Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials

Final Report

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Executive Summary

In April 2010, we began a two-year project to explore the experiences of early career teachers in Alberta, with particular attention to the issue of early career teacher attrition. Our vision for the overall project was to work through a number of interrelated smaller projects in order to develop an in-depth picture of the experiences of early career teachers. We have undertaken this work in the following ways.

We undertook a thorough review of the scholarly literature on early career teacher attrition. We subsequently reviewed the research literature on mentoring and induction, particularly as it related to early career teacher attrition. The purpose of the work was two-fold: firstly to explore current research on the phenomenon of early career attrition in Alberta, Canada, and other countries; secondly to develop a strong conceptual basis for the three empirical studies we undertook.

The first of our three studies was to explore the intentions of early career teachers who are still teaching in Alberta. A semi-structured interview protocol allowed us to attend to how their experiences were shaping their intentions around staying in, or leaving, teaching. The second study, undertaken as a narrative inquiry, focussed on teachers who graduated from Alberta universities but who did not take up contractual teaching positions in K-12 schools in Alberta. Our intention was to learn and understand more about the experiences of this rarely considered population. In the third study, we engaged in a narrative inquiry into the experiences of early career teachers who chose to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Working closely with early career teachers who left the profession enabled us to delve more deeply into both early career teacher attrition, and early career teacher retention. We explored their stories to live by as they moved into studying to become teachers, as they taught, and as they left teaching.

In what follows we both summarize the results of our three studies and frame recommendations or further considerations from our work. We summarize the research problem, the methodology and methods, and the findings for each study.

Study 1: Second and Third Year Teacher Intentions

A problem of concern in Alberta is that a very large number of beginning teachers (approximately 40%) are leaving teaching within their first five years with the highest number leaving between years four and five. We engaged in a semi-structured interview study with 40 second and third year teachers who were still engaged in teaching. Our purpose was to learn more about the experiences of these teachers, as well as to learn something more of their intentions about whether they planned to stay in teaching. We hoped to begin to understand what shaped their thoughts about staying in, or leaving, teaching.

Participants were recruited in a variety of ways and were a representative sample of beginning teachers who taught across the province in rural, suburban, and urban boards, with a range of grade levels and subject areas, and who graduated from as many of the Alberta post-secondary institutions that granted B.Ed. degrees as possible.

In the methodological design of the interview protocol, we were attentive to thinking narratively, as we attended to place, temporality, and personal (inner)/social (outer) considerations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Attending to their lives on both personal and professional landscapes was an important aspect of our interviews as we envisioned that their experiences would be shaped by their school and classroom landscapes as well as by their personal landscapes. Our interview schedule was informed by an extensive literature review around early career teacher attrition and retention, which identified issues such as the support for beginning teachers, and the affect of school culture. It was an important consideration for our participants that their anonymity be preserved, and that they remain unidentifiable.

The tension we experienced as a research team between honoring and making visible the knowledge of each beginning teacher, and honoring their anonymity shaped how we represented the findings. We identified seven themes. The themes drawn across the 40 participants were: support; an identity thread of belonging; tensions around contracts; new teachers will do anything; balancing composing a life; deciding not to allow teaching work to consume them, and the struggle to try and keep that decision; and can I keep doing this? Is this teaching?

In our discussion, we outline the importance of not viewing beginning teachers as an homogenized group without the necessary skills to teach. We suggest viewing them as teachers who are beginning and seeing them as full of potential, possibility, ideas, and as learning to live their lives as teachers. This allows us to think about them as individuals with agency to negotiate support networks, mentorship and contexts. We wonder about sustaining teachers rather than framing the problem as one of retaining teachers. Sustaining teachers who are beginning requires that we know them. What if we were able to support teachers who are beginning as they are making sense of themselves as teachers, before it makes sense to them to leave?

Study 2: Teachers Who Graduated But Who Did Not Teach

Alberta Education indicated that approximately 25% of people who graduate from Alberta post-secondary institutions do not take on positions with Alberta school districts. Wondering why B.Ed. graduates did not pursue teaching positions with school districts in the first few years after graduation, we chose to explore the life experiences of these education graduates.

We designed a narrative inquiry study to explore the experiences of education graduates who did not move into contractual teaching positions. Through narrative inquiry, experience is studied through attending to three dimensions: the personal/social dimension, the place dimension, and the dimension of temporality (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

There were two to three conversations (each lasting about one-and-a-half to two hours) with each participant with a focus on experiences that brought them to teaching, experiences lived after graduating, and experiences around not gaining a full-time teaching contract. The conversations were transcribed. After the first two to three conversations with each participant, we drafted narrative accounts from our data (field texts including field notes and transcribed conversations) for each participant, which were then negotiated with the participant over a series of conversations.

We engaged four participants, who graduated but did not teach, in a narrative inquiry. Teachers included for the study had graduated from an Alberta post secondary institution in the last 3-5 years but had not taken on positions with Alberta school districts.

As a team, we discussed the narrative accounts for each participant and then identified narrative threads that resonated across several accounts. While some threads are resonant throughout all stories, others are more prominent for some than they are for others. We identified five resonant threads: (1) What is teaching was understood differently by different participants; (2) What is teaching to me? I'm not seen as a teacher by those who see teaching as only occurring in schools; (3) Navigating multiple transitions across personal and professional landscapes; (4) Safe and unsafe stories about why they are not teaching; and (5) Living with conflicted views about their lives that were not being lived in schools.

Study 3: Teachers Who Left Teaching Within Their First Five Years

In Alberta 40% of beginning teachers leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. Past research in the area of early career teacher attrition has attempted to better understand the trends and tendencies through data collected from teachers still teaching. Prior research has left the voices of those teachers who have actually left, silent. Our interest in this particular study was to gain a better understanding of both the personal and professional experiences of those teachers who left the profession in their first five years of teaching.

We used the methodology of narrative inquiry to focus on the experiences of teachers who had left. There were three to six conversations with each participant. Conversations varied in length from one hour to two and a half hours, and were held in places where participants were most comfortable. Coffee shops, restaurants, or settings away from the work places, were chosen. Once conversations were transcribed they were analyzed, and narrative accounts were created for each participant. Narrative accounts are interpretive constructions of individual experiences attentive to the three-dimensional inquiry space (temporality, sociality, place).

We worked alongside six participants who left teaching in their first five years. Each participant had a B.Ed. from an Alberta university, and had taught in an Alberta school. Participants' past experiences varied in relation to subject area and teaching level (elementary, middle years, high school).

We identified six resonant threads across the participants' stories: 1) Early landscape stories were important to better understand their stories to leave by; 2) Their imagined stories of teaching bumped with the school stories on the professional landscape; 3) Leaving was a process, not an event; 4) The 'places' they lived (rural, urban) shaped their stories to leave by; 5) They left in both 'safe' and 'unsafe' ways; 6) Many of them saw themselves as teaching even though they left the K-12 classroom. Each of the participants' stories to leave by were imbued with tension between their lives on their personal and professional landscapes.

Looking Across the Three Studies

As we looked across the findings of the three studies, we noted several key points.

1.   The teachers in the intentions study, and the teachers who left in their first five years, all spoke of support. Support meant different things to different teachers. They spoke of receiving support on their school landscapes and of support from friends, families and communities. However, they felt somewhat alone as they moved from their school landscapes to their familial landscapes and back again. They were not clear on how to negotiate the ways to compose lives that allowed them to live out their imagined stories of teaching that involved composing lives on home and family landscapes, and on school landscapes. It was clear that "support" on school landscapes and "support" on home and family landscapes is not enough. Attention to composing lives attentive to the "wholeness" of who they are, and who they are becoming, as people with home and school lives is necessary if teachers who are beginning are to be sustained in teaching.

This feeling of being alone without help in negotiating their way through complex home and school district landscapes was also apparent for the teachers who have not taught.

2.   The teachers in the intentions study and the teachers who left had complex feelings of belonging with colleagues and administrators. As noted above, support from colleagues was not enough to sustain them. Relationships with colleagues were fraught as they often found themselves feeling unsure of who they were, and were becoming, in these landscapes. Mentoring and induction programs were often not seen as safe places to explore their more authentic concerns.

3.   There was a misalignment between the needs of the system and the schools in relation to the lives of the teachers. They frequently had to "do anything" in order to obtain contracts and teaching assignments. They frequently took on extra responsibilities at the expense of personal well being and familial needs in order to try to receive contracts and continuing assignments.

4.   Many of the teachers in the intentions study, and those who left teaching, at one time or another, struggled to not let teaching consume them. When their health and their relationships were being severely challenged, they took steps to change how they were living out their teaching lives. They spoke of making these changes alone and often without consultation or support from those on their school landscapes, deciding that their lives were worth more than having a teaching position.

5.   Many of the teachers in the intentions study, and those who left teaching, questioned what teaching was. Many spoke of loving their work with the students, but found that "much more" was expected. They were often not prepared in teacher education, or by what was said about teaching in the public discourse, to take on the "much more", and often did not consider anything other than being with children as teaching.

6.   Many teachers spoke of the bumping up of their imagined stories to live by as teachers with the school stories that shaped their professional knowledge landscapes. Each teacher wanted to teach in ways that expressed their personal practical knowledge. They spoke of being 'a' teacher rather than being 'the' teacher. 'The' teacher suggested all teachers were the same.

7.   Teachers who were beginning expected teaching to be 'hard' in terms of long hours, heavy responsibilities, and multiple commitments. What they found hard was the bumping up of who they imagined being as a teacher with the school stories that did not allow them to be, and become, the teachers they wanted to be.

8.   The teachers who left, and the teachers who graduated but who did not take up teaching positions in Alberta K-Grade 12 schools, found ways to continue to live out their imagined stories of being teachers, whether that was through coaching, working with families, teaching in other institutions, preparing materials for teachers and so on. These other possible ways to teach were not often made apparent to them in teacher education.

Recommendations: Why Would Teachers Who Are Beginning Stay?

Recommendation 1: Change the discourse around beginning teachers.

a. It is important to begin to talk of sustaining teachers in their life careers rather than retaining teachers for the first years of teaching.
b. It is important to begin to attend to teachers as beginning rather than as beginning teachers. By focusing on them as beginning their life careers, we see them less as deficit, and not knowing, and more as teachers beginning to teach.
c. By attending to sustaining teachers who are beginning, we see them for the richness that they bring rather than for the deficits that they have.

Recommendation 2: Attend to the misalignment between system needs and the lives of teachers who are beginning.

a. Attend more closely to continuity of assignments.
b. Change the way contracts are assigned in order to allow for more certainty in the life planning of teachers who are beginning.
c. Design a series of focus/discussion groups with principals to find ways that would attend to what would need to be considered to make these changes.

Recommendation 3: Attend to the mechanisms and processes that would support the personal and professional lives of teachers who are beginning.

a. Question the value of mentoring and induction programs, as they are currently defined.
b. Design a personal and professional space for each teacher who is beginning in order to support their sustenance as teachers.
c. Attending to teachers' lives would mean there is no one mandated way to provide support. However, every teacher who is beginning needs support.
d. Teachers who are beginning need places to recompose their imagined stories to live by as teachers in order to be sustained in teaching.
e. Work with principals and leadership teams to find ways to design such individualized support.

Recommendation 4: Question where, and with whom, teaching happens.

a. Broaden places where field experience could occur (art galleries, museums, hospitals, etc).
b. Make clear in discourse of teacher education and education policy that teaching is more than face-to-face with students.
c. Too often "teaching" is seen as a day "job" in a kindergarten to Grade 12 school. It is much more than that in the stories that the participants in our three studies told.

Recommendation 5: Teacher education for the 21st century.

a. Begin a series of discussions among stakeholder groups about what teacher education looks like in the 21st century.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In April 2010, we began a two-year project to explore the experiences of early career teachers in Alberta, with particular attention to the issue of early career teacher attrition. Our vision for the overall project was to work through a number of interrelated smaller projects in order to develop an in-depth picture of the experiences of early career teachers. We have undertaken this work in the following ways.

We undertook a thorough review of the scholarly literature on early career teacher attrition. The purpose of the literature review was two-fold. The first was to explore current research on the phenomenon of early career attrition in Alberta, Canada, and other countries. The second purpose was to establish a strong conceptual basis for the three empirical studies we undertook. The results of this critical literature review are reported in Chapter 2 in an article accepted for publication in the Alberta Journal of Educational Research. In preparing this first critical literature review we also noted the need to review the research literature on mentoring and induction, particularly as it related to early career teacher attrition and retention. This review, published in Mentoring and Tutoring, is in Chapter 3.

Based on our reviews of the research literature, we undertook three separate empirical studies. The overall research puzzle that guided the three studies was to understand more about what contributes to early career teacher attrition. While there is some discrepancy about the actual percentage of early career teachers that leave teaching in their first five years "one very stable finding is that attrition is high for young teachers" (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006, p. 10). We concur with Merrow's idea that, "The teaching pool keeps losing water because no one is paying attention to the leak" (1999, p. 38). In addition, there is a significant economic strain put on the system due to the high rates of early career teacher attrition (Macdonald, 1999; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In the United States alone, over 2 billion dollars are spent each year replacing teachers who leave the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005, p. 2). Furthermore, there are different conceptualizations of why early career teachers leave teaching: some draw on notions of individual burnout (Schamer & Jackson, 1996, p. 29) while others draw on contextual problems (Guarino et al., 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Macdonald, 1999; Borman & Dowling, 2008).

The first study was a semi-structured interview study of 40 teachers in their second and third years of teaching in Alberta. We designed the semi-structured interview protocol drawing on the literature reviews and with attention to the experiences of the teachers and how their experiences were shaping their intentions around staying in, or leaving, teaching. We selected teachers from across Alberta, including male and female teachers, as well as a range of teaching contexts (rural/urban; northern/isolated; elementary/secondary; subject matter specializations). The results of that study, which we presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in April, 2012, are discussed in Chapter 4.

The second study, undertaken as a narrative inquiry, focussed on teachers who graduated from Alberta universities but who did not take up contractual teaching positions in K-12 schools in Alberta. In order to better understand this population, we designed a narrative inquiry in which

our intention was to learn and understand more about the experiences of this rarely-researched population. The results of this study are presented in Chapter 5.

In the third study, we engaged in a narrative inquiry into the experiences of early career teachers who chose to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Working closely with early career teachers who left the profession enabled us to delve more deeply into both early career teacher attrition and retention. In becoming attentive and awake in this way, a deeper understanding of the multiplicities of plot lines, and contexts that early career teachers negotiated was gained. We explored their stories to live by as they moved into studying to become teachers, as they taught, and as they left teaching. The results of this study are presented in Chapter 6.

We were invited in the midst of doing our empirical studies to write a chapter for a book, *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century*, which laid out some of our preliminary thoughts in relation to pre-service and teacher education. Our chapter, A Question of Sustaining Teachers, is included in Chapter 7.

In our executive summary we both summarize the results of our three studies and frame recommendations or further considerations from our work.

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Chapter 2: Questioning the Research on Early Career Teacher Attrition and Retention

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Abstract

In this paper, we consider scholarly work on early career teacher attrition and retention from 1999 to 2010. Much of the literature has framed attrition as either a problem associated with individual factors (e.g., burnout) or a problem associated with contextual factors (e.g., support and salary). Some recent conceptualizations consider early career teacher attrition as an identity making process that involves a complex negotiation between individual and contextual factors. On the basis of our review, we suggest the need to shift the conversation from one focused only on retaining teachers toward a conversation about sustaining teachers. This shift offers the possibility of new insights about teacher education and about the kinds of spaces needed on school landscapes to sustain and retain beginning teachers.

Keywords: teacher attrition; teacher retention; early career; identity

Framing the Problem

While there is some discrepancy about the actual percentage of early career teachers who leave teaching in their first five years (from 5% to 50%), researchers Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) state "one very stable finding is that attrition is high for young teachers" (p. 10). In the U.S., over two billion dollars are spent each year replacing teachers who leave the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). While not only the result of early career teacher attrition, early leavers make up a significant number of teachers who leave teaching. The cost of early career teacher attrition is not only economic. The revolving door of frequent newcomers and leavers creates a non-cohesive environment that can be a major inhibitor to school efficiency in promoting student development and attainment (Macdonald, 1999). Researchers report that the *best and the brightest* among the newcomers appear to be those most likely to leave (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), an important finding when "there is a growing consensus among researchers and educators that the single most important factor in determining a student's performance is the quality of his or her teachers" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005, p. 1). We do not intend to imply that early career teacher attrition is a problem in all countries around the world (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005). However, it is a concern in the U.S., Britain, Australia, and in Alberta, a Canadian province.

One could frame research into teacher attrition by thinking about the reasons teachers give for leaving teaching such as salary or family commitments. One might also attend to the social dimensions of attrition, for example, thinking about how school culture protects against, or contributes to, the loss of teachers. One could also look at attrition by examining who leaves teaching and when they leave, for example, by considering personal characteristics or demographics.

In this paper, we begin by examining two well-established conceptualizations of early career teacher attrition. In addressing the first conceptualization, we describe the research that positions attrition as a problem related to individual factors of burnout, resilience, personal demographics, and personal factors (such as family). From the second well-established conceptualization, we describe the research around attrition as it relates to the contextual factors of support, salary, professional development, collaboration, nature of the context, student issues, and teacher education.

After summarizing the research on attrition as it relates to both individual and contextual factors, we problematize these two conceptualizations by examining promising recent conceptualizations that attend to early career teacher attrition as a process that is negotiated over time. We have grouped these conceptualizations into the following sections: Teacher intentions; Interactions between individual and contextual factors; Integrated cultures; and Challenging 'one size fits all.'
We link these promising conceptualizations to a process of identity-making in the final section of the paper. This allows us to reconsider the notion of retaining teachers and to begin to attend to what might sustain teachers in their careers.

Defining the Terms

As we began this task we realized there were multiple terms used in the research literature around early career teacher attrition and retention. For example, the categories used by the National Center for Educational Statistics in the United States adopted the following categories and definitions: a) *stayers* who remain in the same school from one year to the next; b) *movers* who leave their classrooms for another; and c) *leavers* who leave classroom teaching. Early career teacher attrition is defined as those who leave teaching in the first five years of teaching. Freedman and Appleman (2009), in their study of beginning teachers, added a new category, *drifters*, for those who leave urban education but who stay in the field of education. Olsen and Anderson (2007) found in their study of teacher intentions that teachers could be arranged in three groups: *stayers*, *uncertains* (still teaching but not sure if they would stay), and *leavers* (staying in the field of education but leaving the classroom). The Freedman and Appleman (2009) category of *drifters* would fit into the Olsen and Anderson category of leavers.

As is made clear in these examples from the literature, the definitions are somewhat mixed, which makes doing a meta-analysis of the literature difficult. It is also not always clear in the literature what is meant by 'leaving teaching.' Sometimes teachers are defined as having left classroom teaching but remain in some form of educational work. Further, it is not always clear what happens when teachers leave states, provinces, or countries. They are usually counted as leavers, however, they may still be teaching but in a different state, provincial, or national context.

Methodology

We worked with I. Scott in the Coutts Library, University of Alberta, to undertake an extensive literature review for this study. Using terms identified in key review articles (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001), we used the following key terms for our search: New teacher* or novice teacher* or beginning teacher* or early career teacher*, attrition or retention, or teacher socialization or teacher identity; teacher migration or teacher mobility or movers or leavers.

The key terms were always combined with the idea of new teacher* (identified in the first search line). We limited our search to articles that were peer reviewed/scholarly, published from 1999 to 2010, and written in English. Databases searched were CBCA Education (Canadian Education Index), ProQuest Education, ERIC, and Education Research Complete.

The search terms that were used in Education Research Complete were:
*TEACHERS -- Recruiting
*EMPLOYEE retention
*TEACHERS -- Workload
*STUDENTS -- Attitudes
*QUALITY of work life
*JOB satisfaction
*TEACHERS -- Supply & demand

The following search terms were used: beginning teachers, novice teacher, early career teacher, teacher recruitment, teacher mobility, teacher collaboration, teaching (occupation),

faculty mobility, administrator responsibility, teacher persistence, movers, instructional leadership, socialization, teacher leavers, work environment, teacher identity, career change, job satisfaction, teacher attrition, teacher retention, teacher competencies, quality of working life, teacher supply and demand, career choice, teacher attitudes, teaching conditions, and labour turnover.

The articles that were found were put into REF Works. The research team reviewed all abstracts for the articles and selected 65 peer-reviewed articles that were most pertinent to the problem of early career teacher attrition and retention. We selected articles that were based on empirical studies, regardless of methodology. We read and wrote summaries of these articles. We summarized the articles using the following headings: theoretical frame, research problem, context and subject matter, methodology, and findings. Much of the research we analyzed was based in the United States. We were surprised that more research on the problem of early career teacher attrition was not undertaken in Canada, given that the teacher attrition rates in some provinces, such as Alberta, are very high. We hope that our work in the area creates awareness as well as starting points for other researchers concerned about early career teacher attrition in Canada and in other countries. Due to the redundancy of listing all of the studies conducted in the United States, we only list the country the work was done in if the research was undertaken outside of the United States.

Using an inductive process, we identified that the articles framed the problem of teacher attrition in two ways - those that focused early career teacher attrition as a problem mainly situated within the individual, and those that focused on early career teacher attrition as a problem mainly situated within the context. This allowed us to sort most of the articles into two groups. We then identified articles for a third group, those with nascent framings of teacher attrition, and retention, such as articles focused around intentions, interactions between individual and contextual factors, integrated professional cultures, and reconsidering 'one size fits all' induction and mentoring programs.

Conceptualizations of Teacher Attrition/Retention

There have been a number of meta-analyses of the research examining the problem of teacher attrition and retention since 1999. As noted, much of the research appears to identify the issue of early career teacher attrition as either a problem associated with individual factors or a problem associated with contextual or landscape factors. Using these two categories as a guide, we first summarize the literature that adopted a primary focus on individual factors and then the literature with a primary focus on contextual factors.

Individual Factors.

In this section, we identified four overarching factors. Each of these factors, burnout, resilience, demographic features, and family characteristics, situated the problem of early career teacher attrition as mainly within the individual. While contextual factors are seen as interacting with the individual factors, the inquiry starting point in these studies was focused on the individual.

Burnout.

Maslach (1978, 1982), a leader in burnout research, defined professional burnout as a syndrome of bodily and mental exhaustion, in which the worker becomes negative towards those they work with, and develops a negative sense of self worth. A study conducted by Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) noted that burnout may occur more commonly in teaching due to the isolation and alienation that occurs in the profession. Excessive paperwork, lack of administrative support, role conflict, and unclear expectations also contribute to the burnout of teachers. In Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler's study with beginning special educators, they found that positive mentoring can help to alleviate beginning teacher burnout. Along with positive mentoring they also found that administrators who are aware of the many stressors beginning teachers encounter may help combat beginning teacher burnout.

Resilience.

When teachers are referred to as being resilient it points toward their ability to cope with stressors that may impact them as teachers. In the beginning teacher attrition literature, resiliency and commitment, are terms often associated with one another. Freedman and Appleman (2009), in their study with beginning teachers in urban schools, found that beginning teachers who stayed in the profession (stayers) had a disposition for hard work. These stayers were also characterized as being persistent. Gehrke and McCoy's (2006) study on sustaining beginning special education teachers found that beginning teachers who were committed to being resourceful were more successful. Other researchers found that teachers who were committed to the profession of teaching in general were more likely to stay in the profession (Haun & Martin, 2004). In framing the problem of beginning teacher attrition in this individualistic way, there is a suggestion that beginning teachers who leave the profession are not resilient, are not resourceful enough, or are not committed enough to stay in the profession. Thus, those that leave are often seen as having deficits, or as being deficit.

Personal demographic features (age, sex, ethnicity/race, etc.).

The beginning teacher attrition literature points to personal demographics as playing a role in whether or not an individual stays in, or leaves, teaching. When speaking about beginning teachers there is an assumption that beginning teachers are younger than more experienced teachers. While this is not always the case, as beginning teachers may be individuals who start teaching later in life, a number of U.S. and international studies showed that younger teachers are more likely to leave in their first five years (Billingsley, 2004; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Macdonald, 1999). Ingersoll (2001) noted that the "relative odds of young teachers departing are 171% higher than for middle-aged teachers" (p. 518).

Ethnicity and gender also play a role in beginning teacher attrition. Studies that attended to ethnicity/race (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006) found that Caucasian teachers are more likely to leave the profession. Macdonald (1999), in her international review, also found that ethnicity plays a role in beginning teacher attrition. Other studies that attended to gender found that females leave the profession of teaching more often than males (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006).

Personal factors (family).

The variety of reasons given for why beginning teachers leave the profession are diverse and research often focuses on aspects that are directly related to teaching. However, the personal landscapes that teachers live on outside of schools also play a role in beginning teacher attrition. "Personal reasons, such as departures for pregnancy, child rearing, health problems, and family moves, are more often reported as reasons for turnover than either retirement or staffing actions" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 522). Decisions to leave the profession may also be attributed to personal finances or perceived opportunities outside of teaching (Billingsley, 2004). Living conditions and family responsibilities are also factors that may play a role in beginning teacher attrition (Macdonald, 1999). Borman and Dowling (2008) noted that teacher attrition might be caused by any number of personal factors that may change across a lifespan.

In summary, studies which foregrounded individual factors highlighted a number of characteristics or features that are located in the individual, such as burnout (exhaustion), resilience, age, race, gender, and ethnicity or family make-up.

Contextual factors.

In this section, we summarized seven factors that were situated in the contexts in which beginning teachers worked. The support of those on the professional landscape, salary, the availability of appropriate professional development, collaboration, the nature of context, student issues, and teacher education were all factors in studies with an inquiry starting point outside the individual. While the contexts of teacher education, professional development, salary, and student issues interacted with individual factors, the focus of inquiry, in these studies, is on the contextual factors.

Support of those on the landscape.

Lack of support on the professional landscape is an area often discussed when beginning teachers leave the profession of teaching. Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, and Cowan-Hathcock (2007) conducted a study that utilized a cross-sectional instrument to survey third-year teachers who had participated in induction programs. They found that mentoring by experienced teachers, release time for observing (both same field and variant field), common planning times, and creating networks of new and experienced teachers was found to help support beginning teachers better cope with entry into the profession.

Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin (2006) also found, in their study, that opportunities to work collaboratively with others teachers were highly valued by beginning teachers. However, a low percentage of teachers surveyed said this type of support was offered. This study also points to the discrepancies that may be apparent between what beginning teachers perceive as support and what administrators perceive as support. The focus here is on the contextual factors rather than what the individual beginning teacher might see as support.

Support for new teachers is generally associated with retention. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that the beginning teachers who were involved with integrated professional cultures (that encouraged collegial and collaborative relationships for all teachers) were more satisfied with their jobs, more likely to stay in the public education system and were more likely to stay at the same school. In a Canadian study of beginning teachers, Fantilli and McDougall (2009) found that support from experienced colleagues and having a principal who supported a collaborative school culture mitigated some of the challenges faced by beginning teachers. In Angelle's (2006) study of new middle school teachers, the role of the principal in creating a culture focused on students was central to beginning teachers' intentions to stay in the profession. In a study by Alkins, Banks-Santilli, Elliot, Guttenberg, and Kamii (2006), beginning teachers saw learning with, and from, others as central to their professional growth. Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) found, in their review of the literature, that mentoring and induction programs (collegial support) and more administrative support were associated with higher rates of retention of beginning teachers.

Yet the notion of establishing a culture of collaboration is problematic. Subject matter is one way to consider the complexities of collaboration. Banville and Rikard (2009), based on their study, call for multiple sources of support for physical education specialist teachers because of the circumstances of their professional practice (for example, involvement in extracurricular activities). One might also think of mentoring as an opportunity for collaboration. In their study of nine beginning teachers in small urban schools, Carter and Keiler (2009) found that the beginning teachers valued the opportunity to know their colleagues and administrators well, but that they had little curriculum support from administrators and haphazard mentorship experiences. Bullough and Draper (2004) explored the mentoring triad between intern teacher, university facilitator, and cooperating teacher. The researchers described the complexity of mentoring and questioned the portrayal of all mentoring as being good mentoring. Professional development sessions or orientations might also be considered a form of support. Gerke and McCoy (2006), in their study of special education teachers, found that the beginning teachers valued support that focused on problems of practice but were frustrated by *one size fits all* support such as district orientations.

Salary.

Higher salary is often held up as a solution to beginning teacher attrition. Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) found that higher salary was associated with higher rates of retention in the United States. Hahs-Vaughn and Scherff (2008) explored beginning English teachers' attrition and found that only salary was statistically significantly related to increased odds of beginning English teachers' leaving the profession; those who earned less than $20 000 were more than eight times more likely to leave teaching. Imazeki (2004), looking at teacher mobility and salary, noted that transfers were found to respond most strongly when district salaries were increased relative to nearby districts. The study also found that salary increases for more experienced teachers might also reduce exit attrition among newer female teachers. Inman and Marlow (2004) examined the conditions that kept teachers in the profession. They found that, of the external factors on their survey, beginning teachers identified only salary as a reason to stay in the profession.

As with other contextual factors, there are difficulties with seeing salary as an isolated factor in teacher attrition and retention. Buchanan (2009), in his Australian study, examined the reasons given by ex-teachers for leaving the profession. For some participants, salary was an important contributing factor that caused them to leave the profession. For others, salary was not a contributing factor. Even more broadly, Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) suggested that teachers look at overall compensation (comprising salary, benefits, working conditions, other rewards) in relation to alternative employment opportunities.

Professional development.

There is little research that focuses specifically on professional development with respect to beginning teacher attrition and retention, as professional development is often part of the research on induction, mentoring, and/or collaboration with colleagues. In one study about teacher mobility, researchers examined the teachers' reasons to stay in or leave a school. Elfers, Plecki, and Knapp (2009) found that that support for professional learning through incentives and access to resources was particularly important in retaining teachers in schools with high rates of poverty.

Collaboration.

Teaching in schools involves working with colleagues and administrators. Collaboration among professionals can be a rewarding experience that influences the classroom. A lack of collaboration is one reason that beginning teachers give for leaving the profession (Scherff, 2008).

There may be an absence of collaboration for a variety of reasons. Kardos and Johnson (2007) explored how new teachers in four states experienced their work and their colleagues. They found that, in general, new teachers were solo practitioners. Many beginning teachers worked in cultures where collaborative work was not supported, and where they felt they could not, or should not, ask for help from others.

The type of collaboration that happens in schools also varies. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) followed the career decisions of a diverse group of beginning teachers. The researchers distinguished between three types of professional culture: veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated. They found that beginning teachers were more likely to stay in teaching and be satisfied with their jobs if they were part of an integrated professional culture that encouraged all members to collaborate in a collegial atmosphere.

In addition to professional culture, other factors such as proximity to other teachers, the positioning of collaborative members, and the responsibilities of the group also affect collaboration. Griffin, Kilgore, Winn, Otis-Wilborn, Hou, and Garvan (2009) explored the factors that support and constrain the work of first year special educators. They found that beginning special educators who saw themselves as successful collaborators were more likely teaching in, or near, a general education classroom. Bullough and Draper (2004) investigated a mentorship triad of a teaching intern, university supervisor, and mentor teacher. How the participants positioned themselves and the others in the triad affected what collaboration was

possible. Haun and Martin (2004) administered a collaboration survey to beginning teachers and teachers who had left the profession with less than five years of teaching. Teachers were more likely to stay in the profession if they were part of a collaborative group responsible for a common group of students and if the collaborative group positively influenced their desire to continue teaching.

Nature of the context (high rates of poverty, rural, urban, suburban).

The demographic features of schools are also associated with varying degrees of attrition and retention. In his examination of data from SASS (School And Staffing Survey) and TFS (Teacher Follow-up Survey), Ingersoll (2001) found that teacher turnover in urban, public schools with high rates of poverty was slightly higher than average and that the rate of turnover in small private schools was very high. Much of the turnover in the small private schools could be linked to low salary. Similarly in their review of the literature, Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) found that urban and private schools had higher rates of attrition than other schools.

Some recent studies have given attention to further attention to these contextual demographic features. Carter and Keiler (2009) investigated the realities experienced by beginning teachers in small urban schools. They identified a rift between teachers' experiences and the tenets of the Small Schools' urban reform movement. Elfers, Plecki, and Knapp (2009) looked at teacher mobility patterns. They noted that the geographic location of a school was one factor in teachers' decisions to stay or move.

More generally, Billingsley (2004) has described work environment as one of the themes in the literature around special educator attrition. Teachers who perceived the school as a good place to work were more likely to stay in the profession. The factors shaping school climate are myriad and cannot be limited to simple demographic characterizations.

Student issues.

Beginning teachers' experiences with students are often seen as one factor that influences beginning teacher attrition and retention. In most studies, this factor involves issues around classroom management.

Borman and Dowling (2008) and Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) noted that schools with a higher proportion of students from minority groups and students from low SES had higher rates of attrition. Elfers, Plecki and Knapp (2009) found that attrition was related to student poverty; teachers are more likely to leave when schools are located in high poverty areas. Macdonald (1999), in her review, noted that student violence was associated with higher teacher attrition. Patterson, Roehrig and Luft (2003) also found that student issues were a factor in teachers' reasons for leaving.

One study on Manitoba French immersion programs (Ewart, 2009) showed that, while the overall attrition rates of beginning teachers was very low, the most common challenge was classroom management and evaluation of students. In another Canadian study, Fantilli and

McDougall (2009) found that special needs (meeting students' special needs, and individual education plans), and classroom management/behaviour issues had an effect on the contextual challenges beginning teachers face in Ontario.

Brown and Wynn (2007), in their study, pointed out that higher levels of teacher retention have consistently been found in schools with fewer student discipline problems. Brown and Wynn (2007, 2009) found that schools grounded in philosophies such as, *it's all about the kids*, had lower levels of teacher attrition. Haun and Martin (2004) noted that beginning teachers who were part of a collaborative team focused on a common group of students were also more likely to continue in teaching. In Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) study, the participating beginning teachers (movers, leavers, and stayers) spoke of their desire to feel successful in the classroom. Overall success for the beginning teachers meant relationship building, a sense that students were learning, and being valued as teachers.

Teacher education.

Not surprisingly, when teacher attrition problems are discussed in the literature, the structures, philosophies and practical applications of teacher education programs are often addressed. Duck's (2007) study inquired into foundations classes offered in a particular education program and found that increasing the practicality of foundations courses may facilitate for beginning teachers a smoother transition in to teaching. He also found a focus on self-awareness allows beginning teachers to better understand why they like or dislike certain things and why they respond the way they do to certain experiences. This focus on self-awareness enabled beginning teachers to understand there is a multiplicity of right answers about how to be a 'good' teacher.

Alkins, Banks-Santilli, Elliott, Guttenberg, and Kamii (2006), based on their study, suggested the need for more support from institutions of higher education for beginning teachers in three categories: instruction theory and practice; establishing a culture for learning; and teacher development/transformation.

Ewart (2009), in a study of new teachers in minority French and French immersion programs in Manitoba, found a very high retention rate and identified one of the factors for this high rate was the pre-service teacher education program which was closely aligned with the school practices where they would be hired. Fantilli and McDougall (2009), in their Ontario study, found that graduates indicated supports that would have mitigated the challenges they faced included pre-service programs with more exposure to practical tasks. Kutcy and Schulz (2006), in their study of Canadian teachers, found that beginning teachers' frustrations included, among other factors, their frustrations with their pre-service programs. The authors noted the need for 'collaborative resonance' between teacher education programs and schools.
In the Flores and Day (2006) study of Portuguese teachers, beginning teachers noted tensions between theory (what they learned at university) and practice (the complex realities of the classroom). Flores (2006) suggests that collaboration between the universities and schools is needed to enhance the potential of both institutions.

Freedman and Appleman (2008, 2009) followed a cohort of beginning teachers who had studied in a multicultural urban secondary English teacher education program for five years. They recorded a lower attrition rate and found the factors that contributed to this were: the cohort model in teacher education which provided ongoing support as they began to teach, a match between teacher education students' values and ideals with the program; and preparation for the micro politics in urban teaching settings. At the end of the 5-year study, the beginning teachers communicated that one reason for staying was their substantive preparation that included the practical, the academic, and harmony between the two. The teachers also felt the training that helped them to take a reflective stance was helpful.

Hunter Quartz and TEP Research Group (2003) found, in their follow-up to the graduates of the UCLA urban teacher education program, that the teacher education preparation was important in preparing the beginning teachers with understandings of how to build on the strengths of the urban communities. They found the program preparation was very important in contributing to low teacher attrition rates because graduates saw themselves as becoming change agents and saw themselves as joining a profession. Justice and Espinoza (2007), based on their study, found that allowing beginning teachers to become aware of the emotional skills needed to be a teacher might keep them in the profession longer.

Lovett and Davey (2009), in their New Zealand study, questioned the need for a *one size fits all* approach to teacher preparation. Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005), in their study with beginning special education teachers, noted the importance of teacher educators creating spaces in their classes to allow student teachers to collaborate and cooperate with one another.

In summary, studies, which focused on contextual factors that influenced early career teacher attrition, highlighted, for the most part, various aspects of contexts without attention to the individual factors. Looking at beginning teacher attrition in this way gives precedence to contextual factors without attention to the unique features of the individual.

Promising Recent Conceptualizations

In our review of the research on beginning teacher attrition we came to see that prior research seemed to focus on providing correct answers, quick fixes, and de-contextualized data. In our view, there was little more that could be learned by de-contextualizing the data in this way. Existing research presents narrow views of the trends and tendencies that are apparent in beginning teacher attrition. Often times the research focuses on the individual characteristics of teachers without taking into account the contextual factors that may be at play. Other times the individual factors are dismissed, and contextual factors are studied. Separating contextual factors and individual factors provides insights into either the professional, or the personal, landscape. Furthermore, in the literature we reviewed, beginning teacher attrition has been characterized as a particular event; something that happened at one moment or time. Few studies conceptualize early career teacher attrition as a process that is negotiated over time. In what follows, we outline studies that we believe provide promising new directions for early career teacher attrition research.

Teacher intentions.

Clandinin, Downey, and Huber (2009), in their Canadian study, discussed the possibilities of conceptualizing teacher attrition as a process. Their metaphor of teachers standing at a bus stop waiting for their bus to come by and take them away to a new place, offers a way to think about the intentions of beginning teachers. This metaphor illuminates the notion that the process of attrition begins long before teachers leave the profession. Those that leave are often weighing their options of how they might leave the field of education. Other researchers are beginning to explore beginning teachers' intentions (Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Olsen, 2008; Smethem, 2007). Smethem, as well as Olsen and Anderson, in their British study, found that beginning teachers' intentions to stay in or leave the profession varied when examined prior to teaching or at different points in the first five years. Olsen looked at beginning teachers' careers in a temporal manner by inquiring into their personal and professional histories to decipher if reasons for entry linked to their intentions to stay in, or leave, teaching. Although these studies were not able to follow the participants to see if they actually stayed in the profession, it is interesting to consider how beginning teachers' intentions, as they enter teaching, may shape their decisions to leave. Understanding that beginning teachers enter with varied imagined stories of teaching, as well as varied intentions, allows us to be attentive to the notion that not all beginning teachers require the same things, or want the same things. Some may enter with intentions of teaching to retirement, while others may enter to save enough income to travel the world. An awareness of these intentions on both teacher education landscapes and school landscapes shifts the way we think about beginning teachers.

Interactions between individual and contextual factors.

Rinke (2006), in an analysis of the research literature, spoke to the dichotomy apparent in beginning teacher attrition literature between locating the problem of attrition within individuals (individualized conceptions such as burnout) or within contexts (contextual conceptions such as support). Even though these areas have a close relational interaction, they are, at times, treated as separate. Rinke called for future research that inquires into both contextual conceptualizations and individual conceptualizations in a simultaneous way. Flores and Day (2006), in their Portuguese study, noted that the complex negotiation of identity includes both individual and contextual factors. Although studying individual and contextual conceptualizations in a separate way may be easier, it does not frame the problem in a way that takes beginning teachers' whole lives in all their complexities into account. Discounting personal lives, and failing to study the personal lives of beginning teachers, because they are messy and immeasurable will continue to leave important data uncovered.

Integrated cultures.

Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) study looked at the types of cultures that can be created in schools and how they might shape beginning teachers' decisions to stay in the profession. They identified three types of professional cultures: veteran-oriented, novice-oriented, and integrated. An integrated culture is "organized to engage teachers of all experience levels in collegial and collaborative efforts" (p. 605). They found that teachers involved in the integrated culture were more satisfied with their jobs, were more likely to stay in the school system, and more likely to stay at the same school. Thinking about integrated cultures and how beginning

teacher identities may be shaped in a relational and collegial way also could have implications for mentorship and induction. We wonder how beginning teachers are positioned on their professional landscapes as they enter their first teaching positions. Based on our review, the literature seems to position them as having a deficit. They need induction and mentorship to teach them what they do not know. Thinking about beginning teachers in this way does not take their past experiences into account, and discounts their personal practical knowledge. Thinking about beginning teachers' knowledge as important allows for a shift. It allows beginning teachers to be seen as knowledge holders, as contributing members, and, perhaps, as individuals from whom others can learn.

Challenging 'one size fits all'.

More recent research, in the U.S. and New Zealand, cautions against the *one size fits all* type of teacher education, mentorship, and induction programs (Bieler & Thomas, 2009; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Lovett & Davey, 2009). Induction and mentorship programs are often seen as a way to *fix* the problem of attrition. However, if the purpose of induction and mentorship is simply to retain teachers, to keep teachers teaching, how does this define induction and mentorship roles? How the problem of induction is defined shapes the nature and duration of support offered and the programmatic tools and resources provided. Beginning teachers need mentors that value the knowledge and past experiences they bring to the professional landscape. They also need mentors who are skilled in helping them learn in, and from, practice. Induction policies need to focus attention equally on new teachers and on their mentors (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009).

Shifting the Conversation

In much of the research on early career teacher attrition, the focus on individual factors and contextual factors has directed attention toward the *why* of leaving. In this generalized view, the experiences of the people involved may be stripped away, in the hopes of revealing a general solution to the perceived problem. The proposed solutions address individual or contextual factors in order to retain early career teachers.

The discourse around teacher attrition and retention has kept the focus on seeing the problem as one of only retaining teachers, rather than sustaining beginning teachers in a profession where they will feel fulfilled and see themselves as making a strong contribution. In recent work in Canada and the U.S. (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber; Young et al., 2010; Nelson, Antayá-Moore, Badley, & Coleman, 2010; Nieto, 2003), there are studies of what keeps teachers teaching or what sustains them. When we consider beginning teachers, we see possibility in adopting this discourse as a more promising way to understand not only what retains, but also what sustains, teachers in teaching.

Much of the earlier research focused on learning a new role rather than an identity. One line of research focuses on the need to understand the process of becoming a teacher as processes of identity making. Early work in this area began from a view of learning a new identity, that is, an identity as teacher rather than learner. This view was reflected in the early work of Lortie (1975) and has been picked up again in relation to the problem of early career teacher attrition.

McNally, Blake, and Reid (2009), based on a study in Scotland, discussed identity negotiation as well, and pointed to the importance of being attentive to how beginning teachers' identities are negotiated within the relational dimensions of the school. Often times these relational dimensions were situated within informal spaces; these informal spaces were important to identity negotiation and daily teaching life (Lovett & Davey, 2009; McNally, Blake, & Reid, 2009).

Flores and Day (2006) have begun to study beginning teachers from this theoretical standpoint. Flores (2006) spoke to the challenges beginning teachers faced as they re-framed their identities within the cultures of their new school setting. Flores and Day (2006), in their study of teachers in Portugal, worked from a notion of identities as an ongoing and dynamic process that entails the making sense of, and reinterpretation of, one's own values and experiences. They identified three main shaping forces: prior influences, initial teacher training and school contexts.

Clandinin, Downey, and Huber made a more explicit shift to considering the negotiation of identities over time, and on personal and professional landscapes. They worked from a narrative view of teacher identity as *stories to live by* which links teacher knowledge and contexts. In their work with the stories of teachers in Canada who had left teaching, they suggested teachers' stories to live by gradually shifted until they found they were no longer able to sustain who they were, and were becoming, on school landscapes. These shifts in their stories to live by were negotiated on both personal and professional landscapes.

Schaefer and Clandinin (2011) adopted this discourse in a Canadian study of two beginning teachers in order to try to understand what sustained them in their first year of teaching. In their study they found that their participants' personal and professional landscapes were inseparable when thinking about how they might be sustained. They also found that beginning teachers' imagined stories, those stories of who they would be as teachers, strongly shaped their sustaining experiences on both their personal and professional landscape. Estola (2003) explored the place of hope in how student teachers in Finland constructed their teacher identities. In her work, she found, as did Schaefer and Clandinin, that there is negotiation between personal and professional identities. Both Schaefer and Clandinin and Estola worked from a view of teacher identity as a narrative process. This work on teacher identities offers a great deal of promise to ways we might come to understand beginning teacher attrition as a life-making process. Adopting such a view would offer insight into the life/career span of a teacher, with the temporal process of becoming a teacher as linked with the processes of leaving teaching.

We suggest the need to shift the conversation from one focused only on retaining teachers toward a conversation about sustaining teachers throughout their careers. Working alongside beginning teachers and working from a narrative conceptualization of identity and school contexts offers a promising way to understand what sustains beginning teachers and in this way may offer the possibility of new insights about teacher education and about the kinds of continuing spaces needed on school landscapes to sustain and retain beginning teachers.

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Chapter 3: Literature Review on Induction and Mentoring Related to Early Career Teacher Attrition and Retention

Abstract

Early career teacher attrition is a matter of economic, social, and educational concern in many countries. Usually induction programs, including mentoring, are seen to alleviate the problem of early career teacher attrition. This focus on mentoring/induction programs as a solution to what is defined as the problem of early career teacher attrition and retention is the focus for this literature review. In this literature review on mentoring and induction, our interest was in determining the current research base that supports such programs and initiatives. We were concerned that, perhaps, induction, including mentoring, has become the acceptable or taken-for-granted solution to the problem of early career teacher attrition and retention without sufficient attention to the research base. In this systematic literature review, we summarize the literature, raise concerns and highlight new research directions. We attend to how induction, including mentoring, for early career teachers is conceptualized as sometimes focussed on retaining teachers, sometimes focussed on improving teacher quality and rarely on sustaining beginning teachers' lives as teachers.

Introduction

There is widespread agreement among policy makers in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom that early career teacher attrition is of economic, social, and educational concern. Recent reviews (for example, Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006) highlight concerns as well as differential patterns of attrition and retention across subject matters, age, gender, and race. We see the reviews that examine the forces and factors as largely focussed on individual or institutional/social framings of the problem of early career teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2001; Macdonald, 1999). Usually induction programs, including mentoring, are seen to alleviate the problem of early career teacher attrition. State, provincial, or district administrators mandate or strongly encourage such programs or initiatives. This focus on mentoring/induction programs as a solution to what is defined as the problem of early career teacher attrition and retention sets the focus for this literature review. Our interest was in finding the current research base that supports such programs and initiatives. We were concerned that, perhaps, induction, including mentoring, has become the acceptable or taken-for-granted solution to the problem of early career teacher attrition and retention without sufficient attention to the research base or to how the research problem was framed. In this systematic literature review, we summarize the literature, raise concerns and highlight new research directions. We attend to how induction, including mentoring, for early career teachers is conceptualized as sometimes focussed on retaining teachers, sometimes focussed on improving teacher quality and rarely on sustaining beginning teachers' lives as teachers.

Methods for the Review

Criteria.

Our search terms were: beginn* (beginner or beginners or beginning) OR novice OR new OR early career OR newly qualified teacher* OR NQT AND Teacher* AND OR mentor* OR socialization/socialisation OR intern*. We limited our search to articles that were: empirical studies, written in English, in refereed publications, published from years 2000 – present, from Canada, USA, New Zealand, Australia, and the UK, that included material linked to teacher attrition or retention. The following databases were searched: Academic OneFile; Academic Search Complete; CBCA Complete; CBCA Education; CPI.Q. (Canadian Periodicals Index); Education Research Complete; Educational Administration Abstracts; Educational Research Abstracts; ERA: Education & Research Archive; Omnifile; Physical Education Index; Proquest Education Journals; Proquest Dissertations and Theses; Social Sciences Citation Index; Teacher Reference; U of A Theses and Dissertations; NEOS Libraries' catalogue.

Process.

Abstracts of research studies found to match the criteria were transferred into an on-line database. Our research team then collectively reviewed the abstracts and culled the database, including only articles relevant to induction and mentoring with a focus on early career teacher attrition and retention. We did not include articles relevant to induction and mentoring but without connection to early career teacher attrition or retention. We then divided the articles among our team. Each of us read, and then wrote, annotated bibliographical entries of each article, using the following categories: theoretical framework, research problem, context and subject matter, methodology, and findings. We wrote 93 annotated bibliographical entries.

In a series of weekly team meetings, we topically sorted the annotated bibliographical entries. We began our summary with defining the terms mentoring and induction and then summarized the commonly used frames for purposes of induction. Following this, we organized the literature using six of the Wood and Stanulis (2009) criteria of quality induction programs. Together, we then identified any annotated entries related to each criterion. Each criterion is detailed on the following pages. We do not refer to all articles in the annotated bibliography. Once we summarized the research, we problematized the research on induction and mentoring and outlined promising new directions for research.

Defining our terms: The language of mentoring and induction.

Mentoring is such an important part of induction programs that the terms are often used synonymously (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). We, too, found that the terms mentoring and induction were frequently used interchangeably throughout the literature.

Neilsen, Barry, and Addison (2006) discussed differences they perceive between induction and mentoring. They described induction as "a period when teachers have their first teaching experience and adjust to the roles and the responsibilities of teaching" (p.15). Induction programs vary in goals, levels of formality, structure, length, and planned activities. Mentoring may be one component of an induction program; in some cases, mentoring is considered the induction program. Mentors, usually experienced teachers, work with beginning teachers "to

help ease the novices' transition from university student to full-time time classroom teacher" (p. 15). There may be variance in the conceptualization of the term mentor among school districts (Neilsen et al., 2006) related to different purposes, intentions and/or goals for mentorship.

Frames for purposes of induction.

There is a broad spectrum of literature[1] surrounding induction and, while some literature focuses on criteria that make a *quality program* (Wood & Stanulis, 2009), other literature focuses on how implementing those criteria might support beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Some literature seeks to show how evaluation and assessment may help to create *quality teachers* (West, Rich, Shepherd, Recessor, & Hannafin, 2009; Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Other research focuses on how induction programs may help keep beginning teachers in the profession (Vierstraete, 2005). There is consensus on certain elements that are part of quality induction. Obvious contextual differences into which these induction programs are implemented creates research questions around what *quality* induction might look like in different contexts.

Criteria for quality induction programs.

The Wood and Stanulis (2009) criteria of comprehensive quality induction served as our conceptual frame. Framing the review in this way allowed us to organize the literature to speak to the established criteria of *quality* induction. The criteria are as follows[2]:
- Educated Mentors
- Reflective Inquiry and Teaching Processes
- Systemic and Structured Observations
- Formative Teacher Assessment
- Administrators' Involvement
- School Culture Supports

Educated mentors.

Much of the research literature on induction focuses on formal mentoring programs. Three studies (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Carter & Francis, 2001; Hellsten, Prytula, Ebank, & Lai, 2009) included teachers involved in formal or informal mentoring. Hellsten et al. in Saskatchewan found that beginning teachers discussed issues of practice with multiple mentors (both formal and informal). Some researchers found forms of mentor training helped mentors support mentees in their success (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Nielsen et al., 2006). Beutel and Spooner-Lane found mentor training caused mentors to reflect on their professional relationships and to develop empathy for the mentee, but did not facilitate the mentors' learning from the beginning teachers. In their study of 62 beginning teachers, Young and Cates (2010) found having a mentor trained in empathic listening helped beginning teachers to manage tensions

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[1] While we searched the research literature from several countries, most of the research was completed in the United States.
[2] Some the Wood and Stanulis criteria for quality induction are not used within our review and other criteria have been reworded to better represent our reading of the literature.

around teaching. Rikard and Banville (2010) found having a trained mentor was not sufficient support for beginning teachers, as the majority of beginning teacher participants felt under-served or not served by their trained mentors.

Other researchers chose to examine cases of mentoring where the mentor was highly respected. Feiman-Nemser (2001) studied one exemplary mentor who viewed his role as a co-thinker rather than an expert. Piggot-Irvine, Aitken, Ritchie, Ferguson, and McGrath (2009) also studied highly regarded induction programs in New Zealand. Formal mentoring was part of each of these programs, though mentor training was not. The mentors stated they needed more support and development in their role as mentors.

Researchers also examined the ways that mentors and mentees are matched. In their study of 220 beginning teachers and 245 supervisors, Carter and Francis (2001) observed that the mentoring relationships were more effective if the choice of mentor and mentee was up to the participants, as distinct from being assigned to a mentor-mentee relationship. Brown (2001) noted the choice of mentor was important to mentees who felt frustrated in their relationship with an assigned mentor. The beginning teachers in this study said that good mentors were available, reliable, and saw mentorship as a priority. Piggot-Irvine et al. (2009) found making a good match was an important aspect of the respected mentoring programs they studied. In matching, administrators considered teaching areas, personalities, mentor experience, teaching context, proximity, and (in some cases) the wishes of the beginning teacher. Similarly, Whitaker (2000) recognized that mentor matching (grade level, type of students, proximity) was important to beginning teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of mentorship. In his study of 156 first year special educators, there was a statistically significant relationship between perceived mentorship effectiveness and beginning teachers' plans to stay in the profession. Parker, Ndoye, and Imig (2009) saw a link between the mentor match by grade level and beginning teachers' intentions to stay in the profession. Of the elements of mentor matching they examined (proximity, content area, and grade level), only grade level was statistically significant in terms of intentions to remain in teaching. In another study (Iriniga-Bistolas, Schalock, Marvin, & Beck, 2007), beginning special education teachers in rural schools reported their needs were met at higher levels when their mentor was in the same building rather than in another place.

Considering the interactions between mentors and mentees is another area of research related to early career teacher attrition and retention. Schwille (2008) identified ten distinct patterns of mentoring that were integrated into professional practice. In their study of action research cycles in mentoring, Athanases et al. (2008) pointed to the importance of mentors being responsive to the needs of the people and the context. Whitaker (2000) found beginning teachers needed a wide range of support from mentors, including emotional and instructional support. Preliminary findings show a wide range of support from mentors may help with retention of beginning teachers. In a study of a formal induction program in the Midwest, Nielsen et al. (2006) found beginning teachers valued the emotional and instructional support of their mentors (who were trained and were provided time and compensation for mentoring). Street (2004) identified social relationships with mentors as particularly important to new teachers. As these researchers underline, it is important to consider the instructional, emotional, social, and psychological support available to beginning teachers.

One study examined the benefits of mentorship for the mentors. Margolis (2008) invited seven early career teachers (4-6 years of experience) to be mentors. Most of the early career teachers saw mentorship as being both regenerative (helping to inspire their learning and teaching) and generative (giving back to the profession).

One difficulty around mentorship mentioned in several articles was time. Both mentors and mentees felt limited and frustrated by the lack of time for meeting, discussion, and relationship development (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2009). Another difficulty was tension over mentors also being supervisors (Marable & Raimondi, 2007).

Reflective inquiry and teaching processes.

The ways in which reflective inquiry is supported, modeled, and undertaken vary greatly. However, at the heart of reflection, teachers are learning from, and within, teaching. Reflection was an integral focus in Molner's (2004) longitudinal study of beginning teachers. He found new teachers had a heightened sense of themselves as teachers and their colleagues observed high levels of professional growth as a result of reflection and working in collaborative teams.

A sense of the self in relation to the school context was also important in an Australian study of 20 beginning teachers. McCormack, Gore, and Thomas (2006) examined five tasks central to teaching. Two tasks proved challenging to novice teachers: learning the context (students, curriculum, school community) and developing a professional identity. This points to the importance of context as a shaping influence on beginning teachers' practice and the on-going nature of identity formation. Similarly, Cook (2009) worked with 10 beginning English teachers in the Northeastern US. Reflective practice played a role in the new teachers' development of hope and in viewing possibilities for their teacher identities.

Two studies examined the use of electronic media to promote reflective inquiry. West et al. (2009) studied how the use of video analysis of beginning teachers' practice influenced recognition of teaching attributes and reflection on practice. Participants had difficulty identifying their own teaching attributes and placing these attributes on the given continuum. The usefulness of the videos was limited. Leiberman and Pointer-Mace (2010) worked with teachers who created multimedia representations of their practice around essential 'events' of teaching, such as establishing classroom routines. They pointed to the usefulness of these representations for revealing the complexities of teaching. Leiberman and Pointer-Mace supported the teachers' creation of their own representations of practice, while West et al. asked participants to use a continuum that was unfamiliar to the teachers.

Systemic and structured observations.

Formal observation is an element of many induction programs. Usually, a mentor or administrator observes a beginning teacher and provides feedback with regard to the focus of the observation (standards, criteria from professional organizations, standards for certain academic areas, etc.). Sometimes, the beginning teacher observes a more experienced teacher. Roehrig, Bonn, Turner, and Pressley (2008) examined two groups of beginning teachers. All beginning teachers had school-provided mentors and participated in a state-run induction program. One

group also received additional mentoring, which included mentee observation, mentor observation, and discussion about observations. In terms of effective teaching practices, there were no consistent differences between the groups of beginning teachers.

Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) studied two well-regarded induction programs in which observation was used to provide assistance and assessment. Though assistance and assessment are often separated in induction programs, these researchers found that the two purposes could coexist, though it made the mentor-mentee relationship more difficult. It should be noted that only the mentors were consulted; beginning teachers' perceptions were not included. Though there is little research focused on systemic and structured observations, these two studies provoke questions around the common assumption in mentoring and induction programs that observation is always valuable.

Formative teacher assessment.

While there was a link between research on induction and mentoring and formative teacher assessment, there was little research on the topic. Carver and Katz (2004) explored the professional responsibility of mentor teachers when beginning teachers' practices were only borderline acceptable. Based on the results of their study, part of a national New Teacher Induction study by Feiman-Nemser, they recommended mentor teachers take a direct role in helping novice teachers reach acceptable levels of performance. Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) noted a growing recognition that assessment is integral to promoting and gauging teacher quality. In their view this has lead to an increased interest in studying the effects of melding support and formative assessment. Their research, case studies of two well regarded US induction programs that combined assessment and assistance, explored whether support and assessment can co-exist within an induction program. They found four features were central to melding induction and assessment: programs are goal driven and learning oriented; evidence-based analysis of teaching and learning is employed; mentors are respected; and accountability is part of the induction program. There was no beginning teacher input into the study.

West et al. (2009) suggested video recordings of beginning teachers' practices could be used to provide starting points for reflective formative assessments as part of induction programs. Beginning teachers were asked to use the Teacher Success Model as a rubric for analyzing their videotaped practices on two occasions. The study reported limited results noting beginning teachers found it difficult to use the rubric and videos only captured a small part of the experience of beginning teachers.

This limited research suggests the need for more exploration of the links between formative teacher assessment and induction programs. No links were made to beginning teacher attrition or retention.

Administrators' involvement.

There is limited literature that directly links the role of the principal with the retention of teachers. Even less research exists on the effect of administrators, including superintendents, at the district, provincial, or state level. The literature does speak to the development of policy and

the provision of funds for ensuring implementation of induction programs. Brock and Chaitlin's (2008) research suggests superintendents were generally satisfied with induction programs but also recognized that improvements could be made to such programs. However, they identified a number of roadblocks to improving the programs including time, financial restraints, the large number of educational priorities for which they were responsible, as well as issues of distance in geographically larger jurisdictions. The literature reviewed concluded it was the principal who "plays a central role in the effectiveness and success of an induction program" (Brock & Chaitlin, p. 383). It is commonly thought that "the success of beginning teachers is critical to student success and the success of both is largely the responsibility of the principal" (Tillman, 2005 p. 613). In this section, we use sub headings because the scope of literature attentive to the role of principals and mentorship/induction is varied and includes: school culture, instructional leadership, support for new teachers, mentor selection, and flexibility to meet school needs.

Principals and school culture.

The stated goals for new teacher induction programs (Brock & Chaitlin, 2008; McCormack & Thomas, 2003) are: improving quality of new teacher performance, improving student achievement, and improving retention of beginning teachers. The success of new teachers seems to be related to the school culture in which their first experiences as beginning teachers take place. In this, the principal plays a pivotal role. "School leadership as the fulcrum for organizational climate and socialization sets the tone for the beginner's first experience [...]largely through the assistance and monitoring of the principal" (Angelle, 2006, p. 319). In schools where there is a climate that sets high expectations for student learning combined with the belief that all students can learn, beginning teachers expressed loyalty to, and the intention to stay, in a particular school because the mission, vision and values of the school culture matched their own (Angelle, 2006). The satisfaction levels for induction programs expressed by beginning teachers demonstrated that strong leadership from the principal, a whole school approach to learning and teaching with clear goals and expectations, small class sizes, and the opportunity for professional growth were among the factors that contributed positively to this sense of satisfaction (McCormack & Thomas, 2003). In schools where collaboration and teamwork were part of the overall school culture, beginning teachers felt valued, felt they had a place in the school learning community even though they had a great deal to learn, were proud of their contributions and wanted to share them with the principal (Angelle, 2006).

Principals as instructional leaders.

Principals as instructional leaders are in a position to initiate conversations with beginning teachers, observe instruction, provide feedback, monitor progress, and facilitate the transition between teacher education programs and the realities of classroom teaching. Principals have the opportunity to nurture and encourage the development of beginning teacher identity from a position of personal strength rather than a deficit model which focuses on the gaps in new teacher knowledge and performance (Vierstraete, 2005). Vierstraete (2005) suggests fostering of reflective practice within a mentoring relationship that includes the principal, the mentor and the new teacher is important to the ongoing professional learning of the new teacher within the school community. Conversely, in schools with weak or ineffectual instructional leadership practices, the socialization process contributed to feelings of frustration and tension for the

beginning teacher. Weak instructional leadership was also shown to shape ineffective practices as part of the socialization process (Tillman, 2005; White & Mason, 2006).

Principal support for new teachers.

First year teachers, who were in schools where the socialization by, and interactions with, the principal focused on student learning, teaching practice and fostering relationships, encountered fewer problems. More problems were encountered by first year teachers in schools where socialization focused on administrative elements, school routines and requirements (Tillman, 2005). The beginning teachers in these schools felt that they were expected to figure it out for themselves rather than working within a team approach. A correlation was found between the number of problems encountered by new teachers and their decision to stay in the profession (Angelle, 2006). The higher the number of problems, the more likely the new teachers were to leave. Some of the problems were: lack of feedback from the instructional leader, behaviour of students, isolation, ineffective mentors, lack of support, few resources, large classes, and little or no time to interact, plan or create relationships with colleagues (White & Mason, 2006).

While school, district, or state/provincial policies mandate certain supports to be provided to beginning teachers, Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin (2006) found the most valuable supports, as identified by beginning teachers, were often not offered. Andrews et al. also found that although principals felt they were providing these supports, beginning teachers did not perceive the supports as being provided. Thus, there was a discrepancy between beginning teachers' perceptions of support and the principals' perceptions of support.

Principals and mentor selection.

The selection of mentors (Vierstraete, 2005) is often part of the principal's role. A principal who is involved and can blend the needs of beginning teachers with the specific needs of the school creates a more supportive environment for beginning teachers. Choosing mentors who can develop strong relationships, who teach similar students and subject matter, and who share a common goal of student success are factors to overcoming the barriers for improving the induction process for all stakeholders (Ingwalson & Thompson, 2007; White & Mason, 2006).

