# RESPONSES TO DIFFERENCE IN INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION: A CASE OF RACIAL AND LINGUISTIC MINORITY IMMIGRANT TEACHER CANDIDATES

by

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## Abstract

Despite recent rhetoric advocating the diversification of the teacher workforce, teachers in Canada continue to be disproportionately white and of northern European heritage. By investigating responses to difference experienced by racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates in an initial teacher education program, this thesis sheds light on dynamics that challenge or support the induction of minoritized individuals as members of the teaching profession in Canada.

Data collected through interviews with eight immigrant teacher candidates, four instructors, and five student support staff of an initial teacher education program at an urban Canadian university (UCU) indicated that teacher candidates at UCU experienced varied responses to difference. Influences of both hegemony and collaboration were found in the university and practice teaching contexts where individuals representing regimes of competence enacted challenging assimilationist or supportive multiculturalist ideologies. In practice teaching contexts, although all of the teacher candidates engaged with at least one collaborative mentor teacher and they all persisted to complete the program, six of the eight teacher candidates (i.e., all of the linguistic minority teacher candidates in this study) encountered a challenging and significantly discouraging relationship with a mentor teacher. In these hegemonic contexts the legitimacy of the teacher candidates appeared to be measured against a conception of "real teachers" as "real

Canadians" who are native English-speakers and who are familiar with the culture of schooling in Canada. Within the university context, student support staff were consistent in their critical awareness of the challenges and supports experienced by teacher candidates while instructors demonstrated a range of familiarity with these issues and with concepts of equity as they relate to the experiences of teacher candidates.

Implications of this study support the following: continuation of programs offered through student support services; educative collaborative implementation of UCU's equity policy to promote greater consistency in its influence; application of inclusive pedagogy; greater curricular emphasis on social power and constructions of difference; recognition of immigrant teachers' linguistic capital; development of a collaborative method to evaluate teacher candidates in practice teaching contexts; and continued effort to advance a more profound and consistent influence of multiculturalist ideology in Canadian schools.

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# Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

## Introduction

> Since upon "landing" six years later and being labelled an "immigrant," a "visible minority woman," I have remained in limbo. Even after years of being an "immigrant," and upon swearing allegiance to the same Queen of England from whom India had parted, I was not to be a "Canadian." Regardless of my official status as a Canadian citizen, I, like many others, remained an "immigrant." The category "Canadian" clearly applied to people who had two things in common: their white skin and their European North American (not Mexican) background. (Bannerji, 2000, p. 64)

Canada's urban centres are some of the most culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse cities in the world (Statistics Canada, 2008b). While diversity is not a new phenomenon (Dei, James, James-Wilson, & Zine, 2000), changes in immigration policies, and advances in international transportation have resulted in an "increasingly transient world population" (Ryan, 1996). Migration to Canada has shown a steady increase since 1989 (Research Working Group, 2000; Statistics Canada, 2008a) and the cultural identity of Canada's cities has experienced tremendous diversification. Unlike immigrants of the past 20 to 50 years who "trace their roots to Western Europe" (Ryan, 1996), most recent newcomers to Canada have arrived predominantly from Asia and the Middle East (representing approximately 60% of immigrants settling between 2001 and 2006), Africa (around 10%) and Eastern Europe (roughly 8%) (Statistics Canada, 2009). Many recent immigrants do not speak English or French, Canada's official languages, as their first language, and they bring with them cultural and religious beliefs and values that differ from Canada's predominantly Anglo-Saxon, Euro-Christian heritage (Duffy, 2005; Harper, 1997). Such racial, linguistic and cultural differences have made diversity more visible in many communities, prompting increased attention to diversity among students in Canadian education systems (Bascia, 1996a; Dei et al., 2000; Duffy, 2005; Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008; Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009).

Students who have settled in Canada within the past 5 years represent more than 25% of the student population in larger urban school districts and students who are learning English or French as an additional language can comprise as much as 60% of school populations in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, Canada's largest urban areas (Ryan et al., 2009). In her historical overview of difference and diversity in Ontario schools, Harper (1997) describes the current challenge for that province, which includes Toronto and other diverse urban school districts:

> Ontario's school population has never been more diverse than at present, nor has the demand to accommodate difference ever been more insistent. …schools are expected to meet the needs of a population that is racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, to confront gender, racial, and economic disparity and discrimination, to create classrooms in which there is mutual respect and social harmony, and at the same time to establish some sense of a cohesive Canadian identity. (p. 192)

Trends of lagging performance among students from some minoritized groups (Dei, 1996; Dei et al., 2000) have prompted educational researchers and advocates to argue the need for policy strategies and initiatives that will enable public education in Canada to "become more responsive to culturally diverse students" (Bascia, 2001, p. 245). One such strategy calls for an increase in "the racial and cultural diversity of the teaching force to more closely reflect the diversity of the general population" (Bascia, 2001, p. 245) yet Canada's teachers continue to be predominantly white and of northern European heritage (Bascia, 2001; Bedard, 2000; Ryan et al., 2009). For many years, academics and educators have argued the need to diversify the teacher workforce because "they believe that teachers of colour have much to offer the entire student population, the education system generally, and the communities in which teachers and students live, learn, and work" (Ryan et al., 2009, p. 593). Ryan and his colleagues suggest that teachers of colour serve as inspiring role models and empathetic adults who can relate to racialized students and prepare them for "a world that marginalizes them" (p. 595).

Faculties of education in Canada have similarly expressed their support of efforts to diversify the teacher workforce. In their comprehensive overview of initial teacher education in Canada, Gambhir, Broad, Evans, and Gaskell (2008) identify a shared commitment to principles of diversity among faculties of education across the country. Many teacher education programs in Canada have developed policies and initiatives to recruit a more diverse pool of applicants. Some faculties allocate a percentage of their enrollment for members of historically underrepresented groups (e.g., individuals with disabilities, people from Aboriginal communities, and racially minoritized members of society) and engage in community outreach to encourage people from diverse backgrounds to consider teaching as a career. In spite of these efforts, little progress has been made to diversify the teacher workforce and the authors argue that faculties "need to continue to study ways to develop greater capacity and diversity of applicant pools in teacher education programs" (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 14).

Attention to diversity among students and faculty in higher education is also gaining momentum (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, & Morrell, 2002; Tierney, 1994). Bollinger (2007), for example, argues that diversity in higher education provides students with essential opportunities to learn from classmates representing diverse world experiences and perspectives that prepare them for engagement with the "new world" by "nurturing in them an instinct to reach out instead of clinging to the comforts of what seems natural or familiar" (p. B20). Given Bollinger's argument, diversifying the student body in teacher preparation programs will not only support efforts to diversify the teacher workforce but may also, by providing opportunities for future teachers to learn from diverse others, foster greater acceptance of social difference and help future teachers interact positively with students, parents, and colleagues from diverse backgrounds.

To advance their efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, faculties of education across Canada are admitting increased numbers of recent immigrants and first-generation Canadians to their programs. The preparation of these teachers who have diverse backgrounds, are learning English or French as an additional language, and who have little familiarity with the culture of teaching and learning in Canada presents new challenges for initial teacher education programs (Faez, 2006). While universities in Canada endeavour to respond to their needs as students in university classrooms and as developing teachers in field placement classrooms and schools, immigrant teacher candidates often struggle to feel included (Faez, 2006). As Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008) write in relation to the participation of diverse students in higher education programs, "the experiences of these students can still be one of isolation, alienation, and injury" (p. 46).

We also know that minoritized immigrant teachers who are employed by school districts, or are seeking employment as teachers, often feel marginalized within, and excluded from, the teaching profession (Bascia, 1996a; Pollock, 2009). With regard to the availability of a diverse teacher pool, Ryan and his colleagues (2009) point out that there is no shortage of minority immigrant teachers among those who are looking for employment in Canada, as teaching ranks fourth among the most common professions of recent immigrants. They suggest that the lack of diversity among working teachers is more a reflection of exclusionary hiring practices than an indication that qualified teachers from diverse backgrounds are not available.

Researchers examining the experiences of minoritized, immigrant, and other "non-traditional" students in higher education have identified challenges these students face (e.g., Archer, Hutchings, & Ross, 2003; Bowl, 2003; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Most of these studies tend to perpetuate deficit notions of "non-traditional" students in higher education by focusing on perceived "gaps" in social, financial, domestic and academic resources (Reay, Ball,

& David, 2002). Factors related to concepts of difference – race (Attewell, 2000; Dei et al., 2001; Dougherty, 1997), class (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Corson, 1998; Hanafin & Lynch, 2002), gender (Davies & Quirke, 2002; Krahn & Andres, 1999), and language (Freire & Macedo, 1995; Zamel, 1995), and particularly "the persistence of class, gender and race inequalities in access to higher education" (Bowl, 2003, p.2), figure prominently in research.

Race, class, gender and language in compulsory and higher education are often perceived as personal deficits of students (Bartolome & Trueba, 2000; Bowl, 2003; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996) but little emphasis is placed on the ways that these factors are produced, reproduced, critiqued or mitigated systemically or organizationally (Bowl, 2003). Race, for example, is often considered in terms of student identity and adjustment relative to cultural norms of the dominant majority (Archer & Leathwood, 2003; Ernst-Slavit, 2000). Class is discussed in relation to a student's ability to afford tuition (Hutchings, 2003) and the capacity of working class parents to guide students through academia (Archer, 2003; Jun & Colyar, 2002). Gender is often researched for trends in program choices that result in over/under-representation in particular fields of study (Bowl, 2003), and household division of labour that continues in a generalized sense to put additional demands on the time and energy of women (Reay et al., 2002). Finally, language and language facility are associated with academic preparation, readiness and competence (Bartolome & Trueba, 2000; Zamel, 1995). Little research attempts the complex work of examining racism, classism, sexism and linguicism in compulsory and higher education and the ways in which systemic and institutional prejudices result in inequitable treatment on the basis of social difference (Bartolome & Trueba, 2000; Dei, 1999; Zamel, 1995).

Difference as deficit findings are also found in studies of teacher candidates. Gambhir (2004), for example, found that immigrant teacher candidates often require support to develop their ability to communicate in English, to understand the culture of teaching and

learning in Canada, and to develop self-confidence as teachers. Faez (2007) argues the need to extend investigations of the experiences of teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds beyond emphasis on "*what* learners need to know in order to participate competently" to include questions related to "*how* learners become socialized into academic communities" (p. 6, emphasis in original). Although Faez writes that teacher candidates with diverse linguistic backgrounds become socialized in multiple communities through "complex interplay between the individuals and the social context in which they negotiate their linguistic identities" (p. 221), the dominant ideologies framing the social contexts of identity formation are not examined through a critical lens.

Studies such as those presented by Gambhir (2004) and Faez (2007) inform our understanding of the needs of diverse non-native English speaking teacher candidates and suggest ways that their participation in initial teacher education programs can be facilitated through programmatic and pedagogical initiatives. However, with only peripheral consideration of dominant ideologies influencing discourses related to citizenship, schooling, and the teaching profession, such studies are unlikely to generate significant social or educational change required to advance the creation of fully inclusive teacher education programs, schools, communities and organizations more broadly within Canadian society.

The marginalizing experiences of minority students in higher education (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008), of minority immigrant teachers (Bascia, 1996a), and of immigrant teacher candidates (Cho, 2010) suggest a disconnect between principles of diversity articulated by universities and school districts, and the responses to difference expressed in educational contexts. Considering the fact that intentions to diversify the teacher workforce have yielded little progress to date (Ryan et al., 2009), it is important to investigate responses to difference as dynamics that can serve to facilitate or impede diversification.

Throughout the last century, several responses to diversity in education systems have been developed and enacted through policy and pedagogy. The various models that have exerted influence over time reflect ideologically driven discourses of difference (Harper, 1997). Most of the prevailing ideologies have served the interests of dominant members of society (predominantly Euro-Christian, white, middle class men) by creating "organizational borders that . . . make particular individuals prominent and others invisible" (Tierney, 1991a, p. 9). By establishing boundaries and determining conditions for authentic inclusion, an organization's ideology helps to determine "how culture is enacted and how the institution's identity is defined" (Tierney, 1991a, p. 9). The aim, then, for critical researchers and organizational stakeholders is to identify, understand, and deconstruct ideologies that are creating boundaries and limiting the inclusion of historically marginalized groups (Tierney, 1991a).

To understand responses to difference embodied through the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates requires a critical consideration of their involvement with individuals and communities associated with the ITE program (e.g., instructors, fellow students, student support staff, and mentor teachers), and with organizational structures (e.g., policies, programs, curriculum, language of instruction, and evaluation) that frame the challenges and supports they encounter. By recognizing the ways that ideologically driven responses to difference influence the experiences of racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates in the university context and in field placement schools, educational leaders can work toward the deconstruction of discourses that "legitimate structures of privilege and power and, often inadvertently, mask inequities and injustices" (Slaughter, 1991, p. 59).

## Purpose of the Study

This study examines challenges and supports experienced by racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates as responses to difference driven by ideological and discursive stances in the university where they study, and in the school-based classrooms where they interact with mentor teachers. Additionally, this study sheds light on the ways that responses to difference influence the induction of these teacher candidates as members of the teaching profession.

## Research Questions

As will be discussed further in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework and research questions originally developed to guide this study provided for a broad investigation of the challenges and supports that racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates experience throughout their participation in an initial teacher education program. The following original research questions guided the early phases of this study:

1. What systemic, institutional, and individual dynamics challenge and/or support immigrant minority and English language learner participation in an initial teacher education program in Canada?
2. How do the identified systemic, institutional, and individual dynamics intersect with complexities of race, class, gender, and language to challenge and/or support immigrant minority and English language learner participation in an initial teacher education program in Canada?

The original questions facilitated the collection of data related to the experiences of minoritized teacher candidates. However, when I started to analyze the data, I saw a need to

refine my original conceptual framework and its related research questions in order to establish a more precise framing of my findings. In particular, analysis of the data prompted me to recognize responses to difference as a central phenomena influencing and reflecting the challenges and supports that these teacher candidates experienced. I started to understand interactions among teacher candidates, ITE program staff, and field-based mentor teachers as responses to difference that challenged or supported teacher candidate participation in the program and influenced their efforts to be recognized as legitimate members of the teaching profession. Furthermore, to reflect the integrative stance of my inquiry, in refining the research questions I embedded consideration of axes of difference (e.g., race, class, gender, and language) within the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 rather than as explicitly stated research questions. While the original, more broadly stated questions guided the data collection process, what I learned through that process and the early stages of analysis prompted me to develop the following refined questions to guide the analysis and discussion of this study:

1. a) What responses to difference do racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates encounter during their participation in an initial teacher education program?

   b) How do these responses influence their participation in the academic university-based components of the initial teacher education program?

   c) How do these responses influence their participation in school-based practice teaching components of the program?

2. a) How do ITE program staff perceive and understand the responses to difference experienced by racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates?

   b) How do these perceptions and understandings influence the work they do?

**Overview of the Dissertation**

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide this study. Integrative critical theory, together with a critical integrative conceptual framework of organizational interaction, captures complex tensions associated with relations of power and responses to difference in educational contexts.

Chapter 2 first provides an overview of critical theories that have been developed to frame investigations of political, organizational, and social responses to various axes of difference. The tendency of many popular critical theories to centralize one modality of difference (e.g., race, gender, class or sexual orientation) limits the capacity of these theories to capture the complexity of human experience (e.g., Ng, 2003) and I present integrative critical theory as the lens through which this thesis is constructed, analyzed and discussed.

The chapter next presents an integrative critical conceptual framework that supports my analysis of tensions manifested through responses to difference that reflect and influence the inclusion or exclusion of minoritized immigrant teacher candidates as legitimate members of the teaching profession (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009). In this section of the chapter, I describe the ways that my contemplation of the data prompted me to revise my conceptual framework in order to foreground responses to difference as a central dynamic influenced by relations of power, ideology and discourse expressed through regimes of competence. Informed by an existing model of power relations (Cummins, 1996) and a conceptualization of role definitions and educational structures constructed and enacted within regimes of competence (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), the refined framework presented in Chapter 2 is grounded by critical assumptions of organizational dynamics described by Mills, Simmons, and Mills (2005):

> We do not accept that organizational structure and behaviour can be understood without reference to one another. Nor do we accept that organizations can be simply understood as reflections of the broader society in which they are located or as social entities in their own right. It is our contention that organizations need to be understood as the outcome of several levels of abstraction that includes internal and external factors, structural and behavioural factors and various combinations of each factor. (p. 2)

In Chapter 3, I describe the complex educational contexts of schooling and teacher education in Canada to provide a basis for understanding teacher candidate experiences as they participated from September, 2005 until June, 2006 in various aspects of Canada's education system and negotiated power relations within the communities that were central to each context.

In Chapter 4, I present the qualitative methodological approach applied in this study. I describe the research participants, instruments and procedures for data collection, and the process I applied to analyze the data. This chapter also addresses ethical considerations related to the recruitment, engagement, and anonymity of the research participants.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I present the data from this study thematically to describe the challenges and supports experienced and observed by the research participants. In Chapter 5, narratives of the teacher candidates convey challenging and supportive instances in the university and practice teaching contexts that influenced their efforts to develop as legitimate members of the teaching profession. The ways that instructors and student support staff understand the challenges and supports experienced by the teacher candidates, and apply this knowledge in their work, are presented in Chapter 6. Each of these two chapters concludes with a summary. In Chapter 5, the summary provides an overview of the challenges and supports experienced by the teacher candidates. The summary of Chapter 6 provides an overview of the faculty and staff perceptions of challenges and supports and a comparison of the similarities and differences within and between the groups.

In Chapter 7, I provide an integrative critical analysis of the responses to difference presented and discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 as challenges and supports influencing the participation of teacher candidates. Considered within the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2, I first analyze responses to difference in relation to role definitions and educational structures expressed, developed and enacted through regimes of competence in the university and practice teaching contexts. Next, I examine the ideologies and discourses found to influence the responses generated through regimes of competence. Finally, I analyze the responses to difference as manifestations of hegemonic or collaborative relations of power.

Chapter 8 provides a summary of the thesis and presents responses to the research questions. This chapter also discusses implications of this study for integrative critical theory as it relates to the study of racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidate participation in an initial teacher education program; for educational structures (i.e., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation) within the university and practice teaching contexts; and for future research. I conclude the thesis by arguing that if school districts and faculties of education are serious about their aims to diversify the teacher workforce and to promote the full social, economic, and political inclusion and participation of Canada's immigrants, then work needs to be done to advance the influence of inclusive multicultural ideology and discourse more broadly and consistently throughout educational contexts and the teaching profession.

## Terminology

**Teacher candidate.** In this thesis I refer to the eight racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates who volunteered to participate in this study as "the teacher candidates." The term "teacher candidate" is often applied to students in Canadian faculties of

education who are engaged in a program leading to a Bachelor of Education degree and qualification to work as a teacher. Because this study examines the experiences of a specific subset of teacher candidates and does not include the examination of comparison groups who were born in Canada and represent varied dynamics of difference and dominance (the omission of comparison groups is discussed as a limitation of the study in Chapter 9), I refer to the participants in this study generically as "the teacher candidates." An exception occurs in Chapters 7 and 8 where I present and discuss the data collected through interviews with initial teacher education program staff. These study participants were asked to focus their responses specifically on the experiences of internationally educated immigrant teacher candidates. In Chapters 7 and 8, where data from ITE instructors and student support staff are cited, I refer to this group of teacher candidates as immigrant teacher candidates (ITCs). I use the term "immigrant teacher candidate" descriptively and discursively. The teacher candidates in this study are all immigrants to Canada and they have all arrived in Canada from non-European source countries. Use of the term "immigrant" describes their status as newcomers, but it is also used to capture negative conceptions often applied to non-white Canadians:

> Both ethnic and immigrant have come to mean non-white groups and have, therefore, taken on racial connotations. Of course, all immigrants are not non-white, nor are all non-whites immigrants. Yet white immigrants merge quickly with the dominant group while non-white people who have been in the host country for generations are still referred to as immigrants. (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 57)

Other studies have used more friendly terms like "internationally educated teacher candidate" (e.g., Faez, 2007) but I am concerned that such naming by a dominant agent (an academic researcher in this case) masks the insider/outsider complexities of immigrant social experiences in Canada.

**Legitimate peripherality.** In their discussion of communities of practice, Lave, and Wenger (1991) describe "legitimate peripheral participation" (p. 29) as part of the process by which newcomers are introduced and inducted into a community. Their concept of legitimate peripherality suggests that

> there are multiple, varied, more- or less-engaged and –inclusive ways of being located in the fields of participation defined by a community. Peripheral participation is about being located in the social world. *Changing* locations and perspectives are part of actors' learning trajectories, developing identities, and forms of membership. (p. 36)

Teacher candidates participating in an initial teacher education program are engaged in a process of becoming fully qualified and included members of the teaching profession. As teacher candidates, their status in the profession is peripheral and their aim is to move toward the centre – to be recognized and accepted as full participants in the teaching community.

# Chapter Two: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

## Introduction

Many complex and interactional dynamics influence responses to difference in an initial teacher education program. This study examines challenges and supports experienced and observed by the research participants as responses to difference driven by ideological and discursive stances in the university and in school-based practice teaching contexts. In this chapter, I develop critical integrative theoretical and conceptual frameworks of organizational interaction that capture responses to difference expressed through a range of power relations that influence the participation of teacher candidates as peripheral members of the teaching profession.

First, I provide an overview of critical theories and pedagogies that have been developed to frame investigations of political, organizational, and social responses to difference. I concur with scholars who argue that the tendency of many popular critical theories to centralize one axis of difference (e.g., race, gender, class or sexual orientation) limits the capacity of these theories to capture the complexity of human experience (Ng, 2003) and I present integrative critical theory as the lens through which my thesis is constructed, analyzed and discussed.

Next, I describe the development of an integrative critical conceptual framework for this study that originated as a broad compilation of numerous variables, and was revised to serve as a more focused guide for data analysis and the discussion of my findings. The refined framework incorporates concepts of power (Cummins, 1996), critical organizational theory (Mills, Simmons & Mills, 2005) and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) in the university and practice teaching contexts where responses to difference are expressed and

experienced as challenges and supports that restrict or include teacher candidates as legitimate members of the teaching profession.

**Integrative Critical Theory**

Since World War II, research in the social sciences has been influenced by schools of critical thought that represent a "revolutionary shift" from research paradigms claiming the existence of universal truths discovered by way of a rational and objective scientific method. Founded primarily upon a paradigm of socially constructed, dynamic, situational, and subjective realities (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004), critical theories eschew dominant organizational concerns for efficiency and the manipulation of individuals for capitalist gain, and focus instead on the ways in which organizations, as sites of imbalanced power, influence socially negotiated knowledge, identity and agency (Mills et al., 2005).

While various critical approaches are applied in the social sciences, a mutual language and understanding of critical theory is elusive. As a relatively new theoretical domain, critical lenses are being developed in several related, yet different directions. Numerous iterations of critical theory have been constructed throughout recent decades (e.g., feminist, post-structural, Marxist, anti-racist, queer) but most have retained a common articulation of five sub-theories: (1) a theory of **knowledge** as socially and historically produced and determined as a consequence of power (Tierney, 1991b, p. 6); (2) a theory of **empowerment** that portrays humans as oppressed by false consciousness that limits their self-understanding and agency; (3) a **crisis** theory that describes structural conflict producing suffering on such a scale that it may lead to a breakdown of society; (4) a theory of **education** as a transformative activity that creates conditions for enlightenment, empowerment and liberation; and (5) a theory of **praxis** or transformative action to generate social change (Lincoln, 1991).

Initially captured in works developed at the Frankfurt School by Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber to critique capitalism (Foster, 1986), a critical approach to organizational analysis

> takes as its starting point a concern to address those aspects of organizational arrangements that have a negative impact on people, e.g., low self-esteem, discrimination, pay inequities, stress and anguish, etc. In contrast to mainstream organizational analysis that concerns itself with the efficient use of people for formal organizational ends, (e.g., effectiveness, profitability, organizational growth), a critical approach sets out to uncover ways in which organizational ends can be detrimental to people. (Mills et al., 2005, p. 13)

In striving to understand the experiences of individuals, critical theorists raise questions about the ways that power, class and culture are created and negotiated in social structures (Foster, 1986). Not content to merely understand social constructions of experience, "*critical theorists want to understand the world in order to change it*" (Tierney, 1991b, p. 6, emphasis in original); to find conditions of emancipation and realize the "full potential of democracy" (Foster, 1986, p. 87).

For critical theorists like Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997), "diversity and the appreciation of differences are inextricably tied to social justice and the ways that power and privilege construct difference unequally in our society" (p. 6). Many iterations of critical theory have been developed to explore the ways that social constructions of difference serve to privilege some while disadvantaging others. Discussion among critical theorists has recently focused on what aspect or aspects of socially constructed "difference" (e.g., race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation) is most consequential in terms of an individual's or group's engagement with dominant social structures (Trifonas, 2003a).

Critical theorists argue that "difference is produced through dominant cultural meanings, and it is also produced significantly in the relationship of self and other – in short, through the

social relations that constitute the lived and everyday experience of culture" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 123). Viewed through a lens of socio-political ideology, the experiences of people deemed "different" from and by dominant society are primarily influenced by hegemonic deficit conceptions of race, gender, class, culture, language, religion, ability, and sexual orientation (Dei & Calliste, 2000; McLaren, 1997; Ng, 2003; Trifonas, 2003b).

Numerous "difference" oriented critical theories and pedagogies have developed as theorists and researchers emphasize what they consider to be central axes of oppression. Critical feminist (e.g., Bannerji, 2000; Safarik, 2003), anti-racist (e.g., Dei, 1996; Dei & Calliste, 2000; Gillborn, 2008; Troyna, 1993), postcolonial (e.g., Asher, 2005; Tejeda, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003), Marxist (e.g., Cole, 2008; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2000), and queer (e.g., Morris, 2003; Pinar, 1998) theories and pedagogies have been intensely debated as proponents of one theory argue its merits, relevance and utility over others (e.g., Cole, 2008). While critical theorists acknowledge that complexities of class, race, gender, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, ability and other socially constructed differences influence an individual's engagement with society and organizations, most argue the significance of one axis of oppression. To Dei (1999), for example, race is the defining difference:

> Although I am mindful of the trajectories of difference and the interlocking nature of oppressions, my expressed political direction is to maintain the focus on race as one of the fundamental questions of equity. The intent is to guard against that easy slippage into a bland talk of social justice for "all" that fails to name race and difference in stark terms. As has been repeatedly argued, we cannot ignore or deny race. . . . Race is the medium or "modality" through which economic opportunity and social power are lived and experienced in North American society. (p. 80)

Although many critical theorists argue the centrality of a single axis of difference, some call for a more integrative approach that finds common connections among the oppressed while maintaining a critical focus on naming "isms" (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Freire, 1970; Ng,

2003). Calls for more integrative theories are based primarily on understandings of identities as complex, dynamic, relational and situational (Ng, 2003) such that an individual's most salient experience of "difference" may be race in one instance, gender in another, or language in yet another context. Furthermore, the critical sub-theory of praxis and generating change has prompted some researchers to argue that an integrative approach is needed to facilitate the creation of coalitions that will bring marginalized groups together to lend strength and influence to their calls for change (Adams et al., 1997; Bannerji, 2000). As Adams and her colleagues (1997) write, it is important to identify "both the particular characteristics of specific forms of oppression such as ableism or classism, as well as patterns that connect and mutually reinforce different oppressions in a system that is inclusive and pervasive" (p. 5).

It should be noted that while critical theorists regard "difference" as socially constructed through mechanisms of differentiated power, this understanding of difference is contested by those who see characteristics of race, gender, ability and class as "fixed and immutable categories" (Ng, 2003, p. 209) associated with real states of being absent of social influence in their construction. Critical theorists disagree with this stance. To critical theorists, the social impacts of race and so-called racial characteristics, for example, are not grounded by biological facts, but are the results of constructions reflecting a specific context and the interests of their constructors. As critical theorists Ghosh and Abdi (2004) write, "there are no races, only racists" (p. 55).

Considering differences through a lens of logical positivism as "variables" or "factors" has been prevalent in studies of higher education and has often yielded findings that provide insufficient understanding of human experiences (Tierney, 1991a, p. 4). Ng (2003) recommends researchers apply:

> a way of knowing that moves away from treating race, gender, class, and ability as *categories* designating different and separate domains of social life, to discovering how they are features that arise in human interactions. That is, they are *relational properties* located in time and space. We do not have to decide, a priori, which variable is more important. It will show that they are concrete social relations that are interwoven and discoverable in the everyday world of experience (p. 209)

My research is positioned within a critical integrative framework informed by critical anti-racism theory (Dei, 2000). Although critical anti-racism places social constructions of race at the centre of social injustice and inequity, this theoretical stance is more helpful as a basis for an integrative lens than its name might suggest. Critical anti-racism examines and deconstructs the dominance, privilege, power and identity of whiteness while maintaining that race, class, gender, language and other forms of social difference interact in complex inter-relatedness to power and powerlessness, privilege and oppression (Dei, 2000). While the integrative critical framework of my thesis research provides for the examination of white dominance and power, it does not presume to privilege whiteness or race as more significant to experiences of oppression or marginalization than other constructions of difference.

Dei and Calliste (2000) argue the need to examine educational policies and practices through the lens of a framework that focuses on "systems, structures and relations of domination, particularly the racist, classist and sexist constructions of reality that serve as dominant paradigms for viewing and interpreting lived and historical realities" (p. 12). To Dei and Calliste it is important to:

> examine how contemporary representations of race, class, gender and sexual differences connect to the broader power politics of authority, morality, knowledge and speech that denies people (particularly minoritized groups) their agency as resisting and creating subjects. (p. 12)

Within an integrative critical framework, the ways that such organizational structures in education as policies, programs, curriculum, language of instruction and evaluation (Cummins,

1996) have “served the material, political and ideological interests of the state and the capitalist social formation” (Dei, 2000, p. 34) without consideration for equity are exposed through an examination of the ways that organizations “respond to the challenge of diversity and difference; understood as the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, language, culture, and religion” (Dei, 2000, p.34).

Tollefson (1991) argues that inequality is perpetuated by undemocratic structures in which “those who adopt policies are not accountable to those who are affected by them” (p. 209). Indeed, undemocratic structures silence minoritized groups, exclude them from policy- and decision-making systems, and thus differentiate individuals as “insiders” and “outsiders” (Tollefson, 1991). As outsiders, the pressure for minoritized groups to conform to dominate cultural, linguistic, and religious ideologies becomes normative and legitimate. Through an integrative critical lens, legitimization of dominant ideologies as a form of unjust disciplinary power that exploits, disadvantages, and marginalizes on the basis of social difference is exposed. It is through this lens that I examine the ways that relations of power ranging from hegemonic to collaborative are expressed through responses to difference experienced by the teacher candidates participating in this study.

**Integrative Critical Conceptual Framework**

When I first developed a conceptual framework for this study, I built a model of systemic, institutional, and individual variables that I intended to analyze through an integrative critical lens to consider challenges and supports experienced by the teacher candidates. My original conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) reflected research that identified what I categorized as systemic factors (e.g., policies related to access to educational opportunities, funding for higher education, ideologies of merit, and responses to diversity), institutional factors (e.g.,

admissions policies, support for students, and recruitment to increase the diversity of students, faculty and staff), and individual factors (e.g., persistence, income, family history, language proficiency, and academic skills) significant to the experiences of "non-traditional" students in higher education (e.g., Bird, 1997; Bowl, 2001, 2003; CMEC, 1999; Reay, Ball, & David, 2002; Redovich, 2002; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Zamel, 1995). Dynamics of race, class, gender, and language were considered in my initial framework as interactional variables across all three domains.

My original conceptual framework provided for a broad investigation of teacher candidate experiences but I came to realize that to analyze the data in relation to that framework's numerous variables across three contextual domains would yield a report that was largely descriptive and lacking a clear focus on the most significant dynamics influencing the teacher candidates in this study. When I started to hear and analyze the responses of the research participants I realized that my initial framework inadequately anticipated the significance of responses to difference as expressions of power relations. To more effectively frame and understand the data from this study, I reviewed literature examining relations of power (e.g., Cummins, 1996; Tierney, 1991; Trifonas, 2003), critical organizational theory (e.g., Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Mills et al., 2005), and regimes of competence in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). These areas of research provided conceptual clarity that I incorporated into a more concise framework articulated textually in Figure 2.2 and as a visual model in Figure 2.3.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I develop the revised integrative critical conceptual framework that guides my analysis and discussion of the responses to difference experienced by the teacher candidates. The central concepts comprising the integrative framework are related to ideology and discourse generated and expressed through relations of

power within regimes of competence. The challenges and supports experienced by the teacher candidates in the university and school-based practice teaching contexts are considered in my revised conceptual framework to reflect responses to difference enacted within regimes of competence that determine the legitimacy of teacher candidates as peripheral members of the teaching profession. Although presented and discussed linearly, the concepts are inter-related, integrative and dynamic.

**Original Conceptual Framework for the Study of Teacher Candidates Participating in an Initial Teacher Education Program**

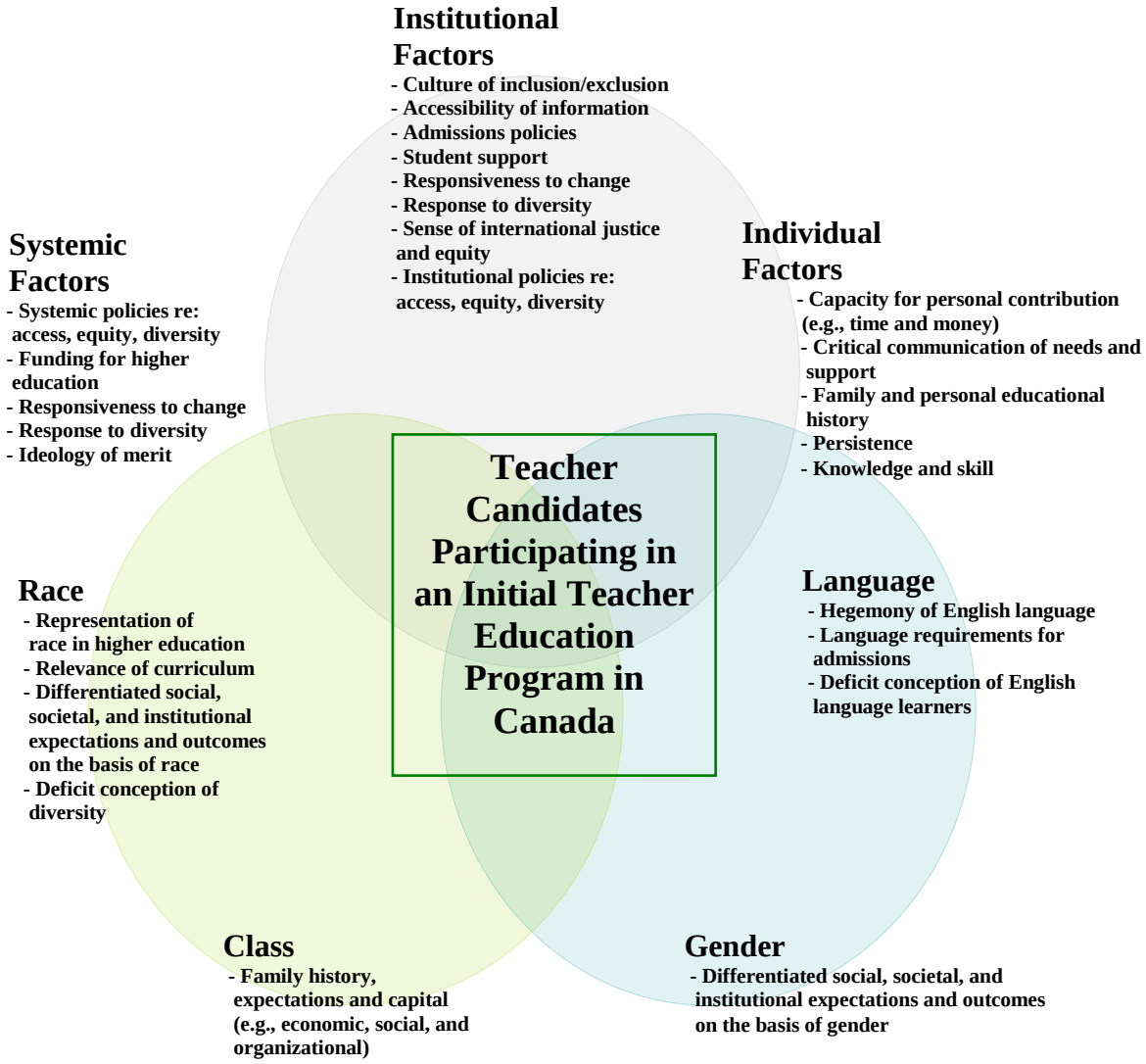


**Figure 2.1 Original Conceptual Framework for the Study of Teacher Candidates Participating in an Initial Teacher Education Program**

**Statement of Integrative Critical Conceptual Framework to Examine Responses to Difference in Initial Teacher Education**

**Responses to Difference**

in initial teacher education are expressed through challenging or supportive

**Educational Structures and Role Definitions**
constructed and enacted within

**Regimes of Competence**
**in University and Practice Teaching Contexts**

that are influenced by

**Ideology and Discourse**

generated through hegemonic to collaborative

**Relations of Power**

**Figure 2.2 Statement of Integrative Critical Conceptual Framework to Examine Responses to Difference in Initial Teacher Education**

**Visual Model of Integrative Critical Conceptual Framework to Examine Responses to Difference in Initial Teacher Education**

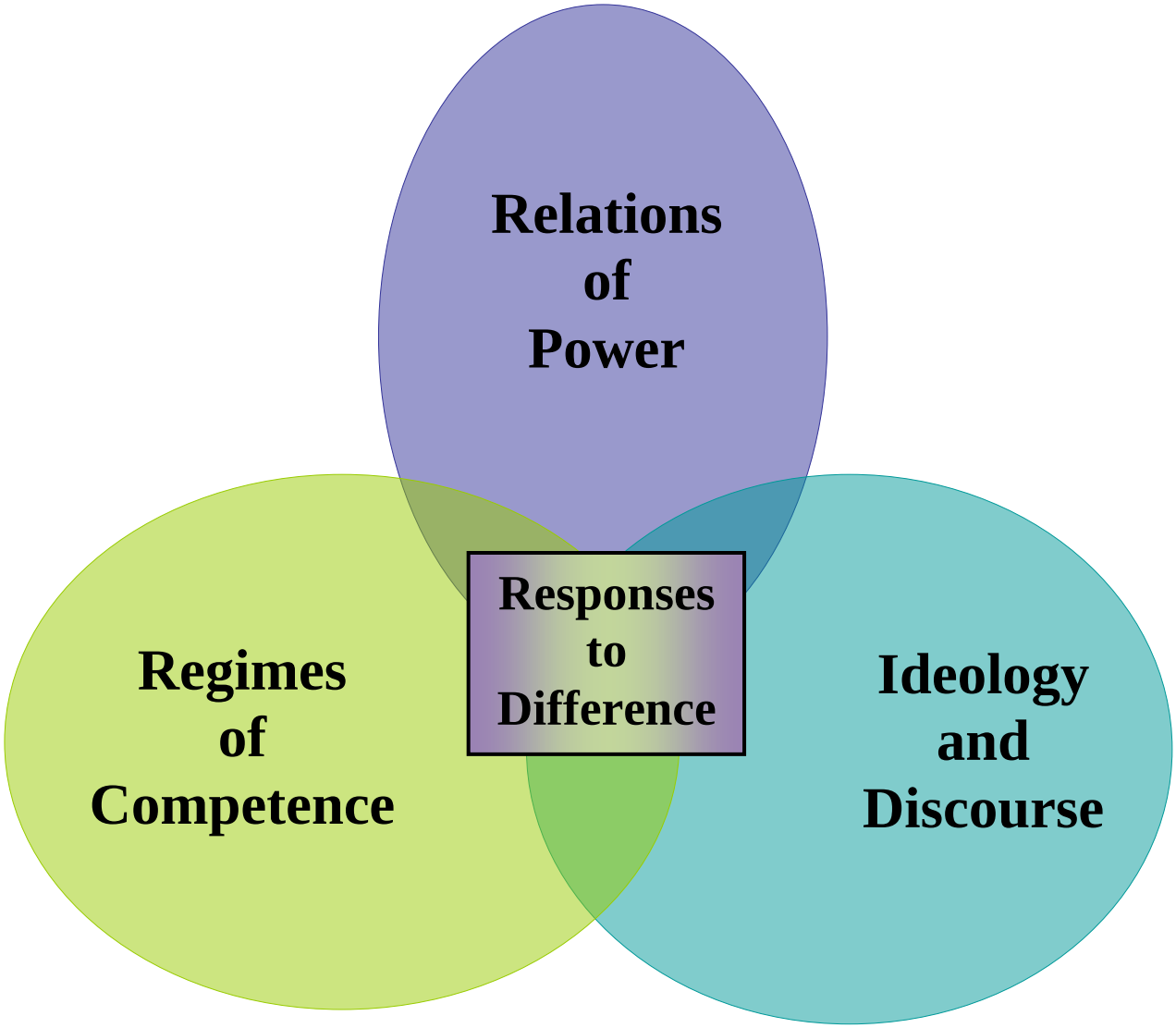


**Figure 2.3 Visual Model of Integrative Critical Conceptual Framework to Examine Responses to Difference in Initial Teacher Education**

**Relations of power.**

> There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes "the practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (Shaull, 1970, p. 34)

Cummins (2003) provides a model of coercive to collaborative macro- and micro-relations of power in education systems and describes power as influencing all social constructions. In coercive relations of power, power is exercised by a dominant group to the detriment of a subordinated group and operates according to a zero-sum logic that assumes a fixed quantity of power. Presuming the availability of a fixed quantity of power prompts a sense that more power wielded by one group leaves less power for others. In sharp contrast to zero-sum logic, collaborative relations of power assume that power is generative and can be created through collaborations that empower individuals and affirm their identities in ways that promote greater efficacy required to change social situations. As Cummins (2003) writes, "power is created with others rather than being imposed on or exercised over others" (p. 52). This understanding of collaborative power is shared by Ghosh and Abdi (2004) who describe power as "power by consensus; that is, power *with*, rather than power *by force*, or power *over* people" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 77).

While collaborative relations of power create promising conditions for inclusive responses to difference, more often than not, power is negotiated in a way that enables those who are powerful to oppress those who are not (Dei, 1996). Within a critical theoretical framework, power is interpreted

> not as a weapon that the powerful wield, but as a process of enablement in which the voiceless and oppressed are empowered to act on their own behalf. When individuals have become empowered, the possibility then exists for them to challenge those

> situations and individuals that oppress them. *Empowerment concerns the liberation of individuals, so that they are capable of understanding their relationship to the world and complex organizations in which they reside*. (Tierney, 1991a, p. 7, italics in original)

Empowerment figures prominently in critical inquiries. To Cummins (2003), empowerment can be "defined as the collaborative creation of power" (p. 52). Giroux adds another dimension describing empowerment as "the ability to think and act critically" (1992, p. 11). Indeed, critical theorists agree that empowerment is not something that can be given from one group or individual to another. Empowerment is a complex process of self-understanding through critical thought that enables individuals to take action that re-forms and re-shapes their own lives and the lives of others (Tierney, 1991a). Building collaborative relations of power can create conditions for empowerment but, as Tierney (1991a) writes, "individuals can struggle to generate the conditions for empowerment, but ultimately, those who are dispossessed and voiceless take control of their own lives, empowerment is not something that is rendered unto them" (Tierney, 1991a, p. 8). To Cummins (2003), micro-interactions

> either reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations of power. When they reinforce coercive relations of power they contribute to the disempowerment of culturally diverse students and communities. When they promote collaborative relations of power, the micro-interactions enable educators, students, and communities to challenge the operation of coercive power structures. (p. 53)

The critical integrative conceptual framework guiding this study provides for relations of power ranging from hegemonic to collaborative. I use the term "hegemonic" to convey Gramsci's notion that power is maintained not only through coercion but also through consensus whereby the dominant group so successfully establishes a "particular way of seeing social reality" that "its view is accepted as common sense" (Adams et al., 1997, p. 11). As Adams and her colleagues write:

> Hegemony helps us understand power as relational and dynamic, something that circulates within a web or relationships in which we all participate, rather than as something imposed from top down (Foucault, 1980). Power consists not simply in a person or group in power unilaterally imposing its will on another person or group, but rather an ongoing system that is mediated by well-intentioned people acting as agents of oppression, usually unconsciously, by simply going about their daily lives (Young, 1990). (p. 11)

Hegemonic relations of power pathologize differences in ways that reinforce existing hierarchies and privileges. In education, for example, language use in schooling, and discourses that "engender a very real belief in the normative/neutral nature of [a] standard language," discourage dissenting arguments that associate proficiency in a standard language with privilege (Dei et al., 2000, p. 100). In contrast, collaborative relations of power in educational contexts foster empowerment by valuing diverse histories, languages, and perspectives (Cummins, 2003; Dei, 1996; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004).

**Ideology and discourse.** As a sociological concept, ideology originated with the work of Karl Marx and "the literature on ideology is extraordinarily dense" (Marshall, 1998, p. 298). A simplified definition of ideology employed by critical researchers describes ideologies as underlying values, ideas and beliefs that frame "the practical thinking and action of agents" (Ball, 1998, p. 127). All organizations and systems are guided by ideologies, "whether or not individuals are aware of them" (Tierney, 1991a, p. 9). In the integrative critical framework applied in my research, ideology is understood to both frame and engender relations of power.

Discourses are "articulations of ideologies and of power equated to knowledge" (Matheson & Matheson, 2000, p. 2). Introduced theoretically and conceptually in the work of Michel Foucault (1926–1984), discourses "explain ways of thinking about the world that are so deeply embedded in practice that we are unconscious of their existence and yet they inform our internalized expectations, values and behavior" (Matheson & Matheson, 2000, p. 2).

Simply put, discourses are instruments of truth understood not as irrefutable scientific fact but as socially "produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint" (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Truth conceived and legitimized by what Foucault refers to as regimes of truth, and normalized through dominant discourse induces effects of power in society. As Foucault (1980) writes,

> Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (p. 131)

In short, "regimes of truth operate to legitimate what can be said, who has the authority to speak, and what is sanctioned as true" (Adams et al., 1997, p. 11).

With reference to Gramsci (1971), Ng (2003) describes dominant discourses as becoming so strongly held by a mass of population that they become hegemonic; normalized as "common sense" to the extent that even when faced with evidence of "unintentional and unconscious acts that result in the silencing, exclusion, subordination, and exploitation of groups of people" the experiences of these people are considered merely as commentary on "the way things are" (p. 213).

The dominant ideologies influencing the inclusion of immigrant teacher candidates as valued members of the teacher workforce are those that frame powerful discourses of citizenship (Bannerji, 2000; Ragnersdottir, 2010), schooling (Bastian, Fruchter, Gittell, Greer, & Haskins, 1993), and the teaching profession (Bascia & Thiessen, 2000), and legitimize conceptions of "real Canadians", "real teaching", and "real teachers" (Bascia & Jacka, 2001; Harper, 1997; Hemmings & Metz, 1992). These discourses exert significant influence over interpersonal

interactions and organizational structures that challenge or support the participation of teacher candidates as prospective members of the teaching profession (Cho, 2010; Ragnersdottir, 2010).

In education, assimilationist ideologies and discourses that repress or deny cultural, racial, and linguistic differences and coerce immigrants to conform to "norms" conceived by the dominant cultural have historically exerted the most influence over schooling in Canada (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004). Through hegemonic power relations, immigrants face significant pressure to assimilate into Anglo-Canadian culture and suppress the identities, languages, and ways of knowing that they developed prior to their migration to Canada (Cho, 2010). An assimilationist ideology advances the notion that members of non-dominant cultural groups should accept the predominantly Euro-Christian values and activities of the dominant group and set aside their heritage traditions and languages. In Canada, First Nations people were the first group to experience the suppression of their heritage religions and languages. Fueled by an assimilationist ideology, Aboriginal children were taken from their families to be immersed in European religions, languages and customs and this "suppression of cultural and linguistic difference intensified with 19$^{th}$-century British colonialism and its assumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority" (Harper, 1997, p. 193).

Large numbers of immigrant groups have settled in Canada from the mid-1800s until today. Beginning with the wave of Irish immigrants in the 1850s, each immigrant group has been subjected to a system of social ranking of inferior status relative to the Northern European and British settlers that came before them (Harper, 1997). As Harper notes, "[i]n broad terms, Canadian unity, prosperity, and harmony – indeed Canadian identity – was inextricably linked with conformity to Anglo-Saxon culture and Western ideals" (p. 194). For racial minority immigrants, however, assimilation proves difficult and is rarely achieved to a level that fosters their acceptance among white Canadians. As Bannerji (2000) observes,

> The irony [of the pressure to assimilate] compounds when one discovers that all white people, no matter when they immigrate to Canada or as carriers of which European ethnicity, become invisible and hold a dual membership in Canada, while others remain immigrants generations later. (p. 112)

To Bannerji, what it means to be a Canadian is at the heart of discriminatory social structures and employment practices that disadvantage immigrants and others who are perceived as "non-Canadians." In her discussion of difference and diversity in Ontario schools, Harper (1997) argues that throughout the history of schooling in Ontario, values and beliefs related to difference "often coalesce around a notion of what constitutes Canadian identity" (p. 203).

This emphasis on national identity and its impact on the inclusion of minoritized immigrants have also been found outside of Canada. In Iceland, for example, Ragnersdottir (2010) discovered that in many school contexts, the legitimacy of immigrant and foreign teacher candidates was determined on the basis of their knowledge of Icelandic culture and language. Considering the behaviour of students and teachers toward foreign teacher candidates, a student teacher participating in Ragnersdottir's study formed an opinion that teachers are evaluated with respect to their "foreignness" and that prospective teachers from some source countries are considered more foreign than others: "A Swedish person is 50% foreigner, a Thai person is 200%, a Spanish person is 150%" (p. 14). Additionally, Ragnersdottir reported that guidelines for hiring new teachers in Iceland suggest that school administrators consider the importance of "retaining Icelandic cultural heritage and Icelandic language" in their hiring practices (p. 25).

In Canada, assimilationist aims of education have been considered by some, notably John Porter, to be the solution to the challenges presented by social diversity (May, 1994). The ideology of assimilation in education is based, in part, on the belief that the cultural and linguistic differences of minority children are responsible for their educational underachievement relative to children of the dominant culture (May, 1994). In keeping with the functionalist

paradigm that continues to dominate systems of education (Foster, 1986), assimilationists argue that the purpose of education is to prepare students as instruments of "'the nation' – which is seen as a unitary whole, politically and culturally indivisible –" (May, 1994, p. 33). Under this premise, minority groups are "absorbed" into the culture of the dominant group in order that they can contribute to the cohesive functioning of society. The emphasis of assimilation is on

> individualistic achievement in the context of a new nation with universalistic standards of judgment. …it [means] forgetting ancestry and attempting to establish a society where ethnic origin [does] not matter. (Porter, 1975, as cited in May, 1994, p. 33)

To assimilationists, the preservation of minority languages is considered a threat to a stable society. As such, "the teaching of English [is] emphasized, and children [are] encouraged to and, in some cases, coerced into leaving their own culture(s) and language(s) 'at the school gate'" (May, 1994, p. 32).

As the following quote and its source indicate, an assimilationist ideology continues to exert influence over notions of "real Canadians" and the ways in which "real Canadians" respond to immigrants:

> Why do we continue to delude ourselves that we are better off with a virtual "open door" policy on immigration? Do we not recognize that in addition to creating a modern "Trojan Horse" situation, these quasi-Canadians cause Canada additional economic and environmental distress? Do they not require public support funds? Do they not take Canadian jobs? Do they not cause increased use of scarce agricultural land for new dwellings? Do they not buy cars which add to road congestion and increase environmental pollution? Do they not cause the U.S., our good neighbour and major trading partner, concern about our sieve-like immigration policies and who are now tightening up a formerly open border? Do they not reduce each Canadian citizen's share of this country's wealth? Do they not congregate in ghetto-like enclaves to harbour their own particular ethnic complaints, while they make demands against the Canadian establishment? (Africentric schools, for example). (Gordon Gilchrist, School Board Trustee in a letter to the editor of the Port Hope Evening Guide, February 13, 2008)

That an elected school official should write such a letter to the editor of a local paper leaves no doubt that many Canadians continue to believe that assimilation is essential to social stability while diversity threatens the very essence of what it means to be "Canadian." For example, Rose Chu, a minority immigrant teacher in Canada (Bascia, 1996b), "believes her two cultures are best kept separate and that survival and achievement, in school and society, are based on not drawing attention to differences" (p. 7).

Multiculturalism is an ideology that on the surface counters the hegemonic ideals of assimilation. By emphasizing pride in minority cultures and by promoting intercultural understanding (Ogbu, 1992), multiculturalism as an ideology celebrates Canada as a pluralistic society. A critical analysis of multiculturalism, however, reveals coercive underpinnings that sustain the status quo of white Euro-Christian dominance while minoritized and racialized others are celebrated for their diversity on a superficial level and restricted from meaningful political or economic influence (Bannerji, 2000; Dei, 1996; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Troyna, 1993).

Multiculturalism gained favour in the 1960s when minority groups; Black Americans in particular, began to protest differentiated schooling and cultural deprivation (Ogbu, 1992). What began as a plea for multicultural equality developed into discourses of pride in minority cultures and celebration of diversity. In Canada, multiculturalism became national policy in 1971 and in 1988 was passed into law as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act: An Act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). Although multiculturalism might appear to be a positive alternative to assimilationism, Troyna (1993), Bannerji (2000) and other scholars express concern about the motivation driving such a systemic endorsement of multiculturalism. Troyna, for example, characterizes multiculturalism as an instrument deployed in response to assertive minority voices during times of unrest. To Troyna, multiculturalism aims to "contain militancy, defuse social conflict, maintain social

order, and thus ensure the social conditions necessary for the accumulation of capital" (Rizvi, 1993, p.5).

Troyna (1993) argues that current multicultural practices are unsatisfactory in meeting the needs of diverse cultures. To Troyna, multiculturalism's superficial emphasis on "saris, samosas and steel bands" masks real disadvantages and systemic inequalities in systems of education. To effect actual change and eliminate inequities, measures are required that "attempt to provide minorities with power and improve their life chances" (Rizvi, 1993, p.5). Similarly, May (1994) contends that multicultural emphasis on lifestyles, heritages and cultural differences does little to address the inequality of educational opportunity and life-chances experienced by minority learners. In Canada, Bedard (2000) argues that the Canadian multicultural discourse enables the dominant culture to "mask discomforting racist practices and policies, allowing most Canadians the illusion that we live in a relatively non-racist country" (p. 43). The multicultural discourse in Canada often serves to silence "the voices of those less desirable people or sanitize them to suit the political climate of the time" (Bedard, 2000, p. 48).

In spite of her critique of multiculturalism as an instrument of the state that centres white, Euro-Christian Canadians and objectifies non-white others as "multicultural" through a prolific process of naming that forever excludes others from being recognized as Canadians and pits "Canadian culture" against "multicultures", Bannerji (2000) recognizes that its meaning is contextual:

> Pitfalls of political consciousness associated with multiculturalism should not prevent us from realizing that its meaning is context specific. Meaning and application of multiculturalism vary depending on who initiates it, on what theoretical and practical grounds, and why. (p. 125)

Recently, anti-racism has been proposed as a more empowering counter-hegemonic pedagogical and political practice that rejects assimilationist and multiculturalist ideologies.

Founded on principles of equity, anti-racism aims to liberate the voices and empower the agency of those who are marginalized and objectified by coercive, hegemonic and functionalist structures, policies and practices in education (Dei, 2000). Even more recently, ideologies of integrative inclusion or integration representing a "radical departure in ideology" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 111) have been introduced that articulate a response to difference that aims for the collaborative creation of a "third space" that "involves all groups in a common effort to build society" (Ghish & Abdi, 2004, p. 111). Framed within an ideology of integration "marked by interdependence, reciprocity, and mutual enrichment," education is empowering and contributes to the creation of a third space; "a dynamic amalgam evolving out of the common experiences of dominant and minority cultures. [The third space] is represented by the word *and.* Integration involves mediation" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, pp. 112-113, emphasis in original).

The same critique and typological discussion of the ways that difference is taken up in educational settings can also be applied to conceptions of nationhood and citizenship. Canada presents a proud multicultural identity on the international stage but several critical theorists argue that the Canadian multicultural identity is a facade constructed of superficial celebrations of difference that mask social inequities, preserve the status of dominant white Anglo-Canadians, coerce immigrants to conform to "norms" established by this dominant group, and establish a social context wherein immigrants and other non-white and non-Anglo Canadian citizens struggle to be recognized as legitimate and fully included Canadians (Bannerji, 2000; Bascia, 1996a, 1996b; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Harper, 1997). Such critical analyses of Canada's multicultural identity bring to light the ways in which dominant Anglo-white Canadians influence citizenship identities through discursive determinations of who qualifies to be regarded as a "real Canadian" (Bannerji, 2000). As Bascia (1996) discovered in her study of immigrant

teachers, ideological constructions of nationhood and citizenship significantly influence the experiences of teachers and the opportunities that are afforded to them.

Conceptualized within the integrative critical framework of my study, hegemonic to collaborative relations of power are reflected in, and reinforced by, ideology and discourse. Assimilationist ideology advances discourses that reflect and sustain hegemonic relations of power. Discourses related to multiculturalism, anti-racism, and inclusion/integration foster more collaborative relations of power. These discourses in turn influence regimes of competence that construct and enact responses to difference that teacher candidates experience as challenging or supportive.

**Regimes of competence.** In their "communities of practice" model, Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), describe learning as a socially situated and interactional process. What the communities of practice model contributes to this study's integrative critical framework is an articulation of tensions within communities that influence perceptions and experiences of members as full participants. A fundamental concept of Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning is the introduction and induction of newcomers to communities of practice through a process they describe as "legimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). By engaging with "old-timers," wider ranges of the community's activities, organizational resources, and increased opportunities for participation, newer members move from peripheral participation toward full participation in the community of practice.

Wenger (1998) describes the process of moving toward full participation as one that entails engagement with regimes of competence. To Wenger, "a community of practice acts as a locally negotiated regime of competence" whereby "a community establishes what it is to be a

competent participant, an outsider, or somewhere in between" (p. 137). Three dimensions frame considerations of competent membership:

1) *Mutuality of engagement* – the ability to engage with other members and respond in kind to their actions, and thus the ability to establish relationships in which this mutuality is the basis for an identity of participation

2) *Accountability to the enterprise* – the ability to understand the enterprise of a community of practice deeply enough to take some responsibility for it and contribute to its pursuit and to its ongoing negotiation by the community

3) *Negotiability of the repertoire* – the ability to make use of the repertoire of the practice to engage in it. This requires enough participation (personal or vicarious) in the history of a practice to recognize it in the elements of its repertoire. Then it requires the ability – both the capability and the legitimacy – to make this history newly meaningful. (Wenger, 1998, p. 137)

In order to begin an authentic and empowering process of legitimate peripheral participation, "newcomers must be granted enough legitimacy to be treated as potential members" (Wenger, 1998, p. 101). Given current social responses to difference, diversity, and newcomers, Wenger (1998) states that it's likely that initial entrants to communities of practice will be evaluated through a deficit orientation:

> Granting the newcomers legitimacy is important because they are likely to come short of what the community regards as competent engagement. Only with enough legitimacy can all their inevitable stumblings and violations become opportunities for learning rather than cause for dismissal, neglect, or exclusion. (p. 101)

Cummins (1996) describes micro-interactions between educators, students and communities as influenced by educator role definitions and educational structures. These micro-interactions are "never neutral; in varying degrees, they either reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations of power" (p. 18). In this study, teacher candidates engage directly with instructors, student support staff, and mentor teachers who, in defining and performing their roles, act as localized regimes of competence. Additionally, teacher candidates

are influenced by educational structures (e.g., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and assessment) that are developed and enacted within regimes of competence. The role definitions and educational structures that challenge or support teacher candidates reflect responses to difference and the degree to which regimes of competence acknowledge the legitimacy of teacher candidates as peripheral members of the teaching profession.

***Role definitions.*** "Role definitions refer to the mindset of expectations, assumptions, and goals that educators bring to the task of educating culturally diverse students" (Cummins, 1996, p. 18). Much research has identified significant correlation between teacher expectations and student experiences and outcomes in schools (McKown & Weinstein, 2008; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). To Bascia (1996b), the ways that teachers characterize "their roles as teachers are profoundly the products of ongoing negotiations with colleagues and administrators, students and parents" (p. 9). Interrelatedly, the ways that educator roles are defined shape their interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, parents, community members, and society at large.

Teacher expectations have a significant impact on learner outcomes as they influence the ways that teachers approach their work with students (Werner, 1991). Beliefs that certain students do not succeed academically because they are lazy, unmotivated, lacking parental involvement, or are playing out a level of achievement expected of students with their socio-economic or ethnic background, may be used by some teachers to justify the level of support they provide (Anyon, 1981; Ramsay, 1983). An educator role that is defined through a deficit perspective of students shifts responsibility for academic success "from the teacher's actions to the students' perceived shortcomings" (Werner, 1991, p. 109). To Cummins, role definitions that reject deficit notions of immigrant children will "focus on empowerment, understood as the

collaborative creation of power, [and will start] by acknowledging the cultural, linguistic, imaginative, and intellectual resources that children bring to school" (p. 57).

In initial teacher education programs, teacher candidates engage with peers, program staff, and mentor teachers who enact varied role definitions in ways that influence their participation as peripheral members of the teaching profession. Described by some researchers as gate-keeping, some individuals play out a responsibility to preserve dominant culture and language in their initial teacher education roles (e.g., Beynon, Ilieva, & Dichupa, 2004; Cho, 2010; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006; Ragnersdottir, 2010; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003). For example, in their study of foreign trained teachers engaged in mentored classroom experiences for the purpose of gaining teaching qualifications in Ontario, Mawhinney and Xu (1997) found that some mentor teachers enacted a deficit response to the linguistic and cultural differences of foreign trained teachers. By playing a gate-keeping role, these mentor teachers deemed some foreign trained teachers unsuitable for teaching in Canada, and challenged their access to the teaching profession. As one such mentor teacher commented, "No one is going to hire her. The whole package of being a teacher is missing" (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997, p. 637). The foreign trained teacher referred to in this statement was subsequently transferred to another placement "where she was much happier and more successful" (p. 637). That this teacher candidate was supported by a different mentor teacher suggests that not all mentor teachers define their role through a gate-keeping lens. Indeed, research has found instances where mentor teachers applied a more collaborative stance in their role and teacher candidates in these contexts felt that they were engaged in a mutually respectful learning relationship (Myles et al., 2006; Ragnersdottir, 2010). In a recent pan-Canadian survey that yielded responses from more than 1,800 teacher candidates representing faculties of education

across the country, more than 80% rated the supervision provided by mentor teachers as good or excellent (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008).

Many researchers examining practice teaching experiences have argued that the relationship between the student teacher and the mentor teacher is vital (Cabello, Eckmier, & Baghieri, 1995; Myles et al., 2006). With particular reference to “foreign-trained” teachers participating in Ontario certification bridging programs, Myles and his colleagues (2006) identified problematic power dynamics between mentor teachers and internationally qualified teachers and they argue the need for intercultural training for teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and members of the broader school community. They further argue that “schools should in fact become more inclusive and accepting of the experiences and identities of their minority teacher candidates” (p. 244).

Cummins’ (1996) conceptualization of role definitions emphasizes dispositions of teachers and does not implicate student role definitions as significant to the learning process. Research often emphasizes the ways that teacher expectations influence student outcomes (e.g., Banks et al., 2005; Conner, 2010), but research examining student enrolment, attrition, engagement and retention in higher education also provides insight into the ways that student expectations and role definitions influence their educational outcomes (e.g., Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews, & Nordstrom, 2009; Fisher & Miller, 2008; Miller & Herreid, 2009; Moore, Moore, & McDonald, 2008). For example, in their study of more than two hundred and seventy students enrolled in a business course at a southern United States university, Moore and her colleagues (2008) found that students ranked their top five expectations as follows: first, learn the material; second, be challenged and work hard; third, engage with a knowledgeable and credible professor; fourth, find the classes interesting; and fifth, get a good grade.

The framework for this study assumes that students (teacher candidates in this case) are active agents who play a role in their interpersonal interactions. They develop role definitions as students in the university setting and as teachers in practice teaching contexts that are consequential to their engagement, persistence, and success in the program.

***Educational structures.*** "Educational structures refer to the organization of schooling in a broad sense that includes policies, programs, curriculum, and assessment" (Cummins, 1996, p. 18). Cummins describes educational structures as reflections of educational goals "defined primarily by the dominant group in the society" (p. 18). The assumption underlying the Cummins model, and the integrative critical conceptual model developed in this chapter, is that educational structures, while at times appearing fixed and impenetrable, are socially constructed, open to public scrutiny, and should not be seen as fixed and impenetrable in spite of evidence that structural change requires significant and persistent effort over time (Mills et al., 2005).

Educational structures that influence the participation of learners in a range of educational contexts include policies and practices related to access, equity and diversity (Ball, 1998; Geis et al., 2000; Mills et al., 2005; Pijl & Frissen, 2009; Ryan, 2006; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Trow, 1973), curriculum (Fordham, Fox, & Muzaale, 1998; Payne, 1991; Rezai-Rashti, 1995; Werner, 1991), pedagogy (Beynon et al., 2004; Freire, 1970; Trifonas, 2003b), programs (Faez, 2010; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Stephen, 2000), language of instruction (Cummins, 2003; May, 1994), and evaluation (Faez, 2006; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Ragnersdottir, 2010).

*Policies.* With regard to policies aiming to address concerns for access, equity and diversity in higher education, emphasis since the 1960s and 1970s has been on financial aid for students, geographical constraints, flexibility through part-time study, and admission

requirements (Geis et al., 2000). These efforts have resulted in increased admissions among traditionally underrepresented groups but high dropout rates and student dissatisfaction have prompted recent demands to equate outcomes in conjunction with policies to expand opportunity for participation (Hagedorn, Perrakis, & Maxwell, 2002; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). As Geis and his colleagues (2000) argue, however, meeting the varied needs of heterogeneous student populations poses significant challenges to universities that have historically constructed policies and programs that are founded on meritocratic assumptions that all students should be treated the same.

Traditional theories of policy development and analysis generally consider policies as rational solutions to managerial or social problems. Emerging most intensively as a formal field of study in the 1960s, the concept of policy sciences originated to support governments in the development of welfare economics and to solve wartime problems of resource allocation (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). Operating under the assumption that problems can be identified and defined based on value-neutral facts, the primary aim of traditional policy developers is to create policies that will address problems in the most expedient and cost-effective manner (for example, see Lasswell, 1951).

Since the 1980s, critical post-structuralist policy thinkers have argued that such simplistic approaches to policy are based on false assumptions of value-neutrality in the identification and resolution of social problems and neglect to consider complex contextual factors that influence policy processes (Prunty, 1985). To these critical theorists, traditional policy processes yield insufficient influence on organizations aiming to generate social change.

Often guided by post-structuralist, feminist and anti-racist paradigms, critical policy theorists emphasize complexities of policy processes by drawing attention to the ways that numerous contextual factors both inside and outside organizations influence policy intentions

and outcomes (Prunty, 1985). Additionally, for critical policy analysts, policy processes are value-laden and must take into consideration issues of power and question "whose interests are being served?" (Ball, 1998, p.128). Ball's (1998) description of most policies as "ramshackle, compromise, hit and miss affairs, that are reworked, tinkered with, nuanced and inflected through complex processes of influence, text production, dissemination and, ultimately, re-creation in contexts of practice" (p. 128) effectively captures the complexity of policy processes and the continuous tension of power influence, negotiation and social construction recognized by critical theorists and discounted by traditional policy makers. To critical post-structuralist theorists policies are

> (a) crucial in their physical and graphic form as well as in their textual content; (b) multidimensional, with many stakeholders; (c) value laden; (d) intricately tied to other policies and institutions; (e) never straightforward in implementation; and (f) rife with intended and unintended consequences (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p.153).

Kenway (1990) (in Taylor et al., 1997), for example, argues that policy texts are best analyzed in terms of 'why', 'what', and 'how': 'Why was the policy developed? What assumptions form the basis of the policy? How is the policy to be enacted? How were competing interests negotiated?' Taylor et al. (1997) further argue the need to question the timing of the policy: 'Why now?' and to ask 'What are the consequences of the policy?'

Critical analysis of policy texts calls for an examination of underlying assumptions and a discursive look at the ways in which policy statements are framed. For example, when considering equity policies, does the policy reflect concern for equitable outcomes in addition to more common and less transformational policy discourses related to access and participation? Does the policy text represent adequate resolution of competing interests and perspectives? Taylor et al. (1997) describe policy texts as "policy settlement, that is, policy attempting to suture together and over matters of difference between the participating and competing interests

in the processes of policy text production" (p. 50). Because policy texts are often the product of negotiation and efforts to reconcile and represent competing values and interests, they are often crafted in ways that are ambiguous and open to wide interpretation in application.

Thompson (1997), for example, in examining institutional mission statements related to equitable access and inclusion found that "policy does not make practice" (p. 110) when admissions criteria and the selection process are considered. Thompson describes a pattern among UK universities of mission statements recently revised to articulate and emphasize institutional commitment to equity and inclusiveness while admissions practices continue to be based on the traditional ideology of academic merit. Indeed, with particular reference to admissions criteria for internationally-educated students, recognition of diverse educational experiences and prior learning continues to challenge inclusion in higher education (Kintzer, 1997; Mann, 1997; Rae, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2001).

In Canada, admissions requirements for initial teacher education programs are established by faculties of education within the regulations established by provincial governments (Ontario College of Teachers, 2006a). While prerequisites and entrance requirements differ at provincial and faculty levels, standard requirements include a grade average acceptable to the faculty "ranging from below 65% to over 90% depending upon the competition for places within the programs" (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 12) and demonstrated English proficiency (French proficiency in Quebec). There are two common initial teacher education pathways in Canada: (1) a concurrent program that candidates can enter directly upon graduation from secondary school, or within the early years of their undergraduate degree program; and, (2) a consecutive program that candidates can begin at any point following the completion of an undergraduate degree. In addition to academic and language proficiency requirements, many initial teacher education

programs also consider related experiences and "disposition toward teaching" (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 12) in the admissions process.

Teacher education programs across Canada have expressed commitments to increasing the participation of under-represented groups in teaching (e.g., Aboriginal groups, minoritized groups, people with disabilities). Strategies including outreach programs, modified admissions measures to minimize prior academic performance and emphasize experiential knowledge as selection criteria, and equity and access policies and procedures that allocate spaces to under-represented groups have been introduced to support measures to diversify the teacher workforce (Gambhir et al., 2008). Statistics to measure the impact of these initiatives on candidate populations in teacher education programs is elusive in Canada where statistics of race and ability are rarely collected or made public. That researchers continue to describe Canada's teachers as predominantly Euro-white and middle class (Bascia, 1996a; Pollock, 2009; Ryan et al., 2009) suggests efforts to diversify the teacher workforce have yielded insufficient results.

While policy makers have some sense of control over the development of policy texts, once the policy is interpreted and enacted by policy actors, "very different things can be done legitimately in the process of policy implementation" (Taylor et al., 1997, p.50). Once in the domain of policy actors, policies developed by policy makers are subject to the agency of policy actors who interpret and in a sense re-develop and re-interpret the policy settlement to suit their own interests, needs and understanding of the problem that instigated the policy process (Ball, 1998; McLaughlin, 1987). In educational contexts, for example, teachers act as

> policy implementors, mediators, constructors, and critics in schools (see Clune, 1990; Thiessen, 1992). They carry out their work in complex environments where they must contend not only with their own values and choices but also with the priorities, obstacles, and possibilities inherent in working with others. (Bascia, 1996, p. 10)

Policies may have both measurable and immeasurable consequences. As the example provided earlier by Geis and his colleagues illustrated, equity policies developed to increase minority population access to postsecondary education may result in the enrolment of greater numbers of students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. However, these same policies to diversify postsecondary student bodies might also result in greater numbers of students who share and articulate a sense of dissatisfaction with curriculum and program expectations that do not reflect their cultural perspectives. Such dissatisfaction coupled with the engaged agency of minoritized students may result in the revision of course outlines or the development of new programs of study. Alternatively, minoritized students may consider that their underrepresentation in higher education signals that they are not genuinely welcome in institutions of higher learning and this belief may prompt increased incidents of program abandonment among minoritized groups (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002).

As Mills and his colleagues (2005) observe, the generally accepted and "heavily idealized" image of organizational bureaucracy has caused little attention to be "paid to the experiences of minority people organized within a majority setting" but this is "beginning to change, and those who have stood for a long time in the shadow of bureaucracy are at last becoming subjects of serious study" (p. 65). They argue that people in organizations are de-humanized through organizational ideologies of consumption that frame individuals as organizational instruments and commodities. Further, within this de-humanized context, "bureaucratic rules encourage people to internalize narrow bureaucratic ways of thinking and acting: people *become* [sic] bureaucrats" (p. 127). As people within organizations become more entrenched in their narrow focus and compartmentalized in their understanding of the organization's purpose and activities, the illusion of the powerful, rational, objective

organization housing powerless people intensifies making organizations “very unpleasant places for immigrants, native people and women” (Mills et al., 2005, p. 61).

To Ryan, a significant challenge faced by organizations in their efforts to create an inclusive culture is the need to develop “shared sets of values that also include everyone” (p. 133). Significantly, by explicitly including the targets of policy (students in the educational context of Ryan’s work) in his use of the term ‘everyone’, Ryan invokes the agency of traditionally excluded organizational bodies and advances critical theories of leadership and policy.

Ryan suggests that “policy deliberations can embrace inclusion in two ways: first, by promoting policies that favour inclusive values and, second, by organizing policy deliberation processes that are themselves inclusive” (p. 128). The challenge for organizations is to move beyond the rhetoric of inclusion by building organizational capacity for the authentically inclusive engagement of all players.

A significant contribution of Ryan’s work on inclusion is emphasis on the importance of educative dialogue as a vehicle for building the capacity of organizational players to engage in authentically inclusive organizational processes. Building on critical theories of emancipatory leadership, Ryan argues that creating inclusion requires the work of leaders who are committed to raising “the consciousness of people so that they can recognize widespread and harmful exclusive practices like racism and sexism and do something about them” (p. 59). Through educative dialogue aimed at developing organizational understanding of “existing patterns of privilege” and exclusion and searching out “alternatives to the status quo” (p. 58) organizational players are empowered to exercise their agency to deconstruct status quo mechanisms of exclusion and to reconstruct their organization through policy processes as an inclusive space. Additionally, Ryan argues that organizational players bring differentiated cultural capital to the

dialogical process and that some, particularly those from traditionally marginalized groups, may not feel sufficiently confident or knowledgeable to actively contribute. Educative processes to build the capacity of all organizational actors to participate fully are essential and may require the involvement of "outsiders" who are "in touch with the values, interests, and wishes of the people whom the policy affects" (p. 129).

As McLaughlin (1987) points out, "policy success depends critically on two broad factors: local capacity and will" (p. 172) and "policy cannot always mandate what matters" (p. 171). While policy cannot mandate what matters, policy processes that engage organizational players in educative dialogue can build local capacity and advance organizations toward shared values of inclusion.

Recognizing that to involve all organizational bodies in the development of policies is unwieldy, Ryan (2006) suggests that broad representation from within and outside the organization should inform the development of policies and that these policies should be considered tentative. Draft policies should be subjected to the scrutiny of wider organizational agents and even after an extensive consultative revision process, should continue to be tested, monitored and revised throughout the phases of enactment.

*Curriculum.* Increased social diversity has challenged institutions of higher learning (Allen, 2005; Montero-Sieburth, 2000; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996; Zamel, 1995). Indeed, "much of the higher education literature, often in the form of innuendo, [suggests] that cultural diversity is the major cause of both campus divisiveness as well as incoherent curricula" (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996, p. 5). More specifically, research in the United States suggests that "issues of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation have become central to what some see as fragmentation within today's academy" (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996, p. 5) as attention to these

issues threatens “the best traditions of U.S. higher education” (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996, p.5) through inclusive practices and ideology that have corrupted the academy by lowering academic standards and compromising the quality of university education (Williams, 1997). In particular, some scholars argue that efforts to respond to cultural diversity on university campuses by introducing multicultural curriculum and providing space for “border knowledge”, “threatens the canonical knowledge upon which the dominant forces in higher education are positioned” (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996, p.6).

Canonized knowledge is that which is deemed important within a hierarchical order. While some scholars argue the canon is essential to academic rigor and the development of an enlightened unified society with a shared sense of cultural identity (D'Souza, 1992; Kimball, 1998), others, like Rhoads and Valadez (1996), argue that the canonization of knowledge centres and privileges some knowledge and ways of knowing while marginalizing other forms of knowledge as insignificant and unworthy of exchange. As described by Rhoads and Valadez, the canon

> tells us that art situated in a museum is superior to street art; classical music is superior to rap; and the writings of Shakespeare and Chaucer are superior to the work of Bebe Moore Campbell and Rudolfo Anaya. The canon tells us that scientific knowledge is superior to spiritual or emotional understanding, and that knowledge produced by white European males is superior to the knowledge of women and people of colour. In short, the hierarchical nature of the canon silences cultural diversity. (p. 7)

Bowl (2003), for example, studying primarily minority adult women in a UK government initiative to widen participation in higher education, found systemic and institutional rhetoric of inclusion to contrast sharply with the perceptions of minority women who felt excluded, marginalized and “outside” of the institutional culture. Additionally, pressure on faculty to emphasize research and publication over teaching and supporting student learning caused the

participants in Bowl's study to feel unsupported and to regard faculty as unavailable, unapproachable, and focused on their own agenda rather than the needs of students.

Increased diversity on university campuses has prompted some institutions to reconsider and remodel the services they provide to students, including those from immigrant, minority, and minority-language backgrounds (Oakes et al., 2002; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Additionally, some scholars have responded with a call for critical recognition of cultural and linguistic hegemony in higher education in the United States, Canada, England, New Zealand, and Australia (Friedenberg, 2002; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

Similarly, rapid societal changes have prompted significant curricular reforms in schools. While teachers were "once expected to prepare a small minority of students for intellectual work", they are now expected to "find ways to support diverse learners' needs and ensure success for all" (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008, p. 35). Subsequently, the work of teachers has become more complex and demanding:

> Beyond a basic knowledge of pedagogy and curriculum, they are called upon to demonstrate many additional new competencies such as teaching a diverse population of students, teaching literacy across the curriculum, using data effectively, engaging in action research, collaborating in school teams, and integrating technology effectively. (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008, p. 35)

Preparing teachers to adequately meet rapidly changing demands has proved challenging to initial teacher education programs that many researchers have historically characterized as "the root cause of poor teaching and inadequate learning and they have identified these programs as being impractical, irrelevant, ineffective and intellectually barren" (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008, p. 40). In their baseline study of teacher education in Canada, Crocker and Dibbon found little consistency in curricular focus across the 56 institutions they researched. Their findings are similar to those of studies in the United States and confirm notions of fragmented and incoherent

curriculum that lacks a “clear shared conception of teaching among faculty” (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005, p. 390). Crocker and Dibbon argue that insufficient knowledge “about ‘what works’ in teacher education” (p. 114) and the fact that teaching is one of the most politicized professions where “[in] many ways everyone is in charge of teacher education, yet nobody is” (Tom, 1997, p. 7, as cited in Crocker & Dibbon, 2008, p. 41), have impeded the identification and adoption of a knowledge base to frame teacher education.

Seemingly contrary to the work of Crocker and Dibbon but reflective of diverse perspectives of the state of teacher education in North America, Gambhir and her colleagues state that initial teacher education curriculum in Canada aims to introduce foundational “knowledge bases and practices (e.g., subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts)” ( p. 6). They found concepts introduced in Canadian eacher education programs to be informed by research examining skills and knowledge bases of effective teachers and to share a level of consistency in programmatic emphasis:

> Through course work and field experiences, initial teacher education programs explore themes and issues related to curriculum and instruction, school law, classroom management, educational psychology, the sociology of schooling, and professionalism. All programs tend to include knowledge through course content about who is to be taught (learners), what is to be taught (subject matter and curriculum), how to teach (principles and practice of teaching), where the teaching takes place (context), and why teach (foundations of teaching). (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 15)

In spite of their perception of consistency across programs with regard to emphasis on the concepts described above, the authors describe a tension in terms of other curricular areas that are considered core subjects in some programs but are merely peripheral in others. For example, some faculties of education recognize as core curriculum topics related to English language

learners, special education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and environmental sustainability while others offer learning related to these areas in peripheral elective courses (Gambhir et al., 2008).

It is not surprising that an enterprise as politically contentious as education, and as influenced by numerous stakeholders in its formal and informal governance as initial teacher education in Canada should find agreement regarding curriculum elusive. As Werner (1991) argues,

> [t]he most salient feature of curriculum making is its *value dimension*. Content is selected from a universe of available knowledge and belief on the basis of what someone deems to be important. Decisions have to be made about what to include and exclude. Central to this activity are value questions: What knowledge is of most worth for students? What purposes should be pursued? How should it be taught? All curriculum development, whether at the level of policy or materials, is an answer to such questions. (p. 106, emphasis in original)

Furthermore, Werner cites Apple and King (1978) who state that "the study of educational knowledge is a study in ideology, the investigation of what is considered legitimate knowledge . . . by specific social groups and classes, in specific institutions, at specific historical moments (as cited in Werner, p. 107).

While academics studying initial teacher education aim to provide empirical evidence linking initial teacher education curriculum to teaching efficacy, the following discussion related to pedagogy suggests that curriculum and pedagogy cannot be considered in isolation. As Werner (1991) states:

> The teacher's preferred *pedagogical style* also shapes curriculum implementation. A teacher who prefers student inquiry may emphasize those topics that lend themselves to project and group work, his student interest, and the use of multiple resources, while encouraging students to question the interpretations found in textbooks. A teacher who prefers a direct teaching style may rely more heavily on one text, teaching from it and reinforcing its content through large-group classroom activities, homework assignments and tests. Teaching style may influence the selection, organization, and interpretation of curriculum content. (p. 110, emphasis in original)

As will be further explored in the next section, notions of fixed curriculum and concerns for "consistency" (Crocker & Dibbon, p. 41) in the preparation of teachers, if constructed and implemented without adequate flexibility to include diverse perspectives and co-constructed learning, may counter intentions and efforts to make education more inclusive.

*Pedagogy*. The ways that teachers define their roles in response to complex influences exerted by power relations, ideology, and regimes of competence frame the pedagogical stances that they will assume in their work. For example, teachers who are more strongly affiliated with hegemonic relations of power are likely to favour what Freire (2002)[1] refers to as a "banking approach" (p. 74). To Freire, teachers who prefer a banking pedagogical style are defining and enacting their role with the understanding that,

> the teacher teaches and the students are taught; the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; the teacher thinks and the students are thought about; the teacher talks and the students listen – meekly; the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined; …the teacher chooses the program content and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it; …the teacher is the Subject [sic] of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (Freire, 2002, p. 73)

In applying a banking style, teachers assume the role of "narrator" (Freire, 2002, p. 71) and students are regarded as:

> "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. (p. 72)

In contrast, teachers who define their roles in ways that reflect collaborative relations of power are more likely to apply what Freire theorized as a "problem-posing" pedagogical stance that emphasizes education as liberation through "acts of cognition, not transferrals of

[1] Originally published in 1970.

information" (p. 79). To Freire, and other advocates of critical and inclusive pedagogy (e.g., Adams et al., 1997; Dei et al., 2001; hooks, 1994, 1998; Ryan, 2006), learning is a collaborative and reciprocal activity fostered through educative dialogue. Cognition develops in contexts where students and teachers are engaged as critical thinkers to examine "alternative ways of understanding the world and social relations" (Adams et al., 1997, p. xvii). Whereas banking pedagogies and hegemonic relations of power resist dialogue, inclusive pedagogies and collaborative relations of power regard dialogue as indispensable for "both learning and knowing" (Macedo, 2000, p. 17).

Dei and his colleagues (2000) describe inclusive schooling as "education without margins"

> a plural centre [created] within educational discourse and praxis that emphasizes diverse epistemologies as core curricular content. It represents an attempt to rethink, re-strategize and reconstruct education as a pluralist project which decentres the canonical texts of Eurocentric traditions as being the primary source of knowledge in schools and society. The production of knowledge from multiple sites and diverse cultural bases must form the fundamental grounds upon which we begin to develop pedagogy in a global, postmodern, and diasporic society. (p. 172)

Similarly, Ryan (2006) argues that,

> [r]esearch is clear on the best ways of delivering curriculum in inclusive ways. For example, it has found that students are generally included when the school honors different ways of knowing and different sources of knowledge, when it allows students to write and speak their own vernacular, and when it employs culturally compatible communication styles. Educators can promote inclusion in the classroom when they express cultural solidarity with their students, demonstrate that they care about them, and hold high expectations for all students. There are many ways to put these and other strategies into practice, and teachers and those responsible for supervising teaching ought to talk about them. (p. 123)

Teacher candidates engage with pedagogical stances in university and practice teaching classrooms. In the university context, Faez (2010) argues the need for teacher educators to

legitimize the participation of all teacher candidates, including those who are internationally educated, by involving them as "resources with valuable insights into cross-cultural understanding and language learning" (p. 15). One way that instructors in initial teacher education programs demonstrate that they value the contributions of students from diverse backgrounds is by recognizing that some teacher candidates may "struggle with issues related to their language proficiency" and by adjusting their teaching strategies accordingly (Faez, 2010, p. 14).

With regard to pedagogies experienced and observed in practice teaching classrooms, the quality of these experiences is of particular concern among teacher educators as they have a direct effect on teacher candidate engagement with the program and the profession (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gambhir et al., 2008). Ideally, teacher candidates are:

> supported by purposeful coaching from an expert cooperating teacher in the same teaching field who offers modeling, co-planning, frequent feedback, repeated opportunities for practice, and reflection upon practice, while the student teacher gradually assumes more responsibility. (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008)

Tensions of varying degrees often emerge between teacher candidates and associate teachers. Dissonance arises when teacher candidates fail to see in practice the pedagogical theories and concepts introduced as part of their academic program (Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995). With reference to Russell, McPherson, and Martin (2001), Gambhir and her collegues (2008) write that "[t]here appears to be a discontinuity between the theoretical work which candidates are taught and their observations of practices in schools" (p. 17). Communication regarding roles and responsibilities of mentor teachers and teacher candidates in field placements is both essential and difficult. Most faculties of education have introduced partnership initiatives and community-building strategies to enhance their relationships with field partners. Nonetheless,

questions about "what ought to be the expectations for classroom observation, practice, and supervision during the practicum, how much focus should be on whole school issues, how much time should be devoted to better understanding the community context, … and what makes for high quality teacher mentor/teacher candidate relationships" (Gambhir, 2008, p. 21) persist in initial teacher education programs.

*Programs.* Programs relative to this study include curricular and co-curricular initiatives developed specifically for internationally educated teacher candidates and also includes initiatives intended to build the capacity of instructors and mentor teachers to meet the diverse needs of teacher candidates.

With regard to diversity in Canadian teacher education programs, Gambhir and her collaborators (2008) describe increased attention to issues of inclusion and equity. Many faculties are beginning to initiate policies, programs, infused curricula, conferences and field inquiry projects that emphasize the centrality of equity in education and in the work of teachers. To support these efforts, Gambhir and her colleagues suggest the need for professional development among teacher educators to:

> deepen their knowledge of learner diversity and differing contexts as well as their capacity to critically respond in sensitive ways is paramount to more effective preparation of teacher candidates. (p. 17)

Faez (2010) emphasizes that responsiveness to the needs of diverse teacher candidates involves the development of a range of programs including courses developed specifically for internationally educated teacher candidates, extra-curricular workshops, informal discussion groups, and a centre of support staff to provide one-to-one advising to "improve language proficiency, knowledge of culture and teacher specific communication skills" (p. 17). Cabello and Eckmier (1995) found that peer support helped the immigrant teacher candidates in their

study persist, reduce instances of burnout, manage feelings of isolation, and minimize feelings of being overwhelmed. Additionally, Cabello and Eckmier found that supportive colleagues help immigrant teacher candidates feel understood, engage in the sharing of professional resources and strategies, and communicate their complex experiences in school environments suggesting that programs that provide opportunities to network and meet regularly with other internationally educated teacher candidates yields many positive benefits.

*Language of instruction.* Cummins (2003), an advocate for multilingual instruction in schools, argues that educational policies and practices that restrict students from opportunities to develop and expand their first language skills are driven by discourses that frame school failure as the result of linguistic and cultural deficits that children bring to schools, and by the "failure of schools to teach basic English and phonics skills adequately" (p. 42). Bastien, Fruchter, Gittell, Greer, and Haskins (1993) describe such deficit discourses of linguistic difference as contributing to a "golden age" myth of school performance that expresses oppressive ideological assumptions that "what is wrong with schools is what is new about them – the influx of disadvantaged minorities. . ." (p. 70). Standardization of curriculum and English only instruction have been the response to concerns that first language instruction limits the achievement of immigrant and minoritized children (Cummins, 2003). To Cummins (2003), these measures represent:

> an extremely narrow interpretation of the teaching-learning process. Nowhere in this anemic instructional vision is there room for really connecting at a human level with culturally diverse students; consigned to irrelevance also is any notion of affirming students' identities, and challenging coercive power structures, by activating what they already know about the world and mobilizing the intellectual and linguistic tools they use to make sense of their worlds. (p. 56)

In the university context, through interviews with undergraduate faculty and more than 325 English language learners in first and second year undergraduate programs, Zamel (1995) identified what many faculty refer to as the "ESL Problem" (p. 507). Describing a 'polyphony' among faculty responses, the participants in Zamel's study described complex responses to increased diversity among students as some faculty recognized the strengths, resources, experience and motivation of internationally educated students as positive influences in their classes while others regarded English language learners as "deficient and inadequate for undertaking the work in their courses" (p. 507). Faculty with a deficit perspective of English language learners blames inadequate preparation and insufficient gate-keeping for the presence of students in their classes who were incapable of doing the required work. Unfortunately for ESL students, faculty with a deficit perspective also tended to conflate language facility and intellectual ability such that students were evaluated on the basis of their communication skills with little regard for their interaction with the course material. Zamel provided the following faculty response as typical of several instructors at the institution studied:

> My experience with teaching ESL students is that they have often not received adequate English instruction to complete the required essay texts and papers in my class. I have been particularly dismayed when I find that they have already completed 2 ESL courses and have no knowledge of the parts of speech or the terminology that is used in correcting English grammar on papers. I am certainly not in a position to teach English in my classes. These students may have adequate intelligence to do well in the courses, but their language skills result in low grades. I cannot give a good grade to a student who can only generate one or two broken sentences during a ten-minute slide comparison. (p. 509)

In initial teacher education, deficit perceptions of teacher candidates who are English language learners or who speak non-standard English have been found to have significant influence over their participation in field placements and feelings of legitimacy as potential members of the teaching profession (Cho, 2010; Faez, 2010; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997;

Ragnersdottir, 2010; Schmidt, 2010; Schmidt & Block, 2010). Tendencies among some mentor teachers to focus on the language skills of teacher candidates overshadows any benefits that these teacher candidates represent in terms of their linguistic skills. Hegemony of English as the language of instruction sustains deficit perceptions of linguistic difference whereas in multilingual educational contexts advocated by Cummins (2003), teacher candidates with diverse linguistic backgrounds would be considered favourably as resources to provide instruction for students in their first language while at the same time facilitating the development of their English language skills. Dei and his co-authors (2000) argue that the absence of critical discussions of language in the context of linguistic diversity contributes to the marginalization of minority students and "it is necessary to address the question of how oppression in schooling is engendered through the promotion and use of a standard language" (p. 99).

*Evaluation.* Hoskin (1990) traces the formal examination of learners to 12th century France when teachers sought to establish "proof of pedagogic and disciplinary competence before admission into the guild of professors" and in doing so discovered a new form of power as the knowledgeable professors began, on the basis of examination, to discriminate worthy from unworthy apprentices (p. 43). To Hoskins, there have been two epochs of what he terms "examinatorial power" (p. 48). The first to determine the worthiness or unworthiness of individuals for higher study in universities, and the second to measure intelligence within a range from "gifted to defective" (p. 48). With reference to Foucault, Hoskins describes the phenomenon of examination as the "superimposition of power relations …functioning as a 'constant exchanger of knowledge' [between] the powerful (teacher, doctor, employer) [and] the powerless (pupil, patient, worker)" (p. 32).

Related to Foucault's theorization of examination articulated by Hoskins is Illich's notion of the power of experts captured succinctly by Finger and Asún (2001):

> Experts and an expert culture always call for more experts. Experts also have a tendency to cartelize themselves by creating 'institutional barricades' - for example proclaiming themselves gatekeepers, as well as self-selecting themselves. Finally, experts control knowledge production, as they decide what valid and legitimate knowledge is, and how its acquisition is sanctioned. (p. 10)

In initial teacher education programs, teacher candidates are evaluated by experts in the university context (i.e., teacher educators) and in practice teaching contexts (i.e., mentor teachers). Studies of internationally educated (Faez, 2006, 2010) and foreign trained (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997) teacher candidates have found that evaluation in practice teaching settings poses the most potential to be problematic. In programs where mentor teachers assume sole responsibility for the evaluation of teacher candidates, some teacher candidates feel constrained in their ability to learn by experimenting with new ideas and strategies (Faez, 2006) and some feel subjected to racial and linguistic discrimination (Mawhinney & Xu, 1997). Evaluative relationships between teacher candidates and mentor teachers can also be problematic from the perspective of mentor teachers. Mawhinney and Xu (1997), for example, found some mentor teachers unwilling to evaluate two foreign trained teachers in their study because they did not want to shoulder the responsibility of "recommending [them] as teachers" (p. 637).

Recognizing the tensions associated with the evaluation of teacher candidates' performance in practice teaching classrooms, Faez (2006) argues that recent trends in evaluation practices that promote input from multiple perspectives should be applied. She argues that mentor teachers should not carry sole responsibility for the evaluation of teacher candidates and suggests that initial teacher education instructors who observe teacher candidates in the field should contribute to the evaluation process, as should the teacher candidates themselves.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I developed an integrative theoretical and conceptual framework for considering the complex and interactional dynamics that influence responses to difference experienced in an initial teacher education program. Responses to difference are framed in this study as expressions of hegemonic to collaborative relations of power that influence the participation of teacher candidates as peripheral members of the teaching profession. Constructed and enacted within regimes of competence, role definitions and educational structures (i.e., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation) are seen to reflect assimilationist to multiculturalist ideological stances that challenge or support the induction of racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates as members of the teaching profession in Canada.

# Chapter Three: Research Context

## Introduction

In this chapter I describe the complex educational context of schooling and initial teacher education in Canada. Understanding the structures of schooling and initial teacher education provides a basis for the analysis of immigrant teacher candidate experiences as they participate in various aspects of Canada's education system and negotiate power relations within the communities of practice that are central to each context. This chapter also describes the emphasis on diversity and equity that figures prominently in educational policies developed for schools and faculties of education, and provides a basis for discussion in Chapters 7 and 8 that describes the ways in which organizational responses to immigrant teacher candidates contrast with the stated aims of equity and diversity policies in Canada's education system. It is also significant to the purpose of this study to provide an understanding of the schooling context in which immigrant teacher candidates attempt to be recognized as legitimate members of communities of practice. Additionally, recognizing the similarities and differences among educational contexts and faculties of education across Canada substantiates the implications of this study as applicable to contexts across Canada and internationally where similar structures are in place.

## Education in Canada

All teacher candidates in Canada, including the immigrant teacher candidates in this study, engage with a complex educational structure throughout their participation in an initial teacher education program. Concomitantly students in a professional degree program and practicing teachers in elementary or secondary schools, teacher candidates interact with, and in, various communities of practice.

In Canada, education is a provincial responsibility. Without an overarching federal authority, education in each of Canada's ten provinces and three territories is distinct. Education policies and practices related to such areas as school attendance, curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher qualifications are developed provincially and administered through district school boards (Davidson-Harden & Majhanovich, 2004). All provinces in Canada have developed policies that address increasing social diversity generated by changing immigration patterns. These policies aim to support the diverse needs of students, and articulate an underlying and significant correlation between equitable responses to diversity and student success (e.g., Alberta's Commission on Learning, 2003; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008; Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2007; Quebec Ministry of Education, 1997). The following statement is reflective of the ways in which diversity is framed by provincial ministries of education across Canada:

> *Diversity* is an overarching concept that relies on a philosophy of equitable participation and an appreciation of the contributions of all. It is a concept that refers both to our uniqueness as individuals and to our sense of belonging or identification with a group or groups. . . .Honouring diversity is based on the principle that if these differences are acknowledged and utilized in a positive way, it is of benefit to the quality of our learning and working environments. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 7, emphasis in original)

Although Canada is a bilingual nation and instruction is available in both languages in all provinces, English is the primary language of instruction in most provinces and territories except Quebec where French is most commonly the language of instruction, and New Brunswick where instruction is provided in both languages.

Canada is generally considered to have a strong education system (Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008). International measures of student achievement rank Canada's students favourably and with 91% of 25-34 year olds reporting senior secondary education, compared to

the world average of 77%, educational attainment levels of the population are relatively high (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2007). The majority of Canadians, however, express greater confidence in their teachers than they report in relation to the system as a whole. Seventy percent of Canadians state that they are highly satisfied with the work of teachers while less than 50% express confidence in provincial public schools (Canadian Education Association, 2007).

While emphasis varies from province to province, "learning to learn, preparation for work, responsible citizenship and instilling values tend to underpin the broad purposes of education in Canada" (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 4). Most provinces enforce compulsory school attendance until age 16, with the exception of Ontario and Manitoba where attendance is required until the age of 18. Provincial education systems are typically divided into three sectors: 1) Elementary education to Grade 8 or 9; 2) Secondary education to Grade 12, except in Quebec; and 3) Post-secondary education in colleges and universities. While requirements for teacher qualification are determined provincially, most provinces require at least one undergraduate degree and a Bachelor of Education degree for full qualification as a teacher.

The labour market for teachers in Canada varies over time and from province to province but prospects for new graduates are not particularly robust. Although Manitoba and Saskatchewan report good prospects for employment, the remaining Canadian provinces report limited to fair prospects meaning that most recent graduates will engage in a period of occasional work before securing a full time contract as a teacher (Government of Canada, 2010).

While pan-Canadian employment statistics for immigrant teachers aren't readily available, in its annual *Transitions to Teaching* survey, the Ontario College of Teachers (2006b) provides evidence that immigrant teachers are significantly disadvantaged in the labour market and that while employment prospects for Canadian educated teachers might be considered

limited to fair, for immigrant teachers, the outlook is described as “dismal” (p. 23) to “difficult” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2009, p. 33). While 51% of Ontario teacher graduates were engaged in full-time employment in 2005, only 18% of new Canadian teachers were employed full-time. Even qualifications in “high-demand” fields do not significantly increase the employment rate of immigrant teachers. Sixty-four percent of Ontario graduates with high-demand qualifications in math, chemistry and French were employed as full-time teachers by the end of their first year of certification while only 19% of immigrant teachers with the same high-demand qualifications were fully employed. The dismal hiring rate of immigrant teachers is described by the OCT (2006) as an “employment crisis” because “despite the fact that they are highly experienced in teaching, many of them appear shut out of the profession in Ontario” (p. 23). The most recent statistics indicate that the unemployment rate for “new-Canadian teachers [is] more than five times higher than for Ontario faculty graduates” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2009, p. 34).

**Initial Teacher Education in Canada**

Gambhir and her colleagues (2008) provide a comprehensive overview of initial teacher education in Canada. They emphasize that initial teacher education programs across Canada recognize the demands placed on teachers to work in dynamic and diverse contexts and that “much of the educational scholarship on teacher education in Canada deals with how the programs attempt to introduce an understanding of racism, diversity and social justice” (p. 6). Issues related to diversity and inclusion, rapid advances in communication technologies, globalization, and democracy have prompted significant discussion regarding schooling, teaching, teacher preparation, and ongoing teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Teacher education in Canada has undergone significant change during the past 40 years as emphasis has moved away from a more traditional skills-based transmission of training to a more holistic educative approach to preparing teachers to understand, critique, and construct learning as a political and interactional activity (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). Gone are the days of training in teachers' colleges directly controlled by provincial governments. Since the 1970s, initial teacher education in Canada has been university-based within faculties of education (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2007). Across Canada, more than 55 faculties of education graduate approximately 18,000 new teachers each year (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). As mentioned earlier, education falls under the jurisdiction of provincial governments and implementation of government regulations and policies is administered by district school boards. Similarly, initial teacher education is a provincial responsibility but "for the most part the greatest control of teacher education rests with the universities and their governing bodies" (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 9). Recent interest in articulating consistent principles among teacher education programs in Canada has been expressed in an accord by Canada's deans of education (Collins & Tierney, 2006) and efforts to increase consistency in terms of program expectations and outcomes are being stimulated by amendments to Canada's *Agreement on Internal Trade* (2009) that promote labour mobility across the country. The intention of labour mobility initiatives in Canada is for professional and trade qualifications to be fully recognized from province to province (Government of Canada, 2006). This is currently not the case for teacher qualifications in Canada and concerns have been expressed by faculties of education, teachers' unions and certification bodies that accepting teacher qualifications from one jurisdiction to another without additional training or reassessment is problematic. The President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, Emily Noble (2008), in a letter to the federal Minister of Human

Resources and Skills Development Canada, articulated concerns shared by many in the education community:

> The differences in teacher certification processes across jurisdictions are considerable and the proposed changes could have significant implications for professional standards and teacher training programs. The differences are justified because of the diversity of the Canadian culture, and are sensitive to regional needs. . . . where a certificate from one jurisdiction will be accepted in another without additional retraining, retesting or reassessment will cause downward pressure on standards. (n.p.)

While it is the case that teacher education programs and requirements for qualification differ from province to province, Gambhir and her colleagues (2008) describe many similarities among programs across the country, particularly in relation to guiding principles and values. Frequently mentioned themes articulated in descriptions of initial teacher education programs across Canada refer to preparing competent and reflective beginning teachers who demonstrate knowledge and skills related to curriculum and pedagogy and who demonstrate understanding of equity in education. Reference to “beginning teachers” is intentional as initial teacher education in Canada is considered part of a broader professional development framework that engages teachers in learning opportunities throughout their careers (Broad & Evans, 2006).

All teacher candidates in Canada engage in field-based practice teaching, commonly referred to as practicum, as a major pedagogical component of their initial teacher education program (Goodnough et al., 2009). Practicum durations vary from 8 to 22 weeks and while provincial governments and regulatory bodies establish minimum field experience requirements, individual faculties of education specify requirements according to their own program conceptions. Time in field placements can include partial days, full days, and blocks of weeks.

**The Initial Teacher Education Program at Urban Canada University**

This study was conducted at the faculty of education at Urban Canada University[2] (UCU), an English research-intensive university in one of Canada's large urban regions. The initial teacher education program at UCU is a consecutive 9-month, post-undergraduate Bachelor of Education degree program and is typical of the programs described in the overview of initial teacher education in Canada. The university, faculty of education, and the initial teacher education program at UCU have developed policies and programs reflecting the commitment to equity articulated by faculties of education across Canada. These policies influence admissions processes that favour prior experience, understandings of teaching and learning as transformative activities, and insight regarding social and educational inequity experienced by people who are often disadvantaged on the basis such differences as race, gender, social class, (dis)ability, and sexual orientation. UCU does not, however, have a policy of affirmative action in the admission of immigrant teacher candidates or other teacher candidates from historically underrepresented groups. The participants in this study were accepted to the initial teacher education program on the strength of their application relative to all other applicants in a highly-competitive process designed to ensure admission of individuals who are well qualified for the teaching profession.

An increased number of internationally educated individuals are applying for admission to the faculty of education at UCU. In 2006, the year of this study, approximately 10% of applicants identified themselves as having been educated predominantly outside of Canada. In response, some recent equity-driven programmatic components at UCU are unique among other initial teacher education programs: 1) an elective credit course was developed specifically for internationally educated teacher candidates; 2) staffing of the writing centre was increased and

[2] Urban Canada University is a pseudonym. Information presented in this section to describe the program at UCU was located on the UCU website and in other programmatic materials. The website and the materials are not identified in this thesis to preserve the anonymity of the university.

the centre was redefined to include support for immigrant teacher candidates who seek help with English language skills and understanding the culture of teaching and learning in Canada; and, 3) a program was developed to enable internationally educated teacher candidates to defer their first evaluated practicum in order to engage in a period of guided and focused field observation during the first practicum period.

To qualify for highly-competitive admission to the B.Ed. program, all applicants are required to hold at least one approved undergraduate degree from an acceptable degree-granting university with a minimum grade average in the “B” (3.0) range. Additionally, applicants who have a first language other than English and did not engage in at least 3 years of successful study at a university where English is the language of instruction and examination are required to demonstrate English language proficiency measured by sufficient scores on standardized language tests acceptable to the university.

The consecutive initial teacher education program is a 9-month, full-time program consisting of five academic course components (foundations of teaching, curriculum and pedagogy, sociology of schooling, educational psychology, and a self-selected elective course) and two practical field experience components comprising two 4-week practicum blocks and one 5-week self-directed internship. Typical of many initial teacher education programs in Canada (Gambhir et al., 2008), the academic courses provide opportunities for teacher candidates to develop their understanding of the transformative purposes of education; teacher identity and professionalism; educational law; psychological foundations of child development and learning; pedagogy; curriculum content knowledge; assessment and evaluation; and social constructions of teaching and learning in contexts of diversity, dis/advantage, and inequality. The two 4-week practice teaching blocks in partnership schools under the mentorship and supervision of a cooperating classroom teacher are intended to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to

observe the school and community context; develop and teach lessons in consultation with their mentor teacher; become increasingly independent in their work as a teacher throughout the practice teaching blocks; assess student progress; and reflect on their effectiveness as a teacher. The 5-week self-directed internship at the end of the program provides an opportunity for teacher candidates to engage in continued professional development in schools or other education-related sites (e.g., museums, curriculum development organizations, early childhood centres).

The consecutive initial teacher education program is rigorous and requires significant time and effort from teacher candidates. In keeping with research examining student engagement in initial teacher education programs (e.g., Faez, 2006) teacher candidates in the program, faculty members and student services often indicate that many participants in the program experience exhaustion, feelings of being overwhelmed, time-deprivation, challenging power dynamics with mentor teachers during the practice teaching blocks, and an arduous learning curve in developing skills in program planning and delivery, assessing student progress, and managing student behaviour.

Teacher candidates at UCU engage in a structure of cohort-based learning communities focused around areas of teaching specialization (e.g., elementary education, secondary education, curriculum subjects, inner city education, students with special needs). A considerable amount of time throughout the program is spent with the assigned learning community and while different faculty members provide instruction relative to the various courses, each cohort group works significantly with one instructor in a manner similar to a “homeroom teacher” model. Instruction at UCU is provided by tenured faculty, seconded instructors, and sessional lecturers with seconded and sessional instructors comprising majority membership on the instructional team.

The practicum schools associated with the initial teacher education program are located in a large metropolitan area and include both “inner city” and “suburban” school communities.

While some schools in the associated school districts have student populations that are predominantly Euro-white and middle class, most schools have diverse student populations. Approximately 25% of the region's students were born outside of Canada and in some schools nearly 100% of the students are immigrants. Slightly less than 50% speak a language other than English at home.

Support services available to teacher candidates within the faculty of education include one-to-one tutoring in the academic support centre; optional co-curricular workshops to reinforce concepts developed in courses; mentored support for internationally educated teacher candidates during the optional first unevaluated practicum observation block; personal support counseling, accommodation of special needs and disabilities; and financial aid.

# Chapter Four: Methodology

In this chapter, I present the approach applied in this study to examine the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates participating in an initial teacher education program in Canada. In subsequent sections, I describe the research participants, instruments and procedures for data collection, the process of data analysis, and ethical considerations.

## Rationalizing a Qualitative Approach

Critical researchers reject methodological approaches grounded in tenets of logical positivism by arguing that these methods limit a researchers capacity to understand the complexities of human experiences and they perpetuate a false conceptualization of research as value-neutral (Lincoln, 1991). Instead, researchers grounded by tenets of critical theory most often employ qualitative research methodologies that "allow those under study the ability to speak about 'their' perceptions and realities" (Tierney, 1991a, p. 5). Providing research informants the opportunity to share their experiences and insights through dialogue with researchers reflects the emphasis critical theorists place on learning and knowledge negotiation as dialogical and interactive.

## Research Participants

**Anonymity.** To preserve the anonymity of the study participants, the immigrant teacher candidates are identified by pseudonyms that are reflective of their given names. The instructors and support staff are identified as Instructor-A, Instructor-B, Support-A, Support-B, and so on. Due to the small sample size, and with concern that a reader of this study might believe that they have identified the research site, I provide only general descriptions and labels of the instructors and support staff to offer a greater measure of anonymity by cloaking genders often revealed in the naming of participants.

**Participant recruitment.** To recruit recently graduated immigrant and minority English language learner teacher candidates to participate in this study, I posted flyers (Appendix A) on bulletin boards at UCU's faculty of education. Additionally, I sent an email invitation (Appendix B) with the informed consent letter attached (Appendix C) to internationally educated teacher candidates who accessed the university's initial teacher education program student support services during the academic year. The email addresses of these teacher candidates were made available to me by student support services staff who, as part of the support process, had invited internationally educated teacher candidates who accessed support services to provide their email addresses with the knowledge that they might be contacted and invited to participate in research projects. In providing their email addresses, these teacher candidates expressed a willingness to receive invitations to participate in research projects. Although the students consented to provide their email addresses, consent to participate in this specific study was requested and attained through the emailed recruitment letter (Appendix B) and the informed consent letter (Appendix C).

To recruit teacher educators and student support services staff to participate in this study, an email (Appendix D) describing the study and providing the informed consent letter (Appendix C) was distributed.

Immigrant teacher candidates received a $25 honorarium for their participation in this study. Instructors and support staff received a $20 book store gift certificate for their participation.

**Immigrant teacher candidate participants.** Eight immigrant teacher candidates who graduated from the initial teacher education program at UCU in June of 2006 volunteered to participate in this study. Table 3.1 presents data collected via the pre-interview demographic

surveys and provides an overview of the participants' sex, age, marital status, children, source country, length of time in Canada, first language(s), years learning English, first degree and conferring country, second degree and conferring country, and previous occupation and country of employment.

Five women and three men participated in this study, a fairly representative gender distribution among the teaching profession in Canada where women represent approximately 65% of the teacher workforce (Gambhir, et al., 2008). The youngest immigrant teacher candidate participating in this study was 26 years old and the oldest participant was 45 years old at the time of data collection. The mean age of the participants was 37 years old, higher than the mean age of teacher candidates participating in the consecutive initial teacher education program at UCU, which is generally in the range of 27 to 29 years of age (UCU Registrar statistics). Five of the participants are married or partnered and three of the participants have children living at home.

As shown in Table 4.1, the participants emigrated from diverse countries (i.e., China, Korea, Philippines, Egypt, Argentina, Guyana, and Iran) and all but one grew up speaking a language other than English. One participant is a recent newcomer to Canada. Having spent only 1.5 years in Canada before graduating from the initial teacher education program, this participant is also the only immigrant teacher candidate who grew up speaking a dialect of English as a first language. The years that the participants lived in Canada before completing the initial teacher education program ranged from 1.5 years to 28 years with a mean of almost 11 years. All of the participants in this study reported having studied English for at least 10 years and the average period of English language learning was almost 20 years.

Six of the participants earned at least one undergraduate degree outside of Canada (Table 3.1). Five participants hold degrees in Sciences and three have earned Arts degrees. All five science majors earned their undergraduate degrees in languages other than English while all

three arts majors earned their undergraduate degrees in English (two in Canada and one in Guyana). Three of the immigrant teacher candidates participating in this study have earned graduate degrees from English universities (one in Canada and two in England). All participants in this study met the English language proficiency requirements established by UCU by completing at least 3 years of study at a university where English was the language of instruction and evaluation, or by attaining the acquired score on a UCU-approved standardized English language proficiency test (e.g., TOEFL).

All of the research participants reported working in diverse occupations other than teaching before they engaged in studies at UCU. Three worked in computer technology fields, one worked as a meteorologist and journalist, one worked as a graphic designer, one worked in social services, one was a registered nurse, and one worked as a sports journalist and health education officer. One immigrant reported having worked as a teacher for 4 years before immigrating to Canada. The three participants who came to Canada with credentials in computer technologies were able to find employment in their field in Canada. The three immigrant teacher candidates who had experience in other fields prior to coming to Canada were not able to find employment in their areas of expertise. The two women who were unable to find work in their professional field worked as domestic labourers and the man who was unable to find work in his field worked as a warehouse labourer. Two of the participants in this study came to Canada as high school students and all of their previous employment was in Canada (Table 4.1).

**Teacher educator participants.** Four instructors in the initial teacher education program at UCU volunteered to participate in this study. Three teach within the elementary education program and one teaches in the secondary education program. Two of the teacher educators were seconded to UCU from their positions as teachers in nearby school districts and the other two

instructors work at UCU in limited term contracts as sessional lecturers. At the time of our interview, both of the seconded instructors were completing their second year as teacher educators. The two sessional lecturers had worked as teacher educators at UCU for more than 7 years and prior to teaching at UCU had worked in schools as classroom teachers for more than 10 years.

All of the instructors participating in this study are white. Three are women and one is a man. Two of the instructors described themselves as Jewish and the other two did not make reference to a religious affiliation. One instructor self-identified as gay. Based on the perceptions of the student support staff participating in this study, the diversity of the instructor participants in this study can be considered fairly representative of the diversity among the instructor group at UCU.

**Student support staff participants.** Five student support staff at UCU volunteered to participate in this study. Three of the staff are under full-time contracts to UCU and two of the staff are doctoral students who provide support to students through the writing centre. The student support staff participating in this study had experience providing support to UCU students that spanned from 2 years to more than 15 years with the average length of employment with the student support services department being almost 6 years.

The support staff participating in this study represent a diversity of race, gender, religions, first languages, and sexual orientations.

## Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection

This study is primarily informed by data collected through pre-interview questionnaires (Appendix E) and semi-structured interactive interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Kirby & McKenna, 1989) (Appendix F) with eight immigrant teacher candidates. Secondary data were

collected through interviews with student support staff (Appendix G) and program instructors (Appendix H). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed with the permission of the participants. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. Data collection occurred during the months of May and June, 2006.

The interactive interviews with the teacher candidates began with an invitation for these participants to share a brief history of their experiences as immigrants to Canada and the journey that prompted them to enroll in the initial teacher education program at UCU. The teacher candidates were asked to describe their previous teaching related experiences and to discuss whether becoming a teacher in Canada had been their goal when they made the decision to immigrate to Canada. Next, they were asked to describe the challenges and supports they experienced as teacher candidates at UCU, and to indicate what advice they would offer to future teacher candidates who face similar situations. They were then asked to discuss opportunities and challenges they anticipated in beginning their careers as teachers in Canada. Finally, the teacher candidates were asked to describe the ways that people associated with the program responded to them and to discuss any effects related to race, class, gender and language that they might have perceived during their participation in the initial teacher education program.

Similar questions guided the interviews with the ITE program staff (student support staff and the ITE instructors) participating in this study. Their interviews began with an invitation to provide a brief overview of their role at UCU. They were then asked to describe issues that they perceived as significant to the experiences of teacher candidates who are a) immigrants, b) members of visible minority groups, and c) English language learners. Next, the ITE program staff were asked to describe the work that they and their department do to support these teacher candidates. They were also asked to discuss impacts of social class, race, language, and gender that they may have perceived in their roles. ITE program staff were then invited to describe

dynamics that support their work. In addition to an open-ended question regarding factors that support their work, they were also asked specifically to discuss policies that guide the work they do to support immigrant teacher candidates. Next, the ITE program staff were asked to consider what more can be done to support immigrant teacher candidates and to describe challenges that they face in providing support. Finally, the program staff were asked to discuss the benefits of supporting immigrant teacher candidates at UCU.

Table 4. 1 Immigrant Teacher Candidate Participants' Demographic Survey Data

| **Pseudonym** | **Sex** | **Age** | **Marital Status** | **Children** | **Source Country** | **Years in Canada** | **First Language (s)** | **Years Learning English** | **1st Degree (country conferred)** | **2nd Degree (country conferred)** | **Previous Occupation(s) and Country of Occupation** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lanying | F | 45 | Married | 4 | China | 15 | Chinese | 15 | B.Sc. Hons (China) | | Meteorologist, Journalist (China), Nanny, Flower Vendor (Canada) |
| Hannah | F | 26 | Single | 0 | Korea | 10 | Korean | 10 | B.A. (Canada) | | Graphic Designer (Canada) |
| David | M | 44 | Married | 0 | China | 28 | Chinese | 34 | B.A. (Canada) | M.A. (Canada) | Director of Student Outreach, Social Service Worker (Canada) |
| Karen | F | 35 | Partnered | 0 | Philippines | 6 | Chinese Tagalog | 30 | B.Sc. (Philippines) | | Registered Nurse. Kindergarten Teacher (Philippines), Nanny, Data Entry Clerk (Canada) |
| Catherine | F | 40 | Single | 0 | Egypt | 12 | Arabic French | 12 | B.Sc. Hons (Egypt) | M.Sc. (England) | Web Developer and IT Consultant (Canada) |
| Sal | M | 41 | Single | 0 | Argentina | 9 | Spanish | 17 | B.Sc. Hons (Argentina) | | Systems Analyst (Argentina and Canada) |
| Gavin | M | 35 | Married | 1 | Guyana | 1.5 | English (Creolese) | N/A | B.A. (Guyana) | | Sports Reporter, Health Education Officer (Guyana), Warehouse Labourer (Canada) |
| Laila | F | 32 | Married | 1 | Iran | 5.5 | Farsi | 20 | B.Sc. Hons. (Iran) | M.Sc. (England) | Software developer (Iran and Canada) |

**Data Analysis**

The first phase of data analysis occurred as I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews. During this process I started to recognize and think about some of the themes that were emerging and the ways in which these themes differed from those that I had anticipated at the outset of my inquiry. I began to realize that the conceptual framework (Appendix I) I had originally developed to frame the study and the interview questions was insufficient as a tool to analyze the complexities I was hearing throughout the transcription process. The development of my original conceptual framework was informed by previous research examining the experiences of immigrant, minoritized, adult, English language learner students participating in higher education programs. As I described in Chapter 2, most research in higher education tends to emphasis a deficit model of difference and conceptualizes marginalized students as having deficit gaps that need to be filled. As a result, my fairly extensive review of higher education research identified a number of factors that challenged or supported the experiences of minoritized immigrant students in higher education but failed to provide for analysis that struck closer to the heart of the stories I was hearing from the teacher candidates in this study. I also began to understand that my original conceptual framework did not adequately emphasize the significance of power dynamics immigrant teacher candidates would interact with during their practicum experiences. Additionally, my original conceptual framework did not adequately capture the ways that power dynamics are specifically significant to the experiences of students in professional degree programs who are attempting to become full participants of a profession.

After transcribing all of the immigrant teacher candidate interview recordings, I read through each transcript and made notes in the margins to flag themes or concepts that were particularly influential to their individual experience. I read through each transcript again and

this time I made more detailed notes on separate pieces of paper to bring together some of the central themes emerging from each person's story. For example, I identified the circuitous route to teaching as a significant part of Lanying's experience in Canada. I pulled from her transcript instances where she described concepts related to settlement in Canada and the experiences that brought her to the initial teacher education program at UCU, and I gathered her discussion of these concepts under one heading.

I read through the immigrant teacher candidate transcripts a third time and this time I asked myself a central question as I was reading: "What theme is most prominent in this person's story? If I were to highlight one quote to capture this person's experience in the initial teacher education program, what would be that quote?" For example, a dominant theme in Lanying's story was her strong sense of self-efficacy in the face of adversity and her drive to persist against all odds. The quote I selected to capture Lanying's narrative was one that reflected her description of herself as an underdog who refused to give up: "I am a come-from-behind runner."

Once I identified the theme that foregrounded each individual's experience, I read through the transcripts again. This time, I used the notes that I had made and the anchor quotes I had identified to develop a narrative of each person's transcript. These narratives are presented in Chapter 4. My aims in crafting the narratives were to: a) give voice and authenticity to their experiences; b) frame their experiences in a way that gave due emphasis to what I discovered as being at the heart of their experiences from their perspective; and c) provide the reader of this thesis with the opportunity to engage with themes that, while not foregrounded in the analysis of this thesis, may resonate with some readers' experiences as immigrