ways?

What did you learn about yourself through this program? Will that be useful in your teaching?

What were the critical moments during your program? What did you learn about teaching or yourself as a teacher through them?

Probe:

Has anyone else inspired or influenced you either in your decision to become a teacher or through your experience in teacher education/practicum? Can you tell me about this person?

Is there anything else that stands out for you as a noteworthy experience during your B.Ed. program?

Prompt: Is there anything that we did not discuss that you would like to share?

D2: Interview #2 with Carly

Thank you again for meeting up with me. I enjoyed the previous conversation that we had in learning about the outlining details of your experience of being a student in the B.Ed. program. For this interview, the purpose of it is to go into more details; a little deeper and more into your reflection, ideas and interpretations, and the meaning that this experience has for you.

After you have reviewed your own transcript, and your responses, from the last interview, is there anything that you might like to add or want to talk about any further?

Prior to the program

You mentioned that you always wanted to be a teacher. What was your earliest memory of this?

Probe: Has this image of yourself as a teacher changed in any way?

You switched your program of study in your undergrad. Do you have any regrets in switching your program so that you have more appropriate teachables?

Teacher education

You talked about your second day in the program, how a professor told you that you needed to get an 80% in the course to pass. Are grades still important to you now?

Probe: So what do the grades mean to you?

In the last conversation, you mentioned that: “On Wednesday we all sit around, and we’re talking, since we all have this huge gap in between classes.” Can you clarify for me, who are the “we”?

Prompt: Is it secondary students in your route?

Probes:

Do you ever connect with the other secondary students not in your route?

How about elementary students?

What about the first-year students? Have you made any connections with them?

Is it an exchange of information about the courses and about being in the program?

Have the connections that you made (with students, professors, other teachers in practicum, supervisors) helped you in your focus to become a teacher?

Prompts:

Do you feel like you are becoming more of the teacher you had envisioned yourself becoming?

Do you feel these connections, their advice, their own stories, have helped you?

What would you change in your learning? That is, is there anything that you would like to learn more of, or have not had the chance to experience?

Probe: Was there anything that you found in the program that was redundant or maybe unnecessary?

Prompt: Such as?

You mentioned that at first you were terrified because you were not always sure what the teachers were asking of you. Do you feel prepared to teach as you had hoped you would at the beginning of the program?

Looking back and looking forward

Looking back to the first interview, you talked quite a bit about collaborating with others and you seem to feel strongly about getting the first-year students more involved. Can you say a little bit more about what this group involvement means to you?

Probe: So how do you feel about collaboration among your future students?

How has the program (or has it) helped you into becoming the teacher that you always wanted to become?

Probe: So do you feel more like a teacher now?

If I were to tell your story of how you became a teacher, how would that story go?

Do you want to add anything else? Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?

D3: Interview #2 with Tom

Thank you again for meeting up with me. I enjoyed the previous conversation that we had in learning about the outlining details of your experience of being a student in the B.Ed. program. This interview is about getting to more details, a more reflective look into your experiences in both deciding to become a teacher and your becoming a teacher during the (B.Ed.) program.

After reviewing the transcript from the last interview and your responses, do you have anything that you would like to add, or anything that you would like to talk about further that you can recall right now?

Image of teacher

You mentioned your experience in the summer camp and afterschool programs helped you decide to become a teacher. Has your image of yourself as a teacher changed since then?

Prompts:

What role did you play then? What is the role of a teacher now?

Did you have a plan (or structure) to what you were doing?

Coursework

How would you describe yourself as a student? What was it like being a B.Ed. student?

Prompts:

What did a typical day look like? (Assume I do not know what it is like to be in teacher education.)

What made teacher education different from your other undergraduate degree?

What activities were you involved in?

Would you go (do these activities) with other students? Elementary? Secondary? Other graduating years?

Dealing with others

You mentioned that: “Everyone in the program should get along, you’re all adults.” Can you say more about what you think this group connection means? Why is it valuable?

Probes:

How about group work? What was it like working with other students?

Can you think of a specific example of a group work assignment that you did that you found worked well or did not work well?

How do you feel about collaboration among your future students?

Have the connections in the program help you in your focus to become a teacher? How?

Looking back

What would you change in your learning? That is, what would you have liked to learn more of? Less?

Prompt: In other words, do you wish something was taught, or that you had the chance to experience something within the program, but did not?

Probe:

Were there things you found redundant or unnecessary?

Were there any courses you liked? Can you describe them?

What assignment that you had in your coursework particularly stood out for you?

Prompt: Was there any in particular that made you think, *this is awesome*, or *what a waste*?

Looking back, did the program help guide you into becoming the teacher you wanted to become? How/why not?

Probe: Do you now feel as prepared to teach as you had hoped you would when you started the program?

If I were to tell your story of how you became a teacher, in your own words, how would it go?