Principals' flexibility to meet school needs.

Types of schools and school communities vary widely and research indicates a need for flexibility rather than a directive approach for induction programs. In this way, effective transition, assistance, monitoring, mentoring and learning can be responsive to the needs of new teachers, mentors, students and the school learning community (McCormack & Thomas, 2003). A principal who commits to developing teacher competencies, professional growth and engaging in conversations, observations, and assessment through a shared goal for student learning creates a school culture in which all teachers, including beginning teachers, can be successful (Tillman, 2005). Training for principals becomes an integrated part of the framework for induction programs so that an understanding of the principal's role, school culture and the importance of induction are developed (Brock & Chaitlin, 2008; Tillman, 2005; McCormack &Thomas, 2003).

School culture supports.

Most of the literature involving teacher attrition, mentorship, and induction speaks to school culture or supports available in schools in some way. However, the literature does not give direct attention to the complexities of creating and maintaining supportive school culture or to the school culture's importance in relation to the retention of new teachers. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) consider elements such as the people involved, the role of physical space, the teacher intentions shaped by the school culture, and the milieu. In this section, we examine each of Ingersoll and Smith's elements in relation to the literature.

It is important to acknowledge the myriad ways people impact the school culture. Some of these ways were discussed in the sections pertaining to Educated Mentors and Administrators' Involvement. Groups and stakeholders important (Wilkens & Clift, 2006) in the development of the school culture are superintendents (Brock & Chatlain, 2008), administrators, peer teachers, veteran teachers, and others. Some studies focus on one sub-group of stakeholders and their impacts (Bickmore, Bickmore, & Heart; 2005; Wood & Stanulis, 2009) who examined the impact of administrators' involvement in induction. The different level of interest of stakeholder groups determines the success of the induction program. Success is also shaped by whether a program is in a veteran-oriented, novice-oriented or integrated culture (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

We found only one study that showed the importance of the physical space as part of the school culture (Blankenship & Colem, 2009). In this study the researchers explored the experiences of two Physical Education teachers in two geographical contexts, urban and rural. Blankenship and Colem acknowledged that proximity to others shapes the school culture and the physical layout can influence a new teacher's role and socialization in the culture.

Johnson and Birkeland (2003) examined the types of cultures that can be created in schools, and how they might shape beginning teachers' decisions to stay in the profession or leave. Three types of professional cultures, veteran-oriented (focused on the teachers who have been teaching for a long time), novice-oriented (focused on the teachers who are new to the profession), and integrated cultures, were described as "organized to engage teachers of all experience levels in collegial and collaborative efforts" (p. 605). New teachers involved in the integrated culture were more satisfied with their jobs, were more likely to stay in the school system, and were more likely to stay at the same school. Wilkens and Clift (2006) also examined the impact of collaboration, part of an integrated model of professional culture. Veteran, novice, or integrated teaching cultures can influence both who benefits from induction and the success of the program (Piggot-Irvine, Aitken, Ritchie, Ferguson, & McGrath, 2009).

Factors that affect the milieu such as the importance of empathy, meeting outside the school to reflect on issues, being seen as a valuable member of the community (Beutel & Spooner-Lane, 2009), having a personal or religious connection (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; Chatlain & Noonan, 2005), having access to friends, family, and a wide variety of resources and personnel (Romano, 2008), were identified as contributing to the retention of beginning teachers.

Problematizing the research on induction and mentoring programs.

In our literature review we found studies where the current work on induction programs, including mentoring, was questioned. There were concerns raised about whether the current research designs, conceptualizations and questions are ones that will move us forward in work with beginning teacher induction and mentoring.

Rikard and Banville (2010) in their US study of effective mentoring found significant concerns with mentoring as the main element of induction. They found 55% of first year physical education teachers were underserved or not served by assigned mentors. While they noted that training for mentors is important, it is not enough to ensure that first year teachers are receiving adequate support. There was no link to the success of induction and mentoring programs in alleviating beginning teacher attrition or retention but they highlighted the complexities of relying on mentoring programs, no matter how well trained the mentors are. White and Mason (2006), in a US study of beginning special education teachers, also highlighted problems with mentoring. They found that mentorship effectiveness was impacted by the proximity of the mentor, whether the mentor taught the same 'types' of students or the same grade level and whether there was administrative assistance. Kensington-Miller (2005), in New Zealand, reported concerns with seeing mentoring as either/or, putting forth an argument for seeing mentorship as on a continuum. A continuum of the possible mentoring relationships allows for a more fine-grained way of understanding the mentor-mentee relationships. The continuum would range from a judgmental stance, implying hierarchical positioning, to a developmental stance where there would be time for the relationship and work of the mentors and mentees to develop. There was no link to whether or not the mentoring impacted beginning teacher attrition.

Hobson's (2010) work in England also focused on the mentoring relationships but from the perspective of the beginning teachers particularly in an increasingly bureaucratic context for teaching. From the intensive study of beginning teachers' experiences of induction, the study highlighted that beginning teachers associated support mainly with people. The beginning teachers saw instructional support as more related to their professional development rather than as support. Hobson drew attention to the importance of providing emotional and psychological support to beginning teachers. No link to beginning teacher attrition was made, but the importance of relational support to beginning teachers, the importance of hearing what the beginning teachers experienced as well as what policy makers, mentors and administrators note about induction programs was highlighted. Kardos and Johnson (2010) asked U.S. beginning teachers about their experiences of mentoring. They highlighted beginning teachers' experiences of the lack of same grade level or subject matter match with their mentors and the lack of conversation with, and observations by, their mentors. These negative experiences were more prevalent in lower income schools.

Manuel (2003) studied six teachers as they moved into teaching in Australia over five years. They explored the transitions and paid particular attention to the lives of teachers as they moved out of teaching, a transition referred to as an *exit gateway*. Ling (2009) offered a conceptual framework with new directions for the teaching profession through induction processes. Ling suggested induction programs are a site for re-imagining growth and change in the teaching profession.

Current research into induction programs (including mentoring) raises a number of questions about the programs that range from more technical concerns about the most efficacious matches and conditions to questions about whether it is possible to structure or mandate induction programs that will solve the problem of beginning teacher attrition or retention. As we read the literature, we wondered if the most effective induction programs would involve engaging beginning teachers in collaborative, integrated cultures in schools that valued beginning teacher knowledge, that included them in the school programs and cultures as full members of the school community with attention to their stories of who they wanted to be and become as teachers. Perhaps there was a need for a re-conceptualization that was more than a tinkering with the technical elements of induction and mentoring programs.

New directions for research in mentoring and induction programs.

Induction programs including mentoring for the purpose of teaching beginning teachers 'the ropes', that is, structures and procedures needed for assuming the role of teacher, may be shifting in purpose and direction. In recent literature we found a move away from a narrow, technical, and fixed goal-oriented framework of inducting beginning teachers towards conceptualizing the development of becoming a new teacher as a process.

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) conceptualized this identity process as 'stories to live by'. The process attends to both the personal context of teachers and the cultural contexts of schools with attention to a time span. The need to shape relational places on school landscapes that allow beginning teachers' spaces to reconfigure their ongoing identities as teachers is critical. Several lines of recent research address aspects of mentorship that relate to becoming a teacher as a process such as autobiographical and biographical research, identity research, and research into continuity of experience.

Autobiographical and biographical research.

Thinking of beginning teachers as the vehicle for their own professional growth rather than as objects of induction programs (Cherubini, 2007) leads to new ways of considering what induction, including mentoring, could mean. Rathwell's (2005) study of beginning teachers in rural Alberta underpins the significance of exploring beginning teachers' biographies to assess their likelihood of forming successful relationships with diverse mentors (principal, formal and informal teacher mentors and other beginning teachers), which are ongoing and which are voluntary for the purpose of successful induction. Jewell (2007) explored the biographies of experienced teachers in her study to find that mentor relationships could provide ongoing spaces for conversation and reflection allowing mentee teachers to make sense of their particular situations, helping to create coherence in their ever-evolving 'stories to live by'.

Identity research.

Rippon and Martin (2006) examined the processes whereby beginning teachers negotiate their identities as teachers within school cultures. Their study emphasized the emotional need for beginning teachers to belong and to be seen as a 'teacher' by colleagues was *as important* as professional development. Barriers to 'fitting in' were seen in school cultures that were

individualistic, where beginning teachers were labeled as probationers, and where beginning teachers were excluded from future-directed professional work in the school.

Smethem (2007) investigated beginning teachers' intentions regarding choosing teaching as a career at a time of increasing accountability. She suggests a typology of teachers: the career teacher, the classroom teacher and the portfolio teacher (a temporary job). Teachers were more likely to teach with commitment when they were able to incorporate their beliefs about making a difference in children's lives and when they were supported in this. Smethem's research directs teacher educators and the teaching profession to create the school spaces for constructing a resilient teacher identity rather than directing schools toward doctrine of 'what works'.

Leiberman and Pointer-Mace (2010) worked from the view that professional development derived from teachers' practices is central to what teaching means for pre-service and professional teachers. Through the process of creating multimedia representations of teaching, teachers articulated the complexities of what they know in context, significantly enhancing teacher voice and professional identity. There is a caution as researchers develop insights on what mentoring is and could be in relation to shaping possible beginning teachers' identities. Devos (2010) is concerned that mentoring for beginning teachers can be framed to support specific and standardized identities based on 'outside' conceptions of good teaching.

Research into continuity of experience.

As attention shifts from specific mentoring and induction programs to collegial support and developing a teaching identity and socialization into the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Flores & Day 2006), the issue of continuity of experience for beginning teachers gains significance. Continuity of experience for beginning teachers often addresses the relationship between teacher education institutions and schools. Lovett and Davey (2009) found that for subject specialist beginning teachers being familiar with curriculum through their teaching assignments as well as quality of support determined their socialization as effective teachers. They concluded continuity between teacher education institutions and schools is essential. Carr and Evans (2006) provoke us further to consider the collaborative possibilities between schools, university programs and school administrators in order to create sustained support and ensure beginning teachers remain in the profession. Beginning 'teacher scholars' worked with prepared mentor 'link teachers' from the schools and with university faculty members. Working over seven years *with* schools, the advanced teacher preparation program was given the necessary time and resources to enable beginning teachers to complete a master's program, to enhance their ongoing professional development and leadership in the schools and to ensure a high percentage of these same teachers remained in schools. Costigan (2004) sought to understand the personal experiences of new teaching fellows (NYCTF program) as their understanding of themselves as teachers evolved over two years. The gap between initial ideals and the realities of teaching were made visible. Course work grafted onto their personal developing narratives as informed by daily hands-on practice was found to be beneficial.

Main (2009) considers continuity of experience in another way. She linked the success of mentoring programs in selected Aotearoa New Zealand schools with the incorporation of principles of Māori culture emphasizing spiritual, mental/emotional, social and physical wellness

for balanced development. The study speaks to the necessity of beginning teachers recognizing and connecting to aspects of the cultures embodied in their experiences at school to more easily re-frame their continuing identity development.

Fox and Wilson (2009) consider the relational nature of support networks for beginning secondary science teachers and found that support from peers across the school were of most value as well as having beginning teachers involved in pedagogical discourse beyond departmental boundaries. The study emphasized the importance of support that is wide-ranging and lasting beyond the initial year. Offering beginning teachers expansive and diverse possibilities for connecting to their own evolving stories to live by in supportive relationships is key to continuing identity formation and sustaining teachers.

Discussion.

Our criteria for researching the literature on induction and mentoring included empirical studies only, studies from the year 2000 and studies from Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Much of the research on induction and mentoring stemmed from the United States. As a starting point to our discussion we further note that although mentoring is often equated with induction, it is only one facet of a comprehensive induction program. We found multiple differences in both induction and mentoring programs around issues such as who offers them, the length of time for which they are offered, whether they are government mandated, whether mentors receive further education for the role, how mentors and mentees are matched and so on. Induction programs including mentoring were seen to be diverse across schools, school districts, states, provinces and countries.

What we found most problematic was whether there is a link between induction programs including mentoring and teacher retention. The effect of induction (including mentoring) programs is unclear in the light of multiple factors that influence teachers' staying or leaving. Complexities in induction (including mentoring) programs stem from differing ways they are conceptualized and the differing ways they are lived out. We are led to questions about whether it is possible to structure or mandate induction programs that will 'solve the problem' of beginning teacher attrition. We found studies showing the quality of teaching may be impacted with induction (including mentoring) but links to retention were often not made or were tenuous.

The research drew our attention repeatedly to the significance of the school culture and context in which beginning teachers work. School cultures which are highly collaborative, value all teachers' knowledge including beginning teachers, which focus on what is most educative for students, and which see students as the responsibility of the whole school, appeared most successful in retaining beginning teachers. Principals were seen to have a pivotal role to play in the success of early career induction programs, setting a tone for collegiality amongst all staff. School cultures supportive of an integrated approach rather than those oriented toward supporting veteran teachers or those oriented around supporting beginning teachers were most successful in retaining beginning teachers.

Several lines of recent research have focused on the lives of beginning teachers themselves. There is interest in beginning teachers' developing identities as teachers. Studies

suggest it is vital that beginning teachers' voices are heard in designing what would support them in their development as beginning teachers. When the problem of how to retain and mentor beginning teachers for their 'role' in schools is reframed as a matter of sustaining beginning teachers to develop newly emerging identities as people who teach children, questions around the support that beginning teachers value, biographical questions around teaching intentions, and questions around continuity of experience as beginning teachers transition from educational institutions to school landscapes become critical.

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Chapter 4: In the Midst of Becoming Teachers: Storying Second- and Third-year Teacher Identities

Paper presented at AERA 2012 (April)

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Introduction

In the spring of 2010, we were invited to apply for funding from Alberta Education to provide more information on what was described as a problem of concern in Alberta, that is, a very large number of beginning teachers (approximately 40%) were leaving teaching within their first five years of teaching. We also learned that around 25% of individuals who graduated from Alberta post-secondary institutions with teaching qualifications did not assume teaching positions in Alberta. As we delved into the literature we realized a large portion of the teacher attrition literature stemmed from North American researchers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001); however, we also became aware of a pattern of early career teacher attrition on an international scale (Estola, 2003; Flores, 2006; Macdonald, 1999; Smethem, 2007). As Alberta Education was our funding agency, our study specifically looked at beginning teachers in Alberta. While focusing on Alberta, we were still attentive to the notion that our research may inform a broader context.

As we discussed research possibilities with those in Alberta Education, we indicated that we would conduct narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) both with teachers who left teaching within their first five years and with teachers who had not assumed teaching positions in Alberta. We also agreed to engage in a semi-structured interview study with 40 second- and third-year teachers who were still engaged in teaching. It is the results of this latter study that we report in this paper.

From our extensive literature review into the high rate of early career teacher attrition (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press) and from our discussions with officials in Alberta Education, we learned there was a spike in the number of teachers who left teaching at the end of their third and fourth years. Our research purpose in this study was to learn more about the experiences of second- and third-year teachers, as well as to learn something more of their intentions about whether they planned to stay in teaching. We were hopeful that we would begin to understand what was shaping their thoughts about staying in, or leaving, teaching.

Designing the Study

In designing the study, we were cognizant of the need to talk with beginning teachers from across the province of Alberta. While we would not be able to generate a random sample, we did want a representative sample of beginning teachers in rural, urban, and suburban boards. We also wanted a sample of teachers who taught at different grade levels and of teachers who taught in the north, south, east, and west of Alberta as well as in the urban core that stretched

between Edmonton and Calgary. We also wanted to include participants who graduated from as many of the Alberta post-secondary institutions that granted B.Ed. degrees as possible.

We made several decisions regarding recruitment. We did not want to recruit participants either through their school district offices or through the auspices of Alberta Education. We believed beginning teachers would be more willing to share their experiences if we contacted them through friends and associates, posters, ads, and Facebook links. We designed a series of digital and hard copy posters and distributed them throughout the province. The Alberta Teachers' Association also included an advertisement in their provincial newsletter to help us find participants. We contacted friends and acquaintances to hand out posters at teacher conferences and we also asked them to help us identify possible participants. Eventually, all of these approaches resulted in participants who agreed to work with us.

We wanted the participants to feel comfortable to share the range of their experiences and therefore, decided to not engage in the interview process within school settings. We attempted to organize out-of-school meeting places; however, this was not always possible and some interviews did, at the request of the participants, take place in school settings. We wanted the participants to feel comfortable to share the range of their experiences. As we reflected on the interviews, this sense of privacy was important to many participants, as they were concerned that what they said might get back to people in the schools where they were working. They appreciated the confidentiality and anonymity of the research.

We were also concerned that the teachers' schedules were often hectic and we were offering no incentives for their participation other than an opportunity to talk about their beginning teaching experiences. Therefore, we attempted to complete the semi-structured interviews in less than two hours, preferably within an hour and a half.

We designed a semi-structured interview schedule. In the methodological design of the interview questions, we were attentive to thinking narratively, as we attended to place, temporality, and personal (inner)/social (outer) considerations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). We attended to the temporal unfolding of their experiences of becoming teachers, including their imagined stories of who they would be as teachers. These stories may have been narratives shaped as children and youth in schools, and as they selected, and underwent, their teacher education programs. Our purpose was to gain a sense of whether or not beginning teachers were experiencing what they had imagined in their first years as teachers in classrooms and schools. Another consideration related to their imagined and lived lives as teachers both in school and at home. Lee Schaefer, one of our team members, completed his master's study with two beginning teachers (Schaefer, accepted; Schaefer & Clandinin, 2011) and highlighted the importance of attending to the beginning teachers' lives on both their home and school landscapes. Therefore, attending to their lives on both personal and professional landscapes was an important aspect of our interview questions as we envisioned that their experiences would be shaped by their school and classroom landscapes as well as by their personal landscapes.

We, as well as others (Devos, 2010; Rippon and Martin, 2006; Smethem, 2007), have begun to view beginning teachers with a lens of developing identities. We composed a number of questions to probe their sense of themselves as people who teach children in a particular school

context. As a feeling of belonging is necessary for developing a sense of identity that is composed and recomposed over time (McKenzie-Robblee & Steeves, 2008), we asked questions about beginning teachers' experiences of belonging on school landscapes.

We had also completed a thorough review of the research literature around early career teacher attrition and retention and were aware of what had been identified as issues or factors in early career teacher attrition. Aspects such as support on school landscapes were identified (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), as were factors such as school culture (Kardos & Johnson, 2007).

We designed the interview schedule and then engaged with two beginning teachers in order to test out the timing, the questions, and the order of the questions. The pilot test with two beginning teachers resulted in our reordering the questions, removing some questions, asking some questions more clearly, and combining some questions where the pilot responses suggested that we would not get additional information. The interview schedule is attached (Appendix A).

All research team members engaged with participants in interviews. Over the 2011 calendar year we interviewed forty second- and third-year teachers. We had each interview transcribed and we worked with the transcribed data. We then constructed a codebook and coded the interview data. Most questions could be coded dichotomously (e.g. rural/urban). Some, such as they type of contract or grade level, resulted in a descriptive label. The codes were constructed to give us both logistical/demographic data such as grade level, same school assignment as the previous year, or different school assignment from the previous year. However, some codes were of a more interpretive nature, such as belonging/not belonging in school. We then engaged in two forms of analysis. The first analysis involved simple descriptive statistics of the coded data. The second involved a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. As we interpreted the statistics, we noted that the context of meaning was lost in simply stating the statistics. For example, we found that 80% of the beginning teachers said they felt like they belonged in their schools while 20% said they felt like they did not belong. We knew different teachers responded with different understandings of what belonging on school landscapes meant. We came to understand that relying solely on descriptive statistics would obscure much. Teachers' stories are the central part of the data and we do not intend to represent our data by focusing only, or centrally, on the descriptive statistics. For this reason we only included statistical data that described the demographics of our participant population or that could be supported by the teachers' words. Below we describe the demographic statistics and then move into the thematic analysis.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Seventy-five percent of the 40 teacher participants taught in urban areas; 25% taught in rural areas. The 2006 census indicates that 82% of the Alberta population lived in urban areas and 18% lived in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2009). Seventy percent were primarily elementary teachers (pre-school to Grade 6); 10% were primarily junior high teachers (mostly Grades 7 to 9, but including middle schools which could include Grade 6); and 20% were primarily high school teachers (Grades 10 to 12).

Of the 40 participants, 42.5% were in the same teaching assignment as the previous year; 57.5% were in a different teaching assignment from the previous year. Sixty per cent were at the same school as the previous year; 40% of teachers were in a different school from the previous year. Only 35% of participants were both at the same school and had the same teaching assignment as the previous year. Thirty-five percent held temporary contracts, 17.5% held probationary contracts, 47.5% held continuing contracts at the time we interviewed them[3].

One of the most troubling statistics, although not surprising, was that only 37.5% of the participants were certain they were staying in teaching. This means the majority (62.5%) of participants were uncertain they would stay in teaching. While we have no way of knowing whether participants will stay or leave in their first five years, the large number who were uncertain confirms the rate of early career teacher attrition.

Thematic Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Working as an eight-person research team was neither easy nor straightforward. Many complicated conversations arose and directional decisions needed to be made. It was difficult to break apart the lives of each individual and to reshape the person's experiences to fit into the categories on our coding sheet. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, lives are complicated, complex, and messy. Trying to make sense of what we heard in the semi-structured interviews was equally as complicated and messy. While some of the codes, such as the demographic information, were somewhat easy to create (see above), other codes were less clear-cut. Resonances across the lives of participants were prominent. For example, participants four, six, eight, and 12 taught in rural schools. Participants one, two, seven, nine, and 19 each noted their imagined stories of their home lives matched what they were now living out. However, as we assigned numbers to the participants and engaged in this work, the individual lives seemed diminished. As we coded, conversations arose about the individuals' stories. One story trickled into, and onto, others, and an excitement filled the air as we waited eagerly to share a similar or dissimilar story. We found it difficult not to attend to the individuality of each life. We soon realized we needed to engage in a thematic coding that made the lives of the participants slightly more visible.

We built a thematic codebook by considering the aspects of the teachers' experiences that did not fit neatly into either/or codes such as belonging/not belonging, valued/not valued and so on. The thematic analysis was an inductive process and began when, as a research team, we coded certain transcript segments as being particularly noteworthy in response to the interview questions. We shared transcript sections from interviews at our weekly meetings around our research table. The first 22 transcripts were read and discussed by the research team. During a two-day summer 2011 meeting, we compiled a detailed codebook with eight tentative themes. We then coded the first 22 interview transcripts. When we reviewed the themes in early

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[3] In Alberta a *temporary* contract, like many other provinces, means that your position has a set end date. An individual on a *probationary* contract is in a position that could potentially become a continuing contract if their principal recommends them for a long-term *continuing* contract. Someone on a *continuing* contract is in a position that is long-term, or tenured.

December 2011, we collapsed overlapping themes into the seven themes in this paper. We then coded the remaining 18 interview transcripts. No new codes were added.

The Tension Between Honouring Each Individual and the Ethical Promise of Anonymity

We assured participants, and the university ethics board, that participants would be unidentifiable (Appendices B and C). There would be no information shared that would put them at risk of being identified. Ethically we are responsible that these individuals' stories are, in a way, separated from their tellers. While we were aware of similarities in the stories, we knew how individualistic, and identifiable, each of their stories was.

We realized the participants had drawn our attention to what we call a discounting of the uniqueness of their knowing, their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), the knowledge that distinguished them as persons and teachers. Research, at times, groups beginning teachers into a category of beginning teachers. Researchers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) note that *beginning teachers* need support. Research also shows that those beginning teachers working in collaborative school environments are more likely to stay in the profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008). Supportive principals are appreciated by beginning teachers (McCormack & Thomas, 2003), and beginning teachers prefer to work in schools that value students (Angelle, 2006; Haun & Martin, 2004; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). There is a certain type of knowledge that beginning teachers are expected to have. They have graduated from degree-granting universities, have completed their practica, and have their teaching certificates. As we studied the transcripts of the 40 teachers, we wondered if there was an assumption that each beginning teacher takes the same experiences from their teacher education programs. Does each practicum help beginning teachers to experience the same things? Are all beginning teachers' past experiences the same? Were their childhoods similar? Are their reasons for being a teacher the same? Do the same things sustain each of these beginning teachers? As we studied the transcripts, we realized more and more that while each teacher is beginning, they are beginning from different experiences, with different experiential knowledge, with different stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). What they have in common is that they are each in their first years of teaching, but each is a beginning teacher with a different beginning.

We began to play with the taken-for-granted way we named them as beginning teachers. We realized that, if we switched the word order, we could name them as "teachers beginning". The word "begin" shifts from a descriptor that often tells us little about them and hides some aspects of them, to a verb, which better reflects the shifting, complex, and different stories they live and of the different landscapes on which they live.

Differentiated instruction is a buzzword today in classrooms all over Alberta. We know that students work at different levels. We know that students have different past experiences, and therefore have different knowledge. We know students learn differently. Yet each person's distinctiveness and wealth of experience seems to be forgotten as beginning teachers enter into their teaching careers. Induction programs make assumptions about the knowledge teachers have, and do not have (West, Rich, Shepherd, Recesso, & Hannafin, 2009; Yusko & Feiman-

Nemser, 2008). They make assumptions that each beginning teacher needs the same thing and in a way make assumptions that beginning teachers are unidentifiable.

However, as we learned from the participants in the semi-structured interviews, it was apparent this was not the case; beginning teachers are not unidentifiable. Like their students, they all have different life experiences. Some have worked in other careers; some have three degrees, some have been soldiers; others have been professional athletes. Some are parents; others are not. Yet these past life experiences are discounted, and beginning teachers' personal practical knowledge can seem to become fixed or seen through the lens of peoples' perceptions of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they acquired through their teacher education programs. If beginning teachers' personal practical knowledge is not taken into account, knowledge composed in their lives in and out of schools, in and out of teacher education, is discounted. How, then, can we understand their experiences as beginning teachers? And how does this discounting of their personal practical knowledge shape their leaving or staying in teaching?

Perhaps beginning teachers are seen as professionals with a deficit. They are seen as lacking the real world, practical knowledge that helps teachers survive. It is implied that they need to be "skilled up," and provided with resources to ensure they can do their jobs because it is already assumed that what they have when they begin teaching is not good enough. The tension we experienced between honouring and making visible the knowledge of each beginning teacher, and honouring their anonymity, shaped how we represented the findings for the research. In what follows we outline the seven themes.

Theme One: Support

Two common forms of support for beginning teachers are formal induction programs and/or being assigned a mentor. The participants shared a variety of ways and means that they, as beginning teachers, felt supported on their school landscapes. Support clearly meant different things to them with differing degrees of acknowledgment of the supportiveness of their individual situations. Some beginning teachers had a mentor assigned, some chose their own, while others did not have a mentor at all. Some beginning teachers were involved in an induction program while others were not, and still others were not invited to participate in programs, as they were not yet on continuing contracts with their school district. Some teachers found the induction program to be of some support as they recognized they were not alone in their challenges and developed a network with other beginning teachers with whom to communicate. Others found the formal induction programs to be 'added-on' to their already busy lives and found it hard to find the time to make substitute teacher plans for the time they were away from the classroom. Some found the topics interesting but not quite on the mark for the assistance they felt they needed. Some wished they could be involved in an induction program while others wished they could opt out, or design one for themselves.

Participants also talked about support in school that was not part of induction or mentoring programs. Of the 40 participants, 82.5% felt that they had support at school. This support was described as important for their lives at school and ranged from collegial, collaborative, formal, informal, a teaching partner, and/or time with a principal and/or consultant or specialist. However, 18 of these 33 (54%) participants who said they had support at school

were uncertain they would stay in teaching. The seven participants who did not feel supported at school were all uncertain of staying. The descriptive statistics indicate that those who were not supported at school were less certain about staying. All 15 participants (37.5%) who were certain they were staying in teaching had support at school. There does not appear to be an emerging pattern in the data except to notice that 82.5% of the beginning teachers felt supported in some way at school and that this support made a difference to how they 'survived' and felt about the quality of work they did day-to-day; however, as mentioned above, this support did not necessarily help them to see themselves staying in the profession.

Many participants spoke of relationships with collaborative team members or teaching partners as contributing to what they imagined teaching would be like in a supportive culture. They found these collaborative relationships also helped them to understand the need for, and prompted their participation in, team meetings, school wide professional development, common assessment, planning strategies and the like, which gave them a chance to feel valued for the contributions they could make. As one participant said,

> In the whole collaboration model my opinion, I actually get taken seriously, so you can give an idea and they want to hear your ideas and they want you to hear their ideas, and it's a really nice team atmosphere... (#32)

This, however, added to the workload, as there were always 'a lot of meetings' before or after the regular classroom hours. With the many expectations they felt they had to meet, some beginning teachers expressed the wish for more time to deal with, and juggle, these expectations; having this sort of time was one way they felt supported at school.

Thirty-nine participants felt supported in their teaching on their home landscapes. Only one participant did not. Participants described varied kinds of support but indicated strongly that family made a difference. However, even with support at home, only 37.5% were certain they were staying in teaching. One teacher described support at home in the following way:

> ...and my family, I mean they are very, very, very supportive, but they feel the same as me at this point which is just really frustrated so when you have a bunch of people together that are all frustrated about something, nothing is...not that they can improve the situation...nothing is being improved... (#1)

We wondered where practices supporting beginning teachers would lead if we thought in terms of sustaining beginning teachers. Did support revolve around the complex relationships beginning teachers described with colleagues including principals and other administrators, parents, and students? How might support be woven into their lived experiences at school? Within these relationships and experiences, we wondered how support might be different for each beginning teacher. How might this affect the work of others in a school who, formally or informally, support the teaching lives of beginning teachers?

We also noted that while most participants felt supported at school, none of them mentioned that those with whom they worked in schools offered support in composing their lives out of school. They did talk about family and friends who provided support at home and also

supported their teaching through helping with marking, setting up classrooms, arranging and finding materials, and so on. Support on the home landscape seemed to include an attention to the participants' lives both on and off school landscapes.

We realized the need for support to be tailored to who and where a teacher is. As we considered support we wondered, what do we need to know about teachers to support them? What is known, usually, is that they are beginning teachers, which means we assume a lot and know very little about them other than how long they have been teaching. With no idea of how to support them, perhaps what we imagine as support is not support. Worse still, the support that is offered might be harmful to sustaining them in composing their lives as teachers.

Theme Two: An Identity Thread of Belonging

When we interviewed participants, we asked them whether or not they felt a part of the school culture. Eighty percent of participants indicated they felt like they belonged. Later, when we attended to the participants' responses, we realized that our question had been far too limiting. All participants expanded their responses well beyond the scope of school culture. In order to include the complexities and multiple layers of culture the participants spoke of, we reframed our thinking and included multiple threads of belonging and of feeling included. We linked this to a question of identity in this theme.

Sometimes, there seemed to be a clear sense of belonging expressed by participants. For example one teacher stated:

> I've established a lot of personal relationships with my coworkers and we're not shy about thanking each other, sharing resources with each other, giving each other feedback and, just being in a temp contract, I find it a compliment when the staff forgets that I'm not going to be there for the full year because I feel like I'm a part of the permanent staff. (#31)

This participant highlights the importance of feeling a sense of belonging. Positive relationships with co-workers were important to this teacher and offered a sense of belonging, even though the participant was not a permanent staff member.

Many participants made comments about relationships and their feelings of belonging. These relationships were with teams, staff, parents, administrators, or/and students. This reaffirmed that, while relationships were necessary to a feeling of belonging, the ways those relationships played out were different for each teacher. For some, as the following participant noted, there were difficult conversations.

> …going up to my colleagues and saying I feel left out, I don't feel like I'm part of your team after we worked on this, has been a rough conversation to get to. It's taken me a year and 8 months to even say I don't feel like I'm part of team, all I want to be is part of the team. (#5)

Some participants, as illustrated in the following transcript excerpt, spoke to the

importance of 'fitting in.'

> …I have to fit in with the students, I have to fit in with my supervisor 'cause they're a head of the board, the school board…and I have to fit in with the parents 'cause they're part of the culture. (#11)

In this example there were many complexities regarding multiple layers of culture. Another excerpt also supported the complexity of belonging: "…I really love my Grade 1 staff, but other than that, you just kind of feel like an alien" (#33). This participant expressed conflicting feelings of belonging and of alienation. She loved working within the smaller culture of a Grade 1 team; however, she did not feel as though she belonged within the larger school culture. Other participants also spoke of the different sub-groups to which they did, or did not, feel as though they belonged.

> It would be easy for me to feel that I'm not [part of the school culture]. Because I definitely feel that people in my kind of contract, where people kind of know you're moving on, are treated differently than people who have been there for a while. (#4)

In this excerpt, the participant identified two sub-groups, those with teaching contracts and those without. For this participant, having a continuing contract seemed to tie to his/her sense of belonging or of being treated as an equal. In contrast, participant #5, who held a continuing contract, indicated it did not impact her sense of belonging. The relationships that were forged trumped the contract.

We asked participants about their place in the school culture and received responses about feelings and levels of belonging, and about the cultural sub-groups teachers experience and must navigate. Each teacher was unique in how s/he wanted to be treated with respect to these cultural groups. However, they all indicated that in order to have any sense of belonging, they needed relationships with individuals and groups in schools.

As we attended to their responses, we noted that, for each of them, belonging implied community. However, we also began to see that many participants felt very much alone on their school landscapes. We wondered if their stories of what it meant to be part of a professional community meant they needed to keep silent about their lives off school landscapes as well as staying silent about any experiences on their school landscapes that might be seen as weaknesses or not up to the work of a teacher. Learning to name one's self as being a teacher who belonged was a lonely, and frequently silenced, journey.

Theme Three: Tensions Around Contracts

> [S]o for me if I wouldn't have got a job teaching this year I don't know what I would have done. I want to do this, I don't want to work in the bank, I want to do this. (#12)

> I already see how I'm starting to, starting now already to consider other things, it's not because I don't like it, it's because that job security, because of all the time with me where I just like, I want to know that I'm going to have an income. (#17)

Participants moved from their teacher education programs full of hope and excitement for taking their imagined places in their imagined careers but also experienced anxiety as they read newspapers, followed stories in the media, and talked with other beginning teachers and their professors about the likelihood of getting jobs. They resigned themselves to the possibilities of subbing, exploring areas where there was a teacher shortage such as special education or English as an Additional Language programs, and looking towards locations that might take them away from their families and support systems to 'get a job'. For example, one participant said, "I tried to do so many extra things, like I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, so I, like I worked with special needs children and in their home. I worked in a summer camp program" (#6).

Another participant spoke of a willingness to move temporarily to a location away from her home in order to secure a job.

> I honestly was just hoping for a job because I knew that teaching positions could be hard to get. I was just hoping for a job. I knew I wanted to come back here 'cause my family is all here, but if I worked in rural that was fine. (#22)

They spoke about their lack of understanding about how the systems worked for getting that first foot in the door and found the waiting, waiting, and waiting for a call to be difficult, deflating, and frustrating. For some participants, once the call came, often in late August or early September, they had little time to respond to the question 'would you like a job teaching?' They had even less time to prepare and feel ready to shift their identities from student to beginning teacher.

> I think it's still struggling with the fact that I don't really 100% feel like a teacher yet 'cause I'm not successful […] I don't fully accept myself as a teacher yet 'cause it doesn't really feel like I've made it […] if I had a contract and I knew I was a legitimate teacher […] I like I think I'm a good teacher. (#33)

The thoughts racing through their minds were ranging from 'yes this is just what I want', to 'yes but I don't have the training for this', to 'yes but I will have to keep my other part-time job', to 'I have loans to pay so this isn't my dream assignment but it will get me started'. Regardless of the thoughts, they mostly accepted their first job offers, whether they were placed in a school or on the substitute teacher list.

> Yeah so and then of course I, someone like me, I feel like I'm in a position where I have to take what I can get right. I actually had a principal say that to me when I turned down a [temporary] job [with special needs students]. (#2)

The assignments and school locations were offered and accepted with little acknowledgment of the beginning teachers' personal practical knowledge. We wondered, as we listened to the participants, if sometimes teachers' lives and careers were sacrificed to the needs to the system. Could teachers who filled in or subbed or temped end up being the collateral damage? As we talked with the participants, we learned that they felt that those on long-term subbing and temporary contracts were identified by the district, and others, as "less than" or

second class teachers. Even for those who ended up finally with probationary or continuing contracts, did not feel that they could say *no* or negotiate their assignments or the resources they might need to teach the students they had been assigned. "And me, not knowing what that might cost my classroom, you know, in terms of our ability to carry through on a project, said yes" (#4).

Some participants taught in the staffroom, auxiliary spaces, afterschool care spaces, and multiple classrooms without desks and had to move teaching materials on a trolley. "Like in my special needs class last year I just had a tote that I would take into a daycare room. I taught in a daycare room last year. [My partner] taught in his staff room last year" (#18).

They taught multi-grade levels, subject areas with which they were unfamiliar, grade levels for which they had not planned, students who had needs that went beyond the beginning teachers' training or expertise. It was not unusual to hear participants recount schedules like the following. "…taught Grade 2 Monday morning, Grade 7 Monday afternoon, like through a week she would teach Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 7, Grade 5" (#18).

> I had a behaviour class my first year, that's not, that shouldn't be a job for someone who's in their first year. I had a [special needs] class my second year. I have no experience teaching kids who can learn perfectly well, so, why am I given a [special needs] class? (#18)

Participants made it through by working long hours, and believing this was just how it was for the first couple of years.

> I need to work my butt off so I get a job next year. If I don't do all of these things then I'm going to be kicking myself thinking did I do enough, and I have friends who are in these positions that are thinking if I don't do all of this stuff, then I'm going to have to question myself for 'oh is this why I didn't get it'? Because I didn't take that one course on that one night? Or is it because I didn't volunteer in this area and that other person did? (#18)

Participants also took on many extra school or student activities in addition to their ongoing work of learning what it means to be a teacher as they learned alongside their students. They became involved in coaching school teams and athletics, or supervising student clubs, or producing the yearbook in addition to the expected team meetings and professional development activities.

> I've been able to get involved in extracurricular activities and that…which I say I've been able to, but at the same time you kind of, you have to, to make your name…I ran the, I did their running club for them and helped in an art club that they had and just a couple of other after school things (#18).

> I know there is a balance but for me that was the hardest part, I'm expected, especially this year I was expected to coach four teams on top of teaching all these different subjects and I'm not going to lie, there were some points this year where I was just ready to go

this is it, I can't do this (#24).

Some participants believed that saying no might jeopardize a contract opportunity, or that by becoming involved they would increase their chances of continued work at the same school. We realized it is possible that schools, perhaps unknowingly, end up exploiting beginning teachers' desire to be seen as team players. We wondered if, in the end, beginning teachers might be the ones 'taking one for the team' or being sacrificed for the good of others. They were not always aware of, nor understood the process and budgetary implications for obtaining a continuing contract.

[I] had no clue where I'd be working throughout the summer and admin couldn't promise me anything. They said we might get you back, we might not, you know, it was, everyone's getting fired from [the school districts]. (#30)

They spoke about being unsure if they were doing enough, or felt they had received excellent feedback about their teaching performance but that did not seem to be enough when hiring decisions were made. If there was a position available, they hoped it might be theirs but found it was often not.

The worst thing is that every spring you know all these rumours start circulating about how many jobs are going to be cut and how people in this position aren't going to get hired again. (#2)

Once they had lived through the first spring of uncertainty about whether they would have a position despite often being told the principal was doing everything possible to advocate for them, it became harder for them to put heart and soul once again into another school, another assignment, on their journey to hopefully receive a continuing contract.

Well I'm in the same boat, like I don't have, I don't have any guarantee um even though my principal says like he, he's doing what he can for me his hands are tied at … and so I have, I have no job right now for next year, as of right now I don't have a job. (#17)

And it was just like I'd worked really hard and put in a lot of effort. I'd done my best to like get to know people on the staff and everything and then it was like boom, just ripped out. And it really affected how I saw my role as a teacher. It's just irreplaceable. (#5)

Continuity of experience was something that many participants wished for because they had not yet had the opportunity to stay in the same school or same teaching assignment. Continuity of experience is regarded as necessary in considering how to sustain early career teachers' continually evolving stories to live by. Fox and Wilson (2009), for example, spoke of the need for beginning teachers to be involved in pedagogical discourse beyond departmental boundaries and that was continuous beyond their first year. Furthermore, Lovett and Davey (2009) concluded that continuity between programs of teacher education and schools were essential for beginning teachers. Yet in our interviews we heard many stories of beginning teachers who, year after year, were given assignments and grades to teach where they had no previous experience, including relevant courses or experiences in pre-service teacher education.

I guess I was hoping that it would be easier to be in like a stable position in teaching, and stick with a same grade, […] and building on it from year to year. Like I knew it would be a lot of work in the first few years because everybody says that, and I did a lot of things ahead of time to try to prepare myself […] at least I can stay with the same grade, I'll get better every year, I'll adapt what I did the previous year and build on that, and so I think the only thing I didn't really realize is how uncertain that would be. And there's nothing you can do about that 'cause part of that is economy right? (#6)

They wished to become better teachers building on their experiences, not starting anew every September with the long months of waiting for the actual confirmation of a teaching assignment.

…if they say next year yeah we can offer you a job doing the same thing that you're doing this year, like I really don't want to teach .5 again 'cause it's just, it's just not enough to be worthwhile for the amount of work that goes into it. Like I don't know if it's different at different grades or if it's just the same. Like it's just ridiculous actually. Unconscionable. So I don't know if I could do it again unless of course they said that they could give me a probationary contract, you know 'cause at least then it would be a stepping-stone for me. (#2)

The first year it was social studies, I had no clue what to do for social…last year I got Art and Drama, I have no fine arts background at all, so that was a challenge and this year I've got [CTS] and next year I'll probably get L.A. 'cause I haven't done that. (#30)

The 'luckier' beginning teachers who had continuing contracts also spoke about the perceived position of having to take on the many other tasks and activities that they were asked to do for the students and the school because they were new or because the other teachers in the school had done this when they were new. We wondered about the trap some beginning teachers experience. They wait for a more permanent contract but also burn themselves out in order to get a job that can allow them to stop doing this. The cost is hidden; maybe it raises, for them, the uncertainty about wanting to take a continuing contract when they are finally offered one and, if they sign it, whether they want to truly continue in teaching.

Theme Four: New Teachers Will Do Anything

Our research team quickly noticed many participants would do almost anything, whatever it took, to enter their chosen profession. We were surprised to see what the participants were willing to do in order to secure a job. In their stories, we detected they felt an element of risk associated with stating their preference of school or assignment and with making a decision to only accept work in a certain school or certain assignment. Some participants felt that if they did not accept what was offered that no other offers would be made in the future. Participants also shared with us their experiences of "taking what they could get" in terms of school and teaching assignments, even if the work assignment was outside of their areas of expertise/experience, included a wide variety of classes and grade levels, or was geographically distant from their home. "My friends that I graduated with, they're working at like Starbucks and stuff because they just couldn't get in" (#17). We heard stories of teachers accepting positions outside of their

training (#2, 18, 21, 28, 30, 35) or desired preference just to get their foot in the door and have an opportunity to teach (#1, 27, 30, 35, 36, 37).

One participant (#2) said, "I feel like I'm in a position where I have to take what I can get, right?" She accepted a job working part-time in a kindergarten program. She graduated with a degree in Secondary Education and also held another undergraduate degree. Another participant decided to let it be known that she would teach special education (without specific training) because she perceived that this teaching assignment was not as desirable as others and she hoped she would have an advantage over other teachers seeking jobs (#7). This decision turned out in her favour; she was hired and eventually offered a contract. However, now in year three of her career, she would like to work in a mainstream setting and fears she will always be considered only for special education positions.

Some participants felt like they had to take a position even if it meant uprooting themselves. They worked away from home, moved themselves from their entire lives in order to begin their careers. Participants told stories of moving from urban centers to isolated rural communities where they felt a sense of disconnection from their family, friends, and lives they had established elsewhere.

I honestly was just hoping for a job because I knew that teaching positions could be hard to get. I was just hoping for a job. I knew I wanted to come back here 'cause my family's all here, but if I worked in rural that was fine. (#22)

Some spoke about their longing to return home. We wondered about the effects of isolation and being away from home. Could these beginning teachers continue to be sustained in their personal and professional landscapes when they felt so isolated? What would be needed to sustain them?

Many spoke of accepting extra-curricular assignments because they felt, as beginning teachers, that this experience would give them greater opportunities to be offered teaching positions in the future (#18, 25, 30, 31). Some participants took on extra coaching duties that made demands on their time before and after school hours even though it took away from their teaching (#18, 30, 31). Others accepted students with special needs into their classes without the support they felt they, and the students, required (#2). One participant agreed to work without a classroom (#28), and was required to move around the school to teach in others' classrooms. Another taught in a non-classroom space in the school (#17). These beginning teachers shared that they felt as though they just couldn't say 'no' to the requests being made of them, even if it made them feel uncomfortable. They seemed to fear the consequences of setting boundaries or refusing. One participant felt that saying 'no' to one job meant that another job would not be offered in the future: "Well the fact that it was […] a probationary contract which meant, you don't turn down probationary contracts […] because that leads to a blackballing as far as I'm aware" (#5).

In a similar vein, another participant applied for and accepted a position that she did not want:

I was successful and got the job that I was pressured into even applying for. I was like that's not what I want to do and she's like, I'm going to make it probationary for next year. No and this market right now, it's kind of tight this year, so I was like oh, it's probationary, I can't really turn down probationary. So I took it. (#27)

Another participant saw the role of administrators as important to what the position entailed and how much support was offered.

And you're working with whatever they gave you to work with. And if they set you up with not enough support, they chose to do that and they have the power to change it and this is what they've done. So you live with it. (#4)

For many, once a job had been secured, they still lived in uncertainty. Much of this uncertainty surrounded job security, school assignments, grade and subject matter assignments, and contracts. One participant (#6) taught in three different assignments at three different schools in three years. Others moved from one temporary assignment to another over a three-year period, teaching a wide range of grade levels and assignments (#18 and 28). We sensed the frustration from one participant when he said, "I'm still on temp, probably a temp for life" (#17).

Our research team wondered about the decisions these second- and third-year teachers made as they accepted the positions and assignments offered to them. We wondered about the cost of saying yes to a job, a grade assignment, a school assignment, extra-curricular activities, teaching space, etc. We wondered what impact this early perceived pressure to 'do anything' might have on sustaining a career in teaching and sustaining a life with family and friends. As one participant said:

As much as it's the climate where there aren't many jobs, I completely regret just saying yes and not knowing what I was getting into because if I would have had to stay at that job, I wouldn't be teaching right now, I don't think I would. I mean, like we said, it's that situation where they throw you in and they say OK you're teaching this, this and this because nobody else will, and I wouldn't have stayed and that might just be me, like I don't think I would have stayed and toughed it out and said yeah it's going to get better. I think I would have said no, I'm not doing it and I would have quit, and that would have been it. (#36)

As we reflected on this, we saw a tension between what beginning teachers had to do and then what they began to realize they wanted to do. Perhaps, over time, some beginning teachers started to realize they did not want to do this (teach) if it meant they would continue to have to 'do anything.'

Theme Five: Balancing Composing a Life: Working Hours

Asking beginning teachers about their lives both on and off school landscapes as they began their careers as teachers came from our wonders around how beginning teachers were composing their lives. Working long hours both on and off the school landscape became a

significant theme related to how the participants were balancing the need to compose a life that was lived on both personal and professional landscapes. One participant said, "I appreciate that we're talking about you know, professional and personal because I feel like a lot of these conversations are about your professional life but you have to understand that it impacts your personal" (#1).

At first we realized that we needed to attend to support for beginning teachers both on their personal and professional landscapes. We then began to wonder about the support that is necessary as they tried to compose their lives simultaneously in two places, home and school. What we were less awake to were the struggles teachers have between school and home. We wondered about the spaces for beginning teachers to make sense of the contradictory and conflicting stories that they sometimes lived as they negotiated the tensions of their lives both on personal and professional landscapes.

Participants talked about a wide variety of responsibilities that affected the number of work hours in their days, both during the school day and outside the school day; "definitely there are days where there's just too many commitments" (#35). Sometimes, especially in relation to their first year, they gave a sense they were being swallowed by the job. Talk of "exhaustion", "school 24/7" (#7, 24) and having "no life" (#22) permeated interview transcripts. As one participant (#24) said, "I couldn't have not lived at home without my parents' support because when you're teaching for your first year, you have no idea what you've just got yourself into." Another participant (#25) said, "and I have a lot of colleagues there that are very much like me so there's always somebody in the building during the summer."

The state of 'on-ness' was significant as participants spoke to the degree of attention that grade levels, subject matters, or other circumstances demanded. Assignments and schools often changed from year to year so there was 'no let up' for some teachers in their second or third year. "This past year I taught Grade 4 Science, Social, Art, and Phys. Ed in addition to Grade 7 Humanities and being athletic director and health coordinator" (#24). The day started early for many with preparations and responses to student work. Lunchtime for participants often meant running a club or eating with students. As one participant (#30) said, "my first year of teaching was about 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. six days a week and nearly drained me to the bottom but I survived."

After school times, on and off school landscapes, involved talking to students, parents, and colleagues, tidying the classroom, planning and preparation for the next school day(s), responding to student work, team meetings, attending to leadership responsibilities, organizing field trips, participating in professional development and district initiatives, attending staff meetings, coaching sport teams, and more. A sense of the relentless pressure to "impress" (#13) was felt by many participants. Prep time for one participant was a time for professional meetings. "[You] go to those meetings and they think they're helping you out but really all we need is time" (#13). Another participant (#16) talked about being "judged" if she wasn't attending every community event. Yet another (#18) felt she had no choice in supervising running clubs because "I have to build my resume if I want to meet, like separate myself from other people." Participants spoke of their "seasonal" (#4) responsibilities too, such as report cards, which

demanded more of their time outside of the school day. One also spoke of "the kind of reporting I want to do to parents takes time" (#4).

At the same time as describing their days, participants mentioned some of the competing stories that were arising as they tried to compose their lives as teachers with lives lived on both home and school landscapes. Competing stories of responsibilities to relationships at home and to their own health and well being emerged in the interviews. One participant talked about keeping relationships with her friends and her need to work on weekends. She could not see friends because she felt she would suffer through the week "cause I'm not going to have done what I need to have done, and nobody really understands that besides another teacher" (#20). Another participant (#13) talked of "too much stress really. I'm a person that always has to be quadding, sledding, fishing, outdoors and then I have no time for that". Many talked about health in terms of fitness but some also talked about sleep: "so that's been hard 'cause my sleep has been affected a lot by this job" (#10). Another participant (#31) talked of her work with a special needs child that she had begun prior to beginning her teaching position: "It's important to me personally to keep contact with this girl but I'm having to cut down on the hours."

We wonder if this sense of living out contradictory or incongruent stories with their imagined stories in their home and/or professional landscapes contributed to their feelings of uncertainty around whether they would stay or leave teaching. There appeared to be no clear pattern: sometimes when their imagined stories of both their lives in school and their lives at home fit with the lives they were living, they were still uncertain if they would stay; sometimes when their stories were incongruent with what they were living, they would stay. All of the variations appear to be at play here.

Trying to compose a forward-looking story, another participant (#15) said "I think I'm going to stick it out, but in the future, like my husband and I are going to try to have kids fairly soon and I don't ever see myself coming back full time after that." Other participants shared other forward-looking stories such as the following one.

> Last year I think I was better at doing more work in the evening, but I think how I'm just like, at some point I'd like to have a family, and I realized this working, working, working isn't going to be good. (#6)

Contradictory stories also arose in one participant's telling of her experience at her school division's large conference at the beginning of the year where

> …they tell you, make sure you take time for your family, but at the same time, IPPs and all this other paperwork especially that they need from you and they don't really give you a chance to spend time with your family. (#15)

What became evident in these words highlighted the difference between what teachers are told and what they are shown, that is, it makes evident the implicit demands put on them while they are being told just the opposite.

Another participant spoke of choosing not to go in on the weekends, "but for me then everything piles up. It's easier for me to go in on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon and do some work" (#6).

A few participants talked about being able to cope with the workload because they were older and their family was growing up. They noted they could not do what they were doing if they were younger and had heavier family responsibilities. For example, one participant spoke of not starting "to work when my boys were young, because I thought like my priority is my boys, right?" (#3). Another was able to cope because she lived with her parents. For one, having no relational commitments and living on her own, meant that, "it's ok for now" (#32). But one participant simply decided "in terms of finding the balance like I've chosen to pursue my professional life and put my personal life on hold" (#38).

We wondered again about the lack of attention to composing a life that acknowledged living on two landscapes: the personal and the professional. When the participants spoke of their lives, they spoke of competing demands and of being required to privilege their lives on their professional landscapes. As we noted earlier, they kept silent about their lives on their personal landscapes fearing there would be consequences for their professional lives.

Theme Six: Deciding Not to Allow Teaching Work to Consume Them and the Struggle to Try and Keep That Decision

Many participants made, at some point in their first two years of teaching, a conscious decision not to allow teaching work to consume them. The decision seemed to come in the midst of living their beginning teacher lives on personal and professional landscapes. After working seven days a week one participant declared, "there's got to be some way to streamline it" (#5). She felt it might be organizational skills at that time. But another realized that the work demands never seemed to stop.

> You just realize that it doesn't really matter if you go in on Sunday. Like it's still not going to change the fact that you have a lot at home, a lot of stuff to do, you're always going to have a lot of stuff to do so. (#37)

Another participant said, "cause the last 2 years I could be there forever" (#10). Some spoke of coming to a decision to live differently after a period of time. "I don't do work at home almost ever and I like that and I think it probably took those years of some often manic-ness to actually get to that point" (#30). Another participant noted, "I've set limitations on how much time I'm willing to spend on my career, and how much time I need to take for myself" (#12).

Each teacher arrived at that decision differently. Some were for health reasons. Some teachers realized, that after having several illnesses, if they continued to allow schoolwork to come home with them that their bodies would not recover. As one participant said, "24/7, 200 days a year? I was getting sick. Health, I was just shut down…I was just deathly ill and it's just like, you know what, I can't do this to myself" (#27). Some realized they were unable to maintain that level of pace. For example, some participants saw that if they continued to do school work at home and school that they would "burn out" (#8). Some had familial

commitments they chose to honour; we heard, for example, "I'm getting married soon and I need to prioritize here" (#7). As we reflected on this, we noted that all of the demands were unsustainable. Sometimes teachers worked fewer hours, sometimes their health gave out, and sometimes teachers left. We did notice, however, that they came to these awakenings without support from those on their professional landscapes. There was a strong sense that they were on their own as they struggled to make the decision and to change the ways they were living.

As participants made changes in how they coped with work they, perhaps, were beginning to shift their stories of themselves as teachers. Some participants began to tell a story of not letting the little things bother them, of no longer being perfectionists, and of letting others help even if it meant things would not be exactly as imagined. One said,

> Okay I'm going to re-assess what's important. …is it important that I have perfect lessons and perfect handouts and perfect bulletin boards? No, to me what's important is that I have energy and that I'm in a good mood to be there. (#8)

Even in these participants' realizations that they must leave some time for composing their lives at home as they left their teaching work at school, many participants struggled with being able to leave the work at school "especially around report card time, there's always like tons of stuff to do and IP updates to be made" (#16). As they began to shape new stories to live by, we noticed the ways participants purposefully improvised rules and schedules and made promises they would need to keep in order to leave the school. For example, appointments were scheduled right after the school day officially ended. One teacher said,

> [I] actually made sure and made the effort to put my daughter in something after school. 'Cause if I didn't do that, then she never would ever do that so if I make that promise to myself and to her that I'd actually put her in, like skating, all winter and make sure and take her religiously, if I didn't make that commitment to her and because I'm making it to my child I'm not going to break it . . . (#9).

Another participant noted, "I keep structured hours as a teacher and so from the time [the students] leave my classroom until 5 is my time to prepare, mark, and do anything else that the job, that I see as the job, requires" (#26). Another participant said, "I have been making time for family and friends more this year than last year" (#29).

Nevertheless it continued to be difficult for participants to leave school at school. They continued to live with competing, often contradictory stories.

> I'm just trying not to feel guilty if I'm not doing work…But I've stopped, I've kind of realized you can't do that. Like, I can't do everything and I, and I do what I can in the day then if I bring the workbag home and nothing gets done, then that's just what happens that night (#6).

Another participant talked of following her rule not to take work home: "I have been very proud of myself" (#31) for that. Yet, for some, with all of the extra assignments they were given, they

were unable to do all of the work necessary at school and were compelled to take it home. One participant talked of

> …instruction and leadership team, reading comprehension strategies training, leader of a training day, go [away] for a week and do assessment workshop, come back and present and implement, my planning this week sucks. Extra projects I've kind of got put on my plate (#16).

We wondered about the loneliness participants felt as they worked to shift how they were living their lives as beginning teachers. Struggling to live their lives differently was challenging. We wondered if those who worked with the beginning teachers were aware of how consumed they were. Was there an awareness of the costs to health, families, and relationships?

Theme Seven: Can I Keep Doing This? Is This Teaching?

> I think what keeps me going is that I've always wanted to do this job and I wanted to be good at it and I don't want to feel like I gave up just because it was hard. And I think what else, the other thing that keeps me going is the idea thinking I can get better, like thinking that OK it's really hard right now, but I think it's going to get easier in some ways. And that I like it I mean I, I, I love working with kids. (#6)

Narrative inquiry is a relational methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) used to inquire into the lived experiences of individuals. Relationships develop between participants and researchers over several meetings. In this study, we only had an hour and a half with each participant. We often wanted to ask questions about the place, the temporality, and the personal and social implications of participants' lived experiences; this, however, was not possible. However, we continued to see that each individual's experiences are continuous, and always interacting between the personal and the social. Working from the starting point that experience is continuous and temporal, provided us with an interesting lens with which to view the future intentions of teachers. Working with the quotation at the beginning of this theme from within a temporal dimension, we see that this particular teacher has always wanted to be a teacher. In some way his/her past experiences shaped an imagined story about what being a teacher would be like, and an imagined story about being a successful teacher. Although from the quotation we see that his/her experiences with teaching have been challenging thus far, in the latter portion of the quotation we see further temporal unfoldings. "I can get better," "it's really hard now, but I think it's going to get easier."

These comments, directed towards the future, were not uncommon among the participants. We asked participants about their futures as teachers. We wondered what will happen if this participant, in a year or two, does not see improvement. What happens if it does not get easier and his/her experiences with teaching continue to make him/her feel like s/he is not able to succeed? Within the data, many teachers pondered whether they could continue with teaching if their experiences in the profession stayed the same. The following two examples are illustrative.

But in the same vein you know, I worry and wonder about how long I can keep that up because you know, it is hope, but it is almost unfounded because I don't see any changes happening. So I think, you know, if I was still in the position I'm in in 5 years…would I still be doing this? I don't know. 'Cause I don't know what would keep me there. (#1)

Every year I just feel more drained and it's like the politics of it too and everything. I just, like, when I read that, teachers stop after five years, so it's becoming [after the] third or fourth [year], I can totally get that because the pressure you feel is insane and you never feel like you can keep up, and I have never thought more in my life about changing my career choice than this year. (#15)

The two quotations portray a resonant theme running through the data. Many participants seemed to be in search of something that they had not yet been able to find. "I think even just 'cause myself I don't fully accept myself as a teacher yet 'cause it doesn't really feel like I've made it" (#33). We wondered, when we thought of this participant's words, if, like many other participants, they might be in search of the imagined teacher they had in mind when they came to teaching. Who is, we wondered, the teacher they had in mind for themselves to live out?

As participants entered the profession, they lacked experience in working in schools and school systems. Although the participants were often told that teaching becomes easier with time, we wondered how long their imagined stories could continue to bump with school stories before something broke. We wondered about the continuity of future experiences if they continued to experience teaching in terms different from how they had imagined it.

Right, like if things are really busy, school trumps the fun, school trumps the family, friends right? And so that's, that's what it is right now I guess and I don't know if that's because we're just at a busy school or busy year, or if it's because I'm a newer teacher. I don't know. (#17)

These words raise questions surrounding the interconnectedness of the personal and professional landscapes. Sustaining beginning teachers needs to be attentive to the personal landscape as well as the professional landscape. Beginning teachers' imagined stories include not only themselves in the classroom, but also the composing of their lives as mothers, fathers, travellers, dedicated family members, and urban professionals. We wonder what will happen when the participant quoted above finds out that all schools are busy, that all years are busy, and that, in some ways, all schools shift the ways in which teachers must negotiate composing a life.

We wondered about their journeys towards living out their story of the imagined teacher they would be. One way to think about this is to see their journey through their first years as a journey from the imagined teacher to the real teacher. Will they leave when they are not able to compose their lives as they imagined they could? As we reflected on this negotiation of identity, we wondered what school spaces would look like that allowed teachers to tell their stories, to understand their imagined teaching selves, and then inquire into these stories in terms of their own practices and lives. Perhaps as we think of the stories of teachers who are beginning, we need to think about both their imagined stories and the stories they are living as beginning teachers and to attend carefully to ways they can move towards reimagining identities, identities

that allow teachers to compose lives that sustain them on both personal and professional landscapes. Attending to the entirety of their lives, we more clearly see that many of our participants did not have the space to recompose who they were as teachers, as well as people who lived their lives both in and out of school.

Discussion

As we analyzed the transcripts we noted that the participants shared many stories with us, some of which we had not attended to when we designed the study. As Maxine Greene (1995) reminds us,

> …with so many traditional narratives being rejected or disrupted, with so many new and contesting versions of what our common world should be, we cannot assume that there is any longer a consensus about what is valuable, useful and what ought to be taught. (p. 3)

Greene's words help us understand our work alongside these beginning teachers. We are struck by the taken-for-grantedness that permeates our thinking about beginning teachers.

One of the dominant stories in the literature and in schools is that beginning teachers come to the profession lacking what they need. They are seen as needing to be mentored, inducted, 'skilled up,' and shown how to live the 'real world' of teaching. It is true that beginning teachers may lack experience, but seeing these teachers who are beginning as deficit, immediately discounts the personal practical knowledge they have gained through past life experiences. We can see from their emotion as they shared their experiences that they are more than willing to learn, they are passionate, and do want to find ways to live their lives as teachers. We wonder how they can feel valued, or successful in environments that construct them as less than, as people with little to contribute. Often times beginning teachers are seen as being deficit in the knowledge and skills needed to be effective teachers. They are viewed as lacking management skills, political knowledge of school, assessment skills, or organizational skills. In the cliché that describes the haves and have-nots, beginning teachers are clearly seen as the have-nots – at least not yet. In thinking about sustaining beginning teachers, we wonder, how does it feel to be considered a have-not. We wonder how shifting the conversation from what they *do not have* to what they *do have* might shift how beginning teachers are perceived. What would happen if beginning teachers were seen as an asset because they brought energy, new ideas, and, perhaps, a naivety that was contagious? Should we encourage a shifted narrative that sees teachers beginning as full of potential and possibility?

Changing the language that we use shifts the way we think about things and, in turn, shifts the way that we do things. We have written (Long, McKenzie-Robblee, Schaefer, Steeves, Wnuk, Pinnegar, & Clandinin, 2012; Schaefer & Clandinin, 2011; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press; Schaefer; accepted) about shifting the conversation from retaining teachers to sustaining teachers. For us, conceptualizing our work around questions of sustaining, as opposed to questions of retaining, has shifted how we think about beginning teachers. This shift enables us to be attentive to how different each beginning teacher is, how complex his/her sustaining stories are, and moved us to start to see teachers as beginning, as opposed to beginning teachers. Seeing beginning teachers as teachers who are beginning allows us to think about them as individuals

with unique storied pasts; thus different support networks, mentorship, and contexts will sustain individuals differently. Sustaining teachers who are beginning begins with knowing them.

"[T]he cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it" (Thoreau, 1854/2008, p. 20). In thinking about Thoreau's words and the participants in our study, we are struck by the amount of life that is required to be exchanged to be a teacher. Creating a future story that includes sustainability both on the personal and professional landscape seems to be difficult while teaching. Although giving up the important things in their lives appears feasible for a short period of time, many of the participants were hesitant about being able to continue to give up other aspects of their lives to be teachers. The cost of becoming a teacher is paid from the "life" of the teacher, much of which takes place off the school landscape. Might creating a safe space for teachers to do the complex calculus of what being a teacher is (and is not) worth to them be a way to sustain them?

In our study, we attended closely to the participants' imagined stories of teaching and the stories that brought them to teaching. We noted that some participants seemed to have been storied into teaching, that is, stories told about, and for them, by family members, or ones they had composed as children or young people (Lortie, 1975). This made us wonder about how being storied into teaching shaped his/her identity. What was the impact of others storying them into teaching? What was the importance of storying themselves into teaching?

One participant said, "I was always told you should be a teacher. Everyday somebody would tell me you should be a teacher. And so it has been" (#4). Others also told stories of family members who are or were teachers and composing stories of being a teacher from these early family stories (#12). Others came to teaching later (#13) or resisted the family story of being a teacher (#35).

Most participants told of where their stories of becoming a teacher came from, whether from their teachers, or families, or from their experiences in childhood or young adulthood. Some resisted the story because of family stories or for lifestyle choices; others picked up the story of becoming a teacher early on and stuck with it. We wondered what impact these stories of becoming someone who will teach have on their processes of staying or leaving teaching.

We wondered about whether we were noting beginning seeds of teachers storying themselves out of teaching as we listened to the participants. Might these two stories live together, a story of becoming a teacher, and a story of leaving teaching? Perhaps, as teachers hint at their limits and plans for the future, they are telling possible beginnings of their stories to leave by.

We are drawn again to wonder: how we might sustain beginning teachers? The word *sustain* means "to strengthen or support physically and mentally" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012) and also to "buoy up" (Merriam-Webster, 2012). As we wonder about beginning teachers perhaps coming to re-imagine their lives, are there things we can do to sustain teachers on this journey? Stories to live by, a narrative term for identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), are composed in relationship, in and out of school places and across time, the past, present, and future (Clandinin et al., 2006). When we consider the whole of a beginning teacher's experience

temporally and across landscapes, both in and out of school, there is significantly more that comes to bear in terms of developing new stories to live by. Might sustaining beginning teachers mean providing the conditions to compose newly imagined stories where the personal and the professional are experientially intertwined (Dewey, 1938)?

For Dewey (1938), conditions that are simultaneously life sustaining and educative provide for both relationships and continuity of experience. Dewey imagined this place as the 'responsive community.' Might such sustaining places create a space of 'in between' where teachers' imagined stories of teaching are gradually recomposed to better fit the real situations they are encountering? We certainly saw the beginnings of newly configured stories of being teachers in our theme around 'teachers deciding not to let teaching consume them.' It seemed some beginning teachers *were* trying to get a grip on things, to begin to compose their lives differently. We found teachers improvising diverse ways to better balance their personal and professional lives. We also noted how difficult it was for many teachers to keep these promises they had made to themselves. We are reminded of Carr (1986) who wrote:

> Our lives admit of sometimes more, sometimes less coherence; they hang together reasonably well, but they occasionally tend to fall apart. Coherence seems to be a need imposed on us whether we seek it or not. Things need to make sense. We feel the lack of sense when it goes missing. The unity of the self, not as an underlying identity but as a life that hangs together is not a pre-given condition but an achievement. Some of us succeed, it seems, better than others. None of us succeeds totally. We keep at it. What we are doing is telling and retelling to ourselves and to others, the story of what we are about and why. (p. 97)

Might we sustain teachers by creating the conditions that would help them make sense of their lives on and off school landscapes? Could a space be created between their professional and personal landscapes as well as their imagined and lived stories of teaching that would allow them to begin to re-imagine themselves, their lives, and what it means to teach? What if this space was able to support them in making new sense of themselves as teachers–before it makes sense to them to leave?

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Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Questions

1.   Describe the school(s) and classrooms in which you're teaching now.
   - Where do you teach? (rural, urban elem, jr. or sr. high etc.)
   - Who do you teach?
   - What do you teach?

2.   Are you at the same school as your first year (second year)? Same assignment? (what was your previous assignment, situation?)

3.   Where do you live? Is this where you consider home?

4.   Tell me about a typical day for you. Include your life outside of school. A typical week?

5.   Is this what you imagined for yourself....at school?....at home?

6.   When you planned to be a teacher what were your imaginings about the place where you'd be teaching? (urban, rural, level of school, special program, province, country, etc.)

7.   Where did you imagine you would live as you began your teaching? (at home, with friends, close to school, on your own, commuting)

8.   Did your University program, teacher education, influence your ideas of teaching?

9.   Did your student teaching influence your ideas about teaching?

10.   Did your first year of teaching influence your ideas of teaching?
   - If yes, in what ways?
   - Was there a specific event or experience that comes to mind...that stands out for you? Can you tell me about it?

11.   Do you feel a part of the school culture or climate? How do you know? Is this what you imagined it would be like?

12.   Do you feel valued in your school? How do you know?
        Do you feel valued as a professional outside of your school? How do you know?

13. What do you consider are your support networks at home? School?
   - What are your ideas surrounding support for beginning teachers? (what was significant for you?)

14.   What sustains you? What keeps you going?
        •   On a personal level?
        •   Professionally?

15.   Create a timeline of what brought you to teaching and your teaching/work experience(s) since graduation.
        What would come next on your timeline? Will you be teaching?
        If so, what other assignments or roles might you imagine doing or might want to explore?
        If not, what might you envision doing?

16.   If you could change something about your experiences what might that be?

Demographic Information

•   Where did you do your teacher education, B.Ed.?
•   Was it all at the same institution?
•   How was your practicum shaped? (how long? levels or grades?)
•   What year did you graduate?
•   What year was your first teaching assignment?
•   Were you or are you a part of an official induction program? (how was it shaped?)
•   Did you or do you have an assigned mentor?

Appendix B: Information letter

Teachers in their second or third year of teaching in Alberta

We are writing to request your consideration to participate in a study on the phenomenon of new teachers leaving the profession in the first five years. We would greatly appreciate your willingness to take a few moments to read this letter before advising us of your response.

We are members of a research team led by Dr. Jean Clandinin from the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (jean.clandinin@ualberta.ca; (780) 492-7770). We are engaged in a study entitled Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials. We are looking for participants for a study on teachers who have graduated from an Alberta institution and who are in their second or third year of teaching in Alberta.

Most research on early career teacher attrition focuses on those who leave teaching in the first five years of a teaching career. However, there is a noted spike in attrition in years 3 and 4 of teaching in Alberta. We wonder why this is. Focusing on the intentions of teachers in years 2 and 3 (just before the spike), including the experiences that brought them to teaching, will offer insights into the processes that early career teachers experience as they begin teaching.

There will be one audio-recorded conversation (about one hour and a half) with each participant using a set of interview questions developed by the research team after reading the research in the area of attrition. The conversations will be transcribed.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and, even if you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Your anonymity as well as the anonymity other participants is protected. Your name will never be used and no identifying marks will linger. All information collected will be safeguarded to ensure confidentiality.

The information gained from this research may appear in various publications, reports, and/or conference proceedings. As a study participant you may request copies of these publications. The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615. Please contact us by phone: (780) 492-7770 or email: teacherattrition@gmail.com to request additional information and/or to arrange to participate in the research.

Your time and interest in this study are much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Research Team: Sheri Wnuk, Pam Steeves, Lee Schaefer, Eliza Pinnegar, Sue McKenzie, Julie Long, and Jean Clandinin

Appendix C: Participant Information and Consent Form
Teachers in Years 2 and 3 of Teaching: Semi-structured Interviews

This consent form is an invitation to participate in the study entitled Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials that is being conducted by a research team from the University of Alberta, led by Dr. Jean Clandinin from the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (jean.clandinin@ualberta.ca; (780) 492-7770), and funded by a grant from Alberta Education. You may contact Dr. Clandinin at any time if you have any questions.

Most research on early career teacher attrition focuses on those who leave teaching in the first five years of a teaching career. However, there is a noted spike in attrition in years 3 and 4 of teaching in Alberta. We wonder why this is. Focusing on the intentions of teachers in years 2 and 3 (just before the spike), including the experiences that brought them to teaching, will offer insights into the processes that early career teachers experience as they begin teaching.

There will be one audio-recorded conversation (about one hour and a half) with each participant using a set of interview questions developed by the research team after reading the research in the area of attrition. The conversations will be transcribed.

Fortunately, there are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. A potential benefit of your participation in this research is that you will be contributing to original research as well as expanding current understandings of early career teacher attrition. You will also be privy to a supportive environment where you may share your stories and experiences. Your participation must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you should know that you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation, up until the final research text is negotiated. If you do withdraw from the study, there will be no repercussions of any sort and your data will be removed from our study.

No one except members of the research team will ever know your responses. Moreover, you will never be referred to by name in any of the research publications or presentations. We will use a pseudonym for anonymity and confidentiality. Also, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. Only the University research team and an experienced transcriptionist will have access to the data. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. All data will also be safely locked in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development will be destroyed after 5 years, unless you indicate a willingness to be contacted again in five years for a future study. In this case, the data will be safely stored and then destroyed after 10 years. Other planned uses and sharing of this data include a master's thesis for one team member (Sheri Wnuk), as well as possible publications and/or presentations in professional journals and conferences for the research team. You may also receive a final report of the study, at your request.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

I, _____, understand the above conditions of participation in this study and I have had the opportunity to have my questions answered a member of the research team. I consent to participate in the study Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials.

Name of Teacher   Signature   Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Chapter 5: Not Teaching in Schools: Becoming Otherwise

Introduction

Alberta Education indicated that approximately 25% of people who graduate from Alberta post-secondary institutions do not take on positions with Alberta school districts. We were not able to confirm those numbers but an informal survey in one undergraduate class confirmed that about 25% of the students were not planning to teach in K-12 schools.

Recent research by Rots, Kelchtermans, and Aelterman (2012) examined the phenomenon of choosing not to pursue teaching as a career. Using a case study methodology and an identity frame with teachers during a particular time in their lives, the researchers explored the participants' practicum experiences during their pre-service teacher education program. We have found no research examining the lives of teacher education graduates who did not teach in a full-time contractual position, or who might have chosen another form of work in the early years after graduation. Wondering why B.Ed. graduates did not pursue teaching positions with school districts in the first few years after graduation, we chose to explore the life experiences of these education graduates through an identity frame. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) conceptualized the process of identity making and shifting as "stories to live by." The process attends to both the personal context of teachers and the social contexts of schools with attention to temporality.

Research Design

We designed a narrative inquiry study to explore the experiences of education graduates who did not move into contractual teaching positions. Narrative inquiry is a relational methodology aimed at understanding experience. It is a collaborative, educative kind of research that takes place over time, and that offers both researchers and participants the opportunity to tell and retell the experiences they are living. Through narrative inquiry, experience is studied through attending to three dimensions: the personal/social dimension, the place dimension, and the dimension of temporality (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). As such, narrative inquirers attend inwardly to personal feelings, hopes, aesthetic, and moral responses, outwardly toward existential conditions, temporally both backward and forward in time, while always also considering the physical place. These three dimensions constitute the metaphorical /conceptual space within which narrative inquiry into lived experiences operates.

Participants

As outlined in our ethics application to the University of Alberta, we designed a series of digital and hard copy posters and distributed them throughout the province. We also set up Facebook and e-mail accounts in order to recruit and communicate with possible participants. The Alberta Teachers' Association also included an advertisement in their provincial newsletter to help us find participants. We contacted colleagues and acquaintances to hand out posters at teacher conferences and we also asked them to help us identify possible participants. We were surprised with how long it took to eventually find four participants who agreed to work with us. We wondered if there might be an identity issue at play; perhaps graduated teachers did not want to name themselves as not having taught, or did not see themselves as teachers.

We met our participants in places of their choice where they would feel most comfortable to share the range of their experiences. Coffee shops, restaurants, and home settings away from work places were typically chosen. They appreciated the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. We discussed the information letter and consent form (see Appendices) with each participant before beginning the conversations and sought their consent. We audio-recorded each conversation and had them transcribed.

We first engaged three participants, who graduated but did not teach, in a narrative inquiry. Teachers included for the study had graduated from an Alberta post secondary institution in the last 3-5 years but had not taken on positions with Alberta school districts. We also included a participant who self-identified as not having taught in schools, but who, through research conversations, revealed that she had taught for a number of months. We decided to include her in this study because we were interested in the fact that she saw herself as not having taught, and because the time that she did teach in a school was short. This brought our total number of participants to four.

Ethical Considerations and Ethics Approval

When ethical considerations are mentioned, discussion often becomes focused on anonymity, confidentiality, proper recruitment, or safe storage of data. These ethical concerns are certainly important, and we address them below. However, relational research brings with it an ethical responsibility to engage in a continued relationship with our participants. Part of this relationship involves the negotiation of narrative accounts, which we describe in the methods section, as well as negotiation of what will be said about them in papers and presentations.

Although there is limited personal risk involved with this study, it is important to outline steps that were taken to decrease the likelihood of any risk. As researchers, we adhered to the confidentiality agreement. All participants will have graduated from post-secondary institutions in the same province and there is a possibility that participants may have graduated from the same teacher education program or may even have done practica in the same school division. Every measure possible was taken to ensure anonymity of the participants. The field texts were kept between the individual participant, the transcriptionist, and the research team. The transcriptionist filled out a confidentiality agreement that will ensure anonymity.

All field texts have/will be stored in a computer that is password protected and hard copies will be stored in locked filing cabinets located in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education. Pseudonyms have been used for the participants, schools, districts, cities or towns and teacher education programs.

The participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix A and B) that outlines they understand the purpose of the study. The consent form also includes detailed information about participant requirements and expectations for the study. Prior to the beginning of the study participants were made aware that their participation is entirely voluntary. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to read papers and presentations before they are made

public. We negotiate with participants to ensure they are comfortable with what we say about them in these papers and presentations.

Being that some of these conversations may have carried with them some discomfort from negative experiences that were shared, we provided support with empathetic listening throughout our conversations. However, participants were able to withdraw at anytime during the study. If a participant were to withdraw, that participant's data would not have been used in the study.

Methods

Using the methodology of narrative inquiry we explored the experiences of graduated teachers who did not teach in K-12 classrooms. There were two to three conversations (of one and a half to two hours in length) with each participant with attention to stories that brought them to teaching, stories lived after graduating, and stories around not gaining a full-time teaching contract. The conversations were transcribed. After the first two to three conversations with each participant, we drafted narrative accounts from our data (field texts including field notes and transcribed conversations) for each participant. Narrative accounts are interpretive constructions of individual experiences attentive to the three-dimensional inquiry space (described above). The draft narrative accounts were negotiated with each participant in subsequent meetings in order to get response, to deepen understanding about the participant's experiences, and to continue conversation around the narrative account. The four narrative accounts are included as appendices (C, D, E, F) to this paper.

As a team, we then discussed the narrative accounts for each of our participants and sought narrative threads that resonated across several accounts. From a narrative lens we have come to see interconnected threads that link our participants' stories together in some way. While some threads are resonant throughout all stories, others are more prominent for some than they are for others. In what follows we pull together these resonant threads, while trying to hang on to the individuality that is apparent within each person's experiences. Eventually, we identified five resonant threads. The final threads are: (1) What is teaching?; (2) What is teaching to me? I'm not seen as a teacher; (3) Navigating transitions; (4) Safe and unsafe "stories"; and (5) Living with conflicted views. We summarize these resonant narrative threads below.

Resonant Narrative Threads Across Participants

Resonant narrative thread one: What is teaching?

Teaching in K-12 schools means different things to different people. The common view of teaching, both on and off the educational landscape, is a view in which teaching is only the time spent in front of students and being prepared for the content area(s). But teaching also includes the whole of the job, including planning, marking, responding to student work, evaluating, writing report cards, meeting with parents and colleagues, organizing extracurricular involvements, attending to other school responsibilities such as supervision and paperwork, as well as engaging in professional learning.

Through our conversations, we began noticing that teaching was a strong part of the participants' lives from early landscapes up to the present and that each participant has a different understanding of teaching. What teaching is for the participants is shaped by their imagined stories of teaching. Teaching is embodied in the participant's lives and is shaped by their family stories of teaching. For example, Megan and Julie point to relational knowing as being integral to teaching, while Alexa speaks of teaching taking place in and out of school, with children, youth, and adults.

Julie's imagined story of teaching spoke of the relational and she was motivated and excited by the idea of making a difference for people as they moved through their lives. The reality of her teaching during her practicum experiences exhausted her. She worked long hours making a difference for students who thought of her as a special person. She was sustained by these positive relationships but her personal landscape was a different story. To continue teaching with the storyline that she developed during her practicum meant that her family, her friends, and other things that were also important were put on hold. Julie didn't want to be a teacher if she didn't love it, but she thought of herself as a teacher who could make a difference in the lives of children. Julie didn't know how to reconcile this tension.

For Julie making a difference in the day-to-day lives of people is a strong part of her stories to live by. She sees this thread as being a piece of what makes her a good teacher, but also has her thinking that she would also make a good nurse, her other imagined story. These two stories have the commonalities of relational knowing, as well as helping and caring for, and about, people as they figure out and live their lives. This is the story of teaching that resonates for Julie. These entwined stories, nursing and teaching, were also part of her early family stories as she found ways to comfort her family when they were sick or upset and as she played out improvised games with her younger sister. She recognized that both her Mom and Dad were like teachers, teaching her many important things as she was growing up. This realization shaped a piece of her imagined story of teaching.

Alexa also has family stories of teaching, and for her, the stories include teaching both in and out of schools. One uncle, who was an elementary teacher, was an influence in her life. She also has family members who are teachers outside of schools: both her grandmother and aunt teach private music lessons. But another strong influence on her choice to not teach in a school after her B.Ed. are stories *about* family. With three young children, Alexa imagines ways to be a parent and these include spending lots of time with her children. At a few points in her life as a parent, she has considered taking care of others' children and then switching with the other parent for another day of care, but these situations have not come to fruition. Alexa's imagined stories of being a parent do not include working in a classroom, which would demand a great deal of her time.

Alexa's imagined stories of teaching are broader than the notion that teaching only takes place in a K-12 classroom. Her stories include teaching Sunday school with a small group of 5-year-olds, Monday nights in her home when she and her husband plan a purposeful lesson for their children that includes singing and games, and visiting community members with a teaching partner, to offer a lesson rooted in their religion.

Megan's notion of teaching is also broader than the K-12 school landscape. For Megan, working relationally with families is a huge part of her imagined story of teaching. Megan is drawn to the many opportunities in her present work off school landscapes to shape children's lives in school. She says, "It's fascinating to me how you can do huge community work and support families who will support their children to grow up so that they have a smooth experience in school." Her imagined stories of teaching include being in a place where her opinions matter and her voice is heard. She likes to be involved in creating changes. Now, on a different landscape, she believes she is very close to living out her imagined story of teaching.

Megan's imagined stories of teaching were entwined with her knowing of her sister's struggles in school. The family story she lived alongside her sister led her to the decision to become a teacher; one with a passion to make positive changes in education. As Megan related stories of her Mom's inventive improvisatory ways to deal with situations around her sister's education outside of school, Megan realized how significant her Mom's story was in her life. Megan's imagined stories of teaching as creative/reflective work that holds a place for voice and agency to change things, and as work that needs to be done in relation to families, resonates with the family stories she has lived and continues to live.

What do you do when you thought you knew how your life would be and then it is no longer your life? Sam, who taught for a few months, went back to what he knew, office work. He didn't go into just any office though; he stayed with education. The classroom was not the only place he could use his knowledge, and his degree, so he found another way to use what he knew. He is a teacher in an office using his skills and knowledge to teach the materials that the office produces.

What he does has a direct impact on students in the classroom as well as teachers. He isn't with the students to see the impact of his work, but the students are always with him. He thinks about what he does and imagines how it will be used in the classroom. Although Sam enjoys his work, he is contemplating moving back into the classroom.

Our participants described very different ideas of what teaching is. Julie described the teaching that takes place in schools. Though she was good at this job, she saw the life of teaching as being unsustainable as part of the whole life she was trying to compose. She was also beginning to see that aspects of teaching might exist in other careers or areas of life. Alexa saw teaching as happening both in and out of the classroom and saw herself as still teaching even though she is not a teacher in a classroom. Megan described one aspect of teaching as working with families and providing a place for family voice and agency; this is something that is part of her current job. For the moment, Sam accepts creating resources for teachers in classrooms as a part of teaching because he feels it makes a difference to teachers and students; he still feels tenuously connected to the classroom. All the participants described their conceptions about teaching as being shaped by their early landscapes.

We began to see teaching as happening throughout the lives of the participants. Indeed aspects of teaching have been 'practiced' for many years before the participants entered their B.Ed. programs. These different ideas about teaching brought us to wonder about the intentions that people come to teacher education programs with, as well as their intentions once they

graduate. We wonder about conversations about what it means to be a teacher and attending to stories of what brought people to teaching. How and when might people entering their B.Ed. programs be invited to share their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) of teaching; the knowledge they have embodied in their lives so far and that so strongly shaped their lives?

Resonant narrative thread two: What is teaching to me? I'm not seen as a teacher.

Resonant thread one looked at broadening conceptualizations around teaching. In this thread we are more attentive to how the participants storied their own understandings around teaching. Some of the participants considered broad notions of teaching, understandings that went beyond teaching in schools. They bumped up against a more narrowly defined narrative of them as not having taught. For our ethics application and our recruitment of participants, we saw teachers as being employed by school districts in Alberta, but the participants spoke of teaching as going beyond the walls of a classroom.

Alexa feels that teaching is an integral part of her life. She talked about teaching her own children as a parent, about teaching other children in Sunday School, and also about teaching adults as a calling in her religion. Alexa also has forward-looking stories of teaching in a classroom when her children are of school age. Though she did not go on to teach in a school after graduating from her B.Ed., she sees herself as a teacher and as a continuing member of the teaching community.

Julie is currently not teaching. She is working in an office within a health care facility. She likes the job security, the benefits, and that she doesn't need to take work home with her. She would like to be teaching, but just not in a classroom. She doesn't feel that her current job satisfies or sustains her nor fulfils her wish and dream to create relationships with people that make a difference in their lives. She still thinks of herself as a teacher and that she is using the knowledge and skills she learned in her teacher education program. Her forward-looking stories narrate an ideal situation where she would be teaching children or adults in a hospital or clinic setting rather than in a K-12 classroom. Julie's imagined story of teacher hasn't yet matched with her employment situations or what she sees herself doing for her life's work.

Julie and Alexa's conceptions of what it means to teach are very different. Though neither is teaching in a school in Alberta, both participants consider themselves teachers. For Alexa, this identity is strongly tied to her continued teaching work with her own children and through her church, and to her forward-looking story of becoming a classroom teacher. Julie's teacher identity is shaped by her past success as a student-teacher as she imagines a future that includes teaching in some way. Julie and Alexa have caused us to wonder about our own storying of the participants as "not teaching." As we think outside of the K-12 school landscape, we wonder, too, about Megan's story. Megan's collaborative ways of working with parents, her community work teaching teens and aspects of her work with preschool children through her current job all fit within her imagined stories of teaching. As we re-examine what it means to teach and to be a teacher, we wonder how these conversations might be opened up for pre-service teachers to consider their own and others' stories of teaching. A person's story of what it

means to teach and to be a teacher will influence the intentions he or she has in terms of teaching on different landscapes.

Resonant narrative thread three: Navigating transitions.

There were several transitions that the participants found challenging to negotiate: moving from studying at university and toward life after graduation, moving between different places and contexts of employment, and thinking about moving into classroom teaching in the future. Through many of these transitions, they had no one to help them with the practicalities of the transition; they knew no one who could speak to them who has experience and knowledge of the educational landscapes they were considering.

Julie was the first person in her family to graduate from university. She had a strong group of friends and because of these relationships Julie was, in a sense, storied into university with this circle. University was a story that had many difficult decisions, a change of program and a change of campus. Julie, however, persevered, continued, and loved her education courses and her practica. She worked throughout her university years in restaurants and health care facilities. When she graduated, Julie as a result of hearing, reading and being told that jobs were difficult to obtain, went back to former positions where she was able to get work, where she was known, that were comfortable, and where she was able to make money, rather than apply to teach. She needed the money to pay her student loans and therefore some sense of job security was important. It was not just getting a teaching position; it was the uncertainty around the continuance of work within the teaching profession that became a barrier for Julie. Julie had no one to talk to or to help her with connections. She had no family stories either to help shape this chapter of her story. Her process of becoming a teacher stalled in the in-between space from the event of graduation to the necessity of making money to pay student loans. As she creates her future looking stories, Julie is still feeling that there are opportunities and possibilities for teaching. However, she doesn't know where to start looking for those opportunities because of the lack of family stories of teaching and because conversations around alternatives to classroom teaching aren't common.

Megan's practicum experiences during her B.Ed. became critical in her decision to not go into teaching. She was on her own trying to make sense of her two contradictory practicum experiences. These two experiences happened over a short time with no opportunity to address the tension. There were no conversation spaces from which to create alternative and broader perspectives. Although Megan wanted to be a teacher from the time she was a little girl, unaddressed tensions, looming wonders about contracts, amidst worrying conversations with her teacher friends began to contrast sharply with the competing story Megan was living. While doing her B.Ed., Megan worked part-time and through the summer in the job with which she is presently involved. Navigating the transition from her B.Ed. to this familiar work life was less risky for Megan. She had developed relationships with colleagues over time; she was comfortable enough to live out her stories to live by; she knew they knew her.

Sam talked little about the support available to help him to navigate the transition from university to life after; he rarely mentioned it because there was no one to help him. There was

no person he could ask for advice or talk through different possibilities. He did not particularly mind being on his own because he knew nothing different.

Sam's supervisor at his office job seemed to be Sam's only opportunity for support. He helped Sam and wanted to bring him on more permanently. When being a classroom teacher was not going to work out, his supervisor suggested to Sam that he could come back, and that way could still be in education, and could still be making a difference.

In contrast to Sam, Megan, and Julie's experiences, Alexa did not seek out employment after graduation. She was already a mother of two young children and envisioned being their full-time caregiver. However, Alexa did express uncertainty around a future transition: re-entering the school-teaching landscape. Though she had some conversations with others in the Alberta school system about what might be required to obtain a teaching position when her children were older, she was still unsure about what this transition might look like. Would it require further course study? What would hiring principals think of the gap between her B.Ed. and teaching in schools? What might be required of her in order to re-enter the system? Would she have to travel? With all these questions and uncertainty, there did not seem to be someone to turn to who might help Alexa navigate the transition.

For each participant, there was not a person or group of people to talk with who knew the landscapes of the Alberta educational system intimately, and with deep experience. Most participants had very practical questions to ask about working as a teacher in a school, but the practicalities were also connected to the composition of their whole lives. We wondered how attending to transitions might be part of the process of becoming a teacher and about how continuity of relationships and place might be part of this attention.

Resonant narrative thread four: Safe and unsafe "stories".

Though not all of the participants saw themselves as having not taught, they all had layered, complex stories about not teaching in schools. Some of these stories seemed socially acceptable, and they were willing to share these stories publicly; these are their safe stories about not teaching in schools. Some participants also talked about other stories that shaped their current situations. Some of these were stories that they did not share publicly; these are the unsafe stories that were filled with conflicting feelings and tensions as they continued to try to make sense of their current and future looking stories.

Julie didn't feel passionate about teaching after graduation. These feelings actually began in her third year of the B.Ed. program. The tension was around the idea of wanting to love her work, bumping up against the expectations that people put on teachers. She shared this concern with her parents, but assured them she would finish her degree. In this way, Julie started her story to leave by in the third year of her B.Ed. She believed that she was right for the profession and would be a good teacher, knowing this from her positive practicum experiences. She did love teaching when she was doing it, but she didn't apply for teaching positions. She needed to work to pay off loans and gain the money necessary to move away from home, and into her own place. This became her safe story to leave by. She went back to work serving in a restaurant where she was known, and began to pay off student loans, and re-evaluate her life as she

compose her stories to live by. She didn't want to start teaching if she didn't love it or if the jobs were difficult to get and keep. Julie wanted to be on her way to become the professional that she imagined, not to be hard pressed to find a job in Edmonton, and then struggle through the process to keep a position. She was overwhelmed. She wanted to find her place, create relationships, and work towards strengthening, enhancing, or adding to the lives of people around her. It was less risky to not enter, not even to apply, than to struggle to "find her place as a teacher in a classroom."

Megan believes she could still become a teacher later if she wanted to, if something came up that made sense to her. She could also begin to tell stories to leave by. Being able to tell safe stories for why she did not enter teaching in a traditional classroom or why she pursued a job off the school landscape after graduation could keep her options open. Megan could tell a safe story of buying a house shortly after graduation; that taking a chance on temporary contracts not being continued and 'subbing' was not advisable at this time from a financial point of view. She could also begin to tell stories to leave by, of (un)becoming a teacher. For this Megan could tell the safe story of her present work with families of preschool children, a job that involves many aspects of teaching.

"I had something to fall back on, something in my back pocket." Sam said this over and over. He could leave his imagined story of teacher, he could leave the classroom, and he could walk away from those possibilities because he had a backup plan: a business degree. That backup was what gave him the strength to leave the K-12 classroom. His mortgage didn't depend on being a teacher, nor did his livelihood, student loans, family stories, or identity. He was safe to leave because he could still live out a different way of being a teacher, and nothing was holding him hostage. He speculates how things would have been different if it wasn't safe to leave. If he hadn't had something to fall back on, he believes he would have felt differently about not teaching. Perhaps he would have hung onto the story of teacher more fiercely.

Alexa started her family while she was a pre-service teacher, graduating soon after the birth of her second child. Soon after this, she moved with her family to her hometown. Financially stable, with very definite intentions of staying home with children, it was safe to not enter teaching in schools. Her dominant story was that of parent, and this story carried forth from her pre-service program into her life after graduation.

All the participants had a "Plan B." For Julie, Megan, and Sam, the backup plan involved other employment. For Alexa, teaching was "plan B" to life's uncertainties. There were safe stories that the participants felt they could share publicly such as the very real stories of finances, and there were unsafe stories, such as the expectations placed on teachers without the flexibility to compose lives, or shape the system in such a way as to live out their stories to live by.

Resonant narrative thread five: Living with conflicted views.

Some participants spoke of the tensions they experienced as they lived out stories that were not in schools. They had conflicted views about their current lives in motion, and their imagined stories about teaching in schools that they had to leave behind. We noticed that, within

the relational narrative inquiry space, these conflicting stories were shared. They were stories unsafe to tell in public.

Julie is proud of her education degree, her success as a student teacher and the work, time, and effort that she devoted to achieving her degree. She is, however, reluctant to share this achievement with others when they ask about university, and work. Inevitably, she has to explain that she isn't teaching, and she doesn't have a clear answer for the next question: Why? She feels guilty and hesitant to explain why she isn't teaching. Apart from being unsure of the reasons, Julie still sees herself as a teacher. Her parents also don't understand why she isn't teaching. They are quiet, wanting to support her with whatever she decides, but wanting her to do something. A possible solution for Julie is to try nursing, and she sees this as a very similar imagined story to her motivations for wanting to become a teacher. Her early stories of wanting to be a nurse are overlaid on top of her thoughts about teaching. She would have to go back to school to gain additional knowledge to become a nurse, or a medical professional, and currently student loans and conflicted views about nursing, teaching, jobs, and life on a personal landscape are adding confusion to her forward-looking stories. Julie wants to make a difference, to work in an area where she can care, help, serve, and create relationships based on trust. She is confused, a little sad, yet still believes that she will do something great with her life. Julie frequently has dreams of herself as a teacher in front of a group of children. This is a recurring dream that happens several times a week. She awakes and wonders about this strong sense of herself as a teacher. Does it have to be in a classroom?

Megan has lived with the desire to be a teacher nearly all her life. Megan still lives with tension as she thinks of teaching in a K-12 classroom. On the one hand, considering her present job, she loves the work, and feels it is very close to teaching, but with more freedom. On the other hand she still wonders, "If I had my own classroom would I like it more? It was not an easy decision. It wasn't something where I was 'O.K, I know I'm not going to be a teacher. I'm clearly going to do this.' Still I would say, very conflicting." Yet the reality of her experience in her second practicum, and in conversation with her teacher friends, gave her the sense that she would be restricted and controlled.

It seems that, for Megan, the conflict between her imagined stories of teaching and the school stories she perceives from her experiences and from her teacher friends means that there might be too big a risk to her stories to live by, if she were to gain a classroom teaching position. At present, Megan is choosing a competing story–working with families with young children *off* the school landscape where she can compose a life that makes sense to her. For now Megan has found a place to 'be'.

Sam misses being in the classroom. Even now as he works in an office doing a job he likes, with good people, he imagines going back into the classroom. He wants to be a teacher working with kids discovering knowledge, but he is unwilling to do one thing. He is unwilling to sacrifice his whole life to take up teaching. He has a spouse, parents, friends, and himself, and is unwilling to give up any of these things. He thinks about this balance as he continually tries to find ways to be in the classroom again.

For Julie, Megan, and Sam, it is conflicting to *not* be teaching in K-12 schools. This tension of what they had imagined for themselves and what they are now living pulls at them as they try to make sense of their decisions. Conversations about where teaching happens (outside K-12) are not common for these three participants. Their decisions to not teach in schools were based on the experiences of others (such as other new graduates looking for jobs in schools) and on their own short teaching experience on the school landscape (such as practica). We wondered if this left our participants with a sense of discontinuity between their imagined stories of teaching and the realities of teaching in schools. We wonder then about *safe* places where pre-service and newly graduated teachers can tell stories around tensions, as well as possibilities, giving them opportunities to live out their lives in ways that make sense to them.

Discussion

What brought the participants to teaching and the experiences they had along the way in teacher education programs, practica, and life shapes these intentions, and the steps forward after graduation. We are drawn to pay attention to their imagined stories, early landscapes, teacher stories, and what they bring with them into education programs and beyond.

Traditionally, beginning teachers are considered knowledgeable only in the sense of their B.Ed. course work and practicum experiences gained. Yet we found that in listening to participants, their personal practical knowledge around being a teacher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) developed through their lives, beginning in childhood. We found that early childhood landscapes (Greene, 1995), particularly family stories, shaped their notions of teaching and that these were different for each participant. We wonder about spaces in university education programs for students to talk about their lives. We wonder about spaces to be attentive to these stories of teaching and about opportunities to inquire into these stories. For example, might spaces be sought out to address questions such as: 'What does it mean for you to be a teacher?' and 'What is teaching to you?' How might these conversations honour education students' experiences, knowledge, opinions, and wonders so far and shape an understanding of education students as knowledgeable, before they begin formal education studies? Might conversations attentive to the life stories of education students further shape notions of teaching as attending to lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988)?

As we consider the whole lives of the participants we see the necessity in paying attention to transition, particularly the transition of graduated education student to teacher. Our research directs us to consider transition as not an event to 'get over' but part of a complex process of becoming that needs attending over time. We recognize the fragility and vulnerability of the participants' stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as they live with their conflicted stories alone. Where are the safe places to tell these stories, the ones embodied in their very being?

Relational continuity is key in creating the kind of educative community (Dewey, 1938) that will be sustaining for composing stories to live by over time. We talk about continuity for students moving through school transitions such as those from kindergarten to Grade 1 (into compulsory schooling), from Grades 6 to 7 (elementary to middle school), and Grades 9 to 10 (middle to high school). We wonder about the transitions from Grade 12 through to a teacher

education program. We wonder too about continuity for beginning teachers who are moving from one place to another…where is their community of becoming? Our work with participants who did not become K-12 teachers illuminates the need for intentional safe spaces through providing sustaining relationships (Hollingsworth, Dybdah, & Turner Minarik, 1993) as graduated teachers move to teaching. We wonder about the possibilities in these safe, relational places for attending both to tensions and possibilities as graduated teachers try to compose their lives in ways that make sense to them; as they try to figure out how to navigate school districts; as they wonder about having a family and so on. Yet how might we get to really know students in post-secondary education and provide relational continuity when professors change from one course to the next? Does class size have something to do with it? We think about smaller colleges, normal schools where students become known by many professors. What are the ways to imagine doing this work? Cohorts? Networks? Connections?

As we return to the experiences of the participants, we are reminded that not teaching in a traditional K-12 classroom is still risky. It is not over and done with. Perhaps it is a process of unbecoming the imagined K-12 teacher and reimagining another story of teaching, or perhaps not teaching. Yet, it does not seem to be okay to *not* go into K-12 teaching after graduating with a B.Ed. Family and friends have storied them into teaching; they feel the expectations of society; they have invested a considerable amount of social and financial capital in completing their education degree. These tensions add to their conflicted feelings, drawing them to compose safe stories of why they didn't choose teaching in the traditional way.

We noted that some are making their decisions to not teach in schools on the basis of limited teaching experience, stories from teacher friends, family, and the media. Again we note the lack of spaces to figure out these big decisions. We see them on their own as they try to compose their lives after graduating from a B.Ed. program.

The participants' stories show us that teaching can happen on landscapes. We wonder if teaching is too narrowly defined in B.Ed. programs and in the larger community. Might teachers come to know teaching as other than teaching in a classroom? We wonder about offering alternatives that might include student teaching experiences in places outside of a traditional classroom. We wonder about opportunities to validate the lives of graduated teachers who work as teachers outside of K-12 classrooms.

Schools and school systems in North America and globally are engaging in conversations about 21st century learning. These conversations include digital, physical, and visual literacies, but more importantly consider learners as whole people within particular contexts and regard learning as multifaceted and unfolding. Listening to the participants has brought us to think about teaching and teacher education in, and for, the 21st century. We wonder where, or if, these conversations are happening in teacher education.

The discourse around teaching in teacher education programs is a narrow one: a teacher is defined by working with students in K-12 classrooms. We wonder how changing the language from "teacher" (which implies a position with a school district) to "people who teach" (which includes the kinds of teaching that the participants spoke of, inside and outside of K-12 classrooms) might interrupt the narrow discourse and provide opportunities to think about

teaching and teacher education in and for the 21st century. How might we think about "people who teach" in ways that attend to their lives both on and off teaching landscapes? These lives, like the lives of learners, are whole lives that have been lived in particular contexts and in relationship with others. Given the strong influence of participant's early landscapes, the difficulties they experienced in transitions, and the conflicted feelings they continue to live with, we wonder how "people who teach" might be sustained from the time they enter a teacher education program and into their teaching life, on or off the K-12 landscape.

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Appendix A: Letter of Initial Contact

Dear Participant,

We are writing to request your consideration to participate in a study on the phenomenon of new teachers leaving the profession in the first five years after graduating. We would greatly appreciate your willingness to take a few moments to read this letter before advising us of your response.

We are members of a research team led by Dr. Jean Clandinin from the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development, University of Alberta. We are engaged in a study entitled Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials. We are looking for participants for a study on teachers who graduated from an Alberta institution with a Bachelor of Education and who have never had a full-time contracted teaching position in Alberta.

Most research on early career teacher attrition focuses on those who leave teaching in the first five years of a teaching career. However, there is little information on those who prepare to be teachers but do not enter a contracted teaching position in Alberta. We wonder why this is. Focusing on this population we hope to offer insights into the processes and experiences that non-contracted teachers have upon completing a teacher education program.

There will be up to six audio-recorded conversations (about one hour and a half each) with each participant using questions and artifacts. The conversations will be transcribed. We will be happy to share the transcripts with you. Before any material is made public, we will negotiate our interpretations of what you say with you in a fourth conversation.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and, even if you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Your anonymity as well as the anonymity of other participants is protected. Your name will not be used and no identifying marks will linger. All information collected will be safeguarded to ensure confidentiality.

The information gained from this research may appear in various publications, reports, and/or conference proceedings. As a study participant you may request copies of these publications.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Please contact us by phone: (780) 492-7770 or email: teacherattrition@gmail.com to request additional information and/or to arrange to participate in the research.

Your time and interest in this study are much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Research Team: Sheri Wnuk, Pam Steeves, Lee Schaefer, Eliza Pinnegar, Sue McKenzie, Julie Long, and Jean Clandinin

Appendix B: Participant information and consent form

A Narrative Inquiry into Education Graduates Who Are Not (Full-time) Teachers

This consent form is an invitation to participate in the study entitled *Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials* that is being conducted by a research team from the University of Alberta, led by Dr. Jean Clandinin from the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (jean.clandinin@ualberta.ca; (780) 492-7770), and funded by a grant from Alberta Education. You may contact Dr. Clandinin at any time if you have any questions.

Most research on early career teacher attrition focuses on those who leave teaching in the first five years of a teaching career. However, a significant number of graduates of education programs do not move into full-time contractual teaching positions. Some pursue other careers. Others work part-time in schools or as substitute teachers. We wonder why this is. Focusing on education graduates' stories to live by, including the experiences that brought them to teaching, will offer insights into the processes that graduates of education experience as they begin their careers.

There will be up to six audio-recorded conversations with each participant, and the first conversation will focus on the stories that brought them to teaching. After the conversations, we will draft individual narrative accounts of each participant and will negotiate those accounts with the relevant participant. The expectations of each participant is that they would be willing to talk with a member of the research team for up to six individual 1.5- to 2-hour conversations and then read and respond to the narrative accounts.

Fortunately, there are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. A potential benefit of your participation in this research is that you will be contributing to original research as well as expanding current understandings of early career teacher attrition. You will also be privy to a supportive environment where you may share your stories and experiences on a regular basis. Your participation must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you should know that you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation, up until the final research texts are negotiated. If you do withdraw from the study, there will be no repercussions of any sort and your data will be removed from our study.

No one except members of the research team will ever know your responses. Moreover, you will never be referred to by name in any of the research publications or presentations. We will use a pseudonym for anonymity and confidentiality. Also, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. Only the University research team and an experienced transcriptionist will have access to the data. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. All data will also be safely locked in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development will be destroyed after 5 years. Other planned uses and sharing of this data include a master's thesis for one team member (Eliza Pinnegar), as well as possible publications and/or presentations in professional journals and conferences for the research team. You may also receive a final report of the study, at your request.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

I, _____, understand the above conditions of participation in this study and I have had the opportunity to have my questions answered a member of the research team. I consent to participate in the study *Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials*.

Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Alexa was waiting for me at the restaurant where we had agreed to meet for the first time. It was warm and comforting to be inside after driving from the airport in a snowstorm on unfamiliar roads. This restaurant was also the setting for our second conversation. During that second drive from the airport, I was able to see the beautiful landscape with its rolling hills and open plains; even the wind turbines seemed majestic against the backdrop of the Rockies.

As we got to know one another over three face-to-face conversations and three phone conversations, we found that we had many things in common. We are both from small towns, both mothers of young children, and both see ourselves as teachers even though neither of us teaches in a K-12 classroom. The first narrative thread that we include here is one that resonates for both Alexa and me.

I Haven't Left Teaching: Teaching is Part of My Life

Alexa described places and ways of teaching that are wider than the idea that teaching only takes place in schools. She talked about teaching Sunday School to a small group of 5-year-olds. In this setting, the lessons were planned, with room for adaptation, but she also drew on some strategies she had learned in her field experiences and personal experience, such as using songs, directing questions at particular students, or changing the volume of her voice. The small group situation fit well with Alexa's belief that her teaching should respond to each individual. She recognized and appreciated the differences between this small group and working with a class of 30 students; she felt that small group work afforded more opportunity for conversation and for effective teaching and learning.

As well, she shaped new ways of being with these very young people that attended to their desire to participate and her belief in the importance of cultivating caring relationships where students knew that they mattered to her. Alexa talked about making a cozy atmosphere with her group with lots of conversation. She also made sense of the contrasting contexts of teaching. Her lesson-planning in schools was more individualistic than Sunday School, where the plans were already made. In addition, discipline was different because of class size, the compulsory nature of schools, and Alexa's learning during and since her field experiences: "If you stop learning then it's hard to teach; teaching and learning go hand in hand."

This Sunday School teaching also played into her teaching as a parent. One daughter, Jane, is the same age as Alexa's students and is in the other Sunday School class. Alexa asks her daughter about what she learned in class and is able to shape conversations with her on the topics they have discussed in class.

She sees her pre-service teacher education as connected to her parenting: "I am using my degree. I have three little kids that I practice on all the time." In one course, Alexa read a book by Barbara Coloroso. She now brings the idea of logical consequences into her parenting (for example, if a child spills something, the child cleans it up). In schools she sees this idea of logical consequences as being connected to teaching children how to live in a democracy and to

make decisions for which there will be consequences. She also talked about how her education and psychology courses helped her understand her children and their development.

For Alexa, clarifying the rules of her home when other people's children are there is part of teaching: "They say it takes a whole community to raise a child and so even if you're not teaching in a school, you're still teaching." Other kinds of teaching also take place in her home, including the regular Monday night family home evening. Alexa and her husband prepare a purposeful lesson around a theme connected to their religion and to family expectations. Sometimes the lesson includes singing and playing games. As well, Alexa teaches in other peoples' homes as a visiting teaching companion. She and her teaching partner begin a conversation with other women in their homes. Often, they begin with a theme or quotation, but the lesson is open to the contexts of the people involved and the lesson can expand. Alexa told me that there is lots of conversation in this visiting teaching, and this reminded me of her teaching in Sunday School where she valued conversation with the 5-year-olds.

As we talked about how Alexa came to see herself as a teacher in these many different places and spaces, with people young and old, with lessons that were sometimes planned and sometimes improvised, she shared some of the experiences from her early years that shaped her identity as a teacher.

A Sense of Teaching Developed Over Time

As Alexa told stories of her early landscapes of playing teaching with her siblings in the summer, there was a sense of her becoming a teacher over time.

> One thing I remember from my childhood is during the summers we'd play teacher. We had a toy room and it had a chalkboard and we would take the younger kids in there and we'd teach them their letters. We probably taught them their letters every year. I'm not sure we taught them anything else other than letters.

Alexa did not talk about an early conscious decision to become a teacher; the becoming a teacher took place over time and continues as she looks to her future plans to return to the classroom when her children are school age.

In her family, there were a few teachers. Alexa's grandmother, who still lives in the same community, taught primary school. In addition, another grandmother and an aunt are music teachers and musicians. The most influential teacher in her family is an uncle who taught Alexa, as well as most of her siblings and cousins when they were in Grade 6.

> I thought he was a fantastic teacher and he was an amazing teacher. He's passed on unfortunately, but, if not, I'm sure he'd still be teaching to this day, […] he was always positive and he was always optimistic and like I said he was an amazing teacher. Most of the time I wasn't the biggest fan of social studies but he made it fascinating, he made it come to life.

In high school, Alexa met a teacher she admired. He became a role model for her own ways of thinking of teaching mathematics.

> Halfway through my senior year I decided I wanted to be a math teacher. It was also that I noticed that my math grades depended on my teacher. I know it's not entirely fair to say but I noticed that there were some years I loved math and other years I thought it was horrible and it often came down to the teacher. My last two years, I had an amazing teacher and he made things make sense and I guess he was a bit of a role model for me. I looked at him and I went 'I want to do this' and it evolved into 'I want to find a way to make math fun' by the time I finished my degree'.

In Grade 12, Alexa decided to become a teacher. She enrolled at an Alberta university and moved to the city after high school graduation. She did two years in Arts, and then moved into the Faculty of Education in secondary education. Soon after that move, Alexa was married and began life with her husband as a married couple. About a year later, Alexa had her first child and took a semester off from her studies. When she returned to the B.Ed. program, she took one course while her mother-in-law, and later a friend, cared for her daughter. Immediately, her life as a parent impacted her teaching and learning.

> I found that you really had to prioritize. Where when you're single you can procrastinate a lot more because you can. If you spend an all-nighter you're not going to have to get up with the kids at 6:00 in the morning because they decided to wake up or anything else. Where it was 'OK my baby's asleep I have to work now,' and so I always was on top of my school work and I'd do everything I possibly could every night. The first semester my grades weren't too great, but the next one I got the best grades I'd ever had because every night I was doing everything I could to get it done. So it was shocking that I finally was able to get in the A category when I had a kid when I couldn't do that when I didn't [have a child].

Alexa's parenting also shaped her two practicum experiences, one in drama and another in mathematics as she continued to compose her life as a parent and a pre-service teacher. During one practicum, Alexa was pregnant and experienced a miscarriage. Her mentor teacher was particularly supportive and urged Alexa to take time off, postponing some of the teaching she was supposed to do in his class. "He said 'No, you are not doing it now, you need to take time, you need to recover, your health is the most important thing.'"

Alexa continued with the B.Ed. program and finished her last class before her second daughter was born. She already knew that she wouldn't be teaching right away as she wanted to stay home with her young daughters. She decided to open a day home to care for her children at home and those of others. The dreams that she and her husband had of owning their own home were becoming impossible in the city. Though her husband worked full-time and Alexa ran a day home, they were paying for Alexa's student loans and living in affordable housing. Alexa did not have access to Employment Insurance benefits for parents because she had been a student, though her husband was able to take some parental leave. At the same time, house prices in the city were rising dramatically and the dream of having a big yard for her children to play in was out of reach.

As Alexa told me about this time in her life, I was reminded of my own "unpaid" maternity leave after my son was born and we talked about this similarity in our stories. I too had been a student just finishing up my degree. Finances were also an issue for my husband and I; our dreams of having a home like the ones we grew up in could not come to be in the city.

Alexa's husband suggested they move to her hometown where her family still lived, where the house prices were within reach, and where he could potentially transfer with his work. Their dreams could come to fruition in the small town, but not in the city. Alexa's dreams for teaching in a school followed her to the new living place and continued to be shaped by how she imagined her family life.

> The plan is once our kids are in school, have me go back and upgrade a couple courses. Talk to the school division, say 'What do you want me to have?' and then go get it. […] And I would probably sub for a while or if I would teach I would only do part-time because your first couple of years are crazy and my kids will probably be teenagers or getting close, so you don't want to not be there because you're lesson planning constantly. If I did half days, I'd have half a day to plan.

Alongside these future-oriented imaginings about teaching in a classroom, Alexa continues to teach as a calling in her religion. She is a Sunday School teacher for 5-year-olds and a visiting teaching companion for women in her ward.

> You go into these other sisters' homes and you have a chance to chat and you have a chance to share the lesson […] We'll have lessons on charity, so on becoming better. We'll have lessons on strengthening our families. And each year they kind of seem to have a theme and it goes through and often you end up talking a lot more than you do giving a lesson.

In all these present contexts, Sunday School, visiting teaching companion, day-to-day parenting, family home evenings with her husband and children, Alexa sees herself as a teacher: "I definitely am teaching in one way or another." This sense of herself as a teacher has developed over time and continues to be shaped by her memories of early landscapes, by her daily experiences, and by her imaginings about future teaching in classrooms.

Continuation and Growth

Alexa told me about her involvement in drama productions in her hometown from the time she was an elementary student until high school. She found that she was able to get to know adults as peers because they were all fellow actors working on the production together. Looking back, she sees that it was also an opportunity to create an identity for herself that was not about basketball, the community's "obsession."

> There weren't tons for people who weren't in the athletics and so drama was right up my alley. All teenagers need some sort of venue, they need somewhere they feel they belong and drama was where I did. Those are the people I got along with, those are the people I

fit with, and I made really good friends there.

She was one of the first in her family of many cousins to not play basketball. Later, other family members found places outside of basketball too, including siblings who are interested in drama and music. Alexa links this interest in drama to her mother's family: "They're a lot more dramatic [than my father's family], more musicians." There is another family connection, Alexa remembers putting on plays for her parents when she was very young.

Alexa's interest in drama continued into her pre-service teaching program, where she chose it as her minor. She found, though, when entering her practicum in drama that her experiences were different from pre-service teachers who had grown up in urban centres where full programs, including stage fighting and mime, were part of the high school drama programs. Her mother said that her professors would teach her what she needed to know for the practicum in drama, but Alexa did not experience this.

> They want you to teach mime and you've never touched it in university. They want you to teach stage fighting, you've never touched it in university. And so they didn't teach me what I needed to know. So all these experiences these kids had in high school that would have taught me what I needed wasn't there.

Alexa also recognized that though she did not learn these things at university, that teaching drama in a small school outside the major urban areas in Alberta might be different from her practicum in the city. Drama in a rural area might be an extra-curricular activity and the students would likely have little experience with putting on drama productions; this is similar to her own experiences in drama as a youth.

Mathematics was Alexa's major in secondary education. She chose this area because she likes math in general. She also acknowledges the influence of her high school teacher who had a knack for explaining things in a way that made sense to her. She was inspired to do the same. As she looked ahead to teaching mathematics, she also saw that math made her more marketable as a teacher. She saw more opportunities available for mathematics teachers in rural schools than, say, for drama teachers.

> When I went into education, they were desperate for math and science. That was what I heard. I was told the people who went out in math and science got a job and the other ones had a harder time, I don't know if it turned out to be accurate because I didn't try.

At university, she experienced math in a different way than she had in high school, a similar story to her experience with drama as a student and then as a pre-service teacher.

> [My high school math teacher] made it make sense, which is the biggest thing in math: getting it to make sense and making it simple. If it's simple, keep it simple, don't make it sound big to make you sound smart. He made it work and he made it easy, he was approachable so if you had a question you weren't worried to go ask him.

[At university], I found the professors fairly unapproachable. I found that they knew their stuff but they didn't know how to teach it, they didn't necessarily know how to convey it. [...] I took calculus my first year and apparently I should have taken it in high school because from what I have found everyone who took it in high school loves it, everyone who's taken it in university thinks it's the root of all evil.

This idea of approachability resonated with Alexa's stories of herself as teacher in the Sunday School where she tried to make things personal for her students, getting to know them and how they learn. In the university calculus class, she was one of 300 students. This story of teaching and learning bumps up against the small group or small class situations (20 to 25 students in her high school classes) that she experienced as a student and continues to live out in her life.

Another bump that Alexa experienced in university was the process of "weeding out." Until this point, teachers had generally tried to help Alexa learn, but university was different.

They try to kick you out a lot have you noticed that? The first year they're trying to weed you out and then you get into education and they're trying to weed you out, then you finally get to the other classes where they're done weeding you out and it's a lot more helpful. [...] I'm paying a lot of money to be weeded out.

She saw that having (or not having) certain courses in high school made a difference to what career paths were open to her and to others. For example, Advanced Placement classes were not available to her in high school, but she saw that having taken AP classes in high school was an advantage to her university classmates.

As we composed this piece of the narrative account, we saw that there were many related ideas in Alexa's stories. Alexa's interest in drama is linked to her mother's family's interest in the arts. The small class experiences of high school are very much like the small group teaching that she engages in with Sunday School and with her visiting teaching companion. However, there were also some bumps, or tensions, between the stories. Alexa's expectations for university were shaped by her supportive teachers and small classes. At university, she experienced a bump with the large class size and the feeling that students were being weeded out instead of supported. She also experienced a bump when the expectations of her teaching in the drama practium went beyond her experiences from high school and from her pre-service teacher education courses. Alexa is not sorry that she experienced these moments of adversity; she feels that she has learned from the situations, but also recognizes that people can be hurt or lost in the transition from high school to university.

Life is Uncertain: Self-Reliance

Alexa's family and her religious community have strongly influenced her path in life. She told me about her parents meeting when they both lived in Asia, then moving to Canada after Alexa and her sister were born. Alexa's mother's family is from the United States but with strong ties to Europe. Alexa also told me about how her mother's upbringing was more formal than the norms in the small town where Alexa grew up and now lives with her own family. She

speaks of her own upbringing as being a cross between the traditions of her mother's family and those of her father's family, but that education and family were important in both traditions.

Both of Alexa's parents have university degrees. There was never a question of whether Alexa would go to university, it was just a matter of deciding what to study. This resonated strongly with my own family's understanding of the importance of university studies. My father and his siblings were the first generation of his family to go to university. My mother and her siblings were the second generation in her family. My brothers and I were expected to go to university; it was seen as the way to ensure future financial stability. This too is the story in Alexa's family.

> My parents very much taught us self-reliance. We struggled with finances a lot when I was growing up. [...] My parents were both very educated but money was still a struggle. You can't just expect things to work out, you have to plan for whatever and so I always told my husband university was never even thought of as an option, it was just 'You are going, what are you going to do?' So where other people are going 'Should I work or should I go?', it's 'No, you are going'.

Underneath Alexa and my shared family expectations to go to university, there are my family stories of immigration to Canada that happened generations ago. In my family, moving to a new place meant working hard, finding ways to participate in the established community, and doing "better" than the previous generation. There are echoes of these immigration stories in Alexa's family in the way that going university is valued as a means to ensure the wellbeing of the next generation, even if something bad were to happen.

> I wanted to have a backup plan. I don't want to have to go work at McDonald's if my husband can't get a job or if we had a divorce, which I hope never happens, or if he passed away or etcetera. Life's uncertain. And so I knew I needed something and my parents always pushed me for education, they're like 'You need something' and education just kind of fit.

The financial aspects of going to university and having teaching as a "back up plan" were important considerations. Alexa remembers that when she was young, her mother would take on projects for work to make extra money. Alexa sees her teaching degree as offering this possibility if her family were to need more money, for whatever reason. Finances related to university studies were also important in Alexa's decisions about where to live when she was going to university and afterwards; Alexa paid her own way through university (and continues to pay student loans).

Alexa's choice of education as an area of study is one that fit both the expectations of going to university as well as how she envisions her life as a parent.

> I do think one of the motivators for me […] is the fact that it works around having a family because I always knew that I wanted to have children and I still wanted to have an education. [...] Education fit the lifestyle I wanted which is important because you are choosing your career for life. I want to have time with my kids and frankly even when

they're older I want to be able to have large chunks of time that I can go visit them and most jobs you don't necessarily have that.

There are also resonances between the self-reliance that is so important to Alexa's family and the way her religion encourages preparedness for life's uncertainties. Within Alexa's religion, there is the planning and preparedness of individuals and families, but there is also a community-oriented preparedness where people help one another.

How we were taught is: take care of your family and help those that need help. Some people, like in this last recession, people who had been helping people for years, all of a sudden, they needed you because they lost their jobs that they thought were secure and even though they did everything they could. It happens to all of us at certain points.

In Alexa's stories of how people in her religious community help one another, there is perhaps a link to the bumping that she experienced as she started university. In her family, in her high school, and in her religion, people are self-reliant but also help one another along in life. Suddenly at university, Alexa began to experience the "weeding out" that did not value each person's experiences or the relationships amongst people; the "weeding out" process valued standards and deadlines and competition.

As we negotiated this narrative account, Alexa and I began to wonder about transitions from high school to university. We wondered what a teacher education program might look like with small classes where the professor and pre-service teachers got to know one another; where there was an atmosphere focused on teaching and learning that was responsive to each person's experiences and imaginings for the future; and where the student was a whole person, not simply a student ID number.

As we looked back on the experiences that brought her to the life she is living, Alexa shared stories of herself as parent to her young children, as wife alongside her husband, and as teacher outside the K-12 classroom. She imagines herself in the future as still being parent and wife, but also as teacher inside a K-12 classroom, with questions about the transitions between institutions of education. Both on and off the K-12 school landscape, there are stories from her family, from her childhood, from her days as at student and pre-service teacher, and from her religion that shape how she understands teaching.

Appendix D: A Narrative Account of Sam – Eliza Pinnegar
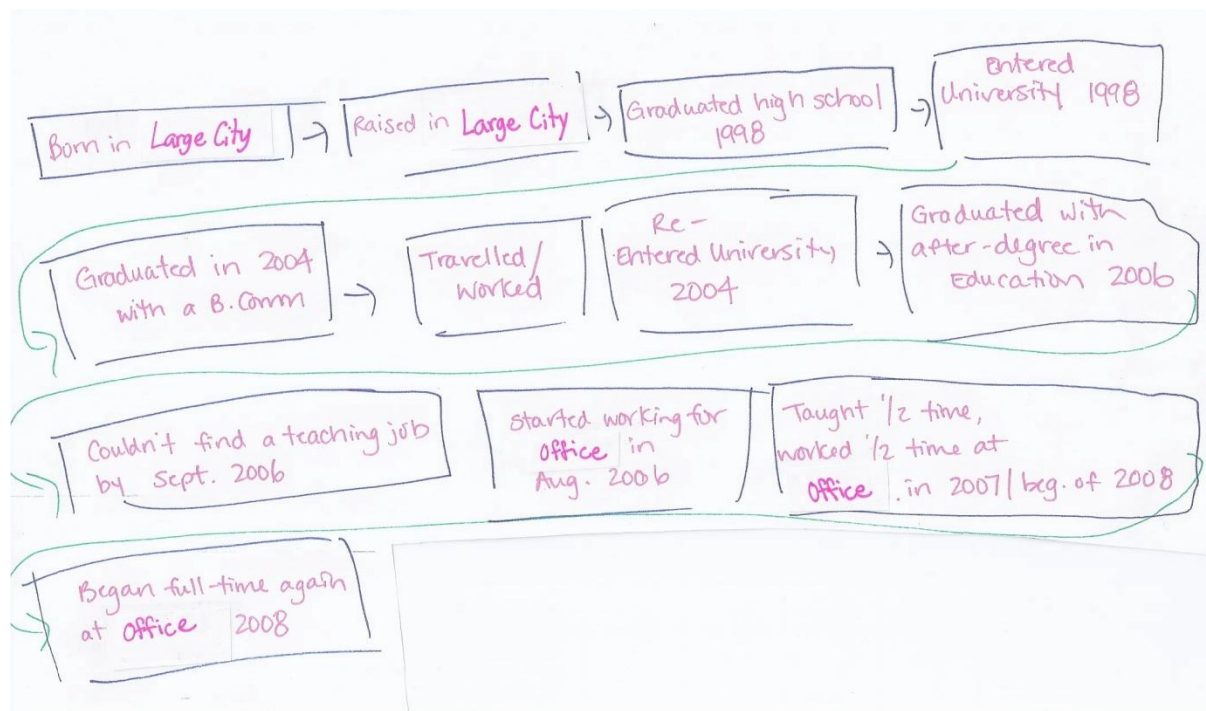
First Time Coming

I was apprehensive as I sat in my car looking at the section of homes where Sam lived. One house seemed much the same as the next. They were close together with white façades. Each house had a bit of grass with a path that led up to the front door. I was early and so waited in my car. It was a bright September afternoon. As I waited I looked closely at every person who passed and wondered, "Is that Sam? Is it someone Sam knows? Are they wondering who I am? Do they know I don't belong to their community?"

Finally I saw someone walking up to the house I thought was Sam's. I got out of my car and walked toward him. He noticed me and asked if I was Eliza from the research project. As he spoke, I wondered, "What is it that identifies me as a researcher?"

We walked together into his house. As we entered, I noticed I could see into the kitchen, the living room, and a small place to eat meals. I knew there was a second floor because of the stairs. Sam directed me to the only table in the rooms downstairs. It was small and glass. I could see through it. Nothing could be hidden. That was when I noticed the other furniture. The couch was black and looked like leather. I could not see many personal touches to the rooms. There were not many pictures, or what I imagined could be cultural signifiers. There was nothing on display that suggested his South Asian cultural background. I could see no photos of family members and loved ones. He was married but I saw little of the partner.

I could have placed many people I knew into that space, and they would have fit. I realized that I had had a picture in my mind of what I thought his house would look like. This was not it. We sat at the table and spoke of the weather and whether I had difficulties finding my way to his house. He poured glasses of water for each of us, and I tried to remember the saying I had learned from my parents, and then in my Teacher Education Program, "Fake it till you make it." I tried to "fake" knowing what to do to begin to build a research relationship. I had not done this before. I worried about whether I would be able to hear him as we sat at the small glass table.

We went over the consent documents to be signed. I was amazed by how quickly this process was done. I wondered, "Do you not get what I am going to be asking you to do?" I was relieved that he was so quick to sign a paper agreeing without discussion. There was no talk of pseudonyms or anonymity at this moment, only conversation about where I came from and what I was doing in Canada. I finally redirected the conversation and asked Sam to draw a timeline of his life. I worried this was a mistake because our conversation ended as he drew.

Born in Large City → Raised in Large City → Graduated high school 1998 → Entered University 1998

Graduated in 2004 with a B.Comm → Travelled/Worked → Re-Entered University 2004 → Graduated with after-degree in Education 2006

Couldn't find a teaching job by Sept. 2006 → Started working for Office in Aug. 2006 → Taught 1/2 time, worked 1/2 time at Office in 2007/beg. of 2008

Began full-time again at Office 2008

We were plunged into silence as Sam thought about how to represent his life on paper, deciding what to put on and what to leave out. Perhaps he was wondering what I wanted from him? What parts of his story? What would be relevant? All of these thoughts flashed through my mind as I sat awkwardly as he slowly began to draw. He started with where he was born, and jumped to High School Graduation, and on to degrees, and finally to work experience, and then ended. We talked as he described what he had created. I thought about all of the things that were not on the paper. Suddenly I felt nervous about asking any questions about what was not on the timeline. How would he understand what I was doing? What would he think? Would asking questions about what he left out be too presumptuous? Would I phrase my questions in ways that were safe for Sam to answer? I wondered about the places he had been, the people who were important to him, and the experiences that shaped him. I wondered about how he made sense of the life he was now living, and the person he was now becoming. Our conversation lasted for an hour and a half. As we left, I told him I would meet him again in few weeks and we negotiated our next meeting.

Sam and I met three more times to have conversations over five months. Subsequent conversations occurred in coffee shops and offices and lasted from between an hour and an hour and a half. I made field notes during the conversations but I also recorded the conversations. Using my field notes, and the transcriptions of our conversations, I constructed this narrative account using our words and phrases from the conversations to form word images which are words or phrases that were, in this case, spoken in conversation and arranged in order to provide a depiction and concise representation Sam's stories that he shared. I used word images in order to give a sense of the co-construction of this narrative account and to represent who he is and who he is becoming. As Sam and I sat together to read the bits of transcript that I selected and sequence them to form the word images, we noticed themes of practicality and a desire to make a difference were seen throughout his stories.

Family - An Immigrant story
Living at home with my parents
Stay close to home
Didn't make sense to go anywhere else
Moved out at 26
Stay close to home
More **practical**

I was surprised at what Sam was telling me, and at how open he was with this story. Where I grew up, staying at home past 18 would have been seen as less than desirable and even a source of some shame. I soon learned this was a thread that ran through his stories to live by. Sam's decisions were made on a different basis, one of practicality. As we moved back through time I came to understand this more.

Mom always said
Make sure you're ok in math
Math is very big
Brother went into sciences
My parents
Please do something **practical**
Business - a **practical** thing to do
Brother, graduating with a psychology degree
What the hell is he going to do
With a psychology degree?
OK
Do something **useful**
Went into the business program
General degree
Marketing
It wasn't like any love or passion, anything like that
Have in your **back pocket**
Practicality reasons
As long as you're **working**

This struck me as a very strong narrative thread woven through his stories to live by, who he was, and was becoming. I noticed how many times in that first, and subsequent, conversations Sam used the word "practical." I wondered how he felt about doing everything for practical reasons, instead of passion or interest. I wondered if I would hear stories of resentment, as I have always felt when making decisions on any other basis than desire. As Sam spoke, I learned that his family did not have much to say about his change in careers because, as they saw it, as long as he could get a job it didn't matter what he did. I felt a little sad that he was not able to feel connected to his decision of going into business. As he talked about his family, he became more engaged in what he said.

My grandma lived with us
For a while
Took care of my brother and I

Spent a lot of time with her
She didn't speak a lick of English
Watched Indian soap operas
Went down to Little India
Perms with grandma
We were old enough to be on our own
She moved back to India

Later in our conversations I realized how important Sam's grandmother was to him. His grandmother was part of an arranged marriage. She was unable to become literate, and was unable to do many things because of sacrifices she made for her family. Sam told me how he saw how being dependent on another person dictated his Grandmother's life. I wondered if, for Sam, this increased the importance of obtaining an education, so he could have a job, and be independent from another person.

Meaningful to Make a Difference
I want to **make a difference** in the world
Do something **meaningful** and **different**
Didn't even think of education
I should have
Don't want to work in an office
Maybe Education's the path I want to take
I thought then
This is better than any day in an office
Oh my god
Can't believe this is going to be my career
Express an interest
In doing something **meaningful**
Social studies
This is great
Better than any day I've ever had working in an office
Wanted to do something **meaningful**
Something **different**
I'm going to be in there
Make a **difference** for these kids

I was struck with the many times Sam used words like "difference" and "meaningful." I wondered if the desire to do something meaningful bumped up against the need to do something practical. Perhaps teaching was the perfect marriage between practicality and passion.

Tensions-Childhood (Public or Catholic)
Elementary
Went to a Catholic school
Motivated and pretty independent
Mom said
We should make sure you're ok in math

Math is very big
I hate math
Math was hard
I'm very bad at science
Really difficult
My dad saying
You should really get outside
Get some sunshine
Go out and play
Go ride your bike
I was shy
I liked to read a lot

As Sam told his stories, I saw how there were tensions between what he should do and want he wanted to do. Sam was excited to go into first grade because it was there he would learn to read. He spoke of this as his joy, being able to enter the worlds and lives of others in different situations and places. This was also reflected when he told how he would sit and read the newspaper with his father at the table in the morning. He also told of watching National Geographic, the history channel, and the biography channel with him. I wondered how this connected with his decision to enter social sciences as a major for his teaching degree. Perhaps it was here, with his father, that the seeds of learning about the world, and of being interested in the events of people and countries, were planted. However, it was also important to be able to gain the skills that resulted in a good job.

Junior high
All my friends went to
Catholic junior high feeder
Decided to go to the public school
That was closest to home
After a month
Think I made the wrong choice
Begging my parents
Can I go to the Catholic junior high
Happy as a clown

Sam decided to go to a different junior high and was disappointed. He couldn't believe the way the students acted. He had been a good student, and his classmates at the Catholic school were not disrespectful of their teacher. After a short time he asked if he could return to the Catholic system. I wondered how Sam perceived the students in the public school system as distinct from those in the Catholic system. I wondered if they were that different or whether it was more that Sam was experiencing discontinuity in the new environment.

As we spoke more, I learned that Sam was unable to teach in the Catholic system when he graduated, as he was not Catholic. I wondered how his memories of his experiences in the public district as a student influenced his perception of teaching, as he searched for a teaching position in the public district.

Tensions-Business or Education
University
Had no idea what I wanted to do
Was always really good at keyboarding
Just go into Arts first
Figure out what I want to do later
Friends went into business
Me - went into business
Thought I wanted to work in an office
Didn't really know what I wanted to do
Decided not to work in an office
Not what I want for my life
I thought
Education would be a good thing
Rewards are so different
It was too late by then
Already three quarters done
Finished in business
Did Education After Degree

I was surprised at his switch from the Faculty of Business to the Faculty of Education. I wondered how Sam shifted from thinking of business for his career to teaching for his career. How did he go from a program like marketing to education? Sam explained that, as he didn't know what he wanted to do in university, he explored many different options. Even as he was in the business program, he explored different options within business, and outside. By the time he decided he wanted to be in education, he had nearly completed his business degree. The practical thing was to finish the business degree before starting one in education. Completing his business degree gave him what he called a backup plan, as well as a way to pay for his schooling, while in the education program.

So different than business
Everyone is so friendly
Loved my classes
Really interesting
Business is dog eat dog
Education – totally opposite
Loved my practicums
So different from business

Sam smiled as he told me how he enjoyed his education program. He began to dream what his classroom would look like. "Ideally in my head you have one vision of how you would have loved to have had your classroom and then reality sets in." It was clear that he had an image of what it would look like to be a teacher. I asked him what he had imagined himself to be as a teacher while still in the program. He described himself as being with students in a room with desks and chairs, the traditional image that had been reinforced by his own experiences in

school. He also described a conflicting view of having places for dance and exploration and technology but as these were not practical they were never embraced as part of his imaginings. I wondered, once again, how his experiences in school as a student as well as in university shaped his idea of what it would be like to teach. Sam, after waiting for a year, received a call in mid-September asking him to accept a position in an English program that also included teaching Foods in a high school.

> *Tensions-Teach science or not*
> Hired at a high school
> I'm a CTS minor, business and marketing
> Major was social studies
> Teaching half-time
> English program
> Foods
> They thought, oh because I student taught in Foods
> Here take two Foods classes
> Almost like an aide but not
> Was teaching the class
> But not a teacher
> Kind of strange
> It wasn't my class
> I was doing a lot of the work

Sam is still not completely clear on what his position was. I can see the puzzlement and frustration on his face as he tries to explain how he was teaching, but was not really the teacher. I puzzled over his perceptions of his status as a teacher, and his identity in that position. He explains that, while there were tensions being in this position, he felt comfortable and confident teaching in these areas. He was competent in English, and he had some experience with Foods. Most of all he liked being able to explore the world, and bring new perspectives to his students. This made him feel like a teacher. He moved on quickly as he was only in that position for a short time. The principal had over budgeted and Sam was given a choice to accept another position, or to have his position drastically cut. He moved on.

> Principal
> We got a science 20-class opening up
> Thought - I'm very bad at science
> Said – Ok, I'll take science
> Why am I in this?
> It was awful
> I didn't want to be stuck on a sub list
> I have no background
> **Whatsoever**
> What am I doing this for?
> You take whatever assignment they're willing to give you
> I pulled out my high school notes
> Hadn't taken science since high school

Nights - I cried the first week
I have to deal with this
Felt totally overwhelmed
Taught half-time
Worked half-time
I felt bad 'cause
Always dealing with the discipline problems
Not a good experience
I'm doing such a **disservice** to them
It's **not fair** to the kids
I **hated** it
I'm making – maybe - small
Slight difference
In that kid's life for 10 minutes out of the day
Right?
Felt so bad
Felt like I was neglecting them
Not knowing what I'm teaching
This isn't worth it to me
Decided to go back full-time
At Government office

Sam does not see himself as having taught. I was surprised to learn of the position he held as a teacher. To me this meant he had taught, but he did not feel he had. I wondered what it would take for him to identify himself as having taught? Sam tells me how when he first was offered the position he had just bought a house, and so accepted the Science 20 class. His body became tense as he told me the turmoil he faced while teaching the class. What he most regrets was not being able to teach the students the way they deserved. His face was filled with sadness as he thought about the students who would soon enter into university without the knowledge or passion for science that they deserved, or that he was able to give them. After hearing this story and feeling the pain that Sam felt during this time, I wondered if he would ever choose to leave his position at the ministry to try teaching again?

Tensions-Work in office or try again
If I were to go back into teaching
You don't even have time to pee
When you're in the classroom
I was at the school sometimes 'til six or seven
It left a bad taste
I'm not really a teacher
I think I've **spent more time** doing **business** stuff

Saw the principal in his van drive by
Evokes that little stab of the heart and the twist
I have just as much to offer as they do
They just have the connection to get in

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Different my life would be
If I had gotten a job
Didn't really pan out
You don't realize it
There's a lot more that goes on
Not just in the classroom with the kids
Now I leave at the end of the day
I'm not satisfied
I'm in an office still
It sucks
I have applied overseas
See what happens…

It happened briefly as Sam reflected on the times when he was confronted with the life he wanted. It was only at our last conversation that his thoughts turned back to the classroom with him as the teacher. I am surprised and excited. I wonder where he will teach and what content. He doesn't seem very hopeful but there was a spark as he contemplated the possibility of him in a classroom again.

The Journey Is Not Over…

I struggled to hear Sam tell his story. He talked of policy and structures but did not delve deeply into his feelings or thoughts. I thought I would have told the story of my life so differently. I imagined he would have included snippets of "him" in the details of what high school Science 20 was. Was this because I was from the United States and he thought I would not know what Science 20 was?

Sam and I negotiated what would be written in this narrative account by reflecting on our conversations, reviewing transcripts and field notes, and clarifying details. From these negotiations I understood more about Sam but also was confronted with more wonders.

It was not until later, when I read the transcripts, that I noticed how often he had used the word "practical". Sam told me, when I pointed this out to him, that it was how his family was. He spoke of his grandmother as he explained. His grandmother had married his grandfather in India. The marriage was an arranged one. His grandmother took care of the family and made sacrifices in order to provide a better life. This was where Sam's parents met and were married. Like his maternal grandparents, Sam's parents moved to Canada in order to provide more opportunities.

I was confused when Sam told me this story. It seemed this was not a story of practicality but of hope, faith, and adventure. It would have been practical to stay in India where they already had a steady business. I realized that the practicality came in around the move to a different country. Sam wondered about his parents' and grandparents' relationships. Did they stay together because of the love and happiness they shared, or was it because at this point it made more sense to just stay together? This causes me to reflect on the relationships in my family, if the reasons they stayed together were love or because if one became ill, no one was financially

able to survive without the other, or if it were just easier to stay with someone you liked okay? I wonder if these stories serve to reinforce the practicality of making decisions.

Sam became sombre as he told another story about his father who, although smart enough to go to university, was unable to increase his education because he needed to provide for his growing family. He got a job with a railway company. His mother worked at a post-secondary institution in order to provide for the family.

Sam wanted to make a difference in the world, but always had to consider if what he wanted would provide a way for him to support himself. This has been a constant tension for him as he is able to provide for himself, but is unsatisfied in his job in an office even though it involves producing education materials. This is not enough to sustain him.

Tensions show up throughout Sam's story as he describes himself as a shy child. The image his parents had of what children should be like (good in math and playing outside) was not the way Sam was constructing his stories to live by. This was once again evident when Sam chose to go to the public junior high school. His ways of being were not congruent with the ways the other students behaved, and so, after only a short time, Sam decided to go back to the system he was familiar with and with the people he knew.

When Sam went to university with no idea of what would be practical or what would allow him to make a difference, he followed the example of some of his friends and went into a general degree within the business program. Still searching for what would fulfill him, Sam took a variety of courses within and outside of business to find out what he might have a passion for. When he decided that teaching was something that was the perfect combination of practicality and passion, he was ¾ of the way through his business program. He decided to finish this degree and later used it to become a CTS minor as well as provide a "Plan B" should he ever need it.

The opportunity came sooner than Sam expected. He was glad he had a back up plan. All through his schooling he was least successful in math and science. As luck would have it, he was offered to teach a Science 20 course. He described this as a horrific experience. The semester after teaching this Science 20 course, Sam was offered another position in the same area. I could tell from Sam's body language and expressions that he felt sad, and felt he had done such a disservice to the students he taught. He turned down the position. He was sad to leave teaching. He felt that he had not really been a teacher as he was not able to live out his imagined story of teaching during the short time he spent in the classroom.

As he continues to work for the Government, in an office, I wonder if he will ever again look to teaching in a classroom. At our last conversation, almost at the end, I could tell that he had news as he sat up straighter and life flooded into his face. He tells me that he has begun applying for teaching positions overseas. He tells me it is a long shot but I can sense that he hopes he will be accepted somewhere.

He wants me to know that the journey is not over. He is not done with teaching, merely out of teaching for now. Sam seems hopeful as he looks to the future and sees himself, once again, in the classroom.

Appendix E: A Narrative Account of Julie – Sue McKenzie-Robblee

The sun is shining as I write my thoughts and reflect on the three conversations that Julie and I have had. I glance out the window and see a winter landscape with mounds of fresh white snow covering tree branches and lying undisturbed on the gentle hills of the park behind the house.

Julie and I met in a restaurant sharing a cup of tea and an appetizer. She graduated from a teacher education program and has yet to teach beyond her practicums, except for a short time as a tutor for a Grade 6 student who was struggling with reading, writing and math.

Julie and her younger sister were born and raised in Home City. Home City is her home and her imagined place where she will work and compose her life's stories. She loves her parents and has great respect for what they have accomplished in their lives. She speaks of her mom as a strong confident woman who, as a young adult, 19 years old, following somewhat in the steps of an older sister, moved to a city in Alberta by herself. Julie's mom was her first teacher. "She's very strong person and has the most positive attitude after all she's been through. I've learned a lot of great life skills from her. My mom has been an awesome role model" (pg. 4...2).

Julie's mom didn't have the benefit of strong parental influences in life as her own mother passed on when she was young and her father remained down east when she moved to Home City to find her own way. Her mom worked her way up the organizational structure of a construction company. "She's done well for herself and she loves her job now" (pg. 5...2).

Julie's dad, the second eldest of four children, opened his own small graphic design company. "He has a partner and one or two people working under him. He makes an honest living and he enjoys what he does. He's taught me many things as well" (pg. 5...2).

Julie describes her dad as very sensitive and as always being there for her. She sees in herself that same sensitivity which is a connecting thread within her own story. "He taught me things growing up about the government and how to do banking and life skills. He's always been the best dad...very caring...he would listen...he's always been there" (pg. 5...2). "He knows that I will figure things out" (pg. 8…3).

As I listen to Julie speak about her parents and their stories I can't help but reflect on my own. Like Julie, my mom was a strong independent person who lost both of her parents early in life. She, having grown up on a farm with the responsibility of raising two younger brothers, learned the value of self-reliance and believed in the individuality and strengths of people. She instilled her work ethic and beliefs throughout our family story by how she lived each day. Her views and values shaped my life and the lives of my siblings. Mom helped me to believe in possibilities. My dad, too, taught me many things about patience and perseverance, and sense of place in the family and the world, as I knew it.

I wonder how the generational stories shape our stories to live by as we move through the transitions from student to student teacher to teacher and, in Julie's current story, her transition to work as a secretary. What would her mom do? What would her dad say? Julie respects the opinions of her parents and they influence how she feels. She knows that being a secretary will not become her life's work. Julie is again thinking about the other possibilities than may be open to her.

Relationships with a strong sense of connection to people and her school stories are threads that Julie keeps circling back to throughout our conversations. She clearly values the people in her life, both friends and family, and these relationships appear to be missing from her current job, which may be what keeps her searching and thinking about the possibility of going back to school to acquire experience in a different area from education. She isn't sure that she wants to be a teacher in a classroom, but that's what being a teacher means to Julie.

Julie's early stories don't seem to point to any particular imagined story for the future. She played with, and at, several scenarios growing up, and loved especially to play house.

> I don't really remember when I was little what I wanted to be when I grew up. I knew I wanted to do something helping people. I had considered nursing. I had considered teaching. I did want to be a teacher when I grew up. I wanted to be a vet too when I grew up too, I love[d] animals. (pg. 3...2)

How much do our early stories and the 'games' we play help us to imagine and try out different stories to live by as we improvise story lines and imaginary lives? What was Julie improvising?

Julie sees helping, serving, caring, and trusting as commonalities that remain signifiers for her choices and wonders today. There is another role, however, that Julie played when she was growing up, and that was of peacekeeper or negotiator. Tension and conflict were things that she noticed, cared about, and tried to help fix or solve. When her parents had problems or "terrible fights" she would talk with each of them and help to bring the more usual equilibrium back to the family.

> From a young age I remember realizing, because they didn't involve us or anything, trying to talk to my dad and tell him mom's thoughts and talk it out with him and try to make him understand and then I'd go to my mom and do the same thing, I was trying to play the peacemaker a little bit…I still do that to this day. I remember doing that a lot and then being the older daughter watching out for my little sister. Trying to shield her even more if possible. (pg. 5...3)

I wonder if playing this role of peacemaker has helped shape Julie's story of helping and caring in her imagined story of either teacher or nurse.

I remember, as the oldest sister with two younger sisters, being the one to play peacemaker between the two of them. Growing up, if it was at all possible, I did whatever it would take to relieve any tension or make the situation better. This wasn't always easy. I

remember my dad reminding me of my responsibility to leave every situation better than I found it. This he believed applied to people, nature, or the world in general. I recall walking through the woods with my dad, and he would carefully move logs off the path, or remove garbage from the creek or carefully step over wild flowers. Leaving situations, especially relationships, better than when I found them, is one of my stories to live by.

Julie's sister was two and a half years younger and it "was a big part of my childhood, growing up with a buddy" (pg. 5...3). Julie describes herself as the musical one, although she was also involved in community league sports, while her sister, the natural athlete, was more passionate about sports, perhaps following her dad's interest and passion. In high school, Julie carried on loving school and the friendships she developed. She was on the swim team, the golf team, the badminton team, and the yearbook club: "the nerdier subjects" (pg. 6...3). She sang a solo at her high school graduation while her best friend played accompaniment on the piano. To this day Julie still likes to do things with others, sometimes needing a gentle push to explore something different. Were her early stories developing her strong abilities to create and understand relational knowing? Is this what made her a good student in school and a good student teacher with whom the children connected? Was this remembered story shaping her imagined story of being a teacher?

Julie had positive school experiences as a student. "I loved going to school and I really enjoyed junior high and high school. I enjoyed being a student and I had really wonderful teachers...I thought the teachers were so cool and they really connected with some of us" (pg. 2…1).

These positive memories and experiences form a thread that also stays with Julie as she explores possibilities for herself in the future. She can see herself as a teacher who 'connects' with kids.

She describes herself as a "good girl" who never got into trouble and who developed a strong group of friends who were focused on school and success as students. "I did well in school, but I struggled with math and physics. I had a math tutor in high school" (pg. 6...3).

Julie was the first person on either side of her family to go to university and finish a degree.

[T]he main reason I went to university is because I had such a solid group of friends. If I didn't have that group of friends and if I didn't go through high school knowing that they were going to university after, like it was just a given for me too. We were all 'Okay, we're going to finish high school and then we're going to go university'. (pg. 6...3)

Julie was storied into university, but not perhaps in the usual way. I remember the family story that I lived by growing up. It mattered not what we took at university, just that we, my four brothers and sisters and I, went, and so we all did. It was not a topic that was discussed a lot, but we just knew throughout our lives that this was the expectation from both Mom and Dad. Dad

and his brother were engineers and Mom had been a registered nurse. Our future-looking stories came from achieving a degree from university.

Julie's group of friends, who travelled together through junior high to high school and then on to university, are still her friends today. She chose her high school in order to stay in relation with these friends, even though her choice of high school was, at first, a slight disappointment for her dad. Her dad had a strong connection to the sports program in one particular high school where he still volunteers his time as a coach, and has done so for many winning seasons. Julie has memories of going to watch his sports teams play and to cheer them on, as well as cheering for her dad. Here are more positive memories about activities from a school landscape.

University wasn't a straightforward path for Julie, and became a place of hard work and one where she needed to make hard choices along the way. She has a regret that she didn't take a year off to work after high school, reflecting now that it might have helped her to know what she wanted to do for her life's work: "I was 17 when I started university" (pg. 6...2). Work is something that Julie knows, and is not afraid of, even if the 'work' is hard. She has had a job since she was 15, and is a hardworking, determined, vivacious person, but she is still searching for the path that feels right for her. "I've always been a very logical and sensible person. I've never been a gambler and I'd rather just take the safe route than take a chance most of the time" (pg. 2...3).

Her first application to university in the B.Sc. Nursing program was turned down. With the help of a guidance councilor, who suggested she take some pre-requisite courses, she applied to a community college as an open student, taking courses on a part-time basis. The courses were ones she could use towards her nursing degree, while also raising her marks. The courses she chose were all nested in science, but she felt she would be fine as they related to biology, not physics, and they were necessary courses. Julie complied with the advice she was given. "I hated it. I didn't think it was for me. And all through high school, I was pretty sure I wanted to be a nurse, so I was really confused and disappointed" (pg.1. 1).

This was perhaps the first time as a student that Julie hadn't been as successful as her remembered story as a student, but she didn't abandon university as a plan. Her friends helped to shape this decision as they were still attending University. She appreciated the flexibility of more than one way to continue with her university dreams.

Julie's story of nursing began earlier than high school, as she remembers looking after her dad when he was sick. "I've always enjoyed taking care of people and everything. If my dad was sick with a cold, I'd make him soup even as a kid and make tea...comfort him" (pg. 9...1).

Julie's confusion continued until she decided that she might make a good teacher. What were the threads that contributed to her seeing herself as a teacher? "I've always loved kids and had fond memories of being in school. I've always loved school and I'm a big reader, I've always loved literature so I thought well, maybe I would be a good teacher" (pg.1...1).

Julie remembered school from the student's side of the desk and easily accepted the bigger narrative of school from this perspective. It was something she was familiar with and it was framing her imagined story of school as a teacher, seeing good students, cool teachers, good friends, and fun learning. She did not see her change of program from nursing into a teacher education program as a risk, but as logical. " I went into education because I kind of gave up on nursing and thought it was too hard, so the safest thing for me was to go into a program where I knew I would be accepted" (pg. 2...3).

Julie does not seem to be the type of person who would give up, especially because something was too hard. Did her strong relationships with her friends throughout high school extend into university? Did her background story in math and physics add a little hesitation, and lack of confidence, to her first experiences in post secondary? Did she feel as connected?

She was accepted into the education transfer program at community college, not applying for education at university, just in case she rejected again: "University was kind of intimidating" (pg. 1...1). Her nursing courses were accepted as options, and she was on her way. Or was she? She reflects positively about her courses, yet felt pressured to choose either an elementary or secondary route. She wasn't sure which way to go, but heard from counselors that it was harder to move from elementary to secondary positions in schools. In secondary, she also had to choose a major. Julie didn't know what to choose. She thought English might work because of her personal love of reading, but she just wasn't sure. In the end she chose elementary: "I've always enjoyed being around little ones" (pg. 2.1). The elementary route satisfied her interest in developmental stages and seemed more generalized: "I have some amazing memories from [community college], I loved school, it was wonderful" (pg. 3...1).

After nearly four years at the community college, she felt prepared and ready for the university program: "I had a great experience" (pg. 3…1). Julie's story to live by as a student was a known and successful storyline, as she knows herself to be a learner and to love learning. Somewhere along the way, in her third year of education, Julie began to once again question education and think about nursing: "I started to realize maybe this isn't the right career for me." Looking back at that time she isn't exactly sure why, as she liked her courses, liked being a student, and loved her practicums. Her mom and dad supported her, and a path that led to nursing or teaching made no difference to them.

> They said I'd make a great teacher and I'd make a great nurse too. I was open with them when I realized I didn't think I wanted to be a teacher in my third year. They said 'Well, what are you going to do?' and I said, 'Well, I'm going to finish.' They said, 'And that's the right choice'. (pg. 5...2)

How much did Julie's early story of wanting to be a nurse play into her feelings? She had not yet done her practicums when she began to shift her thinking. Did Julie recognize the similarities between the two stories? What was her imagined story of teaching? What was her imagined story of nursing?

Julie's student teaching experiences were a highlight of her teacher education program. She completed her first field experience in a Grade 5 classroom in the winter term, and her second field experience in a Grade 1 class, in the following fall term.

> I had an amazing experience from both of them….I had amazing mentor teachers both times and it was a wonderful experience…both mentor teachers made all the difference for me. I learned a lot and gained a lot of resources. (pg. 5...1)

This feeling that she maybe didn't want to teach didn't stem from anything that happened during her practicum. Or, did it?

> It was just a gut feeling [that I didn't want to teach] and then I'd go to my practicums and think okay I can do this for my career and then the practicum would end and then I'd go right back to 'No I don't think I can'. (pg. 3...3)

Her identity started shifting from student to teacher when, on a field trip with her Grade 5 student, she was able to be proactive, anticipate, and prevent potential problems. Her mentor teacher praised her and bought her a coffee and cinnamon bun the next morning. She remembers her mentor saying: "You didn't act like a student teacher yesterday. You acted as a teacher" (pg. 10...2). That meant a lot to Julie. Her student teacher evaluations have been saved and carefully put away. They gave her " tons of positive feedback" and spoke to her abilities as a teacher, especially creating and sustaining relationships with students. She appreciated the children whether they were in Grade 5 or Grade 1, along with all of the inherent differences between the age levels, and this came through as she spoke about her experiences, and as others spoke about her teaching.

These and other positive comments were, in return, sustaining for Julie and kept her moving forward. Other things that Julie found sustaining were the sense that she had completed something: a project, a lesson plan, a unit, or bulletin board display. Here was an echo from her discussion with her parents about persevering to complete her degree. Starting, figuring out, and then completing the degree meant satisfaction and contentment for Julie. She also liked, and was good at, the organizational elements that she was given to do and look after. She knew she had strong organizational skills. She worked long hours and put her all into her classroom experiences. "I kind of did go the extra mile with my lesson plans and trying to find new ways to deliver them and everything….It's exhausting" (pg. 19...2). "I get satisfaction from the work I am doing now when I do a good job for the people I work for. I want to take on challenges in the day. I care about what other people think of me" (pg.. 9...2).

Another moment that stands out for Julie, a moment that speaks to feeling successful, is when she was asked by the Grade 6 teacher from the school where she completed her second practicum if she was interested in tutoring a Grade 6 student who was struggling with reading, writing, and math. With this recognition, Julie felt valued because she was thought to be capable of helping a struggling student. She took on this job in her last term of course work.

I loved to help and gain the experience. It felt like I was a teacher. She and I hit it off right away, we got along great and I went to her Grade 6 graduation…It meant a lot to me. But the job market seemed so bad. (pg. 10…1)

This positive one-on-one experience as a teacher was not strong enough to encourage or motivate Julie to apply for teaching positions when she graduated the term following her last practicum. I wonder how Julie's story might have unfolded if she had had a space and a place to talk with others about composing a whole story to live by, and whether that space or place would help her with the questions she is asking now. Will she be happy with the story she tells?

Julie brought a painting to share with me that had been given to her by a Grade 5 student nearing the end of her first practicum. This oil painting of a cougar running through a flowing river is truly beautiful. The gift of this painting clearly touched her. It hangs on the wall in her apartment now. "It means a lot. [The student] said she wanted to give it to someone special. And she gave it to me" (pg.12…2).

When Julie stops for a few moments in her busy life and notices the painting again she is a little sad. "It reminds me I was a good teacher. It makes me sad because I'm not pursuing it. It just means a lot. I was sad to leave the kids even though it was a lot of work" (pg. 13…2).

Julie graduated with her B.Ed. and wondered where all of the students on stage at convocation would find teaching jobs. "I wasn't so passionate and excited about [teaching] when I graduated" (pg. 13…2). Julie speculates she might have been excited if her final student teaching had happened in her last term of university rather than the term before. The possibility of conversations with practicing teachers on a school landscape, along with access to knowledgeable people who would be able to help her with the application process weren't available at the university. Instead, she went to work full-time for about a year at a restaurant where she had worked on and off for seven years. It was known and comfortable, a place where she worked with friends and really enjoyed it. She likes to serve people. This was something Julie was familiar with so it made an easy transition. "I made good money. I figured I wanted to do what I wanted for a year. I had worked really hard in school and it took me long enough to graduate" (pg. 8…1).

This decision might also have come from the thought and regret about not taking a year off after high school to work and figure out what she wanted to do next. Julie still doesn't know what should come next. The first inklings of guilt and tension arose for Julie because her parents didn't seem to understand why she wasn't at least looking for teaching positions. "My parents weren't very thrilled about [my decision to work at the restaurant]. They were kind of on me to get a real job. I was living at home at the time, too" (pg. 8…1).

I find myself wondering again if, in this transitional space between the two events of graduation and working, there had been a place or space to talk about stories to live by, whether Julie might have been able to reflect about what she wanted to do, or what she wanted her story to be. As I think back on my story of becoming a teacher, I begin to see the importance of the fact that I was able to sign a contract with a school board in February of my final semester of my teacher education program. I didn't know the where, or the what, or the who of the position, but I

did know that I had a position teaching in an elementary school in my city of choice. As I listened to Julie's story, I recognized how the uncertainty of knowing whether of not she could find a position shaped her decisions after graduation.

The year that she had given herself after graduation from the B.Ed. program was coming to an end, and she went to the Alberta Health Services website looking at job postings. Julie was still not looking at teaching positions. Having worked while going to university, Julie had one part-time job at a hospital as a unit clerk. A maternity leave in her former unit created a vacancy posted on the website. She landed the one-year full-time contract as a unit clerk. She went back again to something with which she was familiar. Julie seemed to be circling back to what she knew, and the connections that she had made before the B.Ed. program. The question in my mind as I listened to Julie talk was: 'What is she searching for?' "I was guaranteed full-time hours. I was making great money. I was paid for overtime. I enjoyed my time. Made new friends. Became reacquainted with old friends and I really liked the work" (pg. 8...1).

But this job wasn't permanent, and there were no benefits. One of the things that seemed to be a part of Julie's search was job security. She didn't feel that there was much security in the teaching world in the initial years before gaining a continuing contract. So, Julie applied for three other hospital administrative positions when her temporary position was up, and was offered two of them. She knows that having a degree helped her to obtain these job offers. "I chose the secretary 2 position" (pg.11...1). This new, and current job, is permanent. Julie is working Monday to Friday and now has benefits, a regular raise, and is part of the union. She is making about the same salary as a beginning teacher would make in their first year. Julie sees some drawbacks, such as the pace is a little slower than teaching, although as the first person in this position, she was able to define the job and the work involved. Another drawback is that there are no promotional or advancement opportunities available. Julie is already looking beyond this job for another stepping-stone, so the idea of a permanent job with security isn't all she is searching for.

> I made a promise to myself that I would stay for at least a year. I made a commitment to the people that interviewed me that I was in it for the long run but the job is a lot different than I expected and I don't love it. I like it but it's definitely not what I want to do for my career. I think I'm more capable than this. (pg. 7...2)

> I enjoy my allotted tasks for the most part, but I feel like I could make a difference in a lot of ways, I feel like I can do more. (pg. 18…1)

> I'm not actually helping anyone (pg. 23...2)

I find myself wondering why Julie has not applied for a teaching position, or why she isn't pursuing nursing. The answer for the nursing question, at this moment, is primarily money, and a secondary concern is about the workload, yet she still imagines herself as a nurse. "I may go back to school for the after-degree program. I really love, I know I want to work in a hospital and I'm passionate about helping people and caring for people" (pg. 16...2).

Julie isn't sure that she is ready to back to school full-time though. Julie has a friend who just completed the program and spoke about how much she had to work and how little time she had for anything else.

> It is such an intense two-year program, I'll have to work some when I'm doing it, but I won't be able to work much, so I'll have to get more student loans. I'm not really ready to stop making money right now because I have so much debt….I'd like to go back to school for something within 5 years. (pg. 7...2)

Student loans are a key consideration for Julie: "I still have thousands of dollars of student loans to this day. I need to make money" (pg. 2...2).

The other idea that is germinating for Julie is to become a technician or therapist where she could still work with patients, but be a little less demanding in terms of the time commitment and the emotional connection.

> I've also been thinking lately... I'm a very sensitive and emotional person. I'm a little afraid that I'll get too attached to patients." (pg. 8...2) "Would I be able to handle being around the ill? If you are on a unit you make an attachment with a patient, what if they pass away, that's going to be really difficult (pg. 17...1).

Julie hasn't totally left her identity as a teacher behind. Tension, frustration, and guilt arise when friends and acquaintances ask her what she is currently doing.

> I would tell them that I work as a unit clerk in a hospital or I am working as a secretary in the [clinic] and this was okay until the next question: 'Did you go to university?' I am proud of my Ed. Degree, so I kind of want them to know that, but I don't want to invite the question because I don't want to explain why I'm not teaching." (pg. 12...3) "I feel that people are judging me. (pg. 19...1)

Julie feels some tension and a conflict about what she might do next.

> It's not like I don't want to be a teacher, I just feel like I have a lot of debt and I can't. I can't afford to just try for something [in teaching] that I'm not sure if I'm completely passionate about. (pg. 15...1)

Julie has several reasons that prevent her from continuing her path in education. She didn't apply initially for a teaching position because she had heard from friends, from the media, and from her professors that teaching positions were few, and hard to come by. She believed them.

> I loved the schooling, every bit of it really, the practicums and everything, but I don't know I think what deterred me initially right after school, after I graduated was there were no jobs...It really got into my head." (pg. 9...1) "It seemed so bleak so I didn't really pursue it. (pg. 10...1)

Julie the learner had accomplished a lot from attaining her degree. "I'd learned a lot of valuable skills, even for things that I'm doing today but I wasn't so passionate and excited about [teaching] when I graduated I'm still not really sure why" (pg. 9...1).

> Our professors were telling us that it was difficult and it was no secret, as I was reading it even in the papers and I had friends who were trying to sub and they said we can't even get on the sub list. It was just really discouraging and I just needed to get a job. (pg. 2...2)

What other chapters were there to Julie's story that prevented her from taking the step towards application? She had support from home, positive evaluations from practicums, and great experiences from her teacher education courses. But?

She had the necessity of paying off student loans, and this was one of the realities she faced. "But you get so little compensation for your first year, for so much work, so many hours, after spending so much time and energy and effort in school for 4 years, or in my case nearly 6" (pg.19...2/4). "It's not like I don't want to be a teacher, I just feel like I have a lot of debt and I can't" (pg. 15...1).

Julie's imagined place was staying, working, and living her story in Home City. This was a very strong imagined story so with the bleak prospect of finding a job in Home City, she didn't want to apply anywhere else.

> I knew I didn't want to move to a small town by myself. I surround myself constantly with my loved ones and my whole family's here and all of my friends that I grew up with since junior high. I've never had that strive to be independent and do things like that. And for me it was worth it to stay in Home City and find a career doing something else, [rather] than move away and try teaching. So, that's what I did. (pg. 10..1)

This was another reality.

There were other reasons that threaded through Julie's thoughts as she decided not to apply to teach, even though she believes she would be a good teacher.

> It's a lot of work. It's a lot of unpaid overtime, especially in the first few years. It's exhausting. Even in my practicum, I would stay after school cleaning up, marking, till about 5:30, go home, do my lesson plans. I would do so much work. I would make elaborate worksheets and tangible materials that the kids could work with, and on and on, and then go into school an hour and a half early the next day, prep, teach the whole day, and then do it all over again. (pg. 16...1)

Julie believed that it might get better after the first couple of years if she were lucky enough to get a contract and stay in the same grade.

I realize that teaching will get easier after the first couple of years, especially if you are lucky enough to stay in the same grade, and then it'll be even easier 'cause you can reuse all your materials and lesson plans and things like that. (pg. 19...2)

At the same time, Julie thought: "I don't know if I would still love it after doing that for even the first few years. I don't think I could do it" (pg. 16...1).

Julie, because of the importance of significant people in her life, feels that the story she wrote for herself as a student teacher would not give her the time she needed to continue to live that story for a whole career. "I like the idea of when you're done work, you go home, and you're done for the night" (pg 16...1). "I'm really busy every night. I feel like now that my evenings are free, they get filled up very quickly" (pg.7...3).

What I didn't love about teaching was you couldn't always be yourself. I mean that you have to wear a mask when you're teaching. You have to be happy and pleasant and chipper and energetic...it's exhausting. You always have to be on your game. People expect a lot of you, I think. (pg. 20...2)

Julie believes there is no down time in teaching. Although she loves people, and she loves working, she needs time to be by herself, to just be. She needs time to be sad, to feel angry or upset, to be excited, happy, or even a little scattered.

I don't want to be a classroom teacher, and I've thought about that a little bit since you and I have been talking. There's so many expectations of you and a lot of parents don't understand what teachers go through every day and what every day classroom life is like and when it's their child struggling it's automatically the teacher's fault and some parents are, you can't rationally explain to them why a child is struggling in a certain area, and it's so structured, so outlined with the curriculum, in classroom teaching. (pg. 4...3/4)

Julie had the thought that she wanted to help every child, and that wasn't always possible with the number of students in a class, the expectations of the curriculum that needed to be covered and assessed, as well as the demands of parents for all the children to be happy and do well. Julie's story to live by of helping, caring, serving, making a difference, and connecting with people was bumping up against the realities she experienced as a student teacher: class size, coverage of curriculum, and expectations of parents that she was unable to fix or fulfill each and every time.

I think it's when people don't realize what teachers do on a day to day basis and how it's unrealistic expectations of them, from parents, I think it's hard, you have a whole classroom of 30 plus students, like I did in both of my practicums. I mean, obviously every parent wants their child to do the best they can, and they think you should somehow be giving each of them some sort of individualized attention. (pg. 4...3)

Julie wants to do more than just fix things or make things right. She wants to do more. She wants to make that difference in someone's life.

Julie doesn't feel valued on the out of school landscape as a teacher. From the media, friends, and acquaintances, she hears that teaching is easy, with lots of holidays, and as the reason kids don't achieve well. This is another source of tension for her. Whether teaching or nursing, she wants to make a difference and, in achieving that, she doesn't mind working hard to serve, help, care, or create lasting relationships. In fact, it seems she would rather create lasting relationships throughout her story than short term ones where the children or patients move on out of her life, especially if there is a situation where she can't negotiate a different ending… learning challenges, conflicts, or perhaps a death.

Julie still sees herself as a teacher. "I do believe I am a good teacher, but I just don't think I can do it for the rest of my life" (pg.19.1). Through our conversations, Julie has come to the realization that perhaps she still does want to be a teacher and can see herself teaching, but not as a teacher in a classroom. "Maybe I will be a teacher, but I just realized that I don't want to teach in a school and maybe that's why I thought that I don't want to teach" (pg. 25...2). "My head was just kind of stuck in the whole classroom teaching thing...I didn't hear about any alternatives when I was in school...no one talked about anything else [other than teaching in a classroom]" (pg. 27...2).

This makes me think about the story that may need to shift or be interrupted in teacher education programs to include alternative teaching landscapes or possibilities. How do we value and include imagined stories of teaching as student teachers explore the teaching landscape? How do we honor and value the contributions that people can make on alternative landscapes, which include personal and professional complexities?

Julie dreams about teaching and she still sees herself as a teacher.

I dream at night about [being a teacher] all the time. I quite frequently dream of myself in the classroom. In the dream, I am teaching and I guess… I see myself as a teacher. I think that I am right for the profession, but honestly I think the reason is I don't have that passion and that never ending energy that seems to be needed to be recognized as being good. (pg. 10...2) (pg. 15…1)

Julie is still exploring and searching for possibilities as she tries to imagine a future-looking story. I wonder what she means by 'passion?' Is that a way of saying she would be a teacher, or teaching, if she could shape her own landscape? "I still am not really sure what I want to do when I grow up, for lack of a better word" (pg. 3...2).

In her ideal imagined story, she might like to combine her interests in nursing and teaching by working in a hospital setting as a teacher. She wants to do more, and make a difference by helping and caring about others who need her. She likes the idea of flexibility. She wants to try different things and thinks that she will as long as she has people and relationships that help her discover the possibilities that are out there. "I don't know what, but I'm going to do something great with my life. I'm pretty sure. I hope so" (pg. 22...2).

She has a boyfriend now who is also exploring possibilities. There is some talk of traveling for a couple of months, and perhaps teaching English overseas. There is still the

thought of nursing, of going back to school in a related area, of combining the story of teaching and the story of nursing. I wonder what she will end up doing for her life's work and what she will compose as her story to live by. One thing I know for certain is that whatever Julie chooses to do she will have people around her for whom she cares and who care about her.

A Narrative Account of Megan – Pam Steeves

It was well past our early evening meeting time as I anxiously waited at a table in the small café we had agreed to meet in. Earlier in the day I had checked the place out. I wanted to find a spot that would be quiet enough and also visible enough that we would see each other. I chose a spot close to the outside window and front door. I imagine 'reserving for coffee' isn't typical but I didn't want to miss her! Ironically 'with the 'best laid plans', I did!

As I sat and worried, Megan was sitting just around the corner, out of sight. I kept looking at my watch. Maybe I got the time wrong, maybe the date, oh dear. Megan's emails sounded so positive. She was curious about our study of early career teacher attrition, and said she was specifically willing to take part in this aspect of the study, a narrative inquiry with those who graduated with a B.Ed. but had not gone into classroom teaching. Eventually I made a second or third traipse around the restaurant looking for a young woman seated alone. Our eyes connected! How happy I was and how apologetic! Megan said she was sure I'd be there and figured I'd been delayed in traffic. She would simply wait. That's when I knew how lucky I was. Megan was really interested and wanted to talk.

We began with looking over the consent forms. Megan read carefully but signed without hesitation. I talked a little about the way things might unfold in our conversations held over a three month time period. I told her we were interested in her life with an eye to wondering how it might be that she decided not to go into teaching in the traditional classroom setting. Our meetings would be conversational, not a set of questions. Megan was gracious in her response to me. It only felt right that if I was going to be asking her to tell of her life I should begin by telling a bit of mine. And so, as we sipped our special coffees with the evening darkness of late November surrounding us, I began.

I told Megan briefly about who I was at the CRTED at the U of A, and that I had been a teacher for many years but always worked part-time after the birth of our son with disabilities. I told her that Matthew's life had dramatically shaped mine and my husband's and that over time it seemed to me that it was the 'the system,' not Matthew, that was the most distressing part, the most disabling. When I came to a crossroads in my journey as a teacher, I began my PhD. I was able to continue my involvement in things that mattered to me but in the part time way I needed, through teaching, and research opportunities at the U of A and CRTED, a centre for research for teacher education. I told her I have continued my association with the centre as an adjunct professor, although now living on the west coast due again to personal reasons. I was excited about our current project around early career teacher attrition and very eager to listen to her in conversation. Little did I know then about how part of her stories would resonate with my own.

Megan began with telling about her present work with families in Greenborough, a small community in southern Alberta. She is involved specifically in a resource centre for families with pre-school children, to connect them to all kinds of services, information, and support. She felt she was hired for her strengths around teaching, because her job involves "kind of being teacher." But the job also involves "kind of being a social worker" and "kind of being a community developer." She has been involved in early childhood development, parent education, and screening. At present she meets with members of the community to help people think of the

importance of investing in these early years. She told me "It's very relationship based work, there's no leader saying we need to do these things. It's a lot of beginning conversation. What do you think we should do? What do the families that you work for think?" I was struck by her excitement and enthusiasm for *the way* this work was happening. She went on to say "but every community is going to invest in early years in different ways. So what does your community need? What does your community want to do? They're very much like let me build it from the bottom."

Megan told me she that for her B.Ed., she chose early childhood for her minor specialization. She loves working with young children and families. "We connect parents to all you can imagine." She appreciates the busyness of parent's lives and feels she can lead them to the resources they need, and, if not the answer to a question, then the person with whom the parent can connect. Sometimes she feels parents feel uncomfortable asking for help, that there could be a stigma involved, but as soon as they understand this is a service for everyone they are thrilled.

I wondered how long Megan had been doing this work. She said she had done it part-time and also during the summers for two years while getting her B.Ed. and now it has been another two years. Her response led me to wonder if she had imagined continuing this work all along. I was quite surprised when she told me "I don't know. I think I really wanted to be a teacher, but then I really liked the work I did." In fact, she wanted to be a teacher all the way through her B.Ed. right up until the very end, her Advanced Professional Term (APT). It was after the experience with her APT, which she described as "not the greatest experience teaching," that wonders about that dream began creeping in. Experiencing competing stories--her part time community work alongside her APT--she began to wonder if she could give up the work she loved for teaching. She thought of the APT as giving her the experience that would be pivotal in her decision one way or the other. After it was over, she made the decision to go with the present position she loves, but her unease was captured in her words, "It was a challenge though because I still think if I had my own classroom would I like it more? It was not an easy decision. It wasn't something where I was, OK, I know I'm not going to be a teacher. I'm clearly going to do this. Still I would say, very conflicting."

I wondered if she was still experiencing these stories as conflicting two years later and she told me about her workshop experiences in school with kindergarten children and their parents as part of her present job. When she is in the classroom with children she is elated, "everything I signed up to be." A lot of people she knows describe her as being a teacher but not teaching right now; they say that if a classroom opened up she would be one. Megan herself was thinking she could be a 'real teacher' if she wanted to and so when a position came up a while back she applied. She felt she needed to do this because she knew that further commitment to work would move her closer towards 5 years "out" and she wasn't sure she would be "in the running" any more for a teaching position.

She proceeded to tell me about the experience. "When I was doing the interview and when I was walking through the school, I was like, I would never give up what I have for this." She found it was much clearer to her, once she was actually in the school, even one she knew

well, that she did not want to be a teacher in a classroom. Comparing to her present job she went on,

> I love teaching, and I do love that part but I think I can still get those things that I love through my job with so many more. I find teaching to be very restricting and it's very much like you have this curriculum and these expectations, and you have to do these things to me is how teaching feels whereas my job has so many opportunities that are those kind of grassroots, what do you think, we should try this, that there's so much freedom and there's so much creativity that I couldn't, I don't even work a set schedule, I work flex hours whenever I need to kind of thing. I don't know.

Megan said she cried about her realization that, after all, she did not want to be a teacher, explaining it was a big part of her identity, her 'story to live by' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). She expressed that she was "grieving a little bit." It seemed that for Megan her imagined story of being a teacher, the one she had lived with for so long was shifting, because of what she saw as restrictions to her freedom to be and become who she was in relation to children and families and learning. She said, "I think my philosophy about how children learn and how families need to grow isn't reflected in public school here." During the school interview she mentioned that on the question around the setting of IPP's she said, "I would have parents involved because I think parents are the best experts of their children and they know what's best and I could coach them and help them with the plan and they were kind of looking at me like I had three heads and I was looking at them like they had three heads."

I thought about her experience with her present job working with families and how what *she* believes in and knows, her 'personal practical knowledge' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), seemed to be discounted in the interview. I thought back to my own experience as a young mother with a child with special needs and how my experience and what I believed in as a parent was discounted. Megan went on to say "How can I argue what's best for your child? You (the parent) are there all the time. You have been that teacher 24/7 for years and years and years. I can give, well this works with some other people I know. To me I would never make long terms plans without the parents on board." I wondered about Megan's passionate respect for parent knowledge. I would soon come to know more.

Megan shared that she had personal experience with "seeing how much parents become advocates for their children." Megan's sister lives with a disability. She said that everything, including her entire education, has been a struggle. I began to think we had come to a doorway into her past, into her embodied knowing. I pulled out a blank sheet of paper and a pen. I thought it might be time for me to ask Megan if she would be willing to draw out a kind of timeline, an annal of events of her past up to the present and even imagined future. I told her the line could go any way she wanted, looking back to when she was a child, whatever came to mind. I mentioned that we might use the annal to talk about different things, to trigger stories. Her response was a surprise. She thought the annal task would be hard for her because she didn't think it would be very positive. I assured her it was all right. The annal didn't have to be all positive. I mentioned that a lot of times where there is tension on the annal, "it often is a learning place where you start thinking differently about stuff. So whatever is comfortable for you."

For this part of the narrative account I chose to create word images (Clandinin et al., 2006) of Megan's backward-looking stories, as she told them from her annal; early childhood through to university and up to her present employment. The word images are drawn from Megan's actual words in the transcripts. They portray a more vivid rendering of stories that helped to shape who Megan is, and is becoming. As well, I imagined the word images relating to Megan's love of scrap booking. During our second conversation Megan shared with me one of her elaborate colour coded books from her Grades 4 to 6 years. Megan created the book several years after the events took place. For example she recalled creating her Grades 4 to 6 scrapbook in Grade 7 or 8. Megan's mother collected and kept all "the school day treasures" for her. The scrapbooks held beautifully arranged and detailed collections of school project work, awards, photos, documents, and other things. She drew my attention to all the different years she had written down that "she wanted to be a teacher." But what struck me most were Megan's reflections on events several years after they occurred. She included these "journal like" entries in the book. She now scrapbooks the trips she takes, family events, and so on. I like the notion of scrapbooks. There is a sense that we see a partial story, like storied moments recalled, they are but a scrap. We know we can never see the whole (Greene, 1995), yet I imagine how much Megan must know about herself, her stories to live by, through this reflective practice.

Scrapbook One

I grew up in a day home
My mom …
Had to quit her job
Because of my sister's disability
She couldn't leave her anywhere
She started babysitting kids
To have some money –right?
So I always really liked them
I would always help her
Ever since I was maybe 2

My sister
They told my mom
She was un-teachable-Locked in a bathroom
I'm sure the teachers had no support
But she was terrified of going to school

Mom got her EA diploma
I'm learning this
We should try this
I remember being interested in that
Helping her out with my sister

I really hated elementary school
I was in enrichment
Which meant we had to go read in a storage closet

I tried to fail Grade 4
So I could hang out with my friends

Scrapbook Two

My Mom
Sent me to (another) school
I really liked junior high and high school
It was so fun-Honours and IB
I took jazz and tap and ballet

My mom
Started an organization ~Afterschool activities
I taught their dancing, their teen night
Teaching
I just knew that's what I was gonna do

A lot of people pushed me
Be a special needs teacher
But I really didn't want to
How could I work with special kids all day
When my sister is sitting home with nothing

But I wanted to be a teacher
My life with my sister
Helped me make that decision
The school system failed her
They gave up

My mom's an incredible person
I actually still do things with (her group)

Scrapbook Three

My B.Ed.
An early childhood minor
IPT- Won excellence in student teaching
Opportunity to try whatever I wanted
Yes I'm gonna be a teacher

APT--Grade 4 again
They had nowhere else to put me

And on my desk
At the end of the day
A list of things -This is what you did wrong
And he would be gone

A flagship school
You are here to learn from me
Keep your opinions to yourself
And I have lots of opinions about everything
So we didn't really get along

Bought my house
Come September what are you going to do?
How can I sub?
Later I'll become a teacher
Then I just got invested in the work I was doing

And now I'm like I don't know

It was still a puzzle. On the one hand even though describing her experiences in elementary and her last practicum as "lame" she said "I think I still, I know this is still what I want to do." Moments later she described herself as a person who didn't like things being done to her. She remembered her time in Grade 4 when she challenged and resisted the "pull out" enrichment programming by trying to fail. She talked about her "stubborn defiance," remembering getting into trouble for big opinions. "And I feel like when you're in school and you're a teacher, lots of things are done to you, you don't get control over so many things…"

As we continued our conversations over several meetings her insights about her own stories to live by were becoming clearer as she mentioned them aloud. I resonated with what she said next. Thinking about the place of school she said, "I would like to know I was in a place where my opinion mattered and my voice was heard …cause when it comes to the little ones especially I think I have pretty big opinions on how, if I could be in a classroom, how I would change it." Our intimate narrative inquiry space was in some ways also a public place; a *safe* public place. I imagined a *safe* public place was what she wished for in the out of classroom places (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) on school landscapes, a place where it was safe to *be* in the public place of school.

Megan had "big opinions" about school landscapes, both the in and out of classroom spaces (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) as well as off school landscapes where children's and families' lives out of school shaped their knowing and becoming on school landscapes. She felt teachers needed to know the stories of the families and children in their classes, so they could appreciate why certain behaviours might be happening in school. She felt teachers need to know, for example, if a mom is depressed, or going through a separation or not getting help if needed; teachers might need to know "what's on Mom's plate." But she also felt that many teachers don't know what they should do, or who they should call when they do hear stories. She felt teachers on the "frontline" were "left defenceless on a lot of things." Her sense from her own education

experiences and talking to teacher friends was that "they just teach curriculum, curriculum, curriculum or they push that so much. And all the things that impact your classroom are the things they don't give teachers any skills to deal with."

She expressed her view that schools should be less "island like" and more community based to connect with families. She tempered her thoughts with sharing that she felt there were likely schools that were more connected to their communities and she knew from school people about "team teaching things." She said she felt rude to be making these remarks but it was just that she hadn't experienced any of this. I replied that you only can be talking from your experience and that it is what it is. And we are very interested in what people are saying and what teachers are saying and people who are not teaching or teachers who have left …I wanted Megan to know my great interest in listening to her.

In a later conversation she talked to me about her philosophy in regards to children's learning. She has a copy of a poem on the workroom wall at her workplace. She loves that her room becomes a reflection of what she believes. The poem is all about the many voices of children, their laughing, and their wondering. Yet for her it seemed "the institution shuts it down. It's like they tell them to separate excitement from learning."

Megan told me her approach to learning with young children.

My planning is me spending time with the kids and figuring out what they are interested in and then I'm like wow they were obsessed with the block centre because all they wanted to do was build ramps, we need to add this for next time. That's how I plan because I wanna capitalize, foster what they're interested in.

Her remarks brought me back to my own long ago school landscapes working as a teacher-librarian in team teaching relationships. I particularly remember the children who were having difficulty reading and writing and how, with inquiry projects of their own choosing, because they were so interested, they would be compelled to figure out ways to read, find out, and express themselves. It just worked so much better the other way around…igniting their imaginations with their hearts. I was thinking how wonderful it would be for me to work with a teacher like Megan.

From her experience Megan said that in schools you are expected to justify everything. Referring to the 'blocks story' she said you would have to "sneak it in." And then, "why can't it just be kids were fascinated in this and the learning came as they were exploring." For Megan, it was part of her stories to live by to be creative and have the freedom to do what she wanted to do, and she wanted the children to have these opportunities too but the practical experiences she had in the classroom led her to believe that when you are a new teacher you can't take the time to reflect and to wonder if what you are doing fits with what you believe in, because you are so in the midst of figuring out how to get through the day.

It struck me how these narrative inquiry conversations were giving us both time to reflect. The annal she created drawing out a more temporal wholeness of her life had taken her back in time to many stories of childhood and her mom. Thinking now about what she was doing

she could see more readily how "all those things fell together" leading her to feel very passionate about "changing how the education system works." Megan noted how her mom's inventive improvisatory ways to deal with situations around her sister's education figured so prominently in her own life decisions. The stories on her annal helped her see her mom's shaping influence. "I didn't really think that coming in to talk about why I'm not a teacher would have anything to do with my Mom, right?" She shared with me in the next conversation that "I called my mom after and told her that I thought it was funny how a lot of the things that came up about her work and the things she does and how I guess I never really thought about how my work is similar until we were talking, so it was kind of cool."

Megan often described herself as the person who always needed to know "why, and how come." By the end of our first conversation she wanted to know what kind of changes we'd be making from this research. I talked about actually wanting to find out what the stories of experience were for those who did not go into classroom teaching. I said we would look across the stories of several participants in this particular study for patterns or threads. We were not creating a prescriptive thing because everything is contextual but, by illuminating resonant threads across the stories, new questions might be asked, new ways of thinking about early career teacher attrition might be imagined, and new more educative prospects for early career teachers might be explored. As I listened to myself I thought it sounded pretty hazy in these brief moments of telling but Megan seemed to go with it. "Well I guess it would be pretty pointless for me to tell you anything if you already had the end in mind…so yeah I guess that makes sense."

Just as I believe in this narrative inquiry work we are doing, Megan believes in the work she is doing right now with children and families. She believes there are many opportunities in her work to shape lives with more possibilities on the larger 'off school landscape.' She would like to know that communities are working to empower parents to give them confidence. "It's fascinating to me how you can do huge community work and support families who will support their children to grow up so that they have a smooth experience in school."

Yet so many people ask Megan about her job, her plans for the future. They say that if she were a teacher she would have job security, she could be settled; she would know, to some extent at least, how her life would unfold. Megan says she can't know where her job is taking her because the educative growth and possibility of her position is evolving, "The position that I have right now didn't become invented until July so I mean, how could you plan for that?" When people ask Megan where her job will take her next she is willing to live with the uncertainty of "I don't know." It seems she is willing, as she continues to compose her life, to "make the road by walking" (Horton & Freire 1990).

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Chapter 6: Early Career Teacher Attrition: From Stories to Live By to Stories to Leave By

Introduction

In April 2010, we received a grant from Alberta Education to inquire into the topic of early career teacher attrition in Alberta. We proposed three empirical studies. This paper presents the results of a narrative inquiry into the experiences of six teachers who left their teaching positions within their first five years of teaching. In Alberta, approximately 40% of beginning teachers leave the profession in their first five years. As a team of researchers, we are teachers, principals, teacher educators, and researchers.

There are different conceptualizations of why early career teachers leave teaching: some draw on characteristics of the individual, such as age and gender, while others draw on contextual factors, such as lack of support, concerns about students, or lack of resources (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Macdonald, 1999; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). While recognizing the realities of individual and contextual factors as frames for *why* teachers leave, our interest is in what is masked about early career teacher attrition by these framings. There is much we do not understand about *how* early career teachers come to leave the profession. In order to deepen our understandings, we designed this study to narratively inquire into the experiences of early career teachers who chose to leave the profession. Our inquiry puzzle was around how teachers become teachers and come to leave teaching, that is, it was an identity puzzle. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) conceptualized identity as a narrative term, as "stories to live by." Stories to live by is a way to link contexts, both personal and professional, with teacher knowledge. Framing early career attrition as a problem of identity making and identity shifting, "directs our attention away from what works and how it works and directs our attention toward noticing how much is at work and how necessary it is to pay careful, wide-awake attention to the shifting landscapes and to the lives being composed within it" (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009, p. 11).

Research Design

In trying to gain a better understanding of the high numbers of early career teachers who are leaving the profession in their first five years, the research design needed to be both descriptive and explanatory. Narrative inquiry allowed us to focus on the experiences of teachers who had left. Narrative inquiry is a research methodology that has not yet been used to study early career teacher attrition. In narrative inquiry, experience is studied through explorations of the personal/social, temporality, and place dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Participants.

The criteria for selecting participants included: teaching in an Alberta school; graduation with a B.Ed. from an Alberta university; and having taught for less than five years. Gender, grade level, and subject matter were not determining criteria, as our intention was not to have a representative group. We selected six participants. Their backgrounds included elementary schools, secondary schools, rural schools, urban schools, and a variety of content areas.

Coming to the participants.

In order to recruit participants, we designed a series of digital and hard copy posters and distributed them throughout the province. We also set up a Facebook page, and email account as recruitment venues. The Alberta Teachers' Association included an advertisement in their provincial newsletter. Despite these efforts, we found it to be difficult to find participants. The recruitment attempts provided little contact with possible participants. The participants were found through contact with colleagues who were in relation with individuals who had left the profession. Once we had potential participants, initial contact was through email or phone calls. Participants were provided with an initial contact letter prior to participation (see Appendices).

Methods.

There were three to six conversations, one-to-one with each participant. Conversations varied in length from one hour to two-and-a-half hours, and were held in places where participants were most comfortable. Coffee shops, restaurants, or settings away from work places, were chosen. Participants appreciated the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. In our first conversation with each participant, we discussed the information letter and consent form (see Appendix A and B) and obtained their consent.

We audio-recorded each conversation and had them transcribed. Throughout the entire process, from design to the preparation of final research texts, we were attentive to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. We engaged participants in conversations about their early experiences, their schooling and teacher education experiences, their teaching experiences, their experiences of leaving teaching, and their experiences since leaving. Different methods including sharing memory box artifacts, as well as creating time-lines, annals, and poetry were used to enrich the conversation. From these transcriptions, we engaged in an interpretive process of inquiring into their stories, and identifying narrative threads from their experiences over time. For each participant, a narrative account was created around these threads. Narrative accounts are interpretive constructions of individual experiences attentive to the three-dimensional inquiry space (temporality, sociality, place). The draft narrative accounts were negotiated with each participant in subsequent meetings in order to get response, and to deepen understanding about each participant's experiences. The six narrative accounts are included as appendices to this chapter (Appendix C, D, E, F, G, H).

When the narrative accounts were negotiated with participants, the research team outlined each participant's narrative threads. As a team, we then identified resonant narrative threads across the experiences of the six participants. Resonant narrative threads are threads that run across, and through, the narrative accounts. It was from these threads that we began to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the participants. We identified six resonant threads, outlined below.

Ethical considerations.

Although there was limited personal risk involved with this study, we were careful to take steps to decrease any risk. All members of the research team adhered to the confidentiality agreements. We were careful to attend to concerns around anonymity, proper recruitment, and

safe storage of data. However, with a relational research methodology, such as narrative inquiry in which researchers live alongside participants, we were also attentive to relational ethics.

Ethical approval.

Because all participants taught in Alberta, and there was a possibility that participants may have graduated from the same teacher education program, or may even have taught in the same school division, we were very careful to ensure anonymity of participants. Field texts were only available to individual participants, transcriptionist, and the research team. The transcriptionist filled out a confidentiality agreement to ensure confidentiality. Pseudonyms have been used for participants, schools, districts, cities or towns, and teacher education programs. The participants signed an informed consent form that outlined they understood the research purposes (see Appendix A and B).

Attentive to understanding that these conversations might include speaking of negative experiences, we provided support with empathetic listening throughout conversations. Participants were able to withdraw at any time during the study. No participants withdrew.

Resonant Threads

When we discussed participants' narrative accounts, we identified resonant narrative threads. While some threads are resonant throughout all stories, others are more prominent in some narrative accounts. In what follows we outline the six resonant threads.

Resonant narrative thread one: Early landscapes: Importance of what brought them to teaching.

Researchers and educational theorists (Greene, 1995; Kerby, 1991; Carr, 1986) have written about the strong influence of stories of early landscapes or contexts on teachers' identities. These early landscapes are ones that also shape individuals' stories of teaching, and of becoming a teacher. We saw resonance with this narrative thread in Natalie's narrative account. Both her mother's story of learning, and of institutions, shaped Natalie's story of learning as one in which a solid base of subject matter knowledge is built, and then subsequent learning is constructed on that solid base. This view of learning is one that Natalie lived out in her teaching as well as in her story of moving up the hierarchy of institutions to positions of more and more influence, positions from which she could increasingly make change.

Another strong influence on Natalie's early landscape was her experience with two teachers: one was her Grade 3 teacher who interrupted a story in which Natalie was being promoted without an adequate knowledge base. Natalie learned that teachers could have a significant influence on how a child experienced or lived out a school career. The other teacher who had a powerful influence on her story of becoming a teacher was her tutor who she saw twice a week from Grade 4 until the end of Grade 9. In thinking about Natalie's story one of the questions that resurfaced, which we thought about often during this research project, is, "How do we know how to sustain beginning teachers if we don't know what shaped their stories of coming into teaching?"

Laura's early stories of becoming a teacher are nested in her own involvements, success, and relationships with teachers that she had as a student going through school. Her mother worked in a community school as a program assistant in the small town where Laura grew up, and offered after school programs for parents and children. School landscapes, therefore, were familiar to Laura as she was growing up. Her grandmother was also a teacher and she listened to stories of teaching during visits with her grandmother. As a high school student, Laura described herself as the "go-to person" whenever there were visitors to the school or things that needed to be done. No one was surprised when Laura chose the career path of teacher. It is significant in Laura's story to notice that her imagined story of teaching places a strong importance on the extracurricular possibilities for students.

Alis'ss early landscape stories were filled with experiences that allowed her to see herself as a change agent. Her family gathered around the dinner table and discussed current events and budgeted money each month to donate to charity. This notion of becoming a teacher to help others shaped Alis'ss way into teaching. Alis saw teaching as a career in which she could be involved in constructing environments that were attentive to how diverse each student is, thus recognizing the individuality of children. Alis'ss father was a teacher, and thus her early stories of who she would be often included becoming a teacher. Throughout her school journey she had a number of teachers she saw as role models, and experienced a number of events that she was involved in which placed her as teacher.

Dan's early beginnings also included stories about a number of family members who were teachers, including his father. His childhood memories revolved around athletics, sport, and the individuals who influenced him in these areas. Dan's stories to live by were shaped strongly by sport, and in some ways it seems that teaching offered a way to influence others, in ways that he had been influenced. Dan's experiences with both education and sport seemed to provide glimpses of what it would be like to work in a field that included both of these things; Dan became a physical education teacher.

Reid, similarly to Dan, grew up around sports and athletics. His father played competitive sports and coached him throughout his teenage years. Reid's mom was involved in activity in a recreational way, which provided opposing experiences around activity and sport. Reid also had an uncle that was a physical education teacher who he looked up to. Like the other participants, Reid had influential teachers along the way, who happened to be physical education teachers. His experiences with playing sports, and coaching sports, like Dan, strongly shaped his stories of seeing himself as a physical educator, coach, and the person he would be as a teacher.

Audrey Jayne's family came from a Persian culture. Her grandparents worked hard and were successful in their home country. When they came to Canada and settled in the town that became their home, Audrey Jayne's parents became influential in their community. Audrey Jayne remembers how, while watching her parents work hard to support her, she promised herself that she would be self-sufficient. She wouldn't be a drain on her parents. She wanted to get a good job and work hard so she would be able to live, and become part of the community. This reflected her parents' and grandparents' stories to live by. Audrey Jayne, like the other

participants, made a connection with certain teachers and is still in touch with one of them. It was this teacher's influence that helped Audrey Jayne finally decide to become a teacher.

The experiences described above portray the stories that brought the participants to teaching. Their paths to teaching are inextricably linked to their stories to live by; these stories to live by are expressions of what they believe and value and are a part of who they are, and are becoming. If we can better understand beginning teachers' stories to live by, we may better understand what might keep them teaching in the profession. Being attentive to early landscape stories can provide the context needed to better understand not only how we might retain teachers, but also how we might sustain them (see Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press). Shifting the conversation from retaining to sustaining allows an interruption to the dominant ways we think about beginning teachers and perhaps opportunities to think otherwise (Greene, 1995).

Resonant narrative thread two: Interrupted: Bumping stories.

The participants' imagined stories around teaching were complex, fluid, temporal, and, as mentioned in the section above, shaped by their early landscapes. Each participant spoke to entering the professional landscape, and having their imagined stories interrupted by the system, which provided experiences that allowed the participants to story themselves out of teaching. We see this interruption as bumping between the person's story to live by and the stories on the landscape. We see these bumps as creating opportunities for these individuals to negotiate their stories to live by, their identities. In a way we see these bumps as awakenings to how their own stories may, or may not, be lived out on both the professional and personal landscapes. For the individuals we worked alongside, this bumping eventually shifted their stories to live by, to stories to leave by.

Alis had a strong imagined story of who she would be; this story included changing the system for the betterment of everyone involved. Part of her imagined story was also creating inclusive environments that allowed for respect, belonging, and individualism. Alis had many bumps with the system as she began to realize that the school did not necessarily value creating this environment. Although the initial bumps created tension, it seemed that as the bumping continued, she awakened to see how different her own stories to live by were from the stories that shaped the professional landscape. She began to realize that it would be impossible for her to live on a landscape that did not seem to value the things she did.

We also saw this narrative thread in Natalie's narrative account when her stories to live by of moving up the hierarchy to positions where she would have more and more influence were interrupted by school stories where people were promoted, or were moved into positions, without having earned them. For Natalie, her strong stories to live by bumped as she awakened to how the story of school was not one of meritorious hierarchy. This interruption and bumping became so significant that Natalie recalled feeling "drained" as she could no longer live out her story to live by.

Dan's story also bumped with the stories on the professional landscape, although in a different way. Dan shared stories of his father being a teacher, coach, and leader in the school he

worked in. Seeing his father in these roles seemed to prepare Dan for working within the school system; he expected to be busy and to spend many hours doing extracurricular work. However, because Dan was on a temporary contract his first year, when he returned to his position in his second year, he found out he would be let go from his position. Someone with more seniority coming back from a stress leave took his position and Dan was left without a job. Although he was able to continue to sub, this experience interrupted Dan's story about how things worked on the school landscape, and, as consequence, this bumping shaped his decision to begin looking more seriously at other career options.

When Audrey Jayne graduated and got her first teaching position she expected she would get into the system, she would work hard, and show what a good teacher she was. Her hopes were that this hard work would allow her to gain a permanent contract. Her story began to bump when she began to perceive that obtaining a permanent position was about the people you knew, not what you knew. She describes how she was one of the nameless groups of teachers that came and went without ever being able to be "the" teacher. This was not the story that Audrey Jayne had imagined, and temporary contract after temporary contract seemed to devalue Audrey Jayne's personal practical knowledge, and disrupt her imagined stories of teaching.

While we cannot say that this bumping of stories made each of these individuals leave, we might say that in some ways it helped them to create a story to leave by. *Stories to leave by* signifies that, although certain experiences and events may have been specifically indicated by participants as causing them to leave the profession, it seems that the process of leaving began long before they actually made the decision to leave the profession. As we move into the next thread we inquire more into this process of leaving.

Narrative resonant thread three: Stories to leave by.

Although there may be a myth that it is the least effective teachers who leave teaching, it is important to make clear that each participant storied themselves as successful teachers. They told stories about students being sad when they left; principals trying to entice them to stay; and parents commenting on how much their children enjoyed their classes. Some participants are still connected to the professional landscapes they left. They take their children to staff functions, and keep in touch with past colleagues. Whether being a successful teacher made it easier or harder to leave, we do not know, but the success that they had did not seem to be enough to keep them teaching.

Each participant came to teaching in different ways for different reasons, and each left the profession in different ways. As discussed in earlier threads, participants' early landscape stories helped to shape imagined stories of them on professional and personal landscapes. They envisioned not only who they would be as teachers, but also who they would be away from the school, on their personal landscapes. The bumping of these stories shaped their future stories and eventually led these individuals to finding themselves in other professions.

Alis, Natalie, and Dan all left teaching on more than one occasion. Natalie left teaching twice, her stories of being and becoming a teacher were about a process in which she began teaching, left after two years, returned, and left again to pursue a doctoral degree. Alis left three different teaching positions, before deciding to begin graduate work in counselling. Dan, after

being moved out of his position by someone with more seniority, continued to substitute teach and pick up temporary contracts before he also left to pursue a graduate degree in physical therapy.

As these individuals storied themselves into teaching, it was as if the process was interwoven with a process of storying themselves out of teaching. We also see that when they were no longer able to teach in the public school system, they moved onto other landscapes in which they would be able to teach in different ways.

We also noted that for at least four of the participants, the process of leaving might have begun before they ever began teaching. For Alis, her brother, dad, and mom all completed master's degrees. Her intention on entering teaching was to work for a couple of years, and then move on to a master's degree. Although she did not know what it would be in, she knew that she would, at some point, complete a master's degree. Dan began looking at physical therapy options while in his third year of university, but decided to stick with teaching because he had enjoyed the program up to that point. Dan's experiences on the professional landscape helped to shape his decision to move on to a career in physical therapy.

Reid and Laura's stories were imbued more with the importance of place. Reid knew that his long-term story did not involve living in a small northern city, so he made a short-term decision to teach in a small urban center. Although he had initially only planned to stay one year, the enticement of a permanent contract created a two-year stay before he eventually left to travel to different parts of the world. Although Laura started in a temporary position, it became permanent but, interestingly, Laura still thought of it as temporary because her life was still in the big city. It seems she saw her experience in this small city to be a stepping-stone for her to, one day, have a teaching position in her imagined school, in her imagined city.

Audrey Jayne started out thinking that she would teach forever but only received temporary contracts. Like Dan, her notions of teaching on a permanent contract never materialized. Audrey Jayne canvassed for more permanent teaching positions, but each time she was given similar answers. Principals noted budgetary issues, and unknown student numbers, as reasons for not renewing her contracts despite the fact that they acknowledged her as an excellent teacher. Audrey Jayne went back often to see if there was any way to stay on at the school. Each time she was given similar answers. She would find a temporary job somewhere, and so would move in order to start in her new position. Audrey Jayne didn't see herself as leaving the first time that this happened, but each time her imagined stories of permanency bumped with temporary stories, it chipped away at her resolve to stay in teaching.

Would they have stayed if their stories had played out differently? We do not know. We wonder if they would have been sustained. From their stories it seems that their process of leaving began at different times. We wonder then, how important were their experiences on the professional landscape to their leaving? Could more positive experiences have allowed them to create stories that sustained them as teachers? Would Natalie have been sustained if the school hierarchy had played out the way she had imagined? Would Alis have stayed if the school story valued the person over the system? Would Reid and Laura have stayed if they had been working in their imagined cities? Would Dan and Audrey Jayne have stayed if they had received permanent contracts?

Narrative thread four: Place of personal landscapes.

While Natalie, Dan, and Alis'ss stories seemed to bump more on their professional landscapes, Reid and Laura's imagined stories seemed to align very closely with the professional landscape. Both Laura and Reid ended up teaching in the schools that they graduated from, and although there were still perceived by some as students as opposed to teachers, their transitions to teaching seemed to be somewhat seamless. On the personal landscape, it was a different story.

Reid, having lived in a large urban centre throughout his university years, had an image in his mind of how his personal life would be as a teacher. He would live in a large urban city, and have access to large city amenities. However, Reid's first teaching position was in a small northern Alberta city and, as a 22-year-old, the personal landscape in the small city bumped with his notions of who he wanted to be. Anonymity was difficult as he saw parents and students at restaurants, movie theatres, and grocery stores. His weekends were spent either at friends' houses, or in a large urban city three hours from his teaching city; he had to leave the place where he lived in order to be able to step away from being a teacher. Relationally, although Reid had many friends, there were few single females his age in the small city, and this also created a bump on his personal landscape. When Reid had the opportunity to travel, and move back to the large urban city, he made the decision to leave his small city teaching position.

Laura, like Reid, had a strong imagined story of teaching in a particular large urban city. This city was where her friends were, and was where she was composing her life off the school landscape. This meant that she taught in the elementary school of her hometown and travelled to this city every weekend, "My life was in the city." Like Reid, the personal and professional landscapes did not align to shape a whole story to live by. Laura knew that finding teaching jobs in the larger urban cities was difficult, but once she found an opportunity, she made the decision to leave her small town teaching job, and begin a career in which she believed she would be able to live out the personal and professional story she had imagined for herself.

Both Laura and Reid enjoyed their teaching positions, even though they were perhaps busier than they thought they would be. However, it seems that the bumping on their personal landscapes between their imagined stories, and the stories they were living out, did not allow them to compose lives that sustained them. After leaving, Reid, Laura, and Audrey Jayne felt like they were far more balanced, in the sense that they can now live out professional and personal landscape stories that allow them to be sustained.

Resonant narrative thread five: Safe and unsafe leaving.

Some of the safe cover stories that teachers tell when they leave teaching (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009) are stories of taking a position in policy development or in an association related to teaching, returning to graduate studies, staying home to have a child, or to take care of a young family. These are safe stories to leave by. Sometimes these stories are told to cover the less safe stories to leave by. This could also be conceptualized in terms of social capital. If someone leaves teaching with a significant other who has a good paying job, it may be safe to leave. If someone leaves teaching to take on another position that is stable, and perhaps pays more than teaching, this may also be seen as a safe leave. An unsafe leave may be

characterized as a leave that could be portrayed as failure. Someone leaves because they could not handle it. Or they leave because they no longer enjoy being around students. From a social capital standpoint, an unsafe leave may be seen as leaving without other opportunities.

Five of the participants, from our perspective, made safe leaves. Dan left to pursue a graduate degree in a professional medical field, while Alis left to pursue a graduate degree in psychological counseling. Natalie also left to pursue a graduate degree. When the time came for Laura to leave her hometown and the teaching position where she was highly respected, she needed to make a decision. Laura couldn't keep travelling every weekend to "live her life." This became the safe story to leave by, as the migration of young people from smaller centers to bigger cities is a common enough story. Although Reid left to travel the world, which, from a social capital standpoint may be unsafe, he also left to pursue a dream to travel to other countries. Like Laura, he was very well respected in his small school, which in some ways made the leave safer. This move to travel also seemed to be well supported by both his family and friends, which in some ways may have also made it a safe leave.

We have conceptualized Audrey Jayne's leave as unsafe. Trapped was how Audrey Jayne saw her situation. She felt trapped by her education. She couldn't buy a home, she couldn't get a loan, and she couldn't get married. She didn't want to leave teaching, but teaching pushed her out. Audrey Jayne also once had dreams of being an RCMP officer but looked sad as she told us that she couldn't even do that because she had spent so much time trying to make it work in education that it was too late to become a recruit. Audrey Jayne's struggles with the system eventually led to her search for a job that she saw as being just outside of the teaching realm. Her leave may been seen as safe from a social capital standpoint, as she has found another job, but she really had no choice but to leave, and the powerlessness involved with this creates a very unsafe situation.

As we wonder about the stories of the leavers we worked with, we are intrigued by the stories they tell of their leaving. We wonder about cover stories, stories that are told to smooth over the unsafe leaving that we described earlier. Most of the participants told stories that we conceptualized as being safe, but we cannot help but wonder if under these stories are other stories of leaving that may be less safe. Interestingly, each of the researchers involved in this study also tells stories about safe leaving; we all left the classroom in a way that was acceptable. Yet each of us also tells stories of feeling like teaching in the classroom was exhausting, inflexible, and disempowering. This leads us to wonder about the cover stories that are used to provide safe exits out of the classroom.

Resonant narrative thread six: Living out a similar imagined story after leaving.

Each participant had imagined stories of who they would be as teachers. For Reid, he saw himself as building rapport with students, and becoming a mentor and role model. Although Dan also saw rapport with students as being important, his story involved being able to see how his teaching helped students become better. Alis focused her imagined story more on creating an environment, and building relationships, that provided social justice to those living on her landscape. Laura's stories revolved around her strong relational knowing and the creating of relationships with students and staff. Audrey Jayne imagined exposing students to new ways of

knowing in order to compose different stories about their lives. Each participant saw themselves as being professionals. As we think about the work each of these individuals is involved in today, we see shades of their imagined stories of teacher in their new professions.

For example, Reid who is now as a wine representative, mentioned his job now is not as fulfilling as teaching, but that he has far more time to focus on building rapport with his clients. He feels like, although this may not be the complete focus of his job, building rapport is something that for him is of utmost importance. Laura is currently working with a publishing company, and when asked what she is doing she says she is "teaching." She sees it as 'teaching' adults about the resources available, and how to use them, especially the technology pieces that would support differentiated learning in the classroom.

Dan, interestingly enough, described his favorite part of physical therapy as being able to diagnose a patient, prescribe and teach exercises, and to be able to see them get better; this resonates strongly with his imagined story to be able to watch his students learn. Alis, as a counselor completing her practicum working with First Nations peoples, feels like the focus of teaching was on the curriculum, and not on students. Working as a counselor she feels like focusing on her clients' needs is the most important part of her job, and she is now able to create environments in which she feels social justice can be fostered.

Audrey Jayne imagined that as a teacher she would work hard at something that mattered, something that made a difference. She would have time to volunteer and participate in the community. In her new position, she works hard at a job that matters and makes a difference. She has time to volunteer and be a member in the community with different causes and organizations that matter to her just as much as her job. She is starting to live the life she always imagined she would as a teacher; she just had to leave teaching to do it.

We wonder if each of these individuals sees themselves as living out their imagined stories of teaching in a non-traditional teaching role. Was it the notion of teaching that brought them to teaching, or was it that they perceived teaching as allowing them to live out their imagined stories of helping others, creating learning environments, and building relationships? As we think about this, we begin to see teaching in a pluralistic fashion, as something different than teaching in a classroom. As teacher educators, teachers, principals, and graduate students, we are struck by how conceptualizing teaching in this pluralistic fashion shifts questions around pedagogy, and purpose. How have these individuals' B.Ed. degrees prepared them for teaching on different landscapes? Is the sole purpose of teacher education programming to prepare individuals for K-12 classrooms? If we think about preparing individuals who teach, as opposed to teachers, how does this change our work as teacher educators?

Discussion

What Does 'Hard' Mean?.

In the hallways of schools and universities, people often describe teaching as hard work. Usually when we think about teaching as hard, we imagine people are thinking about long workweeks that often include weekends. The phrase "teaching is a 24/7" job comes to mind. We

think about the diversity of students in classes and hear people speak of how "hard" it is to teach such diverse classes. We think about workload creep that adds more responsibilities and seldom takes any responsibilities away. We think about 'hard' as people outline new curriculum expectations, standardized tests and more frequent student assessments. All of these are what we imagine people are referring to when "teaching is hard work" echoes in hallways. Every profession is asking more of professionals: we're all busy, overworked, and not well enough paid for the hours we work. However, listening to the participants who have left teaching early, we have come to wonder about what is so hard about teaching. What does hard mean in their storied experiences? It may be all of the above, but it is more.

We now see 'hard' for them as the bumping between their imagined stories of teaching, and what they are experiencing in teaching. Their imagined stories of teaching, as mentioned earlier, include their lives on both personal and professional landscapes. What they find 'hard' is having their imagined stories of who they would be, and become, shattered. We heard them talk about how busy they were, and how many hours they put in. This, however, does not seem to be what made teaching hard. Each participant indicated that they knew they would be busy. They knew they would be marking on weekends; coaching weeknights; having early mornings and late nights. They knew what they were getting into. These long hours and multiple commitments were part of their imagined stories of teaching. However, early mornings and late nights became hard when they were still not able to be the teachers they thought they would be. Teaching became hard when the participants learned that administrators and districts did not value what they valued. What became hard was when they had no agency or control over what was being asked; when demands were made and took away time with significant others, children, family, friends and community obligations. It became hard when it took a toll on their relationships, their health, and their imagined stories of not only the teachers they could be, but also the parents, daughters, sons, family members, and friends they could be.

"It will get easier and you'll get more efficient," and "The first years are the toughest," the participants were told this on a regular basis. Based on what we commonly think 'hard' means in teaching, this is helpful information. Planning gets easier; the students and colleagues begin to respect you more; you deal with parents more effectively; you learn to be more efficient; all this may happen. Participants knew this. They knew it would get easier, in this sense. However, they also seemed to know that the teacher they had in mind when they entered the profession, that is their imagined story of teaching, was not possible. No matter how much easier the logistics of teaching got, they would be no closer to living out, no closer to becoming, the imagined teacher they once envisioned. No matter how much more efficient their assessment got, there would still be an interruption in their stories of what they believed were the most important parts of being a teacher. For them, moving away from the profession of teaching, composing stories to leave by, seemed to allow them to begin to re-compose, and re-imagine, what their lives might be while working in other places where teaching was part of their work. They moved out of K-12 teaching but found ways to keep teaching.

Flexibility to attend to composing a life.

From working alongside participants who left the profession early, we understood that teaching, although sometimes all consuming, was only part of their lives. Teaching was

important to them, and they thought about being teachers, and they created imagined stories of who they would be as teachers. As their stories were composed around teaching, their stories to live by also included stories of who they would be, and become, off the professional landscape.

The participants talked often about being told by administration to find or create balance in their lives. For them, this was far easier said than done. The inflexibility of teaching shaped their lives on both their personal and professional landscapes. While one participant joked about not even having time to go to the bathroom, others spoke to the lack of power they had over decisions that were often being made for them: this is the textbook you will use; here is the assessment rubric; fill out personal plans for these students; supervise these times; teach these classes; organize these extracurricular activities; be here at this time; and don't leave before that time. These constraints from the conduit (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995) created inflexibility that rendered them powerless in both their personal and professional lives. With such inflexibility on their professional landscapes, their lives on their personal landscapes were also shaped.

The participants are all now working in other professions. They provided a retrospective reflection as they looked back on their lives as teachers. They reflected on their lives in their present jobs and their lives while teaching. Each participant spoke to how much more flexible their personal landscapes became, once they had left teaching.

When they left teaching, they were able to reconnect with friends, spend more time with families, book medical appointments when they needed to, and live in more respectful ways with extended families, and communities. They spoke to clearer boundaries around work hours; not having to take work home; of leaving work behind. When they were teaching, they spoke of guilt that came with not doing work on the weekends, or in the evenings. Participants, when they left teaching, spoke to feeling more balanced and healthy. Living a life as a teacher creates little flexibility on either personal or professional landscapes. It seems the flexibility on both personal and professional landscapes, now that they have left teaching, allows them to compose lives that are more sustaining.

Imagined stories: Spaces for negotiation.

Lortie (1975) spoke to the apprenticeship of observation that teachers undergo on their paths to becoming teachers. Lortie's focus was on how imagined notions of teaching are framed by the 12 to 13 years students spend observing teachers as students. Although this is certainly important in the imagined stories of teachers, we now understand that the imagined stories that teachers bring to teaching are also shaped outside of the classrooms they attended as students.

We now see the imagined stories of participants as shaped by early landscape stories, personal landscape stories, as inextricably linked to how they compose their lives. Working alongside participants strengthened, for us, the connection between individuals' stories to live by, and beginning teacher attrition. We now see their imagined stories, and the negotiation of them, as an important part of becoming a teacher. Thus, we see that their imagined stories of who they would be, and become, as teachers, do not just include teaching. The imagined stories include stories of being, and becoming, in social networks, in families, and in communities. And

the imagined stories are stories lived, and balanced, on, and between, personal and professional landscapes.

As we reflected on the imagined stories of the participants, we saw that when they were unable to live out their imagined stories, they felt powerless to negotiate spaces on their professional landscapes. They left.

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Appendix A: Letter of Initial Contact

Dear Participant,

We are writing to request your consideration to participate in a study on the phenomenon of new teachers leaving the profession in the first five years after graduating. We would greatly appreciate your willingness to take a few moments to read this letter before advising us of your response.

We are members of a research team led by Dr. Jean Clandinin from the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development, University of Alberta. We are engaged in a study entitled *Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials*. We are looking for participants for a study on teachers who graduated from an Alberta institution with a Bachelor of Education and who have never had a full-time contracted teaching position in Alberta.

Most research on early career teacher attrition focuses on those who leave teaching in the first five years of a teaching career. However, there is little information on those who prepare to be teachers but do not enter a contracted teaching position in Alberta. We wonder why this is. Focusing on this population we hope to offer insights into the processes and experiences that non-contracted teachers have upon completing a teacher education program.

There will be up to six audio-recorded conversations (about one hour and a half each) with each participant using questions and artifacts. The conversations will be transcribed. We will be happy to share the transcripts with you. Before any material is made public, we will negotiate our interpretations of what you say with you in a fourth conversation.
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and, even if you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Your anonymity as well as the anonymity of other participants is protected. Your name will not be used and no identifying marks will linger. All information collected will be safeguarded to ensure confidentiality.

The information gained from this research may appear in various publications, reports, and/or conference proceedings. As a study participant you may request copies of these publications.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Please contact us by phone: (780) 492-7770 or email: teacherattrition@gmail.com to request additional information and/or to arrange to participate in the research.

Your time and interest in this study are much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Research Team
Sheri Wnuk, Pam Steeves, Lee Schaefer, Eliza Pinnegar, Sue McKenzie, Julie Long, and Jean Clandinin

Appendix B: Participant Information and Consent Form
A Narrative Inquiry into Education Graduates Who Are Not (Full-time) Teachers

This consent form is an invitation to participate in the study entitled **Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials** that is being conducted by a research team from the University of Alberta, led by Dr. Jean Clandinin from the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development (jean.clandinin@ualberta.ca; (780) 492-7770), and funded by a grant from Alberta Education. You may contact Dr. Clandinin at any time if you have any questions.

Most research on early career teacher attrition focuses on those who leave teaching in the first five years of a teaching career. However, a significant number of graduates of education programs do not move into full-time contractual teaching positions. Some pursue other careers. Others work part-time in schools or as substitute teachers. We wonder why this is. Focusing on education graduates' stories to live by, including the experiences that brought them to teaching, will offer insights into the processes that graduates of education experience as they begin their careers.

There will be up to six audio-recorded conversations with each participant, and the first conversation will focus on the stories that brought them to teaching. After the conversations, we will draft individual narrative accounts of each participant and will negotiate those accounts with the relevant participant. The expectations of each participant is that they would be willing to talk with a member of the research team for up to six individual 1.5- to 2-hour conversations and then read and respond to the narrative accounts.

Fortunately, there are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. A potential benefit of your participation in this research is that you will be contributing to original research as well as expanding current understandings of early career teacher attrition. You will also be privy to a supportive environment where you may share your stories and experiences on a regular basis. Your participation must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you should know that you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation, up until the final research texts are negotiated. If you do withdraw from the study, there will be no repercussions of any sort and your data will be removed from our study.

No one except members of the research team will ever know your responses. Moreover, you will never be referred to by name in any of the research publications or presentations. We will use a pseudonym for anonymity and confidentiality. Also, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected. Only the University research team and an experienced transcriptionist will have access to the data. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. All data will also be safely locked in the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development will be destroyed after 5 years. Other planned uses and sharing of this data include a master's thesis for one team member (Eliza Pinnegar), as well as possible publications and/or presentations in professional journals and conferences for the research team. You may also receive a final report of the study, at your request.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

I, _____, understand the above conditions of participation in this study and I have had the opportunity to have my questions answered a member of the research team. I consent to participate in the study *Early Career Teacher Attrition: Problems, Possibilities, Potentials*.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   *Signature*   *Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix C: A Narrative Account of Natalie – D. Jean Clandinin: Stories Interrupted

Natalie and I first met when she came to my office and I was immediately put at ease by her friendly smile and warm greeting. She was in the city visiting her parents, something she did as often as she could.

We quickly settled into the chairs in my office and I explained the study. She read and signed the consent forms after a rapid scan. As I turned on the recorder, I asked "Can you tell me about who you are, where you went to school, when you started to think about doing a B.Ed. and becoming a teacher?" She spoke of growing up in Alberta and living in the same city for much of her life. She had gone to school in the same city for all 12 years. She moved to another city when she registered in a university science program. With the option of doing a dual degree she had switched into the program at the start of her second year of university. She said,

> So I went through all of the public system in [Northern City] and then I came to [Southern City] for university and I initially started with a science background and then after my first year I decided to move into education 'cause after you get in and you don't know what you're doing and then after your first year, you're starting to think "okay, what can I do as a career now?" So then I started to get into teaching, being in the B.Ed. program and at that time [there was] the 5-year program…so then that's kind of how I got into education. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

With that introduction, I wondered more about her early school landscapes and the family stories within which Natalie composed, and was composing, her life. As we talked in that first conversation, and then through the second and third conversations, I sensed her family was a strong influence in her life. I wondered whether the strong focus on needing to have a career came from her family stories. As we talked about her early landscapes, she told me she was "actually born in Bangkok and my parents were from Bangkok and we moved here when I was 4 so I pretty much did all my schooling in [Northern City]" (#1, Feb. 6 2012). The focus on needing to have a career was one that was shaped early on by her parents who encouraged her to think about having a career, probably as a professional.

> Yeah so I had no idea what I wanted to do in first year but I knew, of course, parental pressures 'cause my mom was a nurse so she said how about medicine? My dad was in business, he's like, how about business? And I knew I didn't want either one of those so I didn't even look there but I knew I was good in science so I went into science first. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

However, she knew she needed to have a career and when the dual degree opened up, she entered it.

Teachers in Natalie's Life

Teachers were important in Natalie's life. Thai was her first language although she had learned some English by the time she started school. However, she noted, "I wasn't proficient at

it" (#1, Feb. 6 2012). Her first teacher in Canada "was fantastic" (#1, Feb. 6 2012) because she adapted her instruction through speaking slowly and using hand gestures.

While Natalie liked school throughout her years in school, something happened in Grade 3 that interrupted a story she had been living. Early in the first interview she told me that her teacher recommended she be held back in Grade 3. This news from her Grade 3 teacher was a "shock" to her parents. Her mother said, "we don't want her to be held back, we would rather get a tutor" (#1, Feb. 6 2012). Natalie described the situation in the following way:

> ..in the whole school I think there were maybe only five or six non-English speakers and the only reason I knew that was because in Grade 3 I started to fall behind so then the teacher recommended I get a tutor, and there was one tutor who pretty much catered to everyone in my elementary and that lady …followed me all the way to high school. So I would go to her for tutor lessons and she would help me with my English and she'd catch me up…a lot of math problems are in English so if you don't get the English you can't do the math…she's also fantastic. I still talk to her today. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

While Natalie and her family could have told this story with anger, Natalie tells that "if it wasn't for the Grade 3 teacher like saying she needs to get held back, nothing would have happened and I would have just kept going and falling further behind without noticing" (#1, Feb. 6 2012).

Both the Grade 3 teacher and the tutor made a significant difference in Natalie's stories of school, and to how she experienced school. The tutor worked with her twice a week all year, including summers, until the end of Grade 9 when the tutor moved. As Natalie said,

> I think the most influential would be probably my tutor but I don't know if it's cause of the time but she was a really caring and loving character so even now when I became a teacher, she was one of the first people I told, look what you inspired, and then even on my master's thesis I sent her a copy and said, look, this is what you inspired 'cause I think she was the one who gave me a good image of what a teacher should be and look like. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

While there were other teachers in her family in Bangkok (an aunt who was a superintendent, an uncle who was a principal, a cousin who was a teacher), it was her experience with her teachers in school, particularly the Grade 3 teacher who interrupted a smooth story of moving ahead without being able to do the work, and the tutor, who both shaped Natalie's stories of school.

Learning From Her Mom

Her mom was also a teacher to Natalie, both in the subject matter areas as well as in how to compose her life. She noted, "because my mom was able to help me with the math but the language barrier" (#1, Feb. 6 2012) was a problem. Natalie and her parents continued to speak Thai at home. Natalie's mother, however, spent a great deal of time with Natalie as she was

growing up. When it came time to choose a career path it was her mom that she talked to as she made the decision to switch into the dual degree program.

> so then my mom, well, you know what a teacher does, you could definitely go for it….it was mainly my mom and at that time she had already realized she was, okay medicine and business are not going to work so, and a general science degree doesn't mean anything so you need an actual faculty that can feed into a profession, so she's, if education is good and there are probably going to be jobs, then you should definitely go for that. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

It was her mom that Natalie sees as having shaped her life story into one of being, and becoming, a teacher. The metaphor that Natalie learned from her mother regarding teaching and learning was one of building a strong base "and then build up from there and if your base is unstable then everything's going to come crumbling down" (#3, Feb 27 2012). Natalie said that it was this idea of a strong base that connected not only to a kind of learning theory but also to the story of a hierarchy in teaching. As she said,

> Cause teachers have to have that hierarchy, if you're going to try to make a change at the top of someone's life, they'll change but if you can start from when they're younger where they're trying to establish the base and change it from there then you can elicit a lot more change and more permanent change. (#3, Feb 27 2012)

This belief in a strong base for building knowledge, as well as a way to think about institutions, was part of Natalie's learning from her mother.

A Hierarchy Based on Merit in Professions, Institutions, and Life

Natalie understood from her family stories that there was a story of hierarchy in institutions that one enters and moves through, based on merit and expertise. "Yeah it was like you have to do something with your life so you have to look further ahead and then backtrack and say what can I do to get there?" (#1, Feb. 6 2012).

A story of institutions shaped by the story of looking ahead and earning the privilege to move into more and more responsible positions is one that Natalie learned from her mother. When I asked her about this in our third conversation, she said,

> And I do think it's from her [my mother] cause she would always tell me that you have to work hard and if you work hard, you'll get ahead and you want to get ahead so that you can make changes and have the power to do what you want to do, I do think my mom has a big role in that too….She's really smart in teaching me, she doesn't force me to do something but she'll tell you all these stories around it and then somehow it pushes me to do stuff. So, for example, she would say things like, oh do you want to get ahead so you can be like the department of whatever? And then she'll give me an example of how when she was a nurse, she used to have to do all the worst shifts in the world when she was a student but then when she got to be an actual nurse, she got to pick some of her shifts and then when she got to be the head nurse of one of the areas, then she got to give

other people shifts, so she said, this is why you want to work hard so that you can get to a point where you can delegate. (#3, Feb 27 2012)

This story of working hard, and moving into more and more senior positions of responsibility, fit well with Natalie's story of herself as wanting to change the world. As she said about leaving the school where she was teaching after only two years, "it was fantastic and, at that time, I was okay, I really want to make a change, I want to make a difference, hence coming back for the master's" (#1, Feb. 6 2012).

Leaving Home/Returning Home/Leaving Home

Natalie is close with her family. As an only child, her mother and father were very supportive. Her mother worked at home as a "domestic engineer" and made sure that Natalie was supported in her schooling, and in her activities. When Natalie finished high school she opted to move to the other large city in the province to attend university.

..because I'm the only child so if I wanted to break out I had to break out somewhere not at home, but then I didn't want to go too far so that if I did need help they could come and help me so then I chose [Southern City]..it is close enough but yet far enough for my parents that I could get some freedom. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

When she completed her two degrees, she applied for positions in her home city and was immediately placed on the substitute list. Her first assignment was to fill in on a maternity leave.

The Monday morning and they said this teacher is going on mat leave this Friday so we kind of need a teacher. So I'm okay and then they interviewed me and it kind of worked out really well because for my [second practicum] I had taught Chemistry 20 and 30 and then they wanted me to teach Chemistry 10 and 20 so I said well this is a perfect continuation of my practicum which was a year ago but I've got all the material…(#1, Feb. 6 2012)

After teaching for the two months she was hired on a probationary contract, even though she was filling in for another teacher on mat leave. The district told her,

they didn't want to give me a temporary because they said we want to keep you in the district so we'll give you a probationary so that even if you are not at Grassy Meadows School the following year, you would be in our district. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

She stayed at Blue Ridge School for two years, and then decided to return to the other city to return to graduate studies to undertake a master's degree. This pattern of leaving home, returning home, leaving home, returning home was closely linked to her patterns of teaching/leaving teaching/attending school/teaching/leaving teaching/attending school. She continues to move between two provincial cities as she finds ways to compose her life.

Searching For Places to Learn: Always a Learner

Even during her practicum situations, Natalie was a learner, eager to learn. She was a child who was tutored twice every week throughout the year, who studied piano, and who did well in school. She was eager to put herself into learning situations. About her practicum, she said,

> I was there for the math and science so I worked with a math and science teacher but we had spares, so I would go to foods class and I would see how they make like massive amounts of cinnamon buns and then I'd sit in on cosmetology class, I learned how to massage people's heads there. I still do that with my mom now 'cause I learned it there and I just learned so much from there (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

Her eagerness to learn was evident as she was teaching for her first two years. She described the high school department where she worked as

> …the science department was really strong in supporting each other and I had a really great coordinator of science there and we had a really, really strong administrator ' cause Blue Ridge School is kind of like the school where I attended high school where you get the students that are not so, it's [a lower socio economic area] …the administration was handpicked to help to try to revive that school and then our science was really strong there so because I had a really strong coordinator he made my life so much easier 'cause he partnered me with other Chemistry teachers and I would always go to him and I still do sometimes (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

While she was teaching during her first two years, she had opportunities to observe the marking of diploma exams, of piloting field tests, and so on.

> But even during my first year, because my mentor teacher worked really closely with Alberta Education, I would come up to observe their marking and that's on your own money, but I came up to observe their marking so I could be a better teacher for my own students, just to see what the marking process was like…so I did that a couple of times, and then at the end of my second year I could be hired as a marker, and because I came and saw what Alberta Learning was doing so I was, okay I should really come back and do a curriculum degree so that I could make changes to how things are…I thought if I ever wanted to make a change I'd need to be at Alberta Ed. (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

She had a sense of learning while she was involved with Alberta Education, and she started to see that there were other ways to be involved in education that might involve ways to change the world. Her eagerness to keep learning was one impetus that sent her back to study for her master's degree. I wondered if she was sensing a master's degree was needed to move up the hierarchical ladder to positions where she could make more of a difference.

> So everything was really good and I loved it but I'm, this is my second year, this is kind of getting to be a little boring now 'cause everything is the same, even though they now give me more the problematic students like the 14s and the 24s. …so why don't I try for something more challenging? (#1, Feb. 6 2012)

She chose her area of study because "the program of studies was something I thought that I could change" (#1, Feb 6 2012).

Even in her third and fourth years of teaching when Natalie was finding that her two dominant threads in her stories to live by were being interrupted, she still made time to do some work for Alberta Education.

> Yes, that was my little freedom. So I would love working for Alberta Ed cause with Alberta Ed my ideologies of, like you have to work your way to the top, like you have to work a certain number of years before you can be an examiner…and then you have to work your way into being an exam manager. And then you have to work your way to being a department person. So Alberta Ed still follows my ideology, so I really like working for them. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

Natalie continued in her third year of teaching to mark for Alberta Ed and she also wrote test questions for them. "Anytime they said, oh would you like to pilot this, I'd be like yes, let me pilot cause then at least I had a bit of an escape from my school" (#2 Feb 13 2012).

Stories of Being, and Becoming, a Teacher Interrupted

If Natalie had continued to teach, and had not left the school to return to university for graduate studies, I wondered what would have happened. However, she did leave for one year. When she returned from graduate studies and went back to the same high school (Blue Ridge School), much had changed.

> We had a new admin, a lot of my department was new, and I was also working on my own master's, like my thesis at that time….I was still teaching chemistry, and yeah it was more disjointed between the classrooms 'cause we used to go into other people's classrooms and we'd make fun, and everyone could tell that the whole science team was a team, and we were a family. Whereas now it's like my classroom, do my stuff, be done, and go home. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

For Natalie much had changed outside of her classroom that was of concern to her. She had a new administrative team, a new coordinator, and now, rather than be the mentee, she was the mentor.

> It wasn't as fun anymore. I don't know if it was 'cause the administration had changed or if my mentor had gone and I was the mentor, but it just wasn't, the cohesiveness wasn't there as much I didn't find, and everyone was very off on their own little thing. So as soon as like 3:30, it'd be quiet 'cause everyone would be gone. (#1, Feb 6 2012)

As she described the first year of her return, she noted that "it was just more draining. So I used to be able to maybe go home, and do this and that, but now I go home and work on my thesis and that would be it. And even on the weekends, I would feel that it was really draining. Going to work wasn't as fun as before" (#2, Feb 13 2012).

While she understood that it was perhaps that she had changed in that she had the added responsibility of working on her thesis, there appeared much more at work in the school. As she worked there, things began to happen that interrupted her story of being a learner, and also interrupted her story of moving up a hierarchy based on hard work and merit.

The school that Natalie worked in was situated in a lower socio economic area and the school was known to have a high turnover rate. "There would always be new people" (#2, Feb 13 2012). In her first two years, Natalie enjoyed being there and being one of the new teachers. She had strong mentor. Now, in her third year, she was expected to be a mentor and "I didn't know how to be a good mentor. Like I had been mentored and I loved it, and it was fantastic, but I didn't know how to be a good mentor for the person coming in" (#2, Feb 13 2012).

When she began her fourth year of teaching, she was hopeful that she would not find it as "draining".

> So then by the fourth year, still at the same school, and I thought okay, you know, maybe it was because of my master's [thesis work], so then I went back and again things had changed some more. And again I had to mentor but the guy had left and moved into a different position within the same school. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

It was in her fourth year when she was fully engaged in teaching, and without a master's thesis to work on, that she began to see that teaching was not allowing her to live out what mattered to her, that is, her story of being a learner and moving ahead. She was assigned a new mentee, and she continued to feel she was not learning. She was teaching others, in her third year a new teacher and, in her fourth year, a teacher new to Canada. Without being able to learn she said,

> Like in the first couple of months, I was like this is really draining. I don't know what is wrong, and then I decided to apply to go for my Ph.D. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

Without being able to learn, Natalie did not want to stay. However, as we talked further there was another interruption to her story of being, and becoming, a teacher. Because she felt this interruption occurred as she no longer felt herself learning, perhaps it was even more difficult.

> So I always had the idea where you would get moved up the ladder based on merit. So if you did a good job, you'd get recognized, and you'd move up the scale. And it was very true with the first two years when I was there. Like you had to work your way to be a CT, you had to work your way to be an IB coordinator. So you had to work your way to these positions, and all the administrators in the first two years were all like veterans, they knew what was happening, they had worked their way through the system to get to where they were now. So they've had the experience, and then when I left, and then when I came back, like the principal had retired, the vice principal had moved on to other principalships, so like it was good 'cause everyone was moving up, but the people who were coming in, they were newer 'cause any veteran principal wouldn't want to be at our school. So he was newer and his staff that he picked was also newer. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

For Natalie these changes began to make her question her own story of her imagined career path. As she said,

> I'm going to work here, I'm going to pay my time, and then I'm going to move up. Then I can make all the changes that I want…I came back from my master's thinking that, that maybe can help me move up. So instead of working for 30 years before I get into a position like this, I could just work 10 years and get into a position like that. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

As her third and fourth years unfolded, she realized that it was not working in the way she had imagined. "They would move people into leadership positions that weren't very good" (#2, Feb 13 2012). The young teacher who had been her mentee in Natalie's third year was promoted to a position of some responsibility. She was told, "we'll bypass the rules for him because he wants it, and he wants to be it" (#2, Feb 13 2012). As she said, "it was an interruption of how the system worked." This unearned promotion was quite troubling as Natalie realized that he was also not able to do the job to which he was being promoted. As the year unfolded, she and her colleagues undertook a project that they saw as valuable. The young teacher "took that project and…renamed it, and then he called it his project, and we're like what?" (#2, Feb 13 2012). The principal went along with this but said, "for the greater good of the school we don't want to lose this funding" (#2, Feb 13 2012).

> Yeah, so it was kind of more like in my first 2 years, yes there was survival mode but it wasn't emotionally taxing whereas the last 2 years when I returned it was tiring because it was, like everything I thought was just not there….just seeing people around me who had worked to that level get dropped back down for no good reason was like why, if I'm going to work this hard and one person is going to come in and change the whole thing? (#3, Feb 27, 2012)

This second interruption, around learning that her career plan to progress through the system until she earned a position from which to make changes, was significant. Together these two interruptions, not being able to sustain herself as a learner, and learning that the system did not work as she imagined it did, shaped her leaving.

As her fourth year unfolded, the stories of school that surrounded her were increasingly troublesome. As teachers left they advised other staff members to find "an exit strategy." Teachers who wanted to leave were prevented from going by the administration. Natalie was experiencing a "very top down" administration and she was feeling less and less valued as a strong teacher. As she felt less and less valued, she felt less and less committed to being a strong team player. She described it this way,

> 'Cause the first two years it was draining 'cause I'm a first year teacher, but I'd go home, so some days I would go home at 4 and sleep until the next day, and then just wake up and be like, okay I can do this again, and I'd be happy to do that. But the last two years, I'm going to go home and sleep and then be, I hate this. So there was a difference. Even my mom 'cause I lived with my parents, she's like you need to leave again don't you?

Cause she sees that I'm not happy….You're way more tired than you normally are. And once I finished my thesis she thought it was going to be better, but it didn't get better. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

For Natalie, another sign of how little she was valued in the school came when she was unable to arrange an appointment to tell the principal she was resigning. As she said,

I tried to get in to see him all week and I couldn't so finally I saw him in the hallway and I just said "oh by the way, I'm leaving next year". So it wasn't official, can I book a time with you to come and break some news to you? He said, "Oh I'm really glad that this is where you want to be, so you're going to be achieving your dreams." (#2, Feb 13 2012)

Still Wanting to Teach/Still Wanting to Change the World

Natalie did not lose sight of her story of wanting to be a teacher and to be a teacher who changed the world. When I asked if Natalie had intended not to stay teaching when she returned after her first year of master's study, she said,

At the beginning of the third year, I was still like, oh, I am thinking it is going to be the way that it was, everyone's going to be there, it's going to be so much fun. I thought it was going to be fantastic. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

As her stories to live by were interrupted in her third and fourth years of teaching, graduate studies "seemed like a really good beacon of hope" (#2, Feb 13 2012).

Even when the situation at school was particularly troubling in her fourth year, Natalie still loved to teach. She said,

So one of the reasons I still kept going to work and was relatively happy was cause I loved being in the classroom. I loved the interactions there. Different things would happen every day…so different dynamic things happen and I like that. That's why I loved the classrooms. (#2, Feb 13 2012)

I wondered, as she spoke to me of the dynamic interaction in the classroom with the students, if this was linked to her wanting to learn, to living and telling herself a story of herself as a learner.

For Natalie, she still wants to teach. Doing doctoral work provides her an opportunity to continue to live a story of herself as a learner, and as someone who can change the world through her research and by working alongside people in Alberta Education. Being an academic will allow her to continue to teach.

She understands that the university also has a hierarchy that one moves through by hard work and merit. She sees herself as beginning another path, one that she has already begun to imagine alongside her supervisor.

A Narrative Account of Laura – Sue McKenzie-Robblee

It was a warm winter afternoon as I made my way to Whyte Avenue for my first meeting and conversation with Laura. I was nervous and excited about the possibilities of this first meeting. I had her address and phone number handy on the passenger seat of my car just in case I got momentarily lost as I navigated the unfamiliar streets. Laura mentioned that her car was in the garage so I could use her spot if I was unsuccessful finding parking on the street. After I parked I gathered my papers, the recorder, my university bag and gave Laura a quick call. Several minutes later she let me into her building and led the way up the stairs to her apartment.

She too, was excited and a little nervous, not yet knowing what she had agreed to, and yet was pleased about the possibilities of both helping with our university project as well as in the experience itself. A friend from her university days had made the introduction and connection to be a participant as she had been involved in another phase of our research endeavor.

Laura's apartment, where we would meet for all of our conversations and negotiations of her written story, was warm and inviting. It was south facing so there was the last of the day's sunshine and light coming in the window over her antique wooden kitchen table. Her many shoes were carefully lined up under the coats in an alcove just inside the door with a set of keys in the first shoe of the row. We laughed about that later as it was one of her habits so as to always know where her keys were.

After hanging my coat and selecting a flavor of tea, Laura put the kettle on and we moved into the living space. This space was in warm earth colors and meticulously organized showing that everything had a place and was in its place. Even her work area just off the kitchen at her desk with a laptop and other pieces of technology were evidence of work in progress that was organized and ordered.

Gazing around her lovely apartment while Laura busied herself with the tea preparations I couldn't help but notice the little artifacts tucked her and there from other countries and the exotic touches they added to her home. A sewing machine with multi-colored thread and baskets of material against the wall showed one of Laura's hobbies and interests. A row of children's books about sewing and creating with materials were lined up behind her machine I paused to glance at them instantly connecting with my own love of children's stories and books. A golden pig on a shelf caught my eye, which turned out to be Laura's piggy bank, and its story showed a whimsical sense of humor. She laughed as she shared how it came to be on her shelf and the place in her life of good friends and family.

Laura grew up in a small town and then moved to Peace Grove with her family. It was always understood, by Laura and her brother, that they would go on to university after grade school, and that the finances would be taken care of. The situation changed slightly when a divorce occurred and the Laura and her brother had to pay their own way, which they did.

This was a similar story in my home growing up where the unspoken words led us to know that all of the children were expected to go to university. The program choice was left to us

but not the decision to go to university. So, all five of us went on to university, as was wished, and it was the same for Laura and her brother who was two years older.

Laura's mom, a graduate of a college in Saskatoon with a diploma in nutrition, is still working in the school system as an Educational Assistant in a primary classroom. She also runs community school programs such as the breakfast program and an after school cooking club. Laura's father is retired from a governmental job and her step-dad is working in the oilfields. Her brother is currently working as a surveyor in a drafting company with a B.Sc. focusing on environmental science. He is recently engaged and is moving back to a small town with his fiancée and will be working from home. He is content and settled. Laura did mention that her brother didn't really understand the "life of a teacher" going beyond the 9-to-5 frame of his own job. "A job's a job, and for him a job is nine to five and of course you take lunch and of course you leave when the clock hits five" (pg. 23...2).

Laura is still searching, composing her life, and deciding about two different patterns: one as a teacher in her imagined sense, and the other as perhaps still a teacher but on the periphery of the traditionally defined field.

> Growing up my friends, family, teachers and everyone in my educational experience always told me that I should be a teacher. I was just that kid in the class who, if I finished my assignment, I was helping the kids next to me, helping create study groups and studying after school with friends...I always wanted to be a teacher. (pg. 1..1)

Except for a short time in Grade 11 Laura knew that she always wanted to be a teacher. In Grade 11, she briefly toyed with a second passion, which was "counting money, learning about investments and making money." After a positive experience with an accounting class she accepted a summer job with her neighbor who had an accounting business.

> I went and worked for him for the summer and I just hated it. I'm a really social person and to look at them sitting in their offices and just maybe meeting with two clients a day and the rest of the time they were working away and that was it. For that reason I decided I wanted to go back to teaching and that it was right all along. (pg.. 1...1)

Laura missed the interaction with people, and the closeness and sense of belonging that comes from being involved with a collaborative team on a project or planning committee. This is a thread that is repeated in high school and her early teaching of years and I wonder about the absence of this intensely motivating quality in the work that she is doing now. No one was surprised that Laura went into a teacher education program.

This too was a similar piece in my own story. I taught dancing as a teen and loved both the dancing and the teaching. This involvement, experience, and passion took me forward on my own path towards teacher education and teaching. The confidence and success that came from these relationships were similar to those pattern pieces in Laura's story.

Laura remembers being successful at school. She had positive relationships with her teachers and fellow classmates. She was involved in extra school activities and clubs as early as

elementary, with the recycling club as just one example. In junior high she was a member of the student council and was always volunteering to help out. She recalls staying after school to help with anything that teachers needed assistance with, like refilling the pop machines. The thread of involvement continued into high school where as part of the student council, she was a member-at-large in Grade 10, a co-president in Grade 11, and treasurer in Grade 12. Laura describes herself as the "go-to person" for teachers and she really enjoyed that role and the chance to make a difference in her whole school community. "I was always doing speeches at school. When a guest speaker would come, I would introduce them and at the award ceremony I was the person who would present the awards or do the speaking for it" (pg. 2..1).

She was involved in every planning committee such as the grad committee and the dance committee. Stitches of expertise in planning, organizing, and collaboration were sown in these experiences. Laura thrived on being busy and, most importantly to her, being involved with other people as they worked together on projects. She was very proud of her commitment and the volunteer work throughout high school that earned her scholarships for her local community college and post secondary study. She attributes this success during high school and the fellowship of her involvement as one of the reasons she choose education for degree. Laura's early involvement in school, and a sense of belonging as a student shaped her imagined story of teaching. A second reason was her own success as a student and that she placed herself in the role of helping others and contributing to their success. Her imagined story of being a teacher was based on her love of learning, being involved in activities with other people, and her affinity for helping others. Finally she believed that teaching, as a profession, was more of a known entity for her. She knew teachers and worked alongside them as a student as well as her mom's knowledge of school landscapes from her position in a community school.

There was one family story that shaped Laura's decision. Laura's grandmother was a teacher. It was important in her grandmother's story when she was growing up that she be one of the children in her family of four to finish grade school and go on to university or, in her case, Normal School. Laura recounts how her grandmother actually postponed getting married to be able to have a career as a teacher, albeit a short one. It is also interesting that Laura is currently typing the notes of her grandmother's story and hearing her grandmother tell her stories of teaching. These threads and thoughts about becoming a teacher formed the colored fabric of Laura's story.

> I think that I always just gravitated towards teacher. My teachers always noticed that I was helping other students and I was always really involved in every part of school. I didn't growing up have the opportunity to see a lot of different professions. (pg.. 22..2)

Going to the community college allowed Laura to live at home and save her money. During this year a highlight for Laura was her introductory observation course. Her professor was a principal that she knew and who later became her assistant director of education when she began teaching. Her first observation opportunity was at her former high school.

I began to notice a pattern in Laura's reflections of connections within connections. I wonder about the difference that these connections make to the overall image of her identity as a teacher. It was during this observation course that her identity from student to teacher began to

shift. A student asked her if she was a new student and Laura was able to reply "No, I am a new teacher" (pg. 3..1). The staff remembered her and was interested in what she was doing now. They welcomed her to the school and the staff room, not as a student leader, but as a teacher. She remembers it as a bit strange, but because of her leadership involvement, it wasn't as big a stretch as it might have been for someone else. Her next observation session was in a Grade 4 classroom watching a teacher she eventually shared a classroom with. Here are more connecting threads. This was Laura's first experience in an elementary setting, "It was also fabulous" (pg. 4..1). Laura was mindful of the differences between elementary and secondary classroom teaching and still saw herself teaching high school in the future.

Laura left home and what she knew to travel to Edmonton. She lived in Edmonton during her last three years of her teacher education enrolling at the University of Alberta from the transfer program at Lakeland College in Peace Grove.

For Laura it felt like she was taking an Arts program with large classes and the content somewhat removed from teaching until her third and fourth year where the classes were a little smaller and she was able to do her practicums, "I think that going from a small tight-knit community to university and having really large classes and being anonymous and emailing your professor and they don't even know which class you are in was quite a change" (pg.. 6...1).

Laura valued her relationships with friends and professors. She loved learning and was always interested in new things, "I do enjoy the small classes and I like to get to know my professors and be able to go and ask a question and not feel like you're taking up their time" (pg. 6..1).

Laura's studies included a major in Social Studies and a minor in Human Ecology in secondary education with an image of teaching Social Studies or perhaps Home Ec. in her mind, "I was thinking high school all the way through." Laura's two practicums were at large high schools teaching CALM, Design Arts, Drama, and Social Studies and she loved the experience, feeling supported and successful, and receiving positive feedback on her teaching. Her student teaching reports were outstanding recommendations of a teacher to be, "I really began to feel like a teacher in my APT when I was actually teaching in front of the class ...when I took over teaching several classes...not just working with one or two students in a pullout situation" (pg. 4..2).

> I had great mentor teacher(s) and the university facilitator(s) were all very supportive and I had friends student teaching at the same school. It was a really good experience….with good feedback...they really enjoyed watching me teach. (pg.. 5..1)

She worked throughout her years in Edmonton at restaurants, and the after school care center where she experienced working with younger students and developed a sense that she could also teach this age group: "I can do this" (pg.. 2..2). One summer after her fourth year she travelled to Montreal for a French language program, loving Quebec and the experience. The seed for further travel was planted and basted into her story fabric. She thought about staying to teach English or become an English tutor but, "I'm pretty close to my family and decided to stick close to home" (pg.. 3..1). The learning experience in Montreal meant that Laura took a smaller

course load in her winter term so she could pay her expenses that ultimately meant she graduated in December the following year, "I wanted to teach in Edmonton" (pg. 7..1), and that was her plan.

Laura continued to work at the after school care center until she saw her way to making the next step, "I was working there when I finished because I just wasn't sure what I wanted to do next" (pg.. 7..1). She began to get her teaching portfolio together and work on her resume. Laura thought to apply with Edmonton Public as her first choice and the surrounding areas as other possibilities. Getting a position as a substitute teacher was another possibility but not one that excited her. She heard from her friends that it was difficult to get a position with Edmonton Public.

I wonder what might have happened if Laura had heard a different story from her friends or if someone in her Edmonton circle had been a confidante or had a listening ear that allowed the words that formed her imagined stories to become 'public,' so that she might have had a place and moments for reflecting on the stories she wanted to live by. I wonder if there is a possibility to bridge or ease the transitions from teacher education programs to next steps, to provide a safe place to look at possibilities and share vulnerabilities rather than listening to an unspecified grapevine or venturing on alone after journeying with others as a student and student teacher.

In the midst of this tenuous time for Laura, her mom called with information that there were two temporary positions available from February till June in Peace Grove. Laura thought this might give her a little leeway and needed time to develop the necessary materials for application forms and financial wherewitha, "So, I thought if I could teach in Peace Grove for the rest of the year and then get a job in Edmonton, I'd be happy."

It was just a temporary job. The thought "just temporary" went through Laura's mind for the next several years as opportunities unfolded for her, "I'll do this for just one more year" (pg. 8..1).

Laura applied for both positions: a high school Language Arts position, and a Grade 5-6 position covering for a maternity leave. The interview for the elementary position was scheduled first. She had a wonderful interview and was already somewhat known from her previous work in the community as a student. So, after a short deliberation, she was offered the position, "I'll take it" (pg. 14...3). Laura withdrew from the high school competition. She began teaching in Peace Grove in February, having graduated in December. Her success as a student, student teacher, and after school supervisor shaped her personal, practical, and professional knowledge to accept an elementary teaching position, shifting the image to younger students from a high school setting.

I remembered and reflected on myself as a young person eagerly looking forward to teaching and of the importance in my last term of courses being offered a contract with Edmonton Public. I knew then that I would be teaching, though not necessarily what or where, but my uncertainty of what was next was quite different than the experiences of most teachers who are beginning now.

The school wanted Laura full-time so created an assignment which included Grade 6 Language Arts, Social Studies, Health, and Music, along with Grade 5 Music and Health and then, to fill her timetable, Grade 2 and 3 Library and Grade 2 Computers. Laura took it all in her stride and had a "fabulous experience." She saved enough money by living at home to make her first trip to Europe. The assistant principal she was replacing was offered another position and wouldn't be coming back as planned. The principal then offered Laura the chance to come back after her four months of traveling.

> I took it. I really enjoyed the school that I was at, fabulous school, fabulous staff, the students were great and I really enjoyed it so I decided to stay. I also knew how difficult it was to get a teaching job in Edmonton. (pg.. 8..1)

Again the story emerges about believing in the difficulty of obtaining teaching positions in Edmonton. Laura, however, never did apply in Edmonton and I wonder what would have happened in her story if she had, or if she had gone for the interview at the high school to at least have the chance to match her imagined story with the real possibility of living that story. Retrospectively, Laura wonders now if she would still be teaching if she had taken the high school position and would have had the determination and confidence to apply for other high school positions, her imagined story, upon moving to Edmonton. She always imagined herself teaching high school and being involved in student leadership activities from the teacher perspective. Going on trips and encouraging student leadership were two, not surprisingly, of the extra activities she thought she would love to experience as a teacher. Many of her friends from university were subbing or doing other jobs as they waited for the opportunities to teach in their own classrooms. Laura thought to take the first job offered her. That was how she thought the system worked. There were no communities or networks she could ask about the possibilities on the landscape of teaching. What would happen if...What are the options...What else do I need to consider...Is a job a job? She was teaching even if it wasn't where or what she had imagined she would be doing in her beginning role as a teacher.

Laura taught for two more years at the same school earning a continuing contract before taking a leave for a year to travel more broadly. She lived with her brother and saved her money. Her thoughts at the time were centered on teaching in the elementary school in Peace Grove to earn enough money to travel the world and visit places like Turkey, Portugal, India, Nepal, New Zealand, Japan, and England. After making the decision to go overseas, she stored her few things with family and was excited about her newest adventure. Her principal, however, really wanted her to stay. This was an indication of the respect and success Laura was having as a teacher. She was valued as a teacher within the culture of the school and felt honored to be asked to stay.

> My principal pulled me aside and asked if I would be interested in the teacher librarian position that had just come available even though I'd already told him I was going traveling. He was really trying to encourage me to stay and take that role but I just thought you know, it's now or never that I go traveling for a year so I decided to do that. There was a little bit of regret as I thought that was something I would enjoy doing. (pg.. 7..2)

Laura had a wonderful year and still speaks of the experience with delight and passion. We spent an enjoyable time looking at her pictures and sharing stories about places, people, and great things to see. Laura did go back to her school for one more year when she returned home from Greece. Thinking about finances again, and knowing there was a position waiting for her, eased her mind about the next steps she wanted to take. Laura also accepted the position because she "knew what to expect." She didn't apply in Edmonton, which had crossed her mind to do, but she arrived home in July just a little later than she had planned because she connected with friends, "in my mind it was too late I guess" (pg. 19..2). Traveling was a passion that, in her last year teaching in Peace Grove, she wove into her classroom teaching, connecting two of things she loved to do.

> The parents would say I've heard so much about you and your traveling around the world….and now my daughter's been talking about she would love to go here and do this, an you're really inspiring them to do whatever they want...I've heard so much about your passport. (pg.. 4/5..3)

Laura used a passport as a management strategy. The children could earn stamps and then as a class they would share pictures and culinary treats from the places Laura had visited. Laura was well loved and appreciated by her students, the parents, her colleagues, teaching partners, and the school leadership team. She felt supported both at home and at school. Laura shared her classrooms with two other teachers whom she considered her mentors and her collaborative team. The school had a culture of collaboration and was a place where all voices were heard and integrated into the school's overall philosophy. They planned together and discussed students and what would be best for them as they grew as learners. The supportive team she worked with facilitated her shifting image as a high school teacher to a Grade 5-6 teacher. She knew that she could ask them anything and received positive feedback on the work she was doing, "We worked together" (pg. 3..2). Her experiences at the after school care center also helped her confidence and conviction that she would be able to teach in an elementary program.

> So going into elementary was hilarious. I think my first week of lesson plans took about a month...You really have to take a step back and say okay slow down. This is where the students are at, this is where we need to take them and you know, we can slow it down a little bit. (pg. 2..2)

Laura worked closely developing relationships which spoke of her earlier view of herself as a people person who liked to be busy and involved with organizing and planning projects. People and friends shape the fabric of her story, "It's just developing relationships I guess that made it so easy to go and want to do a good job of my job because these people were important to me and their success was important for me" (pg.. 5..3). "I love helping other people and teaching" (pg. 1...1).

She felt successful teaching and thought of herself as a teacher. This, and the success of her students, especially in the extra opportunities she provided for them, sustained her. Being involved, learning, and being busy are supported by her abilities to plan, present, organize, and figure things out.

My thoughts circled around the question: Why is Laura not teaching now? Laura brought the framework of her teaching portfolio to share with me. This was an amazing collection of organized documents all affirming the success she experienced as a young professional and the thoughts from the people with whom she worked of her abilities as a teacher. There were several items outlining the contributions that she had made as a student, a teacher, and a staff member from former teachers, colleagues, parents, and students. So, why is Laura not still teaching? She had support, feedback, success, and a sense of belonging, all within a school context of other young people working together for the best of students. She was storied into teaching with an imagined story of teaching that was slightly different than reality and an imagined story of place that wasn't where she was teaching. So, was there something preventing her from finishing the application process? Were her expectations for herself as a teacher too high when she thought about her life as a teacher? Was her remembered story of teaching in Peace Grove preventing her from applying?

Laura always had in mind her imagined story of living and teaching in Edmonton. While teaching in Peace Grove, she would drive to Edmonton every weekend, "[M]y life was in Edmonton" (pg.16..2). "I basically drove to Edmonton every weekend because all of my friends are here and basically my life was here, but I was working there and my family was there so which was important too" (pg.. 9..1).

There were tensions for Laura as she "never saw [her]self living [in Peace Grove] forever."

> I was at the point where either I stay at home on the weekends and make friends in
> Peace Grove and that's my home or I keep it temporary and keep driving to Edmonton. I
> never really wanted to see myself permanently living in Peace Grove. (pg.. 16..2)

Laura thought of her tenure teaching in Peace Grove as temporary. She kept accepting assignments either because they were a means to another passion or because she thought of them as being temporary and only the next step in her journey. From Monday till Friday after school Laura worked "from first thing in the morning until bed...it was my life" (pg.17..2), and then she travelled to see friends in her other life. She jumped wholeheartedly into what she imagined as the professional life in her school. She was often the first person at school and one of the last to leave at the end of the day. She took on extra supervision at lunchtime as well as soccer, fitness, jump rope for heart, homework, running, math pentathlon, study skills, and skiing clubs. She attended the leadership academy and was the teacher representative for the association as well as the principal designate. She was on a variety of staff committees such as the AISI committee. She took advantage of many professional development opportunities as she loved learning and saw herself as a lifelong learner, "I really enjoyed doing this for the kids but I also saw it as being professional and part of getting a good review...because I thought that I would teach in Edmonton professionally...in a classroom" (pg. 17..2).

She enjoyed what she was doing and this spurred onwards as a result of her own learning and knowing that she was contributing to the success of the learners around her. Her strong relational knowing allowed her to seek out collaborative teams and form relationships that are

very important to her. This was sustaining for her. This description echoes her story from her time as a student particularly in high school.

I was amazed, imagining the effort, energy, and heart involved as I listened to her describe her involvements. She "learned a lot about teaching" (pg. 18..2) from all of her involvements with children. She marveled about the insights she gained into individual children and the joy she felt helping them to accomplish something they couldn't do before.

It was my life in Peace Grove and I loved it. And I wouldn't have changed it and there was balance… I was connecting with my family and I did have a few teacher friends where we would get together and have a glass of wine and do our marking and that kind of thing. (pg. 19..2)

Laura made the decision to move permanently to Edmonton. This was an important and difficult decision for her. She was leaving what she knew, and could count on, for an uncertain future. Interestingly, she was also moving from something that she always thought of as temporary to something that she hoped was more permanent and matching her imagined story of place and future. She was leaving her family for her friends and social life in Edmonton. Her hope was to teach and once again she was planning on applying with Edmonton Public. She resigned from her teaching position in May with everyone asking her if this was really what she wanted, "I was ready and it was what I wanted." Laura was thinking that she might enjoy her summer and start applying for teaching jobs in August. Applying for the sub list as a foot in the door was even a possibility. She would "figure something out" (pg.. 9..1).

Laura phoned a good friend whom she had gone to school with, and then on to university with, when she arrived in Edmonton. In previous conversations, Stephanie had often offered her a job if she ever moved to Edmonton and Stephanie thought Booker Publishing Company was a great company to work for. There wasn't anything immediately available with Booker but Stephanie would definitely keep Laura in mind. This was very reassuring and gave Laura a stepping-stone or another piece of fabric to baste in place as she made the transition. With this connection made Laura began to plan and imagine her life in Edmonton. She found a place to live, at least temporarily. She was a little worried about the daunting task involved in the application process and putting together her teaching portfolio. Looking back, she isn't exactly sure why this seemed to be an obstacle but before she was able to finalize her teaching application Stephanie called and offered her a temporary part-time position for four months as a sales representative with Booker. The teacher that Laura wanted to be, and knew that she could be, set high expectations and it was difficult to imagine beginning again in a new place, "I needed a job and I had friends who helped me even if it wasn't a teaching position" (pg. 1...4).

This began a journey that Laura had not imagined for herself. This first venture was once again tenuous. Laura thought about combining subbing with this part-time position to have full time employment. It turned out however that this was not possible as the position with Booker evolved into full-time until December when once again Laura began to deal with the uncertainty of employment. She started to work part-time with some friends at a restaurant to make sure that she had something to fall back on. Her plan was to take the Christmas holidays to once again put her application together to apply for teaching positions.

Booker called and said, "we want to create something for you" (pg. 21..2). It became a continuation of a part-time job for January with something full-time and permanent beginning in February. "So once I knew that it seemed ok, I'm doing this so now I won't apply. I said to myself that I would give it a year and then see where it ends up. It had to do with making it permanent" (pg. 22..2). "I ended up taking it and really enjoyed it. I was learning a lot" (pg. 10 ..1).

This was still a time of transition for Laura. She could now turn her attention to finding a place to live where she felt "at home." In her first apartment, the rent was raised and, being worried about financial security, she moved to a basement suite. This is where she worked from home for her first job with Booker. She was unhappy and uncomfortable working in the basement suite with little light and space. This had shades of her summer working in a cubicle for the accounting firm and her mom didn't like the arrangement either. She avoided going inside Laura's suite and waited outside to pick her up. Luckily for Laura, when she was visiting a friend, she walked down the block and saw a vacancy sign. It was perfect. Space. Light. Dishwasher. In-suite laundry. Laura was now beginning to feel settled.

> [N]ow I work from home, I work 8-4 and I don't have to drive to and from work. I don't have clubs after school. Right now this is great for me because I'm living life and I'm getting to figure out what I enjoy doing, getting back into sewing and all these things that I like to do. (pg. 10..1)

Peace Grove is still the place Laura calls home because that is where her mom and step-dad live.

> When I say I am going home, it would be going home to Peace Grove but Edmonton is beginning to be my home as I've been here for a year and a half now as well as (for) my university years. (pg.. 6 ..1)

"I would never move back to Peace Grove. It's just home where my family is just not my home" (pg.12..1).

Laura is still living with a certain amount of tension and uncertainty even though she is feeling more settled than she had before. She's living in Edmonton with a strong network of friends and a permanent job with the time to pursue hobbies and interests but,

> I'm not sure where to go from here. I know that it is difficult to get a teaching job and I know that it would be quite different than teaching in Peace Grove with the people I know and the [context] that I know. I wanted to continue teaching, but it just happened and right now it's good. I never thought I would be in sales. It's a lot of fun so I'm doing that right now. (pg. 11..1)

> I don't think this is where I see myself in even three or five years. I think that I'm still learning a lot from it...having positive interactions with educators...I'm still enjoying it

but long term, it's not where I see myself. I appreciated the job and being able to work from home and the personal time. (pg. 11..2)

There are many aspects in her work with Booker where Laura feels she employs her teaching skills and still does consider herself a teacher working in the educational field. She works with adults using interactive technology to connect with teachers and schools. She uses webinars, podcasts, share sites, as well as phone calls and school visits to introduce or ask questions about school resources that support the curriculum documents across the western provinces. Wherever possible, Laura weaves the experience of teaching into her work with Booker. She knows how a classroom works and what teachers might need to help students with learning challenges for example, "I understand the resources from a classroom point of view and I'm taking that angle as I go about my work" (pg. 25...2). "I work 100% from home...I get to run all these webinars where I'm meeting people all over western Canada, teachers, administrators, consultants and just teaching people about our books and resources" (pg. 10...1).

I wonder about her work from a 'cubicle' at home and the absence of people around her with whom she gains her sustaining energy. Recently when asked what she did she wrote down sales representative. It was the first time she didn't say "I am a teacher."

I wonder if this is a shifting of her identity away from that of teacher. I wonder as I watch her eyes animate and sparkle when she talks about teaching and the activities that she did with her students. I wonder as she shares all the things that she learned and speaks of the relationships that were and are so important to her. "I'm thinking to myself oh why am I not doing this [teaching]?" (pg. 26..2). I wonder about the juxtaposition of involvement, expectations for herself, imagined story of teaching, her remembered story of teaching, and decision not to apply for a teaching position alongside security, a life after work, imagined story of place, and what she knows.

There are many aspects of teaching in a classroom that she misses: "I miss things like the cross country ski club and all those things that I did with kids" (pg. 10..1). "I miss working with people...I'm really missing having interactions with people and helping people."

Laura misses the collaborative team of people that she worked closely with. She also wonders about the opportunities in the future. The Booker position, even though it is permanent, still has the possibility of being cut or reorganized if the market takes another downturn or sales quotas are not reached. The current position is what it is, and there isn't much room for other advancement. Laura is beginning to once again wonder about future possibilities.

Over the course of our three conversations, Laura talked about some possibilities she might like to imagine for herself. She is wondering about a master's degree in educational leadership or psychology so that she could help high school students choose the right path through post-secondary. She talks about a teacher librarian position and thinks wistfully about the position that was once offered to her. This possibility would blend her current knowledge of curriculum and resources with her teaching experience, "I would love to teach home economics or high school social studies or elementary again or even middle school, just having my own classroom again, because that was really fun" (pg. 11..1).

She mentions teaching overseas, but that this would only be a possibility if she were to go with someone that she cared about. She talks about getting her own place and someday having children, "My mom wants me to be happy and a few grandchildren would be nice." This is the question that Laura is struggling to answer: Which is the path for happiness?

[I]n the back of my head is teaching in Japan. I think I would like to settle down with a family, and maybe teach at an international school for a few years while I have young kids that were in school. I think that that would be something that I would really enjoy doing. (pg. 14 ..3)

"I know that it is difficult to get a teaching job. I always want to be involved in education. I'm just not sure, I guess if I'm ready to take any steps to make that happen right now." (pg. 11..1)

Laura has friends who are on temporary contracts, or subbing, or attempting to move to Edmonton from rural areas, or trying to find a level of continuity as teachers and knows that they are finding it hard: "I see these people who have been out of school for 5 years and are still in their first year of teaching or subbing, so that is something preventing me from wanting to go back" (pg. 26..2).

Laura is unsure of her next steps. Is part of this uncertainty the loss of her imagined story as teacher without a new pattern piece to replace it?

So do I leave my Booker job and get on a sub list and do the whole subbing and have a backup of waitressing or something like that? At 28 years old, it's kind of scary to do that. And then to have the unknown of will I have a temporary contract, will I have a full-time position, will I get my continuing contract? (pg. 13..3)

She says it all when she shared with me, "it would be scary to leave what I have now for what I want" (pg. 13..3). I wondered what would be Laura's reasons for staying at Booker instead of applying for a teaching position of some kind.

Because it's there and it sort of fell into my lap when I first got to Edmonton. I can take ownership for the new position and decide how it works. Money would be another factor for sure. Partnering with Stephanie who is very supportive and sharing the duties... Focusing on Alberta curriculum...with Booker this is kind of where I would be. (pg. 17..3)

I asked her then what would be her number one reason for deciding to teach:

Happiness. Just enjoy, be the whole idea of identity that I feel like I'm a teacher. Giving it another shot because I feel like if I don't I'll always regret, or wonder why didn't I go back to teaching when I moved. There are always so many avenues that you can take in education...different places I can go. (pg. 17..3)

Laura is a warm, passionate, fun, adventurous young person. I wonder what she will become and whether her identity as a teacher will shift. What will the life she sews stitch by stitch become? Laura's past success bodes well as she continues to reflect on her path and the desire to create lasting relationships that make a difference to others.

I'm still reflecting and thinking about the future and what my choices and decisions will be. I think that now I will apply to be teacher in Edmonton. I have a place to start from. I have a job and that takes the anxiety of applying away and in a worst- case scenario of maybe not being successful and then feeling disappointed, scared and possibly hurt that teaching is no longer a choice for me. It takes that away because I still have a future and it is known right now. (pg. 1.4)

Appendix D: A Narrative Account of Alis – Lee Schaefer

Early Beginnings

As I coasted into Alis'ss hometown, I was struck by how different this small town felt than the large city I currently live in. I had many experiences with smaller towns in Saskatchewan, and Alis'ss place, the place she now calls home, brings back a nostalgic feeling. Although there is a main strip that includes hotels, truck stops and the stereotypical Chinese restaurant, as I meander into the residential areas, although it is winter, I envision bikes sitting on the front lawn during the summer season. I imagine kids organizing themselves in the evening for a game of kick the can and not having to be home until the streetlights illuminate. In the winter I can see kids making their way to the outdoor rink to join a game of shinny, and having to be dragged off the ice for dinner. I picture neighbours turning their vehicles off in the middle of the road to have a quick conversation about the small town sports team, or the latest news in the paper. I imagine neighbours waving to each other as they leave the house in the morning, and conversing as they mow the lawn or shovel the driveway. As a young girl Alis lived in a similar community, although she did not describe her small hometown in a nostalgic way.

Alis and I spent a good deal of time discussing both her home now, and the town that she grew up in. The ways our conversations have unfolded resonate so strongly with Dewey's notions of experience. In a cyclical way each of the experiences she has shared are a part of her story to live by, and perhaps they are also a part of her 'story to leave by.' When I speak about 'stories to leave by' I am drawing on Clandinin, Huber, and Downey's (2010) notion of early career teacher attrition being a process. Teachers are composing their lives prior to coming to the professional landscape, and as they leave the profession they are still in the midst of composing these lives.

Keeping this in mind as I poured through the transcripts from beginning to end was helpful for me. In prior attempts at writing Alis's narrative accounts I have tried to start with an experience that resonated with me. However, as I read through the transcripts again, I realized that the lived experiences of her early beginnings were an integral part of understanding both Alis's present and future story fragments. Alis's moving back and forth in time, in a way contextualizing her experiences, allowed the experiences that she shared to take on a different meaning. As I move forward with the narrative account, I feel that beginning in a linear way, with her experiences, as a child, may be a good place to start.

Pineview[4] was a small town in Alberta. It was the place that Alis's family, her mother, father and brother, called home. Alis notes, it "was a very Christian community and we weren't a particularly religious family, and so growing up I really felt that I did not fit in with the community around us" (Alis, 3-1-1, 258). Their spiritual preferences were not the only cause of Alis's feeling of isolation. "The girls were in dance, and all the guys were in hockey, and we didn't do either of those…so I really grew up feeling very different from the people that I grew up with, and that was a big part of my childhood experience" (Alis, 3-1-3, 323). Alis also

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[4] Pseudonym for the town Alis grew up in.

explained that if there was one word to describe her childhood it would be boredom. "I think it was this whole feeling of me just feeling very different, and very bored and like I just wanna be somewhere other than here. So that was kinda the theme of my life (Alis, 3-1-3 328).

Alis had talked about her childhood in earlier conversations, but this was our third conversation and more personal information about Alis's childhood gave a much richer contextual background to her ambition of creating a classroom environment that was attentive to diversity and difference. It seems that her experiences as a child had created a desire to help students to not feel like she did when she was in elementary school. "I was a very unhappy child because of this whole isolation aspect, and when I was teaching elementary, I found it very difficult because I really felt, like the kids that didn't fit in, I really felt their pain 'cause that was kinda where I was at…I had a really hard time emotionally teaching elementary" (Alis, 3-1-3, 347). Alis's words portray, not only how painful the isolating experiences were for her, but also how strongly they shaped her identity, as a teacher, in a temporal way. Although Alis felt some tension working alongside the students on the margin, in some way her past experiences helped her to recognize these students. And to, in a sense, re-live her own experiences on the margins as an elementary school student.

A while later, in our third conversation, she added,

So it was hard for me to, I don't know, and it's hard to explain cause I don't think I've really processed necessarily that part of my life too much, but yeah to kinda be like, I just sort of felt awkward and part of it was, I guess because when I was at that age, I didn't know the solution, to how to make my life better, I was just unhappy…so then I would see kids in a similar situation and I didn't know what the solution was then, I don't really know what the solution is now, but I really felt for them in that, I know how much it hurts to be that outcast, and so I wanted to do something, but I didn't really know what to do. (Alis, 3-1-3, 378)

Alis, now that she has had more time with counselling, feels different about the story fragment above. She told a story about an individual who was going through a similar situation, and instead of feeling helpless, she was able to sit down and help them through the situation. In some way her counselling experiences have allowed her to re-shape her story to one that would now allow her to help these students on the margin.

Alis's words are insightful, and in some ways conflicted. I remember her being apologetic, and somewhat vulnerable. As I look through the transcript, I am taken back, in an emotional way, to this conversation. In a temporal way her words make me aware of how inextricably linked her stories of a student are to her stories of teacher. Her isolation as an elementary school student shaped her personal and social experiences as she taught on the elementary landscape. They also shaped her challenges to create an environment in an elementary setting that embraced belonging and respect created tension for her.

This tension, for me, depicts a bumping between Alis's imagined story of who she would be as a teacher and the teacher that she was actually able to live out on the professional landscape. This tension between the two stories created a feeling for Alis, a feeling that she

struggled with. Thinking about this experience of struggle in a temporal way, I consider other experiences that Alis shared with me that may have helped to shape her identity as a beginning teacher. Of course, there is no possible way to unpack each experience she shared, but the creation of a positive and inclusive social environment was a strong and ever present thread throughout our conversations. As I move into reflecting on this notion of inclusive social environments and Alis's hope to create them, I move forwards and backwards in a temporal way in which I am attentive to the personal, social and topographical place, in which her experiences take place.

World Travelling

As Alis shared the two experiences below, which speak to her shifting perceptions, she became excited. Her voice is notably louder in the audio recording, and I remember the smile on her face as she spoke passionately about these past experiences.

> The first time I really travelled…with my family, I was 14 and we went to Great Britain and that was huge for me in a lot of ways. One of the ways was that my name, ironically means guardian of the sea, and I'm like, my parents gave me the name guardian of the sea, and I'm like landlocked, like what the heck? And it's a Welsh name and my mom's history was Welsh and so anyway, one of my key experiences of being in Wales was I finally got to be near the ocean, and this inspired the whole notion of needing to travel. (Alis, con 3, p 6)

Alis speaks to how important a shift in place was for her to begin to see the world in a different way. Also the temporality of her words above show the importance of not only her own history, but her family's history. Her mom's Welsh history was clearly a part of her name, and in some way her name created a desire to experience the ocean. The temporality of this experience shaped her future experiences with travel, and a desire to discover a different way to imagine the world, and perhaps her future.

> I read a lot as a kid, I still read a lot, and you know when you read novels and children's books…there is all these cools things that don't exist in middle class suburban North America. For example, keyholes are in children's literature everywhere. I peeked through the keyhole to check what was on the other side, I never understood that growing up as a kid. What do you mean you peeked through a keyhole? You can't see through a freakin' keyhole. And I went to England and my cousin's house had a keyhole that you could actually peek through, and I was like, oh my God, these things really exist, and it was like I discovered a whole bunch of these concepts almost that exist in, I don't know, the narrative that you grow up in reading as kids, but I never saw or experienced as a little person. (Alis, con 3, p. 6)

Alis continued to talk, but as she finished the paragraph referring to the keyhole, I found my mind drifting. Not because I was bored, but because her comment caught me off guard. Often times in research interviews I find myself struggling to find reflective questions that may help the participant think about their lives, and respond in reflective ways. This was not the case with Alis, and the metaphor she describes above resonated strongly with me in a narrative way.

Alis's early beginnings speak to her experiences growing up in a homogenous town, where the dominant story was strong. As Alis and I negotiated her narrative account, she provided more contextual information that provided more meaning to the keyhole metaphor. Alis was not allowed to watch a lot of television growing up, life was boring, but what she was reading about was not always boring. The keyhole, for her, was symbol of leaving the boring place that she did not fit in, and discovering a place she had read about. "My imagined story was not, this is the way things are, it was from my own experience, other people in the world have much more interesting lives than I do. The keyhole signified that I was finally able to be one of the other people that gets to do interesting things" (Alis, personal conversation, April 2012).

As I write this now I think about Alis's experiences with teaching, and leaving teaching, I wonder how these experiences shaped her identity as a teacher. She speaks directly to how these experiences shaped her own perceptions of herself, perhaps, her own perceptions about where she fit. Alis's early experiences with travel, created a passion for seeing the world, which inspired many more inter-cultural experiences. When I asked Alis what these experiences looked like in her classroom she stopped for a moment, she put her finger to her mouth and murmured, almost inaudibly, "hmmmm." "I brought a lot of what I learned from my travel and intercultural experiences into my classroom, and I tried to share consciously and [probably] subconsciously some of what I'd learned about diversity and intercultural communication and respect and all that. I tried to bring that into my classroom" (Alis, con 3, p.8). Of course, Alis's travel experiences were not the only aspect of her past life that shaped what she believed was important in the classroom.

Sacred Stories of Equality

> I've often thought about where the hell did that come from? I think part of it I owe to my Mom and family meetings. So we would have family meetings, I don't know how often. They felt frequent when I was a kid, they might've been once a month…and one of the things that we would discuss at these family meetings was Mom, like a certain amount of the family budget was set aside to go to charity. And she would sort of say, OK, like as a family, what are we going to give money to? So I was reading about…learning about you know, water and building wells in Africa, and as a young kid we were hearing that at the dinner table. (Alis, 3-1-2, 521)

In the first line, when Alis refereed to *that*, she was speaking to the notion of social justice. Often the word social justice is used, there are many different definitions that it seems to take on. I think it is important to give insight about how we used this term.

The word social justice, in Merriam-Webster, is defined as "a state or doctrine of egalitarianism.[5]" This definition seems simple, but what it does not take into account is that the social structures in which we live are in some ways based on class, race and gender. The scope of this paper is not to delve into the complexities of this term, or the various definitions that are often associated with the word. But, it is important, for me, to think hard about what Alis meant

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[5] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20justice

when she used this word. When Alis talked about social justice, from my interpretation, she was eluding to making the landscapes on which she worked better for all of the individuals involved but with attentiveness to those that were marginalized.

During the negotiation of the narrative account, Alis added more to my wonders around her idea of social justice. As she thought about her attentiveness to social justice she spoke to her conversion to Catholicism. For her, taking care of the marginalized is an important part of Catholicism. She talked about the attentiveness to people's ability to change, or to be helped, and sometimes their inability to change. Sometimes individuals cannot change, and should be supported whether they change or not.

Whether it be a classroom, an office, or a movie store, it became quite clear that Alis was motivated, in some way, to create situations that made the places she was working better for the people on that landscape. Again in a temporal, personal, and social way, I wonder how these values for making things better came to be. What types of experiences had Alis encountered that made equality, and equity so important? When I asked her this question, her response was interesting, and reflective as usual.

> We were sort of a family that watched the news, my brother being 5 years older than me and 6 years ahead of me in the school was learning about current events and stuff in social studies and so, the conversations around the dinner table would often be about what the major world events were…so I had the sense that there were people in the world that were suffering and that were unhappy and that I needed to do something about it. (Alis, 3-1-2, 531)

As I think about Alis as a young girl sitting down at a family meeting to discuss what social cause the family budget would go to, her reflective nature and need to make a difference makes more sense. In my own family, discussions around famine and human suffering were not the norm, in fact, I would have to say they very seldom happened. Alis's brother who was older, a role model, and studying global issues at school, allowed Alis to become involved in the complicated conversations that may sometimes be silenced. While these family meetings seemed to shape Alis's ideas about what was important in the world, they also seemed to allow Alis to dream big about how she would help to make the world a better place. In one conversation she spoke to this, "I've got to do big, worldly, I've got to be an international aid worker, I've got to be a politician, I've got to, like on that big global level" (Alis, 3-1-2, 553). Making a difference on a global level in a humanitarian way is no small task. And although it may be said that many young people have inclinations to make the world a better place, it seems to me that this narrative thread is still apparent in Alis's story to live by.

After Alis graduated from high school she moved away from home to study at a college. It seems her college experiences continued to interact with her early landscape experiences and continued to strengthen her need to make a difference. She talked often about the impact that her college experiences had on her as a person and a teacher.

> I think my years spent at college, it didn't seem to matter what courses you were taking, whether you were taking History or Anthro or Economics or whatever, the teachers were

all very good at showing you, I don't know, I just read so many examples and we discussed so many examples of this, times when people chose the system over the human, and I realized how easy it is to do…do you want to be the person that goes against the system, and says hey, I'm going to have a Jew hiding out in my basement? Or do you want to be the person that says I'm scared of the system…I'm gonna follow along with what everybody else is doing. (Alis, 3-1-2, 482)

Alis's hope to make the world a better place, and on a smaller scale, hope to make the places she worked better for the individuals on that landscape, allowed her to see herself as a change agent. For Alis, a large part of being this change agent was modeling the values and ideals that she attempted to pass on to others. "Playing by the rules, it genuinely scares me. What am I allowing to happen that should never happen, if I play by the rules?" (Alis, personal conversation, April 2012). In the story fragment below, Alis again refers to her family upbringing as she discusses her attentiveness to follow through with her convictions, which she refers to as integrity.

Integrity, I mean it describes both my parents but I think it describes my Dad more…he has a very strong sense of what is right, and possibly owing to his military background, he's willing to defend it, and really lives his life and always has by his principles…so for my Dad it was about no, you be a good person and you serve others and you demonstrate humanity and compassion. (Alis, 3-1-2, 473)

Although in the story fragment Alis is describing what she sees as her dads' principles, as I read through the fragment, I see Alis's way of being in the world described. I think Alis made a decision early on in her life that she wanted to be the person that chooses the human over the system. As a beginning teacher, it is often not easy to do what you think is right, as opposed to what the school story expects you to do. However, along with her sense of social justice that was a strong part of her story, there was a strong sense of integrity. Although integrity could be described as a number of things, the best description of integrity I have been privy to came from Elder Bob, "Words, deeds, actions" (Bob, Personal conversation, July 21, 2011). I took this to mean that our words and promises are simply just words and promises if they are not followed through with actions. I feel this definition also resonates with Alis's notions of integrity.

Alis's convictions, shaped by both of her parents, are strong and have become a large part of her story to live by. During the negotiation of her narrative account, Alis referred to Micah 6:8; "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your god." She denoted that there was a strong connection between her spirituality and her desire to help others. Creating these types of environments in her life, and her classroom was and is very important to her. Humanity, integrity, and social justice were values that Alis felt strongly about, and felt strongly about portraying to her students. Instances that Alis was sustained showed me that she was able to see that she had reached her students in this way. They got it. They saw that integrity was an important value. They saw that Alis acted with integrity and treated her students in a human way. However, when Alis's imagined story bumped with the school story it created tension.

A Path to Teaching: Imagined Stories

Alis is at a point in her life where she is not sure what next year holds, yet I sensed this has often been the case for her. As I think about the high rates of beginning teachers leaving the profession, I often wonder about how they came to education. As I have mentioned in other writing, how could we possibly understand how we might sustain teachers, if we don't understand why, or how, they have come to be teachers? As I entered into conversations with Alis, this temporal question was on my mind. Alis has now left three different teaching positions. Yet, from our conversations, I gather that in each of these positions, which she left, she had success. As she moves into her Master's in counselling, she is still not certain whether or not she will go back to teaching.

One of the strengths of Narrative inquiry, from my perspective, is that research conversations happen over an extended period of time. I have had time to sit with transcripts, and to sit with Alis's words. Alis's ideas have shifted even since our conversations began. Her outlook on her future as a teacher, or counsellor, or mother, has shifted as she has had the opportunity to participate in her first practicum as a counsellor. As I wonder about what Alis's future holds, I am reminded of her early beginnings, and her imagined story of who she would be as a teacher.

> To give you the full picture, I had kind of always thought I was gonna get a degree in something and then I would do an Ed. after degree, that was my thought. I did my first year as an arts student and I really liked that and I was like yay, arts, great, I have no idea what to major in. Then so I took a couple of years off and I travelled and I did all kinds of cool exchanges and other things and then I came back. And I thought, I'm gonna be a political science student, yeah that's what I want to be, International relations, woohoo. The by October of that year of political science I was like I am so not a political scientist…but it's too late to drop and three of five courses were all year courses…I'm in it for the long haul…well I now have 6 months to figure out what else I could do next year. I considered every possibility and finally I was like, well I always thought I was gonna do a degree in something and then Ed. After degree, well if I know about the education part why don't I just do that? (Alis, 3-1-1, 261)

Thinking about Alis's words, I wonder why there was such indecisiveness with the decision to go into education. I can remember back to my entrance into education, and I was the same way. I remember writing my application essay for the first time, and trying to think about how I could portray someone that was passionate about becoming a teacher, even though I did not apply my first year. I think there is an assumption that those individuals that know they want to be teachers, or are storied into teaching in their early beginnings, will make better teachers. In thinking about teacher attrition, there may be an assumption that those individuals that are the most passionate about teaching will stay in teaching. This is clearly an assumption, as research surrounding this phenomenon has not been undertaken. However, thinking about teachers' intentions as they enter teaching is important.

> My mom kept a book called School Days…and once a year it has your school picture and your report card in it. On the back page it was always like when I grow up I want to be a. And up until probably grade 8, teacher was always what I had written in there. It was

probably in part 'cause my dad was a teacher and part because I was good at school. (3-1-1, 713).

Although Alis spoke in conversations about her struggles with elementary school, I she was referring to the social interactions with other students. She was always a good student, and always strived to be at the top of the class. These places, positive classroom spaces, provided a feeling of success, and an environment, that as a little girl, felt comfortable.

As a little girl, I mean it's' interesting because, like one of the career paths that I was sort of on there for a while was in theatre, and when I think of how I perceived teaching as a young person, it was quite similar to theatre in a way 'cause I'm standing up in front of a group of people kind of performing the role of teacher. (Alis, 3-1-2, 126).

Temporally, I get a glimpse of Alis's imagined story of teaching when she was a young girl. Alis had been socialized as a student to see standing in front of the class, "performing the role of teacher," as what it would be like to be a teacher. Along with her experiences at school, Alis's Dad, played a role in her imagined story of teaching. When I asked Alis about her Dad's influence on her becoming a teacher, I was intrigued by her metaphorical response. "When I was a young kid, I didn't even really understand the kind of teaching that my Dad did 'cause it was way different than what I was seeing as an elementary kid" (3-1-2, 99). Alis attributed this disconnection between what her father did, and her notions of teaching, to his work in industrial arts; to her, it did not resemble the teaching that she had experienced. Alis, as a young girl, saw teaching as "all your kids in these nice neat little rows and [she] would stand up at the chalkboard with [her] ruler or whatever and do [her] little lesson…[her] as instructor" (3-1-2, 130).

As Alis's "universe began to expand" (3-1-2, 145), and she experienced the plethora of careers that were available to her as an academically successful individual, she began to think about different professions. She notes, I "was never really very much of a rebel, but as much as I had that teenage rebel phase, it was like oh, I can't be like my dad. I don't want to have the same job as him…so part of it was that I have to be different than my family" (3-1-2, 153).

However, as Alis, in a sense tried to escape from teaching, it seems that the interaction of her past experiences continued to pull her back to the profession that, as a little girl, she had always imagined being involved in.

I went to K-9 school…I could be helping kids in elementary 'cause there was that large range...Then when I got into high school, that's where things started to once again be like, hmmm, maybe I really should do it. In Grade 9 this happened too, especially with math…I'm not really a math student, so for me to understand math I really have to break it down….so I would explain a lot of stuff to my fellow students who didn't understand the teacher…And whole bunch of students were like, man I get it when you explain it, I get it, when other people explain it I don't. (3-1-1, 730).

Alis leaned in as she told the story about helping her fellow classmates. She was excited to share it, and it was, from my perspective, something that she was proud of. The experience

affirmed not only her desire to be a teacher, but her imagined success as a teacher and again, the classroom place as an environment where Alis felt comfortable. This experience happened with peers at an influential age, and perhaps Alis's respect for her peers' comments also made this experience more important in her path to becoming a teacher.

After Alis's first year of university she went to New Brunswick to help teach English in French classrooms. She was called a Language Monitor.

> Normally what a monitor would do is take a small group of students and work with them and do games and activities. But they very quickly were like, oh, you're really good at this stuff, so we'll just let you basically plan the English lesson and we'll just supervise. (3-1-1, 747)

Again in this experience, I am privy to Alis's feeling of success. Having an experienced teacher tell you that you are effective at what you are doing is a powerful event. She was successful in another classroom place, and enjoyed her experience working with Grade 3-6 students in New Brunswick. These affirming experiences, in a temporal way, strengthened Alis's imagined story as a teacher.

While, from my perception, these experiences were shaping Alis's path into education, she still had not entirely decided that she wanted to be a teacher, and had not yet enrolled in the Education Faculty. "Technically on the books on the universities books I was a drama major…but I was like what the hell am I going to do with a drama degree" (3-1-1, 766)? After her first year of university, after travelling to a number of places around the world, Alis's social justice values encouraged her to enrol in political science. Although she liked the idea of being involved in the political world, her experiences within her classes did not inspire her to continue along that path. She applied into the Education Faculty at this point and was accepted, however, she also applied into the stage management stream in fine arts, and was accepted. The stage management program was difficult to get in to, in fact they only accept a small portion of people who apply. People who graduate from this program are some "of the people who stage manage the Oscars" (Alis, 3-1-1, 788).

The summer between making the decision between stage management and education Alis traveled to France to be a tour guide at Vimy Ridge. "We got a lot of school groups while I was there. And it was just another one of these, hey I seem to be good at this and kids seemed to want to listen to me. I thought, maybe I should do this" (3-1-1, 777). After sitting down to think about her past experiences, Alis finally decided to become an education student. "I've been on the teaching path for years. Of course I'm gonna be a teacher, how could I have waited this many years before I finally went into education" (3-1-1, 796).

Thinking narratively about Alis's experiences from the time she was a young child until she made the final decision to enter education is important. Of course, Alis did not share all of her experiences that brought her to teaching, but in our time spent she felt that the experiences shared above were pivotal glimpses, or moments of affirmation. If I think about the threads, using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, running through the stories that Alis shared with me pertaining to her path to education, I am intrigued by how similar the experiences are.

The places in which the experiences take place are geographically varied. They happened in small town classrooms, elementary schools, junior high schools, and historical sites. In a topographical sense, it could be argued that these places are different, and this may be true. However, I am drawn to the similar role that Alis played in each of the experiences. In each experience, from my perspective, Alis is seen as the knowledge holder, or expert. Sitting her bears in rows and instructing them, the way teachers do. Helping fellow classmates understand something that she can break down and explain to them. Teaching English in a French classroom, with French teachers to French students, in an environment that her knowledge was clearly valued. I see this extending to Vimy Ridge as well, although like the other experiences it did not happen in a classroom, Alis, as tour guide, was acting as expert to those individuals who wanted to learn from her.

I see the similarity in the way that Alis felt during these experiences. Alis reiterated how much this resonated with her during the negotiation of her narrative account. These experiences made her feel good. It was personally satisfying to help people learn things, which they did not know. From the experiences she shared, I am confident that she was good at helping these individuals learn something they did not know.

I wonder about the similarity of the social environment that was apparent in each of these experiences. For me, as an athlete and coach, I had a number of opportunities helping students or players learn something they were passionate about or needed to learn. They were there for a reason, and often times on their own terms. For me, like Alis, I experienced success in helping the students and players learn. As a beginning teacher, prior to my practicum experiences, I carried these experiences with me. However, as I entered the classroom, I experienced a much more complex, and different social environment. As I did not ask Alis this question, I wonder if she felt the same way as she entered her first professional teaching landscape. I also wonder how these preconceived notions of expert teacher bumped with the experiences of beginning teacher.

Again during the negotiation of Alis's narrative account she stopped to ask a question. She asked what bumping meant. As I explained the notion of bumping to her she asked if I could please use the word clashing instead. She felt the term bumping did not do justice to the level of tension she felt as she negotiated her stories to live by. She felt that clashing was a better descriptor to portray the tension that was present between her stories to live by and the professional landscape. Alis's attentiveness to this tension resonated with her stories, and I was appreciative that she pointed out how strong the tension was that she felt as she negotiated her future stories to live by.

Change Agent Through Relationships

Alis's early beginnings denote an innate passion to make the world a better place, and to enable those individuals she is around to live out better lives. I would argue that this change cannot happen outside of relationship. To illustrate this point, I shift to another conversation that Alis and I engaged in. An important part of narrative inquiry is to create spaces for conversation to spread to unknown places and an interesting way to disrupt the dominant story of *research interview* is to have participants bring in artifacts. During our second conversation I had Alis

bring in artifacts that were meaningful to her as a teacher. One way to think about why Alis had left the profession of teaching is to inquire into experiences that sustained her while she was teaching. In gaining a better understanding of experiences that sustained Alis, I may be able to get a better sense of why these experiences were sustaining, and in turn, a better sense of why she left.

When I asked Alis to bring in artifacts that resonated with her teaching she chose to bring in a portfolio containing student letters. One student wrote, "a lot of teachers just want us to crank out papers. You really embrace teaching us the humanity of language. Journals help us be real. They make us feel connected somehow" (Alis, con 2, p.5). The student goes on to talk about how Alis was able to teach her the meaning of writing, as opposed to just the structure and grammar. Alis noted, "oh my God, that's what I have been trying to do. I've succeeded at least with one student" (Alis, con 2, p. 5).

Alis's early beginnings and path to teaching bring context to this story fragment. The experience, which happened while she was teaching high school English, resonates with her imagined stories of who she would be as a teacher. As Alis read the letter, she became emotional; it was easy for me to see that this was a sustaining experience. I am attentive to Alis's feelings of isolation as an elementary school student, and to how the students' words above illustrate a feeling of connection to the classroom community that Alis missed out on as a student at times. I am also attentive to other imagined stories of who Alis would be as a teacher. From the story she shared above, it becomes apparent that the community that Alis created not only helped students to feel safe, but also it allowed them to learn. This thread of learning is another resonant thread throughout our conversations.

Another letter Alis shared written by a student also spoke to her ability to create a safe learning environment "It's crazy how we are all so tight now. I feel like I can tell you anything without being judged. You're so open minded, open to criticism and open to difference and diversity…you have a very strong integrity and it is obvious in the way you lead your daily life" (Alis, con 2, p. 5). After reading this letter Alis again became emotional and reiterated that these experiences resonated with her so strongly because this is what she was trying to do. The fact that her students were able to recognize that, and verbalize it, helped Alis to feel as if she was making a difference.

As I think about our conversation, it is not surprising that she shared these experiences with me, and spoke to how powerful they were for her as a teacher. They strongly resonated with her imagined story, of social justice and equality, of who she wanted to be as a teacher. Her innate focus on the relational aspects of teaching resonates with both of these experiences. A student out of relationship with you would not respond in this way through their writing. She created an environment based on respect, equity, integrity and belonging. Within these environments Alis was able to see her students learn. It is in thinking about experiences that seemed to sustain Alis that help me to better understand the experiences that may have shifted her stories to live by, to stories to leave by. What I mean is, in understanding what sustained Alis as a teacher, I may get a better understanding of the experiences that allowed Alis's stories to lead her out of the profession of teaching.

The Storm or the Shore?

> I'm gonna change the world or I'm gonna change the system or I'm gonna change something. I'm gonna change that one kid or whatever it is, and then you come up against this system that doesn't want to be changed, and how do you negotiate that?..But what I think is frustrating about systems in general is that in order to be promoted, in order to succeed, you have to go, to some extent at least, you have play by the rules. You have to at least know what the rules are, and you have to demonstrate that you care about the rules, and as a general rule then the people who, promote you are the system. (Alis, 3-1-2, 657)

Alis's words above resonate strongly with my experiences as a beginning teacher. In fact, as I write this I wonder how my frame has been shaped by my own experiences. Similarly, as I tugged on threads from the transcripts, I was careful to question if it was indeed a hanging thread, or a thread that I had kneaded loose. The best I can do is to be attentive to why I have chosen to share certain experiences, and why others will stay in the transcript.

I have chosen the story fragment above because I reiterated the same statement to a colleague of mine in my third year of teaching. I had resigned to the fact that if I wanted to make changes, in a broader fashion, I would have to be aware of who was making decisions, and how they were being made. Generally speaking, from my own perspective, those who make decisions have been successful within the systems they have worked in, thus they have in some way played by the rules that Alis refers to. This type of hierarchical shimmying is not only exclusive to schools, it could be argued that this political and cultural phenomenon happens in all systems. Thinking, in an epistemological way, like a critical theorist, I wonder how the system chooses the individuals that become powerful within the school systems. For example, are principals sometimes promoted on their ability to follow district policies rather than other, what some would say, more important criteria? Having said that, although I am interested in these school, cultural, and political stories, I am first interested, ontologically, in Alis's lived experiences as she negotiated these school stories. In a narrative framing of this wonder, I might think about how Alis's identity as a beginning teacher may have been shaped by the dominant stories of what counts in schools. I am interested first in Alis's experience, and then in the dominant stories on the school landscape.

Also in a narrative way, I wonder about Clandinin and Connelly's notion of the school landscape being, in a way, like a parade. As one enters the parade, they are unaware of what has happened prior to their entrance. As they spend more time within this metaphorical parade, they may begin to get a better understanding of the school stories that shape the particular landscapes they work on. In retrospect, Alis eluded to rules that she felt needed to be followed for her to be successful. On a similar vein, maybe she is alluding to her ability to negotiate her own story within the school story; her imagined notion of who she would be as a teacher, and the teaching story she had to live out on the professional landscape.

The following quote speaks to Alis's broadened perception of the parade that she had entered:

I think I can keep some of my vision and live in the real world and have a happy medium between, but I know some people that they're so far in the real world that they don't think that anything good is possible. Sometimes I think that those are the people who stay in teaching…I think almost to survive you kinda have to. If you accept the mediocrity you get OK with it and you can just keep going to work every day knowing that you're not really making a difference. (Alis, 3-1-1, 1114)

As Alis read through the quote above, she became uncomfortable. She sat back in her seat and cringed "I am more concerned about anonymity after that comment (Alis, personal conversation, April 2012). Alis's words define the disconnection, or clash, between her vision, imagined story, and the landscape in which she found herself teaching. At this point in our conversation she saw herself as being able to walk on, what Cladinin and Rosiek, (2007) call, a *borderland* between her imagined story and the real world. The term borderland, conceptualized by Anzaldua (1997) as a space that is tension filled, metaphorically speaks to the space between Alis's imagined story and story she had to live out on the school landscape. This borderland space filled with struggle, (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) is a space that becomes "blurred as regions overlap and come together" (p. 59). Negotiating this borderland could be metaphorically seen as the shifting and shaping of Alis's identity. Alis, in the midst of this negotiation, speaks to what she perceives happens to those who slip too far into the real world; they are able to survive. It is profound to think that, for a teacher to stay in the profession, they must give up their vision of what is important.

I actually would love for the school system to give teachers more time to do a good job and to be the teachers they want to be…I feel like if I am not teaching I should at least be trying to improve the school system from the outside. And if I am in it, I should probably be trying too, either way I feel like you shouldn't just sit there and participate in this broken system. Because how long can you really stay in the system. (Alis, 3-1-1, 1228)

Alis spoke to the issue of time on a number of occasions. I am struck by how the lack of time created a barrier for her to actualize her imagined self as teacher. "I mean for me [that] was probably the biggest frustration was that I didn't have the time to plan and prepare the way I wanted to, to teach the lesson that I, the students deserved to be taught" (Alis, 3-1-2, 765). Alis, in essence, is struggling here with two different things. On one hand, she is traversing the borderland between real world and her imagined story, and on the other hand she is drawn to trying to help to create a system that is attentive that teachers are in limbo between these two worlds. In a practical way, she legitimately feels like the system needs to provide teachers with more time to do the job they want to do.

They should be given the time to do their preparation work to do a good job; To be the teachers they aspire to be. If we had the time to be the actual teacher we wanted to be there would be less bumping between the imagined story and the teachers we are becoming. (Alis, Personal conversation, April 2012)

As I delved into the data during a recent teacher attrition project group meeting, I began to think deeply about questions surrounding teaching being hard. I am wondering more about what teachers mean when they say their jobs are hard. Of course, each teacher may use the term

differently, but for Alis it seems hard for her was her inability to live out her imagined story. Yes she was busy, had few resources, and had a difficult time balancing her life, but from her words above, the tension stemmed from her inability to be *the teacher, instead of a teacher.* What I mean is that in striving to become *the teacher* she wanted to be, she realized that if she wanted to stay in the profession she would have to become *a teacher.*

Her question at the end of this last story fragment "how long can you really stay in the system" is the question, which initially intrigued me with this research. Being an early career leaver myself, I asked this question internally, and expressed it to colleagues. I also wondered, as Alis does in an implicit way, what makes some individuals stay and what allows others to go? Why do some conform, or in Alis's words, "slip into the real world" and why do others leave; Do those that leave refuse to slip into the real world of teaching?

> So I have two choices as a new person. I can either play that game and move up here, or I can say no to your game and leave. When people choose to leave things don't get better. I am conflicted by having to leave the system, it really wares on me. It's just not easy to leave because I know the system is not going to change. (Alis, 3-1-2, 671)

Alis later told me that by playing the game she meant working within the system the way that you are expected to work. Alis was emotional when speaking about the game. I could tell that the decision to leave was not easy; she felt like she was giving up. As Alis mentions, the system promotes those that are able to, or willing to play by the rules. I should not assume here that all individuals entering the system do not enjoy playing by the rules, or that playing by the rules means that you have to give up your imagined story of teaching. It should also be reiterated that it is never either or, and that this negotiation of identity is permeated by layers and complexity. Having said that, Alis's stories of teaching bumped with the schools story, and she had to make a decision.

Often after conversations with participants I will voice record the field notes that I have taken down while they are fresh in my mind. After this particular conversation I just wanted to listen to music on my drive home from Alis's small town. I hit the shuffle button and a song I had listened to a number of times began playing. The Stars', one of my favourite bands, song "Undertow" reverberated loudly in the truck. A line in the song resonated with me, and although I had heard it a number of times, today it was more meaningful. *You pick the storm or you pick the shore.* I pulled over the truck at the next available turn off and wrote, "from which vantage point can we evoke the most change?" Metaphorically, from inside the storm, there is so much chaos that it is difficult to get out. It is also difficult to know what is happening outside of the storm. From the shore, perhaps, we may have a better vantage point to understand the inner workings of the storm. We may also have more time, less chaos, and be able to watch the storm shift and change. However, can we ever really truly understand the inner workings of the storm from the shore? Alis also ponders this notion of inside our outside. "Do you stay inside and try to fix if from the inside or do you leave and say I am healthier as a person if I'm not in the system" (Alis, 3-1-2, 24). Alis has decided that she is a much healthier on the shore, when not working directly within "the broken system" (Alis, 3-1-1, 1228).

Moving Forward

Since Alis has left teaching, she has become engaged in her master's degree in psychology. Part of this master's work includes a practicum portion. When Alis and I were engaged in conversation, she was in the midst of one of her practicum portions. Part of my interest in working with individuals who had left teaching early, was to get a sense of where their lives had taken them since leaving. I wanted to gain a better understanding of how their identities had shifted since leaving teaching, how their current careers were different than teaching, and their retrospective notions on teaching. Looking at the temporality of Alis's lived experiences provides some interesting insights into why her current career may be more fulfilling than teaching was for her.

> As a teacher your primary function is to teach and so to transmit curriculum…it's about the intellect, it's about the brain, it's about that part of a person personality. Now do teachers do way more than that? Hell ya…but it's not in your job description…And when you get evaluated as an educator, nobody's evaluating your ability to do all those other things, right?...And now I feel like my job is all about relationships and not just about the brain, curriculum, the intellect part. (3-1-3, 470)

It might be fair to say that Alis's imagined stories of teaching included building strong relationships with students, and that these relationship would allow her to help students learn and influence them in a positive way. What counted for Alis, did not count within the school system she was working within. This clash created a tension for Alis. Her early beginnings had created stories to live by that included making the landscapes she worked on better for the individuals there. It was important, maybe even imperative, that she make a difference in what she is doing. Sticking to these convictions, integrity, was also a strong part of Alis's story to live by. From Alis's experiences I get the sense that this imagined story of teaching was difficult to live out. As I move forward to her present experiences, and her perceived future, I wonder about how counselling may allow Alis to live out this imagined story in a different way, outside of the school classroom.

> So I started at my practicum in our counselling office…the culture is so different, and when you think about it, like in some ways, teaching and counselling aren't that different…but just the way I was treated upon coming in to that office was just worlds apart…it was like, well do you want to start counselling right away? No I think I'd like to observe for a while. OK, that's cool. All right, none of this like OK we've got a list of 15 clients that you got to take on like right now…by the way we're going to give you all the shit clients, you know. And then we're going through files of referrals and stuff and there's one like real hot button client in there. And she was like you're new, I won't give you that one, versus here is subject no one else wants to teach, go for it. (Alis, 3-1-2, 906)

Alis uses the word culture to describe how different her beginning experiences were between teaching and counselling. In teaching she notes, "I walked into a classroom that was a blank slate. There were no teaching resources, nothing on the walls, nothing on the bookshelves. It was an empty room of desks and that was it" (Alis, 3-1-1, 364). With counselling she felt like she was walking into a profession that valued her. The people she was working alongside valued

the fact that she was beginning, that she may not be an expert, and that she was going to need support to be successful.

> And like I didn't feel like I could express weakness in that first year [of teaching]. I didn't feel like I could go to talk to my principal and be like…I'm having a tough time with these three discipline cases. Now, in my current position, like I would feel totally comfortable going to my supervisor and being like, you know here is a challenge I am running in to. Do you have any good ideas for me? And it wouldn't be seen as like well you're weak. It would be seen as like your reaching out for support. (Alis, 3-1-2, 945)

This feeling of being supported was a piece that came up often with her new counselling career. One of Alis's struggles with teaching, as I spoke to earlier, was being able to be a good teacher, while still balancing a life outside of the school. She spoke to this with passion in the story fragment below. I asked Alis if she felt like she was a healthier person since she left teaching. She responded in this way.

> It's a combination of the teaching profession and the way that I was driving myself to be a good teacher right, but still. Am I healthier? Way more balance, way more balance…But I think it is impossible, I genuinely think it is impossible to be a high school teacher and to be decent at your job, and have a healthy home life. I really do think it's impossible. Either you're kind of a mediocre teacher and really on top of your family life, or you're a good teacher, or a great teacher, but your family is suffering in some way. (3-1-5, 353)

As Alis became a wife, and a mother she began to imagine what her future would look like as a teacher. Her words speak to her imagined story of who she would have to be as a high school teacher if she made the decision to go back to teaching. Either her family would suffer, or her teaching would suffer, and from our conversations, I get the sense that neither of these sacrifices would be acceptable for her. Alis's profession is certainly important, as I have spoke about often throughout out this narrative account, she needs to be making a difference; however, not at the expense of her family. As I think of this compromise that might have to be made with teaching, I am reminded of a conversation Alis had with her current supervisor.

> The only way you're going to sustain working here, and he's been doing it for like 20 years so he should know, is he's like you have to take care of yourself…you have to make yourself and your family a priority and if your ever finding that those things are falling apart then go back to that…And I thought that's a message I never heard in the school system. (Alis, 3-1-1, 1309)

This supportive environment was something that Alis greatly valued, and in some ways, it seems as though this supervisor reaffirmed the importance of her career, but more importantly, her family and personal landscape. In some ways maybe this supervisor, and the environment she now works in, allows her to compose a future imagined story that may enable her compose a career whilst still being a healthy person, a good mother and a good partner.

Along with composing this successful personal life, I see Alis's job as a counsellor as aligning more with what she had imagined herself doing as a teacher. For example she noted that

> I'd say 85% of our job and that maybe is not generous enough, but 85% of our job is that part the teaching, the curriculum, the classroom management, all of that, and then this little 15% could be dedicated to relationship building and whatever else. Whereas in counselling 95% of my job is relationship building and 5% is paperwork. So in terms of that piece of me that I was hoping to apply and that thing that's really important to me about being useful, and being, like serving others and social justice, and all of that is just like jumping up and down for joy because it's like oh yay, I finally get to like really do this. (3-1-5, 566)

The story fragment below gives a better understanding of how building these relationships shifts, for her, the importance of what she is doing.

> I think that there's, I said to my dad recently, I said there's nothing else that I'd rather be doing. Like Waways[6], there's nothing else I would rather be doing… And part of it is that I feel like in all the other kind of systems that I've worked in, the thing that makes your life hard, as a professional, is other people's personal turmoil, or personal trauma, right? So in the classroom that plays out as the discipline problems. I was working at a video store, and it played out as people's lives are in too much chaos to return their videos on time…And as a counselor, I get to help people cope with that and heal some of that and fix that, and so I sort of feel like [as a teacher] your main function is to teach while at the same time maybe you can manage a little bit of that personal trauma. Whereas as a counselor, I get to just work with whatever that issues is, and hopefully in the long run, that person can heal some of those hurts and when they go back into those other systems, they return their videos on time and they're not in trouble with the law and they do well in school and all those things that everybody else's job becomes a little bit easier. I feel like where I'm at right now, I get to really make that, my primary function is to heal some of that hurt. (Alis, 3-1-3, 423)

There is much to unpack in the two story fragments above. Thinking in a narrative way I am attentive to Alis's past, present and future experiences. Her imagined story of making a difference is realized. She is able to focus on helping individuals change the way they live their lives. This, making the landscapes on which her clients live, a better place, is what Alis had set out to do as a teacher. It becomes evident from both Alis's' words and her excitement throughout our dialogue, that she feels fulfilled by seeing individuals make progress. And although psychological theories and assessment of progress are important, these things all stem from her being able to build a solid rapport with her clients. Her ability to connect with them on a personal level, to care about the trauma in their life, and to help the individuals she works with, in some way, have a better life, enables her to have a better life.

A Story for Tomorrow

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[6] Pseudonym for reserve that Alis is currently working on

"Every journey is cyclical, and so you always start out here, you know we think, okay, we're going from here to here and linearly it is two different places, but often were coming back to where we started. But we are different" (Alis, 3-1-3, p.7). Alis's words resonate strongly with Dewey's notions of experience. Experiences are continuous and always interacting. Alis, in her earlier experiences, explained how the dominant story of her hometown as a child marginalized, and isolated her. Yet, today Alis lives in a very similar little town. Building upon her own words, although the place may be topographically similar, Alis's experiences have changed her. Therefore, her interaction with the place has shifted. On a similar vein, as Alis moves forward, her imagined stories are continually shifting, interacting with past experiences, present experiences, and future stories.

Yet, as Alis's identity shifts and changes, a resonant thread, that I believe will stay with her, is this notion of creating change. I am attentive to her desire to work in a profession that values changing others' lives, a profession in which one can focus on building relationships, connecting with individuals on a personal level, and see the impact of what they are doing. Although this may sound to some like a definition of the teaching profession, for Alis, the system in which she was teaching did not allow her to do this. So as she is in the midst of searching for her own story for tomorrow, I wonder if Alis will find her imagined story within her counselling career. Will she be able to be the parent, wife and counsellor that she wants to be at the same time? Will time away from the teaching profession allow clarity, and a desire to return? Or, will she continue on with counselling, and see teaching as the stepping stone she needed to enter into a profession in which she can live out her integrity, create environments that promote social justice, and learning?

Appendix E: A Narrative Account of Dan – Lee Schaefer

Starting Cold

I told my wife I was not interested in attending her potluck at the hospital where she works. However, our daughter was five months old, and her colleagues were throwing her a baby shower. As I sat in the busy staff room, numerous individuals asked to hold our daughter. As the room was filled with all females, I was cognizant of the fact that another male had come into the room; this was Dan. On the table sat a variety of different foods, and due to the small size of the staff room, and large group of people, we ate awkwardly with our plastic utensils and paper plates.

As there was nowhere to sit, Dan was standing beside me when our first conversation began. In a short amount of time I found out that Dan had a daughter about a year older than mine. I also found out that he was a physical therapist at the hospital. When he asked what I did, I reiterated my research study that was looking to inquire into beginning teachers' lives who had left the profession of teaching early; I let him know I was specifically interested in those teachers who had left that were physical education teachers. The conversation became really interesting when he let me know that he had been a physical education teacher, had taught for a few years, and moved on to do his physical therapy degree.

In a coincidental way, Dan's name had come up when another person from the project was talking to a contact at a different junior high school in the city. It was at this point that I decided to approach Dan to see if he would be interested in being involved in the study.

We did not begin our initial conversations until sometime after our first meeting, but when we did I was excited to be talking to a past physical education teacher who was now working in another profession.

Part of our large project with Alberta Education, is to work with 2nd and 3rd year teachers across the province of Alberta. Our inclination to work with these individuals is that the literature denotes an increase in attrition after year three. We were interested in why this influx of leavers happened, and if the participants we talked to had intentions of leaving or staying in the profession. Although this study is different than my own study with beginning teachers who have left the profession after less than five years of teaching, I cannot help but think about the similarities between Dan's stories, and many of the 2nd and 3rd year teachers we have worked with. This particular story fragment below, mirrors many of the beginning teachers experiences we talked to.

> I was at the school board[7] interviewing for the sub list when the person interviewing me got a call from the person who would end up being my principal; he said he had hired somebody who quit on day 2. He's was like, I need a phys. Ed. teacher right now. And basically the guy walked out and talked to me, and said there's a job opportunity, do

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[7] Dan used specific school board, but due to anonymity I will simply refer to the place in a broad fashion.

you want me to give the principal your number? Sure, great. So he called me that night, it was Friday, I interviewed on Saturday at the school, started on Monday. Cold, first teaching job, throw you in there (Dan, 3-3-1, 10)

Dan, as he mentioned, was hired two days before he started his first teaching position. Unfortunately, because he was hired two days into the school year they were not able to offer him a full-time continuing contract. This meant that his teaching position was temporary. Prior to the negotiation of Dan's narrative account, I made the assumption that having a temporary contract must have been unstable, and uncertain. I made the assumption that it must have been difficult for Dan to be on this type of contract. However, as we negotiated his account he reiterated that this was not the case. He envisioned himself having to substitute teach for a while, so having a full time teaching position, although temporary, was a bonus for Dan. He did not see it as unstable, and was excited to be working as a teacher.

Coming to Teaching and Physical Education

Part of my interest with beginning physical education teachers, is how their past experiences as children, athletes and coaches shaped their decisions to choose physical education as a career. I knew early on in our conversations that Dan was a sports fan. When I entered his house for our evening conversations he always had the sports highlights on the television. When I asked about his involvement in sports he noted "I did just about everything and then in high school I stopped and focused on hockey. I played hockey and did cross country running and I played ball in the summer, so that was my thing. Before I did soccer and track and volleyball and that sort of stuff" (Dan, 3-3-1, 216). Not unlike many physical education teachers, Dan had a strong background in sports. It was something he was passionate about, and in some way, may have motivated him to become a physical education teacher.

Using the methodology of narrative inquiry allows for a temporal lens, through which, I can view participants' experiences. In thinking about why beginning teachers leave the profession, I am drawn to the importance of understanding what has brought them to the profession. In Dan's case, although he did not say he was storied into teaching himself, I denote the number of people in his family that were involved in education. "My dad was a teacher. My grandpa was a superintendent, my uncles a teacher, there is just tons" (3-3-1, 226). Although having teachers in the family may have drawn Dan to teaching, I didn't sense that he was pressured into it. Dan's brother, at this time, was attending university to be an engineer, and Dan entertained notions of following a career path in architecture. However, as a Grade 12 student, he could not imagine going to school for eight more years.

From our conversation, it seemed that an education degree would be a good starting place for him. "My dad was a role model and he taught phys. ed. for 20 some years, got his summers off, coached a ton of sports, played a ton of sports, so I thought it would be a good career choice" (Dan, 3-3-1, 233). As I think about Dan's dad being a role model for him, I wonder what Dan meant by this. In what ways was his dad a role model? In the quote above Dan referred to, the professional landscape, the teaching, and the personal landscape, summers off. I wonder what part of this was appealing to Dan. Was it the coaching, and summers off spent with him, or was it the teaching aspect of being a physical education teacher? Or both?

As Dan and I negotiated his account he spoke to these wonders. "Seeing my dad as a physical educator made me think it would be a good career choice (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012). He saw his father as a role model, and also saw his father as a role model to the students he taught, and the players he coached. His father was a competitive hockey player and played elite level hockey. This allowed him to become a well-respected coach and community member. "You know I saw my dad in the community, and how people responded to him as a teacher and I really aspired to be like that" (Dan, personal conversation, April, 2012).

As I think about Dan's experiences, I am drawn to my experiences with my father, and sport. He coached a number of the teams I played on; hockey, soccer, and baseball. I can remember him carting me from one soccer game to another because I was playing on two teams at the same time. I also remember being dragged out of bed on cold winter days to make an early morning hockey practice. My parents' willingness, and own passion for sport and physical activity allowed me the opportunity to be successful, and in some ways, shaped my path to becoming a physical education teacher. As Dan read about my experiences with my father he nodded his head. This resonated strongly with his story, and he agreed that his father's passion for sport and movement were also an integral part of Dan becoming a physical education teacher.

As Dan graduated from high school he had opportunities with hockey in his hometown. His older brother was already at university, and Dan was able to get a glimpse of what it was like to be a university student. This glimpse seemed to be enough to help Dan make the decision to move away from home and begin his university degree.

The university that Dan went to offered a combined degree with physical education and education. His response to this program was, "get two degrees, have options with physical education to do other stuff if I don't like teaching." (Dan, 3-3-1, 235). Inn Dan's reference to his degrees, I note a sense of a contingency plan. If he did not like teaching, he would have another degree that might offer other opportunities. From my own knowledge, I know that this program that Dan entered has become very popular. In fact, it is one of the most difficult education programs to get into. As I think about Dan's contingency plan, I reflect on my own experience and believe I would have made the same decision.

It seems to me that Dan's first inkling to abandon teaching, and go into physical therapy, was in his third year of his university degree. He began looking at the physical therapy program, but decided to stick with the education degree at that time, due to the fact that, as he said, "teaching has been good to me and I like it" (Dan, 3-3-1, 235). I wonder as I write this what Dan meant by saying "teaching has been good to me." I would assume that he meant he liked the courses, enjoyed the practical aspects, and in a temporal way, imagined himself as a teacher. When Dan graduated with his dual degree, he certainly had intentions of teaching, and decided to move back to his hometown to substitute teach for June and July. He later told me that he chose to do this because there was no way he could get on the sub list quick enough to actually teach in June and July in a larger city. In his hometown it took him two days to get on the sub list.

I asked Dan if he enjoy subbing there? Could he see himself teaching there in the future? He turned his head to the side and looked up at the ceiling. He leaned back and I could tell he

was thinking. He responded, "I don't think I had any intention of staying in the small town I grew up in, at least not right away, I maybe saw myself moving back there later on" (Dan, personal conversation, 2012). Dan having grown up in a small-town felt the urge to stay in the larger city in which he had spent the past five years attending university. He had become connected to this place, and in some ways it became home.

Imagined Stories

It turned out that Dan's first full time teaching position was at a Junior high school. Although he was hired hastily, the position fit his educational background in a way that is somewhat uncommon for beginning teachers. His teaching load consisted of all physical education classes, as well as a computer class and a grade 8 elective called Enterprise and Innovation. One of the things that interests me about beginning physical educators is how their past experiences shape their imagined stories of who they will be as physical educators.

While in some ways beginning teachers' experiences are diverse and varied, as I mentioned earlier, my own experiences, which motivated me to become a physical educator, revolved around sports and athletics. This was also the case for Dan. However, Dan's path to teaching physical education and his imagined story were also shaped by his dad's work in the subject area. When I asked Dan about how having family members who were teachers shaped his ideas about teaching he responded, "Yeah, I had a pretty good idea 'cause I saw the prep work, I saw the marking, I saw the coaching. He [his dad] was a math, phys. Ed teacher forever" (Dan, 3-3-1, 260).

In writing this piece, I am struck by how I name myself as a physical education teacher. From my recollection, Dan did this as well; he called himself a physical education teacher. In fact, this is why I had asked Dan to be involved in the study; his background was physical education. However, Dan taught a number of other subjects in his teaching career. I also taught a variety of courses, which were not physical education. Yet in some way I hung on to this identity of physical education teacher. As I think about why I did this, I am reminded of my own imagined stories of teaching. My imagined stories involved teaching in the gymnasium, creating a quality daily physical education program, coaching and building relationships with students. The only aspect of this that actually happened in my first year was building relationships with students, yet I called myself a physical educator. I wonder if Dan still considered himself a physical education teacher, or was he someone that taught physical education. In shifting the arrangement of the words, we shift the identity associated with the person. Dan responded to this during the negotiation of his narrative account. Proudly he noted, "oh ya, definitely I called myself a physical educator even though I taught other subjects" (Dan, personal conversation, April, 2012). Dan's story to live by was one that included him as a physical education teacher. Naming ourselves in certain ways not only identifies us to others, but also situates us within our own stories of who we are, and are becoming. If Dan had referred to himself as a teacher who taught physical education this would have situated him differently. I interpret the way Dan named himself as physical educator, as him being proud of his story to live by.

While many of the beginning teachers we have talked to were/are overwhelmed with their workloads, this did not seem to be the case for Dan. Our conversations around the notion of

being overwhelmed were brief, and I wonder if the nature of our conversations around this area stemmed from the fact that Dan's work schedule was what he expected.

> I would get there, I was a before school guy. I didn't like being there after school. So I would get there around eight o'clock. I can't even remember what time school started, quarter to nine maybe. And then I would be, I don't know, half an hour, 40 minutes after school…I was lucky teaching, there wasn't a ton of work right? So most of my time that I was late at the school was report card time" (Dan, 3-3-2, 263)

When I asked him if he was overwhelmed by the planning, teaching and busyness, his response was, no. He was able to get done what he needed to in his prep time, and did not feel overwhelmed by his teaching load.

He noted "Like, I had enough phys. ed.…background work, planning wise, for that, unit took an hour, right, to have the kind of structure. This is the progression from day one to then, and what we're doing and how I'm evaluating them and what's happening" (Dan, 3-3-2, 277). I wonder what Dan meant by phys. ed. background. He did note that he had a sports and athletics background, and was also teaching courses that were in his major area. "That definitely made the transition easier" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

Coaching was an important part of Dan's imagined story of teaching, and he did spend many hours coaching, but this did not bother him. He saw it as a very important and enjoyable part of his job. Growing up with his dad as a physical education teacher and coach, may have allowed him to see that coaching would be expected of him as a physical education teacher. During our negotiation of the narrative account Dan responded to these questions "I never felt pressured, I not only saw it as part of my job, but I wanted to do it. I enjoyed it, and coaching was a big part of why I wanted to be a physical education teacher" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

As a beginning teacher I struggled with managing my coaching time, teaching, and my personal landscape. I was prepared to coach. I wanted to coach, but as the year progressed, I found it taking time away from the things I felt needed to be done in the classroom. The long hours after school, and the weekend tournaments, impeded not only on my teaching, but also on my personal landscape, and I struggled to keep a balance. Interestingly, I felt as though I was more valued for my coaching than I was for teaching. Often other staff asked about how the basketball team was doing. They congratulated me on wins, and tentatively approached after a loss to soothe the disappointment. I wonder how this positions athletics on the school landscape, and as I think about sustaining beginning physical educators, I wonder if it provides meaning in a way teaching in the gym or classroom cannot.

Dan never mentioned that the coaching got in the way of his teaching, or in the way of his life, perhaps because he was doing something he enjoyed he did not see it as 'extra'. He gave the impression that he was good at balancing his time at school; it does not seem that workload or time created tension for Dan. When I asked him about his work life consuming him, he responded cheerfully, "no way, I was young and single and living the dream" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

Dan's' words are telling. Although he made the comment in a joking manner, as we discussed this notion of not being in a committed relationship during his first years of teaching he began to wonder. "Ya I'm not sure, you know, now that I have a daughter and a wife, I would probably look at the after school commitment and schedule differently" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012). It is interesting to think about how connected our personal and professional lives really are. Dan speaks to this as he ponders how shifts on his personal landscape may have shaped his experiences on the professional landscape.

Although his imagined story of workload and teaching position seemed to come to fruition, there were areas that Dan noted did not align with his imagined story of teacher.

> I think it was a little bit different in terms of understanding kids. I think when you've grown up an athlete, I grew up around athletes, so when you get into teaching and relating to kids that [athletics] isn't their strong area. That was probably the biggest thing that I wasn't used to, or needed to learn more about. (Dan, 3-3-1, 283).

Dan to spoke more to this during the negotiation of his narrative

> Not taking it seriously bugged me, poor athletes or gifted athletes that don't give a damn. That's what bugged me. I don't care how good you are, just give an effort and try. At least if you're trying you are going to learn something, a skill or a strategy or something. As long as you're participating. (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012)

Dan's frustrations and philosophy that become apparent above in the story fragment resonate with me as a physical education teacher. I grew up an athlete as well, and had imagined stories of teaching students that shared my experiences with sport. However, it became clear throughout my B.Ed., there were many students that "athletics was not their strong area." This interrupted my story of who I would be as a physical educator, I wonder if this experience also interrupted Dan's story of who how he would teach physical education.

When I think about Dan's experiences with physical education, I cannot help but wonder how his experiences with sports, shaped his perceptions of what to expect from students. Like myself, Dan noted difficulties with students that did not seem to take physical education seriously, or seemed to be disinterested in physical education.

Dan, prior to starting his first job, expected there would be students who did not want to participate in physical education; however, his philosophy was influenced further as he was in the midst of teaching. "I saw it was a different experience for those students, and even though I knew it would be there, it definitely shifted the way I taught physical education (Dan, personal conversation, 2012). Dan's initial expectations shifted. He became more attentive to trying to include everyone in the class. Finding activities and teaching methods that differentiate learning to entire classes is difficult, but Dan saw this as an important part of his work as a physical education teacher.

From my own experiences, thinking about how students' perceptions may shape physical educators theories about the subject area is important. When talking to students, I often hear that they've had physical education classes taken away for miss behaving in another subject area. Watching Elementary teachers' days unfold, I have become privy to the variety of subject areas they teach, and physical education, although a core subject in Alberta, is often given little or no preparation time.

Last week I was presenting to 30 teachers from across Alberta. After I had asked them to form small groups, I asked them to think about what was important in a quality daily physical education program. Five of the five groups mentioned fun, and one of the five mentioned learning outcomes. If teachers see physical education in this way, fun, how do students perceive physical education? If students entered Dan's physical education classes with the perception that learning does not fit into physical education, how did he negotiate this, especially as an individual who was passionate about physical education? How might this have shaped his own perceptions about physical education, and does this pressure from students, to have fun, shape our identities as physical education teachers?

Dan while nodding his head said, "yes kids preconceived notions was an eye opener for me" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012). Similarly to the variance of skill levels in the classroom, there was also a variance of students' imagined stories of physical education in Dan's classes. While some students saw it as important and a place to learn, others saw it as "lets play dodge ball everyday cause that's what physical education is, that is what I've done for the past 7 or 8 years, right (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012)?

To further think about this, I defer to Dan's words in an attempt to show how he negotiated these tensions.

> The things I didn't like were…I guess the feeling of stress with classroom management within the gymnasium setting. So I could relate to kids that were good athletes and participated well. I could relate to kids that were bad asses and participated well. Relating to kids that felt like they were there to stir the pot was tough for me and controlling them and you know establishing that authoritative, dictatorship so to speak, to get that control was probably the toughest part for me. And part of it was because I was 21 years old and looked like I was 15…so that was the toughest part (Dan, 3-3-2, 695).

Dan's story fragment allows me to gain a better sense of what was difficult for him in the gymnasium. The feeling of stress that came from trying to manage the gymnasium space resonates with my own story. I can remember, at times, hoping that no one came in to see that the class was in chaos. I am drawn to the words controlling, and authoritative, and wonder if Dan's imagined story of teaching included a well behaved class. I am also attentive to the notion that Dan, at times, may not have felt like the students saw him as a teacher. Dan during the narrative account spoke to this " I think they saw me as a teacher, and as a friend and less as an authority figure (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012). "I was 21 years old and looked like I was 15." I sensed that Dan had imagined his students seeing him as an authority figure and his struggles with this struggle created a bumping between his imagined story and the stories he lived out on the professional landscape.

If I turn to the personal dimension, I get a glimpse of Dan's philosophy; what he thought was important in physical education and what created tension for him. Although earlier he spoke to not being able to relate to non-athletes, as he continued to speak more about his experiences, it seems he had a more difficult time relating to students that "stir the pot." As long as students were participating, no matter their athletic ability or attitude, Dan seemed to be comfortable with this. I wonder if we could correlate participation to engagement, and engagement to enjoyment. If I continue on with this in mind, I am attentive to how Dan might have felt if students were not engaged in what he was teaching. For me, when students were not participating, I took it personally, like what I was teaching was not important. My feeling is that Dan thought participation was important, and that this allowed him to see that he was doing a good job.

> "I loved when kids came and just wanted to participate and do something, work hard at whatever they're doing, regardless if it was wrestling or if it was you know badminton or it was games or if it was dance or if it was fitness…when whatever moons aligned that every kid in my class was into it, you know those were great ones because when you feel like you're doing something, your achieving something, you're getting that physical education out of them, right? (Dan, 3-3-2, 720).

Dan was passionate as he shared this story fragment. This was in our second conversation, and I could see that he was becoming a bit more comfortable with sharing his experiences as a teacher. I was curious about what Dan was referring to when he alluded to "getting that physical education out of them." During our final conversation he spoke more to this.

> Getting the PE out of them was almost participation. I knew I would get them learning and into what I was doing that's the buy in. You get the message across that whatever lesson you set out to teach they get it cause they were engaged. Don't get me wrong, it was not so much about them enjoying the class. It was about them being engaged. Engagement and fun are two different things. (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

> The final lines of this story fragment are important in regards to Dan's philosophy of physical education. From my experience, *fun* is often the quintessential goal of physical educators. *Busy, happy, good.* For Dan this was not enough. Although enjoyment might have been a means for him to get students engaged, the most important thing for him was engagement – learning.

> The other interesting part for me in Dan's story fragment is the "whatever moons aligned" statement. From this phrase, I get the impression that this, what I would call sustaining experience, did not happen very often. If "getting the physical education out of them" was indeed a way for Dan to see that he was "achieving" something, and it did not happen very often, I wonder how he measured his success. In our last conversation I asked Dan if there were other things that he could correlate with doing a good job, or being a good teacher?

> Relationships with kids, that was the other way I measured my success. Kids from every level, every background, you can feel that buy in, or almost feel them being engaged. When the moon's aligned with all kids great. Just last year a kid looked me up on

Facebook. I remember he was not a good athlete but tried his but off. He got in touch with me, and let me know he really enjoyed my class. I guess that's maybe how you measure success. (Dan, personal conversation, April, 2012)

Dan has been out of the profession for over 7 years, and just last year a former student contacted him. What does this mean for beginning teachers if this is indeed a way to measure how successful they are? I wonder, if these types of experiences happened while Dan was still teaching, would he may have been more inclined to stay.

I am also intrigued with Dan's story because, in a way, I think Dan is disrupting a dominant story in physical education; the story that, as physical educators, we care about athletes, competition, high fitness levels, and winning. Dan's counter story is important.

When you get good classes where, you started with some sort of warm up activity, everybody is on task doing their thing. You switch and you do a couple little skill things whether it's kicking a soccer ball, you know running with a soccer ball, whatever, you do some sort of mini game where they're using those skills to transfer it into a different type of setting…that was the best" (Dan, 3-3-2, 733)

Dan again speaks to sustaining experiences for him teaching physical education. When Dan mentions, "using those skills to transfer into a different type of setting," from my interpretation, he is again speaking to watching students learn. There is no way, in the short amount of time he had with students, to teach each movement pattern or performance cue for each activity. Seeing his students transfer skills that were taught in different environments or activities to other activities must have been fulfilling. I would also like to point out, that the pedagogy he speaks to above, related warm up, skill teaching, modified game with skills, and is commonly taught in university pedagogy classes. These philosophical underpinnings of this pedagogy are attentive to students learning something, and transferring it into a modified activity, or different environment, to show their learning.

Again this, in a way, is a counter story to the dominant story of playing the sport with the *real* sport equipment and the *real* sport rules. Dan alluded to playing a modified activity in which the skills taught could be transferred. This modified activity, for me, presents Dan's philosophies of inclusion; through modifying activities he allowed more students to be included, and, perhaps, fostered learning.

Being that I have not seen Dan teach, I can only tell from his stories the type of teacher he was. The fragment above shows me that he was using pedagogy that would be seen as effective. I feel the need to share this to help better understand the type of teacher Dan was. He clearly cared about physical education, and was passionate about getting students participating and learning in his classes.

Borderland Spaces

As a beginning physical education teacher, I often felt like I was living on the borderland as a person teaching in the physical education area. Although I taught a number of different

subject areas, physical education was my passion, and as mentioned earlier, I still name myself as a physical educator. My background was in physical education, and as a teacher, it was the area that I felt most comfortable. Metaphorically this borderland space, which I felt I lived within, was created by trying to negotiate teaching in a subject area that I felt was seen as less than. Although throughout my undergraduate degree we often talked about the marginality of physical education, it was a different feeling to experience it firsthand. I have delved into this topic in great length in my past work, but I feel it is important to lay this tension out here for two reasons. The first being that I feel the reader should know that I have had past experiences as a physical educator that shade the lens with which I view the professional landscape. Second, Dan's lived experiences as a physical education teacher resonate with mine, and it is important for me to keep in mind that others may interpret his experiences in different ways; I am attentive to this as I move forward.

I asked Dan outright if he felt like he worked within a marginalized area. He thought about it for a while before he responded.

> We still had enough facility wise. I think I was like you know you're teaching PE…but I had my principal come sit on my classes twice maybe, whereas other new teachers around the school teaching core classes, he was sitting in on their class once every 2 months or something like that…so you could tell what [was important], and that's what the school division looks at right? Core marks (Dan, 3-3-3, 375).

Dan perceived his principal's lack of frequent evaluation in the gymnasium space as an explicit inference that physical education was not as important as what other teachers were teaching. One might also interpret this experience as the principal being more confident in Dan's teaching, therefore, less evaluation might be needed. However, it could also be construed as the principal not caring, or valuing what was going on in Dan's gymnasium space. I need to wonder more with Dan about when he woke up to this? Did he feel this as marginalization? Did the stories of his Dad shape they way that he perceived these interactions? Did Dan feel like the division, and principal, did not value what he was doing, or am I reading too much into this based on my own experiences.

Dan spoke to this during our final conversation " I think that I started two days after school year and the principal was in my class when, um, the dance unit in December, if I am a brand new teacher why are you checking up in December. Just no face time, as long as no kids getting hit in the head with a dodge ball your okay" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

It seems that although "face time" with principals can create stress, Dan perceived the lack of face time as, in a way, marginalizing him, and the subject area he taught in. His words again resonate with the *busy, happy, good,* dominant story that precedes physical education. This not only shaped Dan's stories to live by as a physical educator and beginning teacher, but it also gives a glimpse into the hierarchical position of physical education on the professional landscape he worked.

We know that the principal plays a very important role in supporting beginning teachers. As a beginning teacher, I taught a number of different courses. My principal evaluated me a

number of times during social studies, and language arts lessons, but he did not enter the gymnasium space once to observe my teaching. I certainly cannot say that my principal was not supportive; I would say he was very attentive to the needs of all of the beginning teachers in the school. However, him not coming into the gymnasium sent a clear message to me about what was important to him. Unfortunately, what I felt was the most important part of my day, he did not value. Dan nodded his head during our final conversation, and commented, "I agree, I felt the same way" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

Although the principal helps to shape the professional landscape, so do other individuals upon the landscape. Dan also had an opportunity to teach core subjects in his second year of teaching.

> It's different teaching…. I was teaching science, I wasn't trained with that, but part of it also was expectation you know? I mean the students can sense it when there is more importance placed on it by parents or by you know, within the school system, the schools teachers or principals, you know pushing those CORE courses. There wasn't any extra study time offered for phys. Ed. But there definitely was for CORE courses, right? So I mean they know and most of it is from their parents and knowing what marks are going to count the most for them. (Dan, 3-3-2, 611)

What counts? Dan, in the story fragment, reiterates the importance put on core classes. Although in Alberta physical education is a core subject, it is often not treated as one. This devaluing of physical education has become a strong part of the dominant story. So much so that, as Dan explains above, students even begin to see physical education as being unimportant, as a mark that is not needed, as a class that is meant to blow off steam. Dan notes, "there wasn't any extra study time for physical education." Why is this the case? How has the learning in other subject areas become what counts? Dan also alludes to the parents' perceptions of what counts. All of these phenomena are apparent in Dan's stories. Perhaps they are so visible to me, because my lived experiences as a beginning physical education teacher parallel Dan's. How has this become the dominant story for physical education? How do these dominant stories shape beginning physical educators notions about what they do? How many times can you be called *just a gym teacher,* before you become, a *just a gym teacher*?

As Dan read over the last paragraph he thought for a while and replied "Ya, but they can access what is perceived to be physical education outside of the school. Right like basketball. People have the opportunity to put their kids into that. Core they can't really unless they hire a tutor" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

Perhaps the notion that sports and physical education are one in the same becomes apparent here. The perception that sport and physical education are synonymous is a discernment that we often try to disrupt in physical education teacher education programs. However, if societal views, as Dan alluded to, see their son's and daughter's getting what they deem as physical education outside of the school place, conceivably, this may attribute to some parent's and student's seeing physical education as not important in schools.

It has been sometime since Dan left the classroom, but as our conversations around the perception of physical education came up he seemed to become more engaged. I noted this in his tone of voice, his body language, and the length of his responses. He drew parallels between his current work as a physical therapist and his past work as a physical educator.

> Even in physical therapy, my new career, we have people...they don't know how to coordinate a certain movement with a certain body part to do an exercise or to do a posture correction or to do whatever. They don't get it…what are the chances of them moving, and by moving I mean being active…or having the value to say hey, I'm going to take the steps instead of the elevator (Dan, 3-3-2, 642)

Although Dan did mention that these might be things they would not necessarily learn in physical education, he denotes the importance of individuals having the knowledge, values and skills to be active individuals. This could be said to be the goal of physical education, yet Dan is now a physical therapist. I wonder if, in some sense, one could argue that physical therapists and physical educators have similar goals. A physical educator may be seen more as preventative, helping people learn how to become active for life, and a physical therapist helping individuals heal themselves so they can continue to move. So, although Dan has moved on to another career, in some ways, he sees a connection with what he does now to physical education.

> While being a physical education teacher requires a lot of general knowledge, physical therapy requires more specific knowledge. Physical education is a more broad focus in life while physical therapy is more specific" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

Dan spoke to how being a PE teacher made him a better physical therapist.

> Well building relationships is a great skill in itself, so having that background is valuable. And although there are certainly differences I am still helping people to be active, and helping them in other ways too. Outcome measures, we use those to evaluate progress, using designated tested outcome measures this balance test or this range of motion, a good physical therapist is always evaluating what they are doing to see what their progress is. A good physical education teacher does this as well. Evaluation is a use of your personal professional judgment, to see what is happening. Same as PE teachers, specific plan and unit and this is what is happening. The physical education teachers that are most successful re-evaluate and use that evaluation to guide their teaching in the future. In physical therapy if someone comes in with a bad knee and is not getting better, I need to re-evaluate what I am doing and try something different. Should be similar if you are a good physical education teacher. (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012)

My wonders now turn to thinking about how an individual's identity shifts when they work upon a landscape that devalues what they think is important. If they enter the profession believing that they are doing important work, might they leave at some point if they are not valued? Or might they try to move into other areas of teaching so that they are teaching in an area that is valued?

Story to Leave By

Unfortunately, the questions I have written above are difficult to even attempt to answer from Dan's stories. Although he did share story fragments that speak to the liminal space in which some physical educators live within, his experiences on a temporary contract also shaped his decision to leave the profession. As mentioned early in this narrative account, Dan was hired after the first semester started. What this means, in the district in which he worked, is that he had to be hired on a temporary contract. The context of this situation is important to help better understand Dan's story.

The term temporary contract speaks for itself in the sense that it is not permanent, not long term. This, in itself, can be somewhat problematic as there is no certainty to the position. Although, it is important to note that Dan did not see it as an uncertain position. Temporary contracts are given to teachers covering for a maternity leave or a sick leave, but they can also be distributed for positions when the hiring date is after the first day of school. Dan was hired two days after the September deadline, and therefore was assigned a temporary contract. He taught the whole year, and from the stories he shared with me he enjoyed it, and was successful. "I taught in a junior high….it was a good school, it was well run, reasonably good kids" (Dan, 3-3-1, 100). I asked him if he felt valued in his first year, he replied,

> Yeah. I think so. I mean it's like did I feel valued by the students? Yes definitely. Did I feel valued by co-workers, other teachers? Some, others probably not. It's probably that way whether your a 10-year veteran teacher going in there to a new school or whether you're a brand new teacher going into that school. I think that the administrative staff there was very fairly good about recognizing staff with different roles and different things that they're doing" (Dan, 3-3-3, 286).

It seems from his words that Dan was able to put things into perspective. Although it sounds like he may not have felt valued by some staff members, he did not see this as being attributed to his status as a first year teacher. Whether he "was a 10 year veteran" or a beginning teacher he felt there would always be staff that valued him, and others that did not. Dan was certain that the students valued him, and from the last line of the story fragment above, I get the sense that the administration also valued him. Although Dan felt he had a successful first year, things did not go as planned as he began his second year of teaching.

> I started the next year and after a month or so there was a guy…who was on stress leave who, whatever happened, happened and he left, was placed with his seniority, bumped me out because I didn't have a continuing contract….He lasted a few months and then went on stress leave again, and then left so I came back and taught for a bit, and then said thank you very much I'm going to be doing my pre-requisite courses for physical therapy school" (Dan, 3-3-1, 35).

Dan, after teaching over a year at the same school in the same position, was "bumped" out of his teaching position. This story came up in our first conversation during the first few minutes of us talking. It seems to be one of the experiences that shaped his decision to leave the profession. When I asked him about what might have happened if he would have had a full time contract he noted,

Good question. I think I still would have been examining going back to university, but I may not have been looking at it that soon. But yeah I think part of the life being in kind of flux kind of here there whatever not being totally nailed down and played a role in it (Dan, 3-3-3, 216).

As Dan explains above, physical therapy was on his mind before this had happened, but it seems this experience shaped Dan's decision to leave teaching. As I think about the situation Dan was put in, I wonder if his life being in "flux" allowed moving to physical therapy easier. Having a full time contract and being in a school he enjoyed may have made leaving much more difficult. Being "bumped" from his position almost made Dan's decision to leave teaching easier.

For me, even after hearing the contract stories of 2nd and 3rd year teachers across the province, Dan's story is unbelievable. He taught successfully for a year, came back to teach another year, and was "bumped" out of his position by someone who was on a stress leave. Not even someone from his school, someone who had taught somewhere else.

"And I met the guy, cause I started there and then all of a sudden I find out this guy is coming, and I'm going to be leaving. And I show him stuff about the school and this and that…it was tough, you go back after he was there and…the kids are like when you coming back" (Dan, 3-3-1, 155)? "Some kids were like did they fire you? No they wanted to keep me (Dan, 3-3-1, 163). Not only was Dan "bumped" out of his position, he was expected to introduce the person, who was taking over his position, to the school. As I sit and write this in a coffee shop, I am lost for words. I take my hands away from the keyboard, and replace them, but I can't seem to find any way to describe how something like this could possibly happen. The devaluing of Dan as a beginning teacher, person, and part of the school, is unequivocal. I am attentive to the fact that I need to stay with Dan's words to try to better understand how he negotiated this.

Well there was not much I could do. They post positions, I couldn't apply for them because of my contract, and he gets hired back. I heard the guys a lunatic, and he's going to teach in the school. It was unreal. They can't fire him, he's part of a union in a huge association, so what do you do (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

From inquiring into Dan's words, a few things become enlightened. It must have been extremely difficult to train the person who was going to be taking over his job. To have to leave a position for no other reason than, we need to make a spot for this other person. Dan, in a sense, became collateral damage of the system. This was a situation that was completely out of Dan's control.

Having to describe this situation to the students as he came back to substitute teach was also complicated. Being that he could not, in a professional way, describe to students that someone from a stress leave situation had taken over his position. What could he really tell them? Having said that, one thing that stands out for me, is how concerned the students were. The students asking him when he was coming back, and telling him they missed him, shows the level of respect they had for him.

Although years have passed since this experience, I expected Dan to be more upset about what happened to him; he wasn't. Dan seemed to story this as, just something that happens to people who are not on continuing contracts. He did not seem to blame the principal. He seemed understanding towards the principal's position.

> Part of it is that the administrators have to do it because they don't know what their funding or what their scheduling is going to be like next year…They can't offer people that [continuing contract] if they end up in a situation where they got too many teachers, not enough classes (Dan, 3-3-1, 188).

Dan's story condoned this as just the way that things are. When I commented about how crazy it was that someone bumped him with more seniority, his response was "that's the way it works though" (3-3-1, 69). I wonder if in some way Dan came to see this as "how it works" from his dad's stories of the system. How has this become the way that, this particular education system, does business? How does treating the least experienced among us in this way, shape beginning teachers' perceptions about the education system? Of course, I can only speak to Dan's experience in this narrative account, but for him it was enough to help him to create a story to leave by. Perhaps he sees it as meant to be; he is now working in a profession that he had always had in the back of his mind.

Again, our narrative account negotiation became an opportunity for Dan to think more about his experiences. "My dad, he was not too phased. He was okay with me moving on. Both of my parents were really supportive of whatever I was doing, or would have done. I was like, you know, this is happening, I'm going to move on and try this. More of the outcry probably came from the teachers in the school. They were like, what! This is crazy (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

I am again drawn to Dan begin respected by his colleagues. Their outcry portrays the positive ways in which Dan was storied on the landscape. Although Dan no doubt felt slighted, at the end of Dan's second year, the year that he got bumped and was subbing, he was asked to take on another temporary position.

> They hired someone else for a maternity leave and the person lasted a week, the kids ran her out of the school. The principal approached me and said, look, you know the kids, they like you. So I taught 2 months of grade 7 sciences, I think I had one grade 9, science which had the achievement test class, which was fun and enjoyable, different. But that's how I finished off my teaching career. After that I got into physical therapy school" (Dan, 3-3-1, 58).

As Dan finished off his second temporary contract, he was accepted into the physical therapy Master's Program and has not taught, in a k-12 classroom, since.

Physical Therapy and Physical Education

I spent enough time in this physical therapy clinic growing up. I was an athlete,   and it was a career option… I think it's a good profession where you use your   mind to figure things

out, what's going on, what's happening, help people, help fix them, get them better. I enjoy it. (Dan, 3-3-3, 327)

Dan, as an athlete growing up, spent many hours in the physical therapy clinic, and this line of work became appealing to him. Although I was interested in how Dan came to physical therapy, I was also interested in how he saw his job as a physical therapist as different than teaching.

I'm in the hospital, I'm doing a couple different things like my outpatient role versus my inpatient role is completely different. Outpatients, I'm booking clients coming to see me to get physical therapy to get better and I'm the sole provider. I'm treating them, they have whatever physical ailment and I'm fixing that. Whereas inpatients a little bit different, and especially right now in medicine there's a big team aspect to it, doctors, outpatients, there is dieticians, social work, everybody working together to help whatever the person is in the hospital for. Sometimes I have a bigger role in that, sometimes I have a smaller role in that, sometimes I don't have a role in that, so that changes. I guess day to day wise I manage my caseload and I plan out my day as I see who I think needs to be seen that day and for whatever reason whereas you don't have that option as much in teaching. You don't have student A is doing fine in this course, student C is really struggling, I can't just say I'm not going to see student A at all, I'm going to see student C for everything. Where in physical therapy you can do that (Dan, 3-3-3, 519).

Dan's story about his physical therapy position work, as compared to teaching, is interesting. The first time I read the transcript, I keyed in on the notion of Dan as sole provider to his outpatients. They are coming to him, he is diagnosing what is wrong with them, treating them, and fixing them. "I think it would be taking the problem presented to me whatever the physical ailment is and assessing it, analyzing it and developing a plan to fix it and then fix it. That'd probably be the biggest thing that I like about physical therapy" (Dan, 3-3-3, 615).

Here in Dan's words, I can see that this is a very clear way to evaluate what he is doing, and, whether or not he is successful. In comparison to teaching, Dan seemed to struggle with *seeing* that he was doing a good job. "I mean you can have a class full of geniuses that get great marks on all their exams and their achievement tests, but have you taught them more?" (Dan, 3-3-3, 627). In physical therapy, individuals come in with a problem, and he fixes it. He is able to see this, in an almost explicit, objective way.

I am also attentive to the team aspect that Dan speaks about in the fragment above. He was also part of a team while teaching, but he seems to be a contributing member of the team he mentions above. " I definitely feel valued for my knowledge, in fact at times I think I am counted on too much" (Dan, personal conversation, April 2012).

I am attentive to his ability to create his own caseload, and to attend to the patients that he, as a professional, decides need the treatment most. He is able to "plan out his day" to focus his attention on something, or someone, that he sees as being important. He even notes that this is not the case in teaching, you cannot decide, "I can't just say I'm not going to see student A." The students, they all need to be attended to, and although you are attending to all of them, it

may be difficult to measure how much of a difference you are really making. Dan spoke further about his perception of autonomy in teaching as compared to physical therapy.

> Yeah, and definitely not a professional decision option you have much of in teaching. I mean you have the option to provide whatever after school tutoring or this or that if you so feel like it. But I mean it's different it's not, it's above and beyond, right? I'm not a student, or patient X is not because they really, really need physical therapy and this and that, I'm not staying till 5 o'clock trying to fix them. That's not my role, my role is to do what I can during the working hours and based on the whole system it's often not as much as I want, but sometimes that's the way it is (3-3-3, 540).

Dan explicitly speaks to how he saw his role as a teacher, and how he now sees his role as a physical therapist. This is important in the sense that, as a physical therapist. "My role is to do what I can during the working hours." He does not need to go above and beyond to feel like he is doing a good job. In teaching, it is taken-for-granted that you spend hours before and after teaching tending to what you did not get done during that day. Dan did mention that at times he has to stay late to chart work with a patient, but on other days he is able to leave early; he sees this as a give and take, but ultimately his decision. He speaks below to the expectations involved with teaching.

> I think some of it is kind of expected, it's kind of thought of in the profession, and I guess I don't know if it's outside perception or outside perception from teachers that that's the way it should be. Probably a little bit of both, but I think that as a teacher I probably excepted it because my summers are pretty good, and as outside people they probably expected it because that's what teachers do (3-3-3, 571).

Dan again has a story for "what teachers do." This is expected, my wonder is, why has this expectation become part of teaching? Dan expected this as part of teaching. It didn't surprise him, and from his stories, I would not say that he left teaching due to the after hours work that is expected.

As I end this piece, I still have many wonders. I wonder about the professional landscape that Dan began teaching on. I wonder about Dan's intentions as he entered teaching. He spoke early on in our conversations about questioning other career options during his education degree. I also sensed, from our conversations, that moving into a physical therapy Master's Program was not un-expected. Yet, I can't help wonder what would have happened if Dan had not been "bumped" from his first teaching contract. As I think about the future of this work, I am reminded of Dr. Jerry Rosiek's comment "why is teacher attrition a bad thing?" Perhaps when I think about Dan leaving I am caught up in the education field losing another good young teacher. If I frame Dan's decision from his perspective, perhaps him leaving, was a very good decision. So although for some stakeholders teacher attrition is a bad thing, for others, like Dan, perhaps teacher attrition is not all bad.

Appendix F: A Narrative Account of Reid – Lee Schaefer

Imagined Places

After I left my first conversation with Reid, I was struck by how important *place* seemed to his stories. On the drive home I was reminded of a conversation I had with an Elder a few months earlier. "We have an identification problem, the land does not recognize us" (Bob Cardinal, personal conversation). Bob Cardinal is an Elder that I have had the honour of working with over the past few years. Being around him is hard to put into words; it is, in a way, unexplainable. I would compare it, in some ways, to being connected to a place. Having a sense of place with a certain topographical location is unexplainable. It is hard to capture through words or writing. There is a feeling, a connection, a sense of belonging, a relationship. These thoughts, the relationships with place, with the land, consumed me after our conversation. When I arrived home it seemed the last half hour of my drive was a blur.

I wondered about his words, "the land does not recognize us." Bob's words speak to the relationship with the land that is often discounted by Western ways of thinking. From a Western perspective, the land is inanimate; it is an object. You cannot have a relationship with something that is not alive, or *real.* But Bob says, "everything is animate, everything has spirit." Thinking in this way allows for a relationship, and a connection to the land, and to place. I believe in what Bob says, because I can feel it. When I go back to our family's farm, a place in which I spent a lot of time as a child, I feel different. My memories of that place bring back a feeling of nostalgia, and a remembrance of my past experiences there. The first time I shot a pellet gun was in the large red barn that still stands there today. I killed my first, and last, bird there, and I remember the sick feeling I had in my stomach when I walked up to the lifeless carcass. My uncle's words "are you happy now?" still resonate with me today.

I have similar feelings that come about when I sit around a campfire, or stop in a quiet forest while cross-country skiing. What this feeling is, I am not sure. I do know it makes me feel good. It balances me, puts things into perspective, and washes out the remnants of everyday life. It's something I have come to need, or maybe have always needed.

In Reid's stories this sense of place includes rural places, urban places, outside places, inside places, imagined places, and real places. The time I have spent with Reid over the past few months reminded me of how important place is as we compose a life. Our stories for tomorrow often include places: places we might visit; places we might live; places we will raise our children; places we will work; places we may get married; places we may be buried. In some way, like my own connection to the land, people become connected to these places, have relationships with them, and they become a part of the life they are composing.

Narrative inquiry, as a methodology, recognizes how important place is to individuals as they compose their lives. From a narrative inquiry standpoint, similar to Bob's notion of place, the landscapes in which we live, work, and imagine, are fluid, ever changing, and living. These places are part of our stories, our identities, who we are, and who we are becoming. Place has been a resonant thread throughout my conversations with Reid. His stories to leave by, in his

own words, were shaped by the landscapes on which he worked, and lived, and the imagined landscapes on which he hoped to live, and work.

Place is, of course, not the only phenomenon to think about as I inquire into Reid's lived experiences. Just as place cannot be separated from who we are, neither can the social environments in which we work, our personal feelings, or our past, present, and future experiences. As I move forward from here, I am attentive to these dimensions and how they played out in the stories that Reid shared with me.

Early Beginnings

Physical education, movement, and activity are threads of continuity throughout Reid's stories. Like many physical education teachers, Reid's childhood memories are filled with sports. Sports were a big part of his life growing up, and from the stories he shared, were influential in his becoming a physical education teacher. His experiences with activity were positive, and as a physical education teacher, I wonder if Reid felt that he could help others to experience the joy that he had gotten from sport and activity.

As I read over the transcripts of our conversations, his association to sport and movement jumped out at me. However, I began to think deeper about how Reid's experiences with sport had shaped him. What was illuminated as I thought in a different way about Reid's experiences with sport, and physical education, was that it was not only the act of participating that influenced Reid, but the relationships with the individuals he walked alongside as he participated. When I asked Reid what shaped his way into physical education, he initially talked about his passion for activity. I then shared a story of an experience I had with my grandmother playing the Game of Life. The Game of Life is a board game that allows you to choose a profession card if you land on certain squares. Invariably, I always chose the teacher card. My grandma would often mention that she thought I would be a good teacher. My story seemed to resonate with Reid as he reflected on his own stories.

> Something that just came to me, which I hadn't even thought about in the past, but what you had said about your grandma. My Uncle Mike is a phys. ed. teacher and he teaches junior high phys. ed. and he's been with Kitchener Catholic for I want to say 32 years now that he's been teaching phys. ed., religion, and history, but mostly phys. ed. He's been coaching football, wrestling, track, badminton. You name it, he's coached it, and he's taught it. And this is the kind of guy they've asked to be admin on a huge number of occasions, but every single time he's like no, that's not my place, that's not where I fit in. I love the teaching part…so from my earliest memories Uncle Mike was always one of my favorite uncles 'cause whenever you go to his house, you're throwing a ball, you got a football out, you got a baseball out…just always had that passion for sport and physical activity. So that was always similar to me, so I was always attached to Uncle Mike and knew he was a teacher (Reid, 3-2-1, 239).

Reid was a bit taken aback as he shared that story fragment. I think the fact that he had not thought before about how influential his uncle was, surprised him. I found it interesting how one simple story about my grandmother's influence on me, allowed Reid to remember stories that he

held about his uncle. I got the sense that Reid respects his uncle for his involvement in activity, teaching and coaching. Reid never said that his uncle was a role model, but I get the sense that he is. As Reid and I negotiated his narrative account he added more context to his relationship with his Uncle Mike.

> He was my favourite uncle, when we were around him there was always activity; no sitting around watching television. He was always pushing us kids to be active. I remember on Sunday's sometimes we would go visit Uncle Mike and he would open up the gym at the school he worked at. 11 years old go with cousins, free rein in the gym; that's a dream PE class. But I never saw him teach, but he was always the most understanding, and most patient. For gifts he always gave things that would attribute to activity, for example like he would give a Timex watch, staple for every PE teacher, or give you books. (Reid, personal conversation, April 2, 2012)

In later conversations Reid spoke about his teaching philosophy, which allows me to see the connection between him and his uncle's philosophies. In the first part of the story fragment, Reid spoke to his uncle turning down administration positions to continue to teach. His uncle would say, "I don't like educating adults, I like educating kids" (Reid, 3-2-1, 232). This resonates with Reid's passion for building relationships with students, and providing students with experiences that will shape them in educative ways; this was the most important part of teaching for Reid.

It is difficult in the story fragment above to discern what specifically it is about his Uncle that Reid respects. What I mean is, what aspects of Uncle Mike does Reid associate with being a physical education teacher? I wonder specifically about how Uncle Mike influenced Reid's imagined story surrounding physical education, and teaching. Did Reid see himself as a future physical educator because he liked that, when he was at Uncle Mike's house, he had the opportunity to be active? Or was it because Uncle Mike coached a variety of different sports? Both of his uncle's children are successful athletes. Perhaps Reid sees a connection between his uncle's teaching pedagogy, and how well his own children have done with sport. Maybe it is his uncle's passion for movement, and sport, or possibly it was all of these things. While Reid's imagined stories around physical education were shaped by his relationship with his uncle, his uncle was not the only touchstone that Reid seemed to connect back to his pathway to physical education.

Reid's father worked in the oil industry until his recent retirement. For most of Reid's childhood and teenage years, Reid lived in a smaller northern Alberta city where Reid's father worked. Being in a smaller centre may have provided Reid with more opportunities to be actively involved.

> I played a lot of sports in high school…since I was younger, I've been coaching, playing, refereeing soccer and hockey. I've always tried to be in physically active environments whether it be sport or just any kind of physical activity" (Reid, 3-2-1, 247).

When I think about students' pre-dispositions to enjoying activity as they enter school environments, I attribute this in some way to their home environments. It's not surprising to me

that both of Reid's parents were active individuals. "You and I both know that family is as important as being in a phys. ed. class…what you're doing out of school is 10 times more important" (Reid, 3-2-2, 481). Reid's mom enjoyed walking, biking, bowling, and softball, while his father played competitive soccer until he was 40, and was also heavily involved in golf, squash, and softball. Today they are both still involved in these activities.

Although Reid did not mention this, as I write I am drawn to the differences between the activities that Reid's parents participated in. His dad, a competitive person, was involved in activities that were less recreational, and more sport, or competition oriented. He also coached Reid and his sister's soccer teams when they were between the ages of four and 17. Reid's mom was more involved in recreational activities that allowed for movement and socialization as opposed to sport and competition. She was an "ultimate hockey mom, always encouraging and supportive, financially and emotionally" (Reid, Text message, March 19). I wonder how these two different ways of being physically active shaped Reid's perceptions of movement, and activity? How did his home environment shape his decision to become a physical education teacher? Why was competition so important to Reid when involved in sport, but so unimportant in his physical education classes? Reid talked extensively about this in his physical education philosophy. I wonder how connected his philosophy is to his parents' beliefs about sport, and activity?

When Reid talked about other experiences that shaped his passion for physical activity he noted,

> Big things that I can really lean on, I had two awesome phys. ed. teachers in high school. Both these two guys were just awesome role models. I always enjoyed phys. ed. more than just because I got to play hockey, and football, and soccer, and all those games, but more though [because] I could attach myself with these guys (Reid, 3-2-1, 244).

Reid speaks passionately about his high school physical education program. For Reid it was not just his success in the class that created a passion for physical education. It seems his ability to "attach" himself to his physical educators was the part of physical education that Reid remembered. His teachers, role models, created an environment in which Reid succeeded. His experiences in this environment created a connection, rapport, between his teachers and himself. He looked up to them, and when I asked him about his imagined stories of who he would be as a physical educator, he replied "basically a meld of characters who drove me to think about that teacher idea. So a mix of my two high school teachers, my practicum teachers, my favourite university profs kind of thing…I think I'd be mostly myself, but a mix of their attributes as well. (Reid, 3-2-1, 335).

Reid also spoke about how his teacher education program created interruptions in his story of physical education, and allowed for possible re-conceptualizations. "…There is always that story that phys. ed. is not just floor hockey and dodge ball" (Reid, 3-2-1, 346). This notion that phys. ed. is not just floor hockey and dodge ball did not surface until Reid began taking physical education classes at the university. As he spoke, I thought about how similar his experience was to my experience with physical education. As he entered his program he was passionate about activity, competitive in sport, had coaching experiences, had two physical

education teacher role models, and had success in physical education as a subject area. I am attentive to how Reid's past experiences shaped his perceptions about sport, and activity. I am also attentive to his emotional connection to being successful in physical education, and sport. The social environments in which he had success often included male role models such as his dad, Uncle Mike, his physical education teachers, and his practicum teachers. These environments were also infused with competition. My own influences were very similar to Reid's shaping influences.

It could be argued that, a male-dominated competitive sport-based environment is the dominant story in physical education. As I think about this dominant story, my thoughts shift to those individuals that do not fit into this dominant story: females, overweight individuals, un-athletic individuals, un- active individuals, those that do not enjoy competition, those that do not enjoy sports. A counter story to the dominant narrative includes competitive, and non competitive environments, a variety of activities that promote lifelong participation, inclusive physical education programs that offer differentiated learning opportunities for both athletes and non-athletes, a focus on education as opposed to simply playing and having fun. I wonder how difficult this counter story may be to write if the individuals moving into physical education programs have grown up in, and had success in, the dominant story of physical education. Yet what is surprising for me, given Reid's background, is that competition and sport were not dominant parts of his physical education program. Again, I wonder how his past experiences have shaped his philosophical underpinnings of what is important in physical education.

As I came to understand Reid's stories to live by, I became more attentive to the environments, or places, that shaped his story, as well as the individuals on those landscapes that helped to shape Reid's stories. As he put it "I could attach myself" to these individuals who had common interests, coached me, taught me, and mentored me. In a metaphorical way, perhaps it was less what was being taught, and more about how it was being taught, and who was teaching it. As I move forward with Reid's narrative account, the centrality of relationships becomes a more resonant thread in his stories to live by.

Transitions

As Reid's family moved from the small northern town to a larger urban centre, Reid decided to go to university. It might seem that Reid's past experiences with activity and sport would make physical education an obvious choice. However, as he started grade 10, his older sister was just starting university. His sister was in business, and I found out through our conversations that he saw his sister as a role model; especially academically. "She was totally the reason that when I started I went into business" (Reid, personal conversation, April 2012).

> I went to university thinking that I was going to be in business…I was planning to do a business communication degree. First year I took all the general courses, didn't do very well, focused more on the social side of university than the actual academic side. Scraped through, continued my second year, figured that business was probably, I didn't really enjoy the economics side, the management side, anything like that. Stats were not that good. Didn't like the maths. I was way bigger on the humanities. I liked the histories and liked the law classes. As much as I hated English in high school, it wasn't too bad.

Anything I could do with writing, apart from a multiple-choice test, was always where I succeeded. After second year I was a history major in the Arts program. Then that summer I applied for education just simply because I started looking at it from the outside, and where am I going to go with a history major? So from there I applied to education. I was accepted into the history program with a phys. ed. minor (Reid, 3-2-1, 249).

The story fragment shows, like many beginning university students, Reid was uncertain about what he saw himself doing in the future. Although his past experiences with English in high school were not favourable, he became drawn to the humanities during his first years of university. His imagined story of the future, while enrolled as an Arts student and history major, did not seem to have a realistic path, and thus his transition into Education began. With an Education degree, it seemed that his enjoyment of history and English could lead to a future career. I wondered why the physical education minor? Why not physical education major? Reid responded, "lots of my history courses had already transferred over" (Reid, 3-2-1, 261). Reid's pre-requisite courses in history overlapped with the history courses in education, and provided a transition that allowed for an easy transfer. "If I would have gone back, I'd say that I would have majored in phys. ed. or done a phys. ed. degree. But in terms of timeline when I was in school, I just thought that was silly" (Reid, 3-2-1, 593).

Could this be conceptualized in a way that positions Education as a *backup* or *default?* From our conversations, I did not get the sense that Reid had always wanted to be a teacher. In his story above, it does seem that education was almost an afterthought, something that allowed him to use his university degree in a practical way. Reid's stories make me wonder about my conceptions around who would make a good teacher? What intentions correlate to someone being an effective teacher, or staying in the profession? I was also a transfer student into Education. I remember writing my entrance essay, and thinking hard about what the gatekeepers might see as 'good' reasons for entering. I did not write my essay using an argument that I was not really sure about Education, but felt like I might get a job with a B.Ed. Such an essay may have resulted in a rejected application.

Are those who are storied into teaching, individuals who know they want to be teachers from as early as they can remember, better teachers? Do they stay in the profession longer? As I think about these questions, I am attentive to how important Reid's imagined stories were that brought him into the teacher education program. I wonder about how important these stories are to considering how we might sustain Reid, or how Reid might sustain himself, in teaching within K-12 schools.

Identity Negotiation

My biggest thing after I got in to phys. ed. was the curriculum. And my biggest was always the [lifelong participation]. So if we could have a kid grasp any activity, whether it be organized team sport, or individual sport, or an individual activity that they could do well into their 50s, 60s, 70s, and be active three times a week, awesome. I could care less if they could make a layup. I could care less if they could hit that slap shot, anything like that. But going into it [the physical education program] yeah we are just going to run

around and play some games for 45 minutes, and get some sweat burnt, and send these kids to math class (Reid, 3-2-1, 361).

Reid's story fragment, for me, speaks to a shift in his identity from student to teacher. At this point, during his program, he began to think about the impact physical education might have on his students. Remarkably, he keys on the transfer of skills, and enjoyment into life. I find this remarkable given that his past experiences were filled with competition and sport. The above story dismisses these things as almost unimportant. He didn't care if "they could make a layup" or "hit that slap shot," he wanted them to transfer what they learned in his class to their everyday lives in a real way; he wanted them to be active into their "50s, 60s and 70s." Because Reid had experiences teaching students, and working with mentors and professors, these experiences may blur the temporality of when this transition began to happen. For example, was it a professor talking about curriculum that helped him to see physical education differently? Was it an experience with a mentor teacher? Was it his mother's recreational association with activity that created this imagined story for Reid? Given that he has taught physical education, did this notion of lifelong activity become stronger as he worked alongside students? These questions help me reflect on my pedagogy as a teacher educator. Reid's and my early experiences with sport and activity are very similar. My father competitively played softball, and coached a number of teams I played on. My mother was much more recreationally active, but very supportive of whatever activity I was involved in. I played competitive sports my whole life; competition was/is a large part of my own stories to live by. My philosophies around physical education are so similar to Reid's.

Metaphorically, as I think about Reid's and my shifting identities, I think about a rainstorm. In the prairies I can see a rainstorm coming for hours. Yet it is difficult to decipher where the line of rain actually begins? For those who have ever watched a rainstorm approaching on the prairies, there is almost a line in the sky. As the storm gets closer, the line becomes blurrier, less defined? For Reid, perhaps that metaphoric line was first shaped when he saw his mom and dad as active individuals. Perhaps it began as he moved out of competitive sport, and found enjoyment in recreational sport. Perhaps it began as he became aware of the diversity of students in his classes. During the negotiation of Reid's narrative account he spoke more about the influence of his field experiences in shifting his stories of students. He began to ask himself, "what is the goal of PE here, fantastic athletes, or trying to get kids active for lifelong participation" (Reid, personal conversation, April 2, 2012)?

Perhaps, like a rainstorm, where it begins and ends is difficult to discern and, this discernment may be un-important. What is important is that thinking about this shift as a rainstorm allows it to be seen as a process similar to Reid's identity shifting. Like a rainstorm, although we cannot decipher when exactly it shifted, we know it shifted, and thinking about this shift in a temporal continuous way allows me to think about it as a process, a shift that is always in motion.

Professional Landscape Stories

When I finished my Education degree, I worked for 6 months at the university. After that, about May…oh I'm sorry, February there was an Education career fair. I went in and

talked to one of the guys from my old [high] school district. He said, "are you interested in coming back? Do you have a job right now?" He was kind of going to hire me on the spot, but I had a contract with the campus recreation until June. So I got an e-mail from my old principal who was still the principal at my old high school. So he said, "I have a position opening up for September of next year" (Reid, 3-2-1, 94).

Although Reid was now comfortable with big city living, once he was done working at the university, he made the decision to take the teaching position in the town where he grew up. It was a full-time physical education position in a high school. These types of jobs are hard to come by directly out of university "I was thinking I'd do mostly social studies, mostly English with a bit of phys. ed. in the back. So in terms of dream position this was basically it, which was unreal (Reid, 3-2-2, 266). Reid jumped at the opportunity. Along with the position, he noted that he knew a lot of the staff already and still had friends in town. "…It was just a really easy environment to ease my way into teaching" (Reid, 3-2-1, 104).

When I asked Reid about a typical day in his teaching position, he responded,

I was probably firing off 80 to 85 hours a week at the school but I loved the coaching…It was basically every weekend, three times a week practices, so my time commitment had gone up 30 hours a week…I was kind of burnt out by the end of volleyball (Reid, 3-2-1, 495).

Once Reid was done coaching volleyball his first year, he was asked to take on the duties of senior basketball coach. "I turned it down, off some advice from some other teachers saying you just have to relax and take some time to yourself…I'm really glad I did" (Reid, 3-2-1, 497).

I describe Reid as happy go lucky. Although he was working 85 hours a week, it did not seem to bother him. He seemed to enjoy the teaching aspect of his job, and it was almost like the coaching part of his job became something that did not seem like work to him. However, he knew when he had enough coaching. He, like many physical educators, spent multiple weekends a semester out of town. For smaller centre schools, the travel is much more rigorous due to the increased distance between opponents.

There is also something about Reid's stories that struck me as different from my stories, and other stories I have heard from beginning teachers. I felt pressured at times to take on a plethora of extra-curricular activities. I did not have colleagues telling me "to relax;" I had colleagues and principals asking me to take on more duties. I took on these responsibilities with a smile thinking that saying no may jeopardize my teaching contract. Reid's refusal, when he was approached to coach basketball, creates a number of wonders for me. From his stories, it becomes apparent that he was supported on the professional landscape. His colleagues told him to say no. Although this may seem like a small gesture, for me, as a beginning teacher, it was very difficult to say no. There also seem to be different expectations for physical education teachers on. As Reid said,

It's funny. The expectation of staff is that A, new teachers take on the coaching, and B, if it's not new teachers, it's the phys. ed. staff. So seeing as I was both of those, I was kind

of expected to do all this stuff. It was a good shift. It was nothing that blew me away"
(Reid, 3-2-1, 500).

Although the coaching expectations may have surprised Reid, he continued to smile, and seemed to take the pressure to coach with a grain of salt. As I write this narrative account in a busy coffee shop, I am struck again by how intriguing it is that Reid responded this way. I wonder how Reid's past and future stories shaped his response.

Although Reid did not expect any retribution for coaching, he found that in both implicit and explicit ways, those individuals who were involved heavily in extra-curricular activities had *perks*. Reid spoke to how his principal responded to those that were involved.

You have lots of supervision, you're helping out coaching, and you're doing this, yeah for sure, you can go do that. If you come in and say I don't really want to teach this, I'd rather do something else…the principal will be like, yeah, for sure, your involved in all of that extracurricular stuff. You have that freedom, you have that flexibility because you have given so much to the school (Reid, 3-2-1, 63).

Again, this gesture may seem small, but intrigued by the agency that Reid speaks to in this story fragment. His story of the principal was one that included the principal valuing him for the extra work he did. To take it one step further, spending extra hours with students provided him a flexibility and freedom that allowed him to have more power over decisions within the school; at least decisions regarding him, his teaching load, or his supervision. Reid noted that this was certainly not why he coached, but was a nice pat on the back for putting in extra time.

My wonders shift to Reid's imagined stories of teaching. It was apparent that Reid's imagined story of himself included coaching. "Coaching was definitely one of those things that really pushed me towards teaching, especially the phys. ed. side of it (Reid, 3-2-1, 636). I wonder if this is partly why he was not surprised by the extra hours that were spent coaching. "…It's tough, people like you and I, I enjoy coaching, and I love coaching. I didn't think I should be reimbursed for coaching. I didn't need an honorarium. As long as they were paying for my hotel room, I think that's fine" (Reid, 3-2-2, 42). It seems that, in a way, the coaching aspect of his job was sustaining for him. Perhaps it was sustaining given that he was able to choose when he would, and would not, coach. Coaching, on his terms, provided him opportunities to build stronger relationships with students; this was very important to Reid. It also allowed him to gain more control over his professional landscape in a way that, from my experiences, is uncommon for beginning teachers.

Bumping Stories

Past work I have done focused on the bumping of beginning teachers imagined stories with the school landscape stories on which they work. As beginning teachers in my Master's work entered their first teachers positions they had strong ideas of how things would be like. Often times, their stories did not align with the stories they lived out on their professional landscapes. As mentioned earlier, Reid seemed to have a good idea of what was going to happen as he began his first teaching position. Perhaps this is why his imagined professional landscape

story only seemed to bump softly with the stories on the professional landscape. Having said that, in the story fragment below, Reid speaks to a bump between what he valued, and what the school system seemed to value.

> I mean this is not a performance-based position, profession even. You don't get rewarded for having 2 sub days in the whole year, you get rewarded for having your kids earn a 95 on their standardized tests and now we're talking standardized tests, what's that showing? Is it how effective a teacher I am? Am I really promoting creativity and new thought and sparking innovation, that kind of thing? Maybe. Probably I'm just teaching to the test, teaching what these kids need to know, but I think that's a tough part, same thing you can't qualify it, right? So how do you pat these teachers on the back other than saying good job? I mean it shouldn't be a completely extrinsic thing that you're working towards, but unfortunately lots of things are (Reid, 3-2-3, 286).

He continued on:

> if teachers had more incentive, maybe it's incentive. But you look at these, like you said the new teachers that bend over backwards for a couple years, meanwhile the fourth and the fifth and the sixth year teachers, some of them might be still working really hard but you've seen just as many that are there at 8:30 and gone at 3:30, their lesson plans don't change, they don't do anything extracurricular, but they still expect the new teachers to do everything… So that'd be frustrating as a new teacher, be like why aren't they doing anything? But lots of these new teachers probably eventually turn into that as well, like I've put my time in and now it's somebody else's turn. (Reid, 3-2-3, 305).

Reid's words allude to the dominant story that seems to surround teaching, and beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are given, often, the less than desirable assignments. They are expected to take on a variety of extra-curricular activities, with little support. However, for Reid, this is not part of his story. He was teaching what he wanted to, and able to say no to coaching or extra-curricular obligations that he did not feel fit into his workload. When I asked him how he was able to be so involved at the school yet seem so balanced, he replied,

> Unlike you, it was a bit easier for me 'cause I didn't really have a family yet. So I wasn't in a committed relationship with anybody who was living with me. So that was better 'cause I didn't feel guilty. I'm not sure if that was ever something that came to you, but I never felt guilty being away from home and being at the school because I really had nothing else to do except for teaching and coaching which made it maybe easier for me (3-2-1, 524)

Reid's words articulate the relationship between his professional and personal landscapes. As he describes, he was able to focus on his professional landscape because his personal landscape was less demanding. I wonder what it would have been like if he had a girlfriend, wife and/or a family. Would this have made his heavy workload contentious? I am attentive to Reid's personal landscape, and how it provided, in a way, the space for him to become engrossed in teaching and coaching. Although living in a small town may have had less appeal than the large city, the lack of things to do outside of school seemed to allow Reid to be sustained by his work.

For some beginning teachers, the boundaries between lives on their professional and personal landscapes often become blurry. In some ways work overtakes everything else. Although Reid's work did seem to overtake his personal landscape, he was okay with that. I asked Reid about his weekends when he was not coaching. I asked him if he had to work on the weekend. He said "Not really. Nice thing about phys. ed. is, I had some health, so I was planning for some health and marking some health stuff. But usually I have all of my stuff done during the week and weekends were pretty free for me" (Reid, 3-2-2, 182). "…weekends were either heading to [large urban city] or just relaxing kind of" (Reid, 3-2-2, 176).

Although Reid attributed part of his free time to the lack of marking in physical education, it seems like Reid was able to put things into perspective, which allowed him to step away from teaching. "You need to know when you need to work, you need to know, OK, now its Reid time. And you just have to get away from the school and get away from the kids and focus on yourself" (Reid, 3-2-2, 290). It seems simple. Yet, I felt like my teacher's work was never done. For Reid, creating time for himself seemed to be something he saw as a priority, and he followed through with it.

How was Reid was able to set boundaries between *school time* and *Reid time?* In a session for beginning teachers on wellness, I brought up the topic of balance; many of them laughed. The common retort was that everybody at the school tells them to have balance. But they asked, "when are they supposed to get everything done." How could they not let their work consume them? Mat seemed to feel like he was able to live comfortably on both his personal and professional landscapes. Perhaps it was Reid's short-term commitment to teaching in this small town that allowed him to take his busy schedule with a grain of salt.

Small Town Saturday Night

> It's a nice little town, my buddy just moved up there for an oil job, and he's from Edmonton, lived in Calgary, now he's going there. So he's same thing, he's terrified, he thinks it's going to be snowy fields and igloos and all that kind of stuff. So it's a nice little town, the lake is beautiful. In the summer it's the best place in the world, in the winter, but I mean when you're teaching, so if you have a family, it's a great place to have a family 'cause if you're there for the summers you'll love it. But I mean every summer I got 'out of dodge' and I headed down here to be with my buddies. 15,000 people. It's got all the amenities you need, it's got the hockey rinks, it's got a few different shopping centers, it's got Sportchek, it's got OJs now. (Reid, 3-2-3, 963)

In the small place where he grew up and where he taught, Reid was unable to get away from students and parents.

> So there's still zero anonymity in this city place, so you go shopping, you see parents or kids, you go to the movies, you see parents or kids…. but one movie theatre, one hockey rink, one workout place, so I mean you could be seeing your 18 year old kids if you go for a workout, and oh Reid's here, great, let's go talk to him, or let's go bug him, or let's

watch him workout, or something, it's different…There's not a whole lot to do social-wise (Reid, 3-2-2, 997)

He continued,

> Most teachers went for drinks on Friday at OJs, but after that go to a buddy's house 'cause there's no place to go out for drinks 'cause you'll see Grade 12 kids or parents, I'm not sure which is worse, maybe parents. So yeah you usually just hang out at buddies' houses more than going, there's no good restaurants to really go out to so you're not enjoying that side of things. You don't go to a movie 'cause you'll see a million kids. You especially don't take a date to the movies 'cause brutal, you don't go with another guy to movies 'cause now you're the gay teacher. Hey Reid who is your boyfriend? You're running laps in the morning kid. Yeah so I mean the anonymity thing was a bit of a pain for me. I didn't enjoy that, especially as a younger guy, 22 when I started, some of my students are 18 so I mean that's a bit fluffy. So that was a bit of a pain in the ass (Reid, 3-3-2, 1014).

Thinking within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I am attentive to a number of things that need unpacking in the story fragments above. Although Reid's imagined stories surrounding his professional landscape seemed to align with what he was actually doing, it seems that his imagined story on his personal landscape bumped against the stories he was living out in the small northern city.

As a 22-year-old it was difficult to compose a life in this small city. As a teacher, I appreciate the need to get away from the school, the students, and the parents. Yet in this small city, as Reid explained, to get away he had to leave the city. Attending social functions at local establishments meant running into parents and students. Not only did this in some ways shape his identity, but it shaped his identity as perceived by others.

Reid seemed to be able to create boundaries between his professional work, and his personal life, but to be unable to create boundaries between teacher and person. Although he could leave his work at school, he did not seem able to leave being a teacher at school. For Reid, this created a bump on his personal landscape that did not allow him to compose a future life that seemed sustainable.

> The big detriment to me, which you know about, was there was no one there, I won't say romantically, but you know what I mean. There was nothing that really made me want to stay. I mean relationship is a big part about where you are and there was nothing even close to that there, just because it's a very transient town
> (Reid, 3-2-1, 153).

Reid, imagining his future, sees a relationship as important. For him, this small, as he called it, "transient town" did not allow him to compose a future life that would sustain him. It is interesting to think that mentorship and induction programs are all based, in a sense, on professional development. Yet Reid's stories show that it was on his personal landscape where he experienced more bumping with his imagined stories. I wonder what would have happened if

Reid had met someone, and built a relationship. What if she lived in this town, and was unwilling to move, would Reid have stayed? After Reid read the last paragraph during the negotiation of the narrative account he looked surprised. It was as if he had not thought about this before. He responded, "Ya, I think I would still probably be up there" (Reid, personal conversation, April 2012).

Stories to Leave By

When I asked Reid about his intentions entering his teaching position, his response was not surprising.

> I'd say my plan was to teach for at least 2 years, maybe 3, get my permanent certificate. If I loved it, maybe I'd love it, I really had no pre-conceived notion. But it was, I'd say, a means to an end. I did hope to get back to the large urban city cause that is where my family is and that's where I'm familiar with. A bunch of my buddies have moved down there, so great idea to head back down there now…I kind of like the bigger city atmosphere (Reid, 3-2-1, 120).

Reid's intentions for his first teaching position remind me how important it is to understand how beginning teachers imagine composing their lives as they enter their first teaching positions. Reid's teaching position was, as he said, his dream job, but the place of his dream job did not align with his imagined story that he was in the midst of composing on his personal landscape. Although Reid's principal tried to keep him at the school, after his second year, he resigned from his contract and moved on to travel the world.

When I first asked Reid why he left his teaching position his immediate response was the city he was teaching in. When I asked him if he thinks he would have left if he had been teaching in a larger city, his response was that he did not know. Certainly it would have made leaving a more difficult if he was living in the location he wanted to. Yet, if he were teaching in a large urban city, perhaps his teaching position would not have been as desirable. Once Reid returned from his travels he moved back to the large urban city. Although he did look for teaching jobs, nothing that appealed to him was available. When our conversations first began Reid was working as a wine representative. He is now working for a professional sports team in their marketing area.

Teaching vs. …

Part of my interest in working with teachers who were now in other professions was to better understand how, in retrospect, they thought about their new jobs. When Reid explained a regular day at his new job he spoke about setting up accounts, checking emails, and meeting clients. He also noted that, "all the meeting times are made by me. I control when I have lunch, I control when I start, I control when I go home, all that kind of stuff (Reid, 3-2-4, 67).

This control and flexibility over his schedule seemed to be very important to Reid. I asked Reid what the biggest difference was between his new job and teaching. He replied,

I'd say this is more flexible, I'd also say it's a lot less rewarding. Rewarding in the sense, I'm sure there's a lot of salespeople who get really, really pumped when they make a big sale, that's what drives them, I get more pumped when I make a good relationship or when I can talk to somebody pretty openly and form a good relationship so similar to the teaching side. My favourite part about teaching was really building the relationship with kids and getting that rapport and then working from there, so I'd say the rapport thing and the relationship building is still kind of at the forefront of why I really enjoy doing it. (Reid, 3-2-4, 87).

Reid spoke often about how important relationships were to his teaching and to his life. The relational part of teaching for Reid was as important, or more important, than the subject areas he was teaching. For Reid his new position provides flexibility that teaching did not, and he is still able to focus on the aspect that he felt was the most important part of teaching, relationships.

I asked each participant if they felt they were healthier people since they had left teaching. Each replied with different answers, but each seemed to feel they were healthier now that they were not teaching. Reid noted,

I feel like I'm emotionally and socially healthier… Mentally yeah, I'm in a pretty good spot I think. I'm pretty happy with where I am, I don't feel like I'm missing out on something. I'm not stressed at all… I feel like I'm just more at ease now. It kind of gives me the ability to do what I'd like to do when I'd like to do it, and maybe that's a bit selfish but it's something I had the ability to do, so why not do it? (Reid, 3-2-4, 1017).

I wondered if Reid wished he were still teaching. I sensed that his professional landscape position was okay, but that it might not sustain him for an extended period. I also sensed that Reid's personal landscape, at this point in his life, is more at the forefront than what he is doing professionally. When I asked Reid this question during the narrative account negotiation, he responded in a way that gave me the sense that he was very uncertain about what he is doing now, and what he might be doing in the future. I am also attentive to the importance Reid has put on place. This is not to say that what he is doing professionally is not important, but Reid gave up his dream teaching position to live in the location that he can imagine composing a life.

I am reminded of Elder Bob Cardinal's words, "the land does not recognize us, we are disconnected from place." Although he may have been speaking more to the aspect of nature, Bob's words help me think about Reid's experiences with teaching in a place that did not allow him to imagine composing a future life; he was disconnected. Will Reid return to teaching? I think he might if his dream position came up in his dream location. However, as he negotiates his new professional landscapes and his personal landscape, it may become harder and harder to imagine giving up the flexibility he has now, to return to the classroom. For now, it seems that Reid is composing a life within which he can imagine a sustaining future. He is now coaching a spring hockey team and finding that he is able to live out pieces of his imagined story of teaching. He noted that he "was really missing working with kids, but the coaching is helping with that" (Reid, personal conversation, April 2, 2012).

The ending of this account has shifted since Reid and I had the opportunity to negotiate it. When I finished reading the account, Reid leaned back in his chair, put his hands on his face, and said, "I don't know, I just don't know. After reading this, it reminds me how much I loved teaching, maybe I will go back, I just don't know" (Reid, personal conversation, April 12, 2012). Although I sensed a tension with his leaving the profession before, this final conversation laid the tension out explicitly. Reid is not sure what his future holds. For now, his personal life, and the place in which it is lived out, is most important. However, I am not sure, nor is Reid, what comes next. For now he has left.

> My intent wasn't for sure to leave the profession of teaching 'cause I'm still not sure if I wanna leave. I mean I'm out of the profession right now but I still think about it you know and I haven't fully committed to leaving. It's still up in the air, it's still one of those things I think about quite a bit. (Reid, 3-2-4, 35)

A Narrative Account of Audrey Jayne – Eliza Pinnegar

Meeting Audrey Jayne: A Beginning

As I sat in my Wednesday morning meetings, I felt increasingly nervous. I had arranged to meet Audrey Jayne mid-afternoon. As I studied the google-map for the location of the coffee shop where she and I would meet I realized I could reach it in 15 minutes by public transportation. I left an hour and a half before the agreed upon time to ensure I would not be late. I followed the labyrinth of underground passageways and found the downtown cafe.

As I surveyed the café, I carefully selected what I thought would be the quietest place to sit, without direct sunlight, and away from the foot traffic. I wondered how bothersome it would be. Would Audrey Jayne feel comfortable talking to me with the possibility of others overhearing us?

As I waited for Audrey Jayne, I thought of how I wanted to live a different story with this participant, that is, I wanted the participant's voice to be heard. I knew very little about Audrey Jayne except that she came from a Persian heritage and had learned about the study through an aunt. I watched people, wondering which one was Audrey Jayne. I realized that I had a picture in my mind of what Audrey Jayne would look like. Because of her cultural background I pictured her with olive skin, dark hair, and exotic eyes. As soon as I realized what I was thinking, I dismissed my preconceived pictures. I began to look at **every** woman and wondered, is this Audrey Jayne?

She arrived right at the agreed upon meeting time. She saw my binder with the University of Alberta insignia on it and came over and introduced herself. I was glad that I had banished the stereotypical picture of Audrey Jayne before meeting her. Her skin was light, and her hair was blond. We went over the consent papers and the information letter. We started the conversation, talking about how Audrey Jayne came to stop teaching in a K-12 classroom situation, about her family, and about experiences in her life. Working within the three-dimensional inquiry space (temporality, sociality, and place), I was interested in hearing about the places that were important, and the people who influenced Audrey Jayne over time.

After talking for over an hour we came to the end of our first conversation, we agreed to meet again in three weeks. We meet a total of three times over the next four weeks. Each conversation lasted from an hour to an hour and a half. We continued to meet at the same coffee shop; it was easy for each of us to get to and we both felt comfortable there. Each conversation was recorded and transcribed. From the transcripts and field notes I read and identified common threads. After reorganizing the pieces together I wrote and created a dramatization of the conversations Audrey Jayne and I had had. Audrey Jayne and I met two more times in addition to the three previous conversations to read and negotiate the dramatization and final account. This dramatic form allowed Audrey Jayne and me to represent our research relationship and what we noticed in her experiences of becoming a teacher and of leaving teaching.

The dramatization is set in the coffee shop were Audrey Jayne and I met for our conversations. The text is an interpretive construction from the transcripts of the conversations between Audrey Jayne and me.

Setting: Two women dressed in casual business attire sit across from each other in a coffee shop. Each has a beverage. A table separates them and a recording device is placed on it. Throughout the conversation coffee machines and blenders whir and people move about, talking and placing orders.

(*Lights come up*)

Eliza:
Could you tell me the story of how you came to not be teaching?

Audrey Jayne:
Well it was definitely not my first choice. Right from the get-go I always thought I would be a teacher. That's how I identified myself. To me it seemed like if I wasn't teaching that I must have **failed**. Actually because I wasn't able to have that permanent teaching job like I planned on, I actually fell into a depression and I had to get help for it because I felt like I had **failed** at life somewhere.

(*Eliza tries not to look shocked at the bluntness with which Audrey Jayne shares with her these struggles. Lights fade out.*)

(*Curtain up and lights come on*)

Act 1: Early Landscapes

Eliza:
Can you tell me about your family?

Audrey Jayne:
My parents were well-known in town, my mom is a nurse at the hospital, my dad was part of what made the town run, we were a strong family, we are very highly regarded. People didn't know me as Audrey Jayne, it was that's Jason's kid or that's Paul's sister. You always have that connection. Everybody knows everybody. I like the way that I was raised and the way that I grew up. I don't know anything different. It felt safe and I think it instilled in me a lot of values that I don't see in many kids today. I was raised to be very responsible and to be self-sufficient. I worked hard for what I wanted. I'm the youngest of three kids. I got a job and I started saving for my education because I knew I didn't want to get trapped, pregnant in this small town. I want to make something of myself and I knew that that was really important to my parents as well as my grandparents.

Eliza:
What are your family's stories of you, how do they see you?

Audrey Jayne:

I think my family sees me as very capable and very independent, very strong-willed. I'm very stubborn. My parents believe I'm the more mature of my siblings and so a lot of things rest upon my shoulders to make right or to forgive so I feel that pressure a lot. I think my parents would say that I'm very hardworking. I know they're very proud of me especially with the volunteer work that I do and that they do see me as somebody very mature. My grandparents, a few visits ago I went home my grandpa told me that he is 100% certain I will be the next Prime Minister of Canada and I'm like "oh OK, well I'm going to need more than my Bachelor of Education but sure, thanks" but I was thinking no. I mean there have always been high expectations of me.

Eliza:

Tell me about your grandparents. Was it them who moved to Canada?

Audrey Jayne:

Yeah. They moved here in 1979. They've always lived two blocks away from us. I spent the majority of my time at their house. I almost lived at grandma and grandpa's. I had my space away from my brothers which was nice. It was like my little refuge. My grandparents were very wealthy, very well known in Iran. My grandpa worked for the Shah of Iran when they were there, so they had a very interesting lifestyle, they had chauffeurs and they had kitchen help and they had gardeners and my grandma would go day tripping with the wives and it was very lavish. And then the regime was overthrown. Because my grandpa worked for the Shah and for the government, he was immediately placed on the hit list, they wanted him dead, so they packed two suitcases, took whatever money they had on hand and left in the middle of the night and came to Canada where my mom and dad had already moved.

Eliza:

Have they been back to Iran since?

Audrey Jayne:

My grandpa has not returned since. My grandma has been back a few times but it's not quite the same and they basically went from having everything to having nothing. In Canada they lived in the basement of an elderly woman's home and my grandpa sorted bottles to make a living and then when he was in his 50s he went to NAIT to become a mechanic so that he could provide a better life for my grandma. Out of everything that's happened, all the turmoil, all the hardships and everything that's happened to him, he does not carry a grudge. He does not have a chip on his shoulder and he just loves life and it's inspiring. And so when we grew up we spent a lot of time with my grandparents because my mom worked shift work, she was a nurse and dad worked 6 a.m. 'til 5 p.m. and he was busy in the evenings too. So we'd often go to my grandparents and they were the ones who really brought the culture to us because they continued with their lives. We see all the historical pieces and cultural pieces in their house and things like that, so we grew up there speaking Persian and English at the same time 'cause my grandparents, my grandpa spoke English, he picked it up but my grandma didn't so we'd have to speak Persian with her. We got accustomed to the food because I'd eat dinner there almost every night. We ate Iranian meals. That's comfort food for me. And they would have Iranian children's books that would try

and teach me some of the cultural stories, and my grandma would teach me the little songs in the kids' nursery rhymes. We'd cook together and have our meal and we'd always have tea, oh my goodness we drink so much tea in my family. My grandma would, they're called like little coffees I guess would be the direct translation so it's almost like an espresso type thing, but then you'd flip it over and let the grounds dry and then she'd read the coffee grounds. She'd always read your future in your coffee, so that was something we'd always do.

Eliza:
Do you have other traditions that you celebrate?

Audrey Jayne:
Yah. So we did that and then March 21st, or the first day of spring, is always the new year so we'd have our new year's celebration, there's a big table with different items on it so things like money to bring a prosperous year, and you would have eggs for a fertile year and you would have a goldfish to bring you life and you would have a mirror to bring you beauty and all of these different things. They'd always be all set out. We'd have a big traditional dinner. We'd grow these herbs for the whole month and then after New Year's you take them and you throw them out, you have to chuck them out the window kind of thing. Out with the old and in with the new. Another part of the culture for us is the closeness of family members. I know my mom really struggled with that because my dad wasn't very close with his siblings and we're not really close with our cousins and that just makes no sense to her because her side of the family, everybody's so close.

Eliza: Really? In what way?

Audrey Jayne:
For my mom it's like what's going on, our families are supposed to spend every moment together. But still, I can't even count the amount of times that I brought my grandpa for show and tell and for guest speaker and whenever we'd have cultural day that was awesome 'because I could bring, my mom and grandma could cook so it was accepted and it was known. So I am close to family, just not all my extended family. It was good; it was just me. I was one of a kind.

Eliza:
Are you still close to your grandparents?

Audrey Jayne:
Yes. We're still really close and I'm really thankful for that. That's something that I guess is abnormal for a lot of people. I talk to my grandparents every day and I talk to my parents, probably 10 times a day. Some times before we go out I would say, "I need to call my grandpa. I need to tell him this", and people think it is too weird. But I love it.

Eliza:
What about your parents?

Audrey Jayne:

My parents were fairly strict when I was growing up, and I think maybe they saw that because I was very sociable and very out there that I could easily have fallen off the track and gotten side stepped. I knew that my parents expected a lot from me so that's hard to do, that's really hard. I really struggled with that when I was looking for work and things like just the thought of waitressing and stuff like that like I felt I was letting my parents down because people would say "oh well where's Audrey Jayne?" and that couldn't have been an easy thing for my parents to say.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:

Audrey Jayne's family plays a major role in the way that she lives her life. Her parents and grandparents instilled in her a story to live by of culture as well as values of responsibility and self-sufficiency. Her grandparents were able to be positive and build a life after great tragedy. I wonder how this story impacts Audrey Jayne as she strives to "make something" of herself, and I wonder if perhaps this is because she sees that the members of her family have been able to do that in their own lives.

(Narrator exits as the curtain comes up)

Act 2: The Interweaving of the Cultural, Personal, and Professional

Eliza:

I wonder if you can you tell me more about your culture and how was it impacted you growing up?

Audrey Jayne:

I feel very connected to my Persian side even though I've never been to Iran and I really just look like an average Caucasian Canadian kid, so I don't know why I'm so close to that side but I am proud of my heritage. In our town growing up we were the only Iranian family so that was very bizarre. When people would hear us speaking Persian to each other that was out of the ordinary. We would celebrate some of our customs, holidays and traditions. It was always like, "oh, silly them".

Eliza:

I have to admit that I am completely ignorant of this culture.

Audrey Jayne:

Every year for New Year's I make the big traditional Iranian meal and I have everybody over even though they kind of think it's a little bit weird and funny but they all still gladly participate. A lot of people, when they find out about my culture, they are very interested, they're very

almost in awe. All that is hidden behind what you just see, so I know a lot of times that that goes into my identity on how people maybe associate me. Like this is the Iranian princess or something like that, lots of people always want to hear me speak Persian.

Eliza:
I am wondering if it was any different when you were teaching?

Audrey Jayne:
When I was teaching in Red Deer there was a strong Persian culture in the school so once the kids found out that I could speak Persian, then that was all the rave, they just wanted to talk to me in Persian all the time. They would say, "let's start a Persian Club", and "let's go do this and that". It is a part of my story. I think if I maybe looked a little bit more Persian I think it would have been a stronger part of my story and not so hidden, because now sometimes people don't really take you seriously because they go, "yeah you have blue eyes and blonde hair, what are you talking about", and "I'm like, no, really, I am Persian". So I don't know.

Eliza:
And with the kids you taught? How was it with them?

Audrey Jayne:
I have this favourite moment when I was teaching in Red Deer and I had two Afghani boys in my class, one knew that I spoke Persian and one didn't, and the one who didn't he kept kicking a soccer ball against the wall and I said, "hey cut it out, stop it". I turned around and he fires it at the wall again. I turned around and he's like, "it wasn't me, somebody else did it". Then to his friend in Persian he said, "she'd never figure it out, she's just a woman, and she's too stupid". I turned around and I gave him a tongue lashing in Persian. He was shocked. And his buddy says "told you she can talk", like he's not even fazed and from that day on anytime this kid would see me he would literally stop and put his head down and go, ma'am, and let me pass and say, "sorry Miss", and he was so sheepish after that. He had such respect because he knew I could call home and talk to his parents, because before, mom and dad don't speak English, no one can call home so he got away with everything at school. It's kind of a winning moment when you can call somebody about it. It's my secret weapon.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:
Culture was important to Audrey Jayne growing up. Now, as an adult, her culture plays an important part of her personal landscape, as well as on her professional landscape. Because she does not look stereotypically Persian, many people are unaware of her connection to her culture until she makes it shares that part of herself. I wonder how her stories would be different had her ethnicity been immediately visible.

(Narrator exits as the curtain comes up)

Act 3: Becoming a Teacher

Eliza:
You went from a small town to a larger city to do your schooling. Can you tell me about that?

Audrey Jayne:
I did 2 years at a small college and then 2 years at a large university with the transfer program. I found if I went the smaller college route, it was a little bit cheaper, it was an easier transition for me because I was a small town girl, and I could start my program first. The work that I did went directly towards my degree and I did a lot of my extra stuff at college. Then I get to university and it was like, class size 472. "What? What do you mean? How is that possible?" And I know that going to a smaller place like the college is probably what saved me. It's severe culture shock to come from a town of 900 your whole life, now you're in the big city, you can't keep up and oh my goodness. I wish I could have stayed at the small college. So it was interesting I guess, this gradual step down in humbling yourself, because coming out from high school I was very highly regarded in our community and so I had a very strong self-esteem and I felt like I could take on the world. Then I went to college where it was like "OK I'm a little bit of a smaller fish in the sea but that's OK", like there's still opportunities, like there's still something that I can jump in on. And then you go to the larger university where you're just completely knocked down. It was like "I don't care who you were or where you came from, give me all your money and I'm going to give you this little piece of paper in return, OK? Good doing business with you" and then that's like the end of the day so it was just the gradual steps down. You really seem to not matter when you're in a place that big and coming from a place where you did matter and you mattered hugely, it was a big shift, a definite shift.

Eliza:
Now I know that volunteer work is big in your family and that you continued to do it through school. Can you tell me more about that?

Audrey Jayne:
I've always had something that I volunteer for, so in university I volunteered at the seniors' home down the street. In high school I volunteered at the hospital in the long term care and I helped to feed supper to the patients there and just go visit, which really stood out as to what my true character was. Every year when I was in university my friends and I would get together and for our Christmas presents to each other we'd spend the day baking and we'd make little packages and we'd give them to the homeless people, then of course with my non-profit organization work I volunteer a lot with that and do various things.

Eliza:
And throughout these experiences you continued to want to be a teacher?

Audrey Jayne:
Yeah but it was interesting because I originally wanted to be a police officer which is funny because I now work in that area so it kind of came full circle. The day I told my mom when I was younger, I said "mom I want to be a police officer", I didn't realize that my older brother

had told her that exact same thing that day so she's like "oh you're cute. You're doing it with your brother" and I went OK "I'm going to be a teacher". My mom said "oh awesome" and I said I wanted to be a teacher so I became a teacher and then I loved it. School has always been very important.

Eliza:
Your mother's a nurse and your father works for the town they live in. What does the rest of your family do?

Audrey Jayne:
They're like engineers, civil architects, biologists and I was like yeah I'm a teacher so I felt inadequate. But then my grandparents never made me feel that way and even now my grandpa always tells me, maybe he's just saying it, he's like "you're the most educated one in our family. You're going to do real well".

Eliza:
And what was the imagined story you had about teaching when you started?

Audrey Jayne:
 I truly believed that I was going to meet the love of my life in university and that we would finish university and I would be a teacher and that we would get married. Then I would have a teaching job and 2 years later I would have my permanent contract, I would be pregnant with my first baby and then I would go back to teaching, then I would have another baby and then my life would be good. So then when you think about it and I go "oh my goodness I was supposed to do all that at 21 to 25 and I'm now 26, not married, no kids, no contract, no mat leave coverage if I want it" and I go "hmm. Something got screwed up along the way". I really thought in my heart of hearts that my toughest time, biggest struggle would be university and then I'd finish, get a job, part of that is maybe that hopefulness that I would get a job out of my practicum.
Eliza:
Did you have anyone to show you how to be on this professional landscape while doing things like volunteering and attending to other personal things that you enjoyed?

Audrey Jayne:
I had one mentor teacher. I and another student teacher had to share him. This student teacher and I are now very good friends. The school was self-directed learning so there's no formal teaching, it's just kids have manuals and that's it, so my job, the mentor teacher taught English and drama, the other student teacher was the drama minor so she did all the drama, I was the English minor so I did all the English. My job consisted of sitting at a desk on a floor in the English wing all day long and I didn't do anything unless kids had questions and then they'd come up and I'd answer their questions. That's all it was, like I felt like I didn't do anything so I still worked and I still maintained my life somehow and it was awesome. And then I did my second practicum at a junior high school and I decided not to work during that time and I was glad that I didn't because the mentor teacher at that placement, she was very involved, she was very thorough, and she had very high expectations and it kicked my butt. I learned what true

teaching is through that one, it was very different so I worked a lot longer hours, I took work home, and it was the real deal basically.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:
While moving from high school to college or university is often hard, it seemed particularly hard for Audrey Jayne. She had to re-imagine how to compose her life so that she could honour and live out the small town life style of volunteering and being involved in the community, which was a part of her story to live by, on the new large city landscape. I wonder about the way that she came to decide teaching was the path she wanted. How would her story to live by change had she become a police officer instead of a teacher. I also find it interesting that while she was able to be fulfilled on the personal and professional landscapes during her first placement, Audrey Jayne identified the second placement, in which she worked long hours and took work home, as "true" teaching and embraced this as a way of composing a life.

(Narrator exits as the curtain comes up)

Act 4: Imagined Life Story Interrupted

Audrey Jayne:
We were often told in university that if you do a really great job chances are that they're going to just keep you on and hire you right from your practicum. So I went in with that expectation and then they wanted to hire me out of my last practicum but then the school board stepped in and said "she hasn't completed the 6 months administrative paper process so sorry". The school said "we're really in need of a teacher and she's the one we want" and they said "yeah well she didn't fill out these papers in time" so I didn't get it. It went to somebody else. You go "oh my goodness", I really thought that I'd be there forever and ever amen but I wasn't. It's been interesting in that I never imagined that my education would dictate my life because I can't get married because I don't have the financial stability. My significant other, who is a teacher, and I haven't been able to save money. We can't buy a home because we have nothing more than a 1 year contract. We have no proof of stable income; no bank will give us a loan so we have had struggles financially that way. We have tried to go and get money; they won't give us more than a thousand dollars because we can only guarantee that we're going to make payments for a year. I can't have kids because I can't go on a mat leave because I would have no income and no guarantee of a job when I'm out, when I'm done my mat leave. I always thought I would choose the time and place, when, where, why and how. I never thought teaching would dictate my life for me.

Eliza:
So how was it not getting the position you wanted after graduating?

Audrey Jayne:
I was able to get temporary placements and so I did end up teaching in a classroom for a fair amount of the time since I graduated. But it was always 4 months at a time. Then I was out

looking for work again. They would tell me, "oh you're doing a really great job but we have nothing for you because so and so is going to get the job", or that kind of situation. I had no debt in university and I was doing really well. 4 years after being a teacher I have more debt than I can ever imagine, I don't know how I **can't** get a job here.

Eliza:
How did you make that decision to leave teaching?

Audrey Jayne:
It came down to I had to do basically what was right for me to be able to survive, to be able to put food on the table and then just to be able to move ahead in life. I thought, "oh my goodness I'm 26 and I'm still renting a basement because I can't afford a house". I've been with my significant other for about 3 years, and we can't get married because we don't have money. I asked myself "**Is this the life that I want**"?

Eliza:
Do you have the same view now?

Audrey Jayne:
I really truly believe that it actually took me physically stepping out of the situation to just kind of shake my head free of, whoa you were way too involved, you were way too consumed by the job, I think I probably would have either been burnt out or would be single on my own and that's it and just work, work, work, and that would have been it. So I think as much as I'd love to do it, I think it was good for me to step back to go no it's OK to say no to some things and it's OK to tone it down a little, you don't have to be gung ho every day, you can be gung ho half the time and it would still be effective.

Eliza:
Your significant other is a teacher isn't he? Is he a "Die Hard" teacher?

Audrey Jayne:
Yeah and it was frustrating for me to see my boyfriend, he enjoys teaching, he is a good teacher, he does love it but I wouldn't go so far as to say he's passionate about it. So to see someone who isn't passionate about something that I was die hard passionate about, and to go "what are you doing"? It killed me, absolutely killed me. It was really difficult. It was an everyday struggle and wanting to get in there and do it for him and have that piece of it, to take hold of that. I have to let that go because it was driving me nuts, I'd be up all night going "what do you mean? You've got this project tomorrow" and he's not working on it, "you could be doing so many cool things with that" and trying to get in and then realizing no, it's a different way to work, a different style and that's OK. I think it made it more difficult because I would be very excited about different things I would do.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:

Audrey Jayne had an imagined story of how she would live as a teacher. It included getting a job right out of her practicum. She planned to fall in love and get married, have children, and return to teaching between each child. She planned to be that "die hard" teacher that makes each student feel like they are the most special. This imagined story was interrupted when Audrey Jayne was unable to get the teaching job she wanted, despite her being that "die hard" teacher that she thought was so important. I am amazed that Audrey Jayne is able to be so open with this story. I feel her how hard this tension is as her imagined story bumps up with the story she is composing now. I wonder how this will change her story to live by.

(Narrator exits as the curtain comes up)

Act 5: In the Midst of Trying to Teach

Eliza:

I am wondering about other jobs you have had. Can you tell me more about them?

Audrey Jayne:

For a year I did the kindergarten program. I worked in a clothing store. I did some marketing jobs, waitressed, kind of like just that and anything that I could. I was kind of all over the place. I'd be really excited about my job but at the end of the day we'd come home and he'd talk about school and then I would crash. And it would be really hard to get up. I had jobs that I'd just get so bitter with. I would get a new job but nothing would be fulfilling.

Eliza:

And within teaching?

Audrey Jayne:

I did 2 years of grade 9 to 11 in Red Deer. From there I went to a high school for 4 months and did one semester. At the end of the semester I was told no more work for you, sorry with budget cuts. So that's when I received this job in law enforcement and within probably about a month of me getting the job, I got all these phone calls saying we want you back, we can afford you now. So it always seemed like it was a step too late. Same with Red Deer I left and a month after I left, then all of a sudden they had an opening for me but at the time they didn't. So it always seemed like, and maybe that was my own downfall, that I wasn't patient enough but I couldn't handle not knowing where my next pay check was coming from, not knowing if I could pay those bills because I used all my savings, I had nothing. I couldn't take that chance. The impression they left me with is that I wasn't good enough to fight for but when they really needed somebody I was worth it. But they never wanted to budge when I needed the help. And also it was very much the experience that both my partner and I experienced was, it's not so much what you can do but who you know.

Eliza:

Can you tell me more about that?

Audrey Jayne:

Yah, we saw a lot of things like oh this person graduated high school from here and yeah all of a sudden they have a job or this person can coach sports, now they've got a job and this person is so and so's daughter or son, they have a job and it was very much favouritism is what we found. Being that we weren't well-known around here, we felt like we were needles in a haystack.

Eliza:

Can you tell me more about the experience of leaving a position and them calling you back?

Audrey Jayne:

I went into my principal's office and I said here's my situation, my family's asking me to come home, if there is a job I will stay, this is what I want to do. If there's nothing whatsoever that you can do for me then I guess this is my notice and I'll be moving in a month at the end of the school year. He was adamant "no there would be nothing, sorry". So sure enough I picked up and moved and probably within 2 weeks into the school year I got the phone call, "oh, we have a position available here". And I said "well I just spent every last dime moving myself here". I went in and talked to him probably on four or five separate occasions, "are you sure there's not even a .2, there's not even an anything". He said, "No. I don't have anything." I just went "OK, this is it then" and his response to me was "yeah, let me know if you need me to call anyone for you", like don't let the door hit you on the ass on the way out kind of thing. So I left and then I could have died when they called, like come back.

Eliza:

Wow. That has got to be hard.

Audrey Jayne:

And it's kind of like the thing I hear over and over, like "oh you're such a good teacher, they shouldn't have let you go" and "this is your passion. You have to be teaching" but then I'm going "well then it doesn't make sense 'cause if I'm so wonderful and so great, and if you see these qualities in me then why aren't you giving me a job? Why are you letting me go? Why are you kicking me out the door"?

Eliza:

And your family during this time? How were they?

Audrey Jayne:

Yeah, it was things like Christmas holidays. It would drive my family nuts, we'd all go home for Christmas break but they'd be sitting in the living room and I'd have an entire kitchen table full of papers as I'm trying to get caught up on marking. "Well why don't you come join us and watch the movie", "yeah I'll watch from here, you guys go ahead", like got to mark and it would drive my family nuts because they would never have my attention because I was always marking, marking, marking. I'm sure that they paid a dear price, I'm sure it was hard on them and of course them to see me working so much and then you don't get paid for your overtime or anything and so I think that was very hard for them too to see that.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:

I can feel the pain in Audrey Jayne's voice as she tells about wanting to teach but at every turn she is denied the opportunity to continue teaching at a school in a more permanent position. I imagine her feeling alone as she tries to get any kind of position, even a .2 and how difficult it must be to believe that teaching is what she is supposed to do and not being able to live that out. Even with the short term positions I can feel the tension of Audrey Jayne trying to balance her image of being a die hard teacher, and her family and personal life. I wonder how her family tells the story of this time in Audrey Jayne's life.

(Narrator exits as the curtain comes up)

Act 6: Composing a life out of teaching (professional)

Eliza:

And now you are in a different position with a new job. Can you tell me about it?

Audrey Jayne:

Well now I have a position as a curriculum designer. I'm still using my Ed degree but not teaching per se. More the behind the scenes planning type of stuff and it's taken until now, this job which I've only had for 3 months but it was almost like I had my blinders on. I saw a Bachelor of Education that can only be used in a classroom and now I'm finally at a place where I guess I'm OK with not being a teacher. I've accepted this as not a sign of failure but embracing it to see where it takes me rather than, well I guess I'm back at square one, ready to just give up kind of thing. But it's been a conscious effort every day. Even things like when my boyfriend and I are out and we run into some of his students and I go "yeah I really miss that". That was a really cool part of my day and now I don't get that 'cause I sit in front of the monitor for 90% of my day, so it has its shortcomings but at the same time it's still finding that value. I'm on a temporary contract during a mat leave so we're not quite out of the woods yet. I've been given the impression that I'm not leaving anytime soon and when my contract is up that it will be renewed and maybe made permanent. Again I have heard that time and again so I'm just going to wait it out, but for the time, I just thought oh that's 1 year, its guaranteed income for a year. I'm really hoping. I'm tired of looking for a job, trying to find what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm tired of being the new kid and learning and learning, new job, new job. I want that comfortable marry up so I'm hoping that this is it. I really love this job, I'd be happy to stay there for a while.

Eliza:

It sounds like your outlook and view have changed a little bit.

Audrey Jayne:

I'm starting to see the future and my career not as a black hole, grim, but rather opportunity. I know that has been a very new outlook and new step in my perspective, in that I'm starting to see change of good, not change of bad.

Eliza:

So do you see yourself going back into the classroom at some point?

Audrey Jayne:
I imagine that I will not step foot in a classroom again, I really truly do and I'm OK with it. I imagine that I will continue in the position that I'm at, doing curriculum design, and I will give this a go for the next 2 years. I get a permanent position that is and then looking forward to the future I think different options where I can go as an independent design consultant and do the same work that I do now just of my own free will, or I'm going to open up a bakery and I'm going to go with something totally different. But I'm feeling good about that, I think I really love teaching, I think I got burnt by teaching, and I think that with my personality I don't think, now that I kind of step outside the circle I'm not sure that teaching is the best career for my personality because I have that tendency to get too far involved and too consumed by it that I don't, I think it would cause me problems in the future.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:
Audrey Jayne feels hope once again. As she is able to remove her "blinders" and see teaching beyond the walls of a classroom in front of children, she has begun to live out her imagined story of living a teaching life on a different landscape. She talks about how she needed to step outside of the life she was living in order to see how to live the way that would allow her to honour her life on a personal landscape while enjoying her work on her professional landscape.

(Narrator exits as the curtain comes up)

Act 7: Composing a life (personal)

Eliza:
And through all of this your significant other has been with you and now you have this new view of what might happen. Can you tell me more about that?

Audrey Jayne:
We've been together 3 years but we've never lived together so now we're going to live together and I think a great deal of what pushed that forward is because I'm happy with where I am in my professional life, that it has brought positive, happiness into the personal life and so we are able to move forward as a result of me letting go of what happened with teaching and moving forward with my own life in my career. We're going to rent a place. Us renting together will allow us both the opportunity to save a little money each month where we can put that towards then getting married, kind of that stuff, if we can play nice then we'll get married. Yeah that's a really endearing thing too when you look and you go wow we kind of made it through all that, like I'm pretty sure there's not a lot else that we couldn't handle but no, it's good. I think it's an open book. I'm not, I don't want to write my pages before I get there and I think that that's so much of my personality is to have my life story written before I even get there and what I need to do to really work on writing it after, I've been there and to just let it go because I see so much in all different kinds of situations and scenarios, where I get it so in my mind that this is what it's

going to look like and this is how it's going to play out and this is everything that I just end up getting so disappointed and so frustrated and so upset and then it's well now that's a disaster. Whereas if I just didn't envision everything and have to have it all set out and know the course that I'm on, if I could just step back and say you know what, I'm going to go with it as it comes and I'm going to see how it is, I think that that would have such a difference on my quality of life and my nerves and my stress.

(Curtain falls as Narrator comes out)

Narrator:

Audrey Jayne has started to compose a forward looking story as she starts to see her life as full of opportunities and not failures. She has started to make plans to move in with her significant other and to move forward in her personal life. I wonder how this new outlook will shape her stories to live by in the future.

(Curtain falls and lights fade to black)

Negotiating the Narrative Account

As our conversations turned to negotiating the text, we arranged when and how to meet to co-compose Audrey Jayne's narrative account. We met in person once and then a week later to negotiate the text that had been created for a total of two face to face negotiations. Many of Audrey Jayne's stories resonated with me even though we come from different backgrounds. As she shared her stories, the emotion she felt resonated with me as she told me about them. I was grateful that she was so open about the pain she felt and the relationships and memories that continue to keep her going. As I read and re-read Audrey Jayne's words with Audrey Jayne, we both noticed the impact of certain stories that are important to Audrey Jayne's story to live by.

My own grandparents lived far away from me as I was growing up but were vital to the composition of who I am as well as the way I move through life. I can see how Audrey Jayne is rooted in her culture by her grandparents. It is this relationship that has shown her how to be proud of her culture as well as what it means to work hard and be part of a community. At times this comes with tensions of living up to high expectations but it is the encouragement and the pride of her parents and grandparents that helps sustain her, especially now, in creating a forward looking story.

Audrey Jayne grew up in a small town in Alberta where her family was well known and she was respected. She learned the importance of being involved in the community and volunteering. These were important things to Audrey Jayne as she moved from the small towns to larger city areas. This also caused some tension for her. It is amazing to me how she has found ways to honour the aspects of living in a small town while living in a large city by becoming respected in a new community as well as allowing time for the volunteer work that is so important to her.

Much like living a small town life style on a large city landscape, Audrey Jayne shows how she had to live in tension within teaching. Her significant other is a teacher which meant that Audrey Jayne had to deal with seeing someone else live the story she wanted to live. She described how she was passionate and "diehard" while her significant other did not do things the way she would have. I could tell how hard it was for her accept that she was not teaching and that someone else had a different way of teaching. I was touched as Audrey Jayne shared with me the depression that she was dealing with during that time. I could see how hard it had been to give up the story of teaching in a K-12 setting and yet how necessary it was for her and her relationships with her significant other and her family.

In many ways, Audrey Jayne giving up the story of classroom teacher and being happy with her significant other living a teaching life is because she has been able to live out a different story of teaching on a new landscape. Working with the education of law enforcement allows her to feel that what she does matters, that she is using her education degree, that it is not wasted as she helps to impact the communities and lives she cares so much about. She has been able to continue with her volunteer work and honour those parts of her story that are most important to her well being. Most importantly, she is able to live out a more balanced life that she feels comfortable with.

As Audrey Jayne looks forward she cannot see herself back in a classroom setting, yet she is happy for the time she was able to have there. She looks forward to living out her imagined story of falling in love, getting married, having children, and participating within a community. It is interesting to Audrey Jayne and I that she had to leave teaching in order to live out this imagined story. I can see the hope, the strength, and the pride of her family and community in Audrey Jayne as she tells her story to me and as she moves beyond the imagined story she held to new experiences.

Chapter 7: Teacher Education: A Question of Sustaining Teachers[8]

Keynote address by D. Jean Clandinin at the 1st Global Teacher Education Summit, Beijing, China, accepted for publication in the book *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century*
D. Jean Clandinin, Lee Schaefer, Julie S. Long, Pam Steeves, Sue McKenzie-Robblee, Eliza Pinnegar, and Sheri Wnuk (University of Alberta) and
C. Aiden Downey (Emory University)

Abstract

In many places around the world, early career teacher attrition is a major concern. The costs associated with teachers leaving within their first five years of teaching are significant in economic terms. However, there are also concerns that the rapid movement of beginning teachers in and out of teaching creates less educative school and classroom environments and, consequently, less ideal learning conditions for students. Another significant concern is the impact on the identities of early career teachers who leave teaching.

With these concerns in mind, a pressing question for teacher educators is how do we create teacher education spaces that enable beginning teachers to compose identities that sustain them in teaching. Working from a view of teacher knowledge as personal practical knowledge that is expressed on professional knowledge landscapes, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) and Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1999) have developed narrative ways of thinking about knowledge, school contexts and teacher identities (understood narratively as stories to live by). It is from this conceptual framework that we (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press) have undertaken a study of early career teachers who are still teaching as well as those who have left teaching within the first five years. Working with early career teachers, our purpose is to better understand the stories to live by of beginning teachers and to think about how we might better sustain them as teachers. We see teacher education as playing a key part in helping to sustain beginning teachers.

Introduction

Sitting in the noisy coffee shop Marie and Jean talked for almost two hours on that late May afternoon. Marie had volunteered to participate in our study of the experiences of early career teachers (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press). She was just ending her second year of teaching. Only a month or so left and she would be gone. She would not be back in the fall. She was heading off to teach in an international school and said that, while she was officially just taking a leave from her position, she knew that she would not be back. By all accounts she was an exemplary teacher who had been shortlisted for awards of excellence, awarded a permanent contract, and whose students had achieved well on the provincial standardized achievement tests. As they said goodbye after our conversation, Jean continued to wonder about beginning teachers. What was her responsibility as a teacher educator in all of this? Why was Marie not staying in

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[8] This paper draws on research undertaken with Lee Schaefer, Julie Long, Sue McKenzie-Robblee, Pam Steeves, Eliza Pinnegar, and Sheri Wnuk of the University of Alberta and C. Aiden Downey of Emory University.

teaching? Should Jean be concerned that she was leaving? What is our collective responsibility as teacher educators working with beginning teachers to look closely at when, how, and why the teachers we educate leave the profession?

If Marie had been a single instance of an early career teacher leaving teaching, perhaps we would not have wondered. But she is not. She is one of about 40 percent of beginning teachers in the Canadian province where we work, who leave within their first five years. And in our semi-structured interview study with teachers in their second or third years of teaching, she, like many others, is one of the individuals we see as uncertain about whether they will stay in teaching. Marie, however, was quite clear, at least in what she said to Jean in that particular time and place. While she was leaving to teach in an international school in the next school year, she did not tell a story of herself as still teaching in five years. Listening to the future plans of the 40 beginning teachers we are talking with, who are still teaching across our large Canadian province[9], appears to confirm the trend that 40% or so of early career teachers will leave within their first five years of teaching.

As we look across the transcripts of our interviews, we realize that some beginning teachers are leaving because they are not being given permanent contracts, and some are leaving because of funding cuts caused by economic uncertainty that have resulted in fewer teaching positions. But many who have contracts already, and who know they have jobs waiting for them are also considering leaving. We see that the situation is more complex than whether or not one has a teaching position and a contract.

There are numerous studies, mostly in the US, Britain, and Australia that show large numbers of teachers leaving teaching in the first five years (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). This high rate of early career teacher attrition raises questions for policy makers around the economic costs of teacher education, both pre-service and induction, as well as the costs in terms of the quality of education in schools (MacDonald, 1999, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

In our (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press) review of the relevant literature around early career teacher attrition and retention, we noted the high rate of early career teacher attrition is most often seen as a problem associated either with the individual teacher or teaching context. For example, the individual factors usually identified with early career teacher attrition are burnout, a lack of resilience, and/or personal demographic features such as age, race, or sex. The contextual factors usually cited are support, or a lack of support, from those in the beginning teacher's context, salary, professional development, collaboration, nature of the context (that is, high poverty, rural, urban, suburban), student issues, and teacher education. For example, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) note the U.S. data shows that "beginning teachers, in particular, report that one of the main factors behind their decision to depart is a lack of adequate support from the school administration" (p. 202).

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[9] C. Aiden Downey, Emory University, was the Horowitz Postdoctoral Fellow for the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development in 2007-2008. He continues to work with us on this project.

As we read the many studies, we wondered whether the foci of the studies were too narrow and whether the data was too de-contextualized. When the research focussed on the individual characteristics of teachers, contextual factors that may have been in play were not visible. At other times, individual factors appeared to be dismissed as the study focus was on contextual factors. Rinke (2006) spoke to the dichotomy apparent in beginning teacher attrition literature between locating the problem of attrition within individuals (such as burnout) or within contexts (such as support). Even though these areas have a close relational interaction, they are, at times, treated as separate. Rinke called for future research to simultaneously inquire into both contextual conceptualizations and individual conceptualizations. As we read the studies, we noted two additional concerns, beyond those Rinke identified, with how the research frames early career teacher attrition.

Firstly, we rarely saw the particularities of each beginning teacher's life contexts, both in school and out of school. Secondly, most often early career teacher attrition was characterized as a singular event, something that happened at one moment in time. Few studies characterized beginning teacher attrition as a process unfolding over time. In work done (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009) we discussed the possibilities of conceptualizing teacher attrition as a process that develops in, and over, time. Our metaphor of teachers standing at a bus stop waiting for their bus to come by, and transport them away to a new place, offered an imaginative way to think about the intentions of beginning teachers related to staying in teaching or leaving teaching.

The literature raised many questions for us, particularly as we realized that despite the relatively high salaries for beginning teachers in our province and the proliferation of induction and mentoring programs in local school districts[10], the high rate of early career teacher attrition persisted. Talking with early career teachers in our study continued to puzzle us, particularly as many of them spoke of leaving teaching, or of not being certain they were staying in teaching, despite having permanent contracts. In what follows, based on our literature review, and our earlier studies, we offer three different approaches for the kinds of research that might offer new understandings of the experiences of early career teachers.

Re-conceptualizing Research Directions in Early Career Teacher Attrition

Studying beginning teachers' intentions in relation to teaching.

In our review of the literature we found some researchers were beginning to explore beginning teachers' intentions (Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Olsen, 2008; Smethem, 2007). Smethem, Olsen, and Anderson found that beginning teachers' intentions to stay in, or leave the profession, varied when examined prior to their beginning teaching or at different points in their first five years. Olsen looked at beginning teachers' careers in a temporal manner by inquiring into their personal and professional histories to decipher if their reasons for entering teaching linked to their intentions to stay in, or leave, teaching. Although these studies were not able to

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[10] Ingersoll and Strong (2011) report that in the U.S. "the percentage of beginning teachers who report that they have participated in some kind of induction program in their first year of teaching has steadily increased over the past two decades—from about 40% in 1990 to almost 80% by 2008" (p. 202)

follow the participants to see if they actually stayed in the profession, it is interesting to consider how beginning teachers' intentions, as they enter teaching, may shape whether they stay in teaching.

Adopting an identity framework.

In our current study, we work from an idea shared with Flores and Day (2006) that the idea of conceptualizing teacher attrition with a focus on teacher identity, and the processes of becoming a teacher, as identity making. This allows us to attend to both individual and contextual factors within the complex negotiation of identity.

There is a long history of work in teacher identity, which began from a view of learning a new identity, that is, an identity as teacher rather than learner. This view was reflected in the early work of Lortie (1975), and has been picked up again in relation to the problem of early career teacher attrition. Recently, McNally, Blake, and Reid (2009) discussed identity negotiation, and pointed to the importance of being attentive to how beginning teachers' identities are negotiated within the relational dimensions of the school. Often times these relational dimensions were situated within informal spaces; these informal spaces were important to identity negotiation and to daily teaching life (Lovett & Davey, 2009; McNally, Blake, & Reid, 2009).

Flores (2006) spoke to the challenges beginning teachers faced as they re-framed their identities within the cultures of their new school settings. Flores and Day (2006), in their study of 14 teachers in Portugal, worked from a notion of identity making as an ongoing and dynamic process that entails the making sense of, and reinterpretation of, one's own values and experiences. They identified three main shaping forces: prior influences, initial teacher training, and school contexts.

While we share an interest in framing the problem as one of identity making and identity shifting, we adopt a more explicitly narrative view. By this we (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) mean, we understand experience as the "fundamental ontological category from which all inquiry—narrative or otherwise—proceeds" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 38). We see experience as "a changing stream that is characterized by continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social and material environment" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39). In thinking narratively, we are attentive to thinking with stories in multiple ways: toward our stories, toward others' stories, toward all of the social, institutional, cultural, familial, and linguistic narratives in which we are embedded, as well as toward what begins to emerge as we share and inquire into our lived and told stories.

Over many years, Connelly and Clandinin developed some key terms to express our narrative understandings, terms such as personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Clandinin, 1985, 1986), storied professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 1996), and, most importantly for this paper, the concept of stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), a narrative term for identity. We understand that from a person's vantage point, knowledge and context are entwined with identity. A narrative way of thinking about identity speaks to the nexus of a person's personal practical knowledge, and the landscapes, past and present, in which a person lives and works. A concept of 'stories to live by'

allows us to speak of the stories that each of us lives out, and tells of, who we are, and are becoming. This highlights the multiplicity of our lives—lives composed, lived out, and told around multiple plotlines, over time, in different relationships, and in different landscapes.

Our focus on lives in motion, life composing, life writing, has been part of Jean Clandinin's work for many years now. The work that Connelly and Clandinin began so many years ago links backward to the philosophy of John Dewey (1938), and to curriculum scholars such as Joseph Schwab (1970, 1971, 1973, 1983). In earlier work Clandinin and Connelly (1995) wrote that living an educated life involved cultivations, awakenings, and transformations. For them, cultivation is "the living and telling of life stories. But education also involves change in these stories. It involves retelling through awakenings and reliving through transformations" (p. 158). They noted, however, that "while every cultivation, awakening and transformation is part of an individual's education, they are not always educative" (p. 158) in the sense Dewey (1938) defined. These ideas of cultivation, awakenings, and transformation appear particularly relevant as we hear of the experiences of early career teachers.

This narrative theoretical frame allowed us a way to explore early career teachers' experiences over time, and in context, and as having embodied, emotional, moral, and cognitive dimensions. As Clandinin, Downey, and Huber worked with the stories of the teachers who had left teaching, they suggested teachers' stories to live by gradually shifted until they found they were no longer able to sustain who they were, and were becoming, on school landscapes. They saw their work on teacher identities as a way to understand beginning teacher attrition as a life making process. Adopting such a view offers insight into the life/career span of a teacher, with the process of becoming a teacher as linked with the process of leaving teaching.

Shifting the Discourse of Early Career Teacher Attrition from Retaining to Sustaining

In our current project around early career teacher attrition, we noted that the discourse, as it is currently constructed, keeps the focus on seeing the problem as one of only retaining teachers, rather than sustaining beginning teachers in a profession where they will feel fulfilled and see themselves as making a strong contribution. In recent work (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; Young et al., 2010; Nelson, Antayá-Moore, Badley, & Coleman, 2010; Nieto, 2003) there are studies of what keeps teachers teaching or what sustains them. Schaefer and Clandinin (2011) adopted this discourse in a study of two beginning teachers, Shane and Kate, in order to try to understand what sustained them in their first year of teaching. In work alongside these two beginning teachers, they learned that their stories to live by bumped against the stories shaping their professional knowledge landscapes. "As stories bumped, both Kate and Shane shifted their stories to live by in order to catch glimpses of their imagined stories…Although they both had sustaining moments that came out of these shifts on their personal and professional landscapes, it is difficult to tell if these sustaining moments will turn into stories that will sustain them in teaching" (2011, p. 291).

Studying Early Career Teacher Attrition In Order to Learn about Teacher Education

In much of the research on early career teacher attrition, we (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, in press) noted the focus on individual factors and contextual factors that directed

attention toward the *why* of leaving. In this generalized view, the experiences of the people involved may be stripped away, in the hopes of revealing a general solution to the perceived problem of early career teacher attrition. We suggest the need to shift the conversation from one focused only on retaining teachers toward a conversation about sustaining teachers throughout their careers. Working alongside beginning teachers and working from a narrative conceptualization of both identity, and school contexts, provides a way to understand what sustains beginning teachers, to offer new insights about pre-service teacher education, and about the kinds of continuing spaces needed on school landscapes to sustain and retain beginning teachers.

In this chapter, our question is what might we learn from such an inquiry for teacher education in pre-service teacher education, in induction, and in professional development. How might we shift the work of teacher educators? Do we need to re-imagine the support that is provided as student teachers move into teaching? What does it mean to live out a transition from student teacher to teacher? What does it mean to compose, over time, and in multiple contexts, a life as a teacher?

Writing about teacher education some number of years ago, and working with Clifford Geertz's (1995) metaphor of a parade to describe school contexts, Connelly and Clandinin wrote,
> The changing landscape and teachers' and researchers' professional identities, their stories to live by, are interconnected. Just as the parade changes everything—the things, the people, the relationships, the parade itself—as it passes, so, too, do teachers' and researchers' identities need to change. It is not so much that teachers and researchers, professionals on the landscape, need new identities, new stories to live by: they need shifting, changing identities, shifting, changing stories to live by as the parade offers up new possibilities and cancels out others. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 128)

Later, Clandinin, Downey and Huber wrote that work as teacher educators
> is to create teacher education spaces for helping teachers compose stories to live by that will allow them to shift who they are and are becoming as they are more attentive to shifting social contexts, to children's, youths', and families' lives, as well as to shifting subject matter…Part of learning to compose stories to live by that are fluid is learning to think narratively about lives and about school contexts as knowledge landscapes. (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009)

What is clear from this way of thinking about the experiences of beginning teachers is to see that the move from pre-service teacher education to teaching involves transitions. Adopting a narrative view of identity as stories to live by, we see a multiplicity of transitions within the experiences of each beginning teacher. In most everyday conversations when the term transition is used, it is taken to mean leaving one place, and arriving at another; leaving secondary school, arriving at work; leaving teacher education institutions, and arriving in teaching and so on. In the everyday use of the term, transitions are times and places to be passed through. However, this may suggest to policy makers, administrators, teacher educators, and beginning teachers that you can successfully transition if you have enough skills, enough resilience, enough support. It is all a question of preparedness on both the part of the individual and the school context in which the student teacher/becoming teacher is arriving into.

However, the dictionary defines transition as a "change or passage from one state or stage to another: the period of time during which something changes"; or in music "a movement from one key to another; modulation; a linking passage between two divisions in a composition; bridge" (Collins English Dictionary). Taking up this definition of transition makes it more evident that a transition is change or passage from one state to another, one thing or person becoming another. There is a sense that transitions are temporal, a sense of bridging between or across.

As we think about the way beginning teachers are described as transitioning into teaching, there is a sense that there are a series of steps or stages. There is little sense of lives in transition, or someone becoming otherwise. With our interest in a narrative view of understanding experience and lives narratively, we also feel uneasy with how the word transition, too often, is used to focus our attention on an event, a discrete happening, or occurrence. The dis/ease is also with the focus on the event of transition rather than on the person experiencing the transition. In the way transition is taken up in policy and practice discussions around early career teachers, there is a sense that beginning teachers should "just get on with it", "get skilled up", and become teachers[11]. There is an accompanying sense from others that all of us who are teachers went through it, and that if you are well prepared, then you will survive. Thinking in this way also reminds us that transitions involve liminal spaces and we are troubled by how the word transition frames, or is framed by, a technical discourse and, as a consequence, shapes research, practice, and educational policy in technical ways. A number of years ago Vivian Paley, a well known U.S. early childhood educator, spoke of transitions as the most challenging time in a classroom because children had no story of how to move from centre time to recess time or from story time to snack time, from one activity or place to another activity or place. Transitions were story-less times, she said. Clandinin, following that conversation with Paley, became fascinated by the idea of storyless times and storyless places, and about the ways

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[11] Some U.S. researchers (for example, Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011) link student achievement scores to early career teacher attrition. They note that, when teacher effectiveness is defined by student success on standardized achievement tests, "teachers who leave after three or four years are less effective" (p. 278). They argue that schools should more rapidly enhance teachers' effectiveness (defined by student achievement scores) and change teacher education programs in order to increase student teachers' effectiveness when they begin teaching. To improve student teachers' effectiveness they suggest adding more time in schools and more training on the specific content teachers will teach. Their argument appears to be that we should quickly counsel early career teachers who do not raise students' achievement test scores out of teaching and do a better selection of those we allow in to teacher education. Such a focus glosses over the experiences of early career teachers and appears to focus only on effective teaching in relation to student test scores. In our study we learned that beginning teachers frequently teach in many subject areas, at different grade levels, and are asked to take on assignments at the last minute. We are not certain that the suggestions of Henry et al. speak to the contexts in which the beginning teachers in our study work.

people, whether children, youth, or adults, compose their lives in those transitional spaces. Clandinin wondered what stories they composed to live in such spaces. Drawing on the work of Carolyn Heilbrun (1999), Clandinin linked story-less times and storyless places to the idea of liminality.

Limen in Latin means threshold and anthropologist Victor Turner attended to the experiences of people as they pass over the threshold from one stage of life to another. The liminal stage or state is an in-between space, neither here nor there, and thus the form and rules of the earlier state and state-to-come neither work nor apply. In liminality, one is in an indeterminate state, what we now call a story-less state, what Heilbrun calls "in between destinies" (p. 102). It is a space of much possibility, a space where Heilbrun writes, we can write our own lines, compose our own plays and stories.

Steeves's (2000) work draws attention to these in-between spaces as spaces between destinies, where we need to be open to imagination and improvisation. The in between spaces are spaces of becoming, spaces open to imagination, open to our embodied sense of 'what if' that are embedded in our stories to live by. Transitions, understood in this way, open the possibility of change. If we stop and think narratively about transitions as liminal spaces, we see that each person is engaged in a process of, as Maxine Greene (1995) suggests, becoming otherwise.

With this as a theoretical frame, that is, thinking narratively about identities as stories to live by, and times and places of transition as liminal spaces, we have a different standpoint from which to begin to understand the experiences of beginning teachers as they leave the university and enter schools and begin teaching. It is through listening to the stories that teachers in their second and third years of teaching are telling of their experiences that we are learning of their struggles to make sense of what is happening to them, to who they are becoming as they compose their lives on their personal and professional landscapes.

Wondering About Pre-service Teacher Education and Induction Teacher Education

We wonder if we asked student teachers to inquire into their imagined stories of who they would be as teachers, what each of them might learn about their stories to live by. What stories are they telling themselves, stories shaped by their own childhood stories, by their experiences with teachers and schools when they were positioned as children and/or parents in relation with teachers and administrators? What would become visible if each student teacher attended to how their stories might, or might not, be possible to live by when they began teaching? We wonder if we have created spaces for such autobiographical inquiries as part of pre-service teacher education. We wonder if Marie had an opportunity to look back on, to inquire into, stories she lived and told on her early landscapes as she engaged in pre-service teacher education. We wonder if induction programs open up such spaces for beginning teachers to inquire into their experiences in their teaching. We imagine that if these inquiries are not started in teacher education programs that the contexts in which early career teachers live might not allow such inquiries.

We wonder if student teachers imagined as they left the university as students to become teachers in school contexts that they would make a smooth comfortable transition to living a life

as a teacher. We wonder if in our teacher education programs we give them a sense of promise that a smooth transition, without tensions, change, dis/ease, is what is desired and possible. We wonder if they have a sense of staying awake to what might happen during the transitional spaces, in these liminal spaces of becoming otherwise, as they begin teaching. We wonder if induction programs work with early career teachers to help them set in place ways to deal with the interruptions, and disruptions, in their stories to live by as they begin teaching. We wonder if there are people who come alongside to remind beginning teachers to attend to their lives both in and out of schools, to stay attentive to relationships that sustain them, and to attend to their needs for healthy living such as rest, food, and physical activity. As one teacher told us, "I know that there is a balance for me, that was the hardest part, I'm expected to coach four teams on top of teaching all these different subjects…there were some points this year where I was just ready to go 'This is it, I can't do this.'" In the stories that we are hearing, the early career teachers often tell us that, until their health or relationships totally disrupt them, they frequently work to the exclusion of attending to other aspects of their lives.

We wonder if teacher education programs portray a teacher's personal life and professional life as easily separated; a portrayal with a sharp and discernible divide between their lives in school, and their lives out of school. We wonder if they are awake to how their lives outside of school will be shaped by their lives in school. As Kate, one of the beginning teachers in Schaefer's study described, she realized how the tensions on the school landscape were creating tensions on her personal landscape. "She was not who she wanted to be on either landscape" (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2011, p. 286). In the stories we are hearing, the early career teachers are experiencing disruptions in their family lives, their personal landscapes. One beginning teacher spoke of needing to make appointments to spend time with her children because otherwise she did not have time to be with them.

We wonder if teacher education programs create a sense of seeing a teaching life as an ongoing act of improvisation, one in which there is no certainty, a life lived at least to some extent in liminal spaces of uncertainty. We wonder if somehow teacher education programs allow beginning teachers to foreclose their capacity to wonder about their work of teaching and of becoming teachers. We wonder if their teacher education programs allowed them to see the process of becoming a teacher as a gradual one stretched over time. The process of becoming is an ongoing process, a process that Maxine Greene described when she said, "I am what I am not yet."

We wonder if teacher education programs discount the emotional, moral, and physical work of teachers in order to focus on the cognitive and organizational work. What might it mean if in teacher education programs we acknowledged the complex layers of teaching which link identity making with teacher knowledge and teaching contexts? What happens when the focus of teacher education is only on pedagogy and subject matter? What is ignored in those programs of teacher education? With only a focus on pedagogy, what remains hidden from view? As the beginning teachers are telling us, they are learning how much of teaching is work outside of what they see as teaching in the classroom such as Individualized Program Plans, supervision of clubs and activities, coaching, preparing school-wide performances on top of their meetings with parents, colleagues, staff meetings, professional development, induction sessions, marking, grading and report cards.

Ways Forward

We have not come to any easy solutions to what is a persistent and recurring problem with huge costs to teacher education institutions, school districts, beginning teachers, children and families. We hope what we are engaged in with our conversations with early career teachers who are still teaching will enable early career teachers to add their voices to the conversation that has, for too long, not heard them speak of their experiences. We think that the stories of early career teachers, such as Marie, need to be heard in order to begin to more fully engage not only the reasons for leaving but the experiences of early career teachers as they become teachers. Perhaps in this way their stories can better inform the ways forward for pre-service and induction teacher education.

As we think about what we are learning about pre-service teacher education and induction programs in our conversations with these early career teachers who are still teaching about their experiences, we are reminded of the importance for teacher educators and those who work in schools to be attentive to the shifting knowledge landscapes in order to work with early career teachers to create spaces for pushing back against dominant narratives that narrow the spaces for teachers to engage in thoughtful and educative ways with children, youth and families, "spaces that sustain them in teaching and living the kinds of respectful relationships with children, youth, and families that they imagined" (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009, p. 12) when they chose to begin to live their lives as teachers.

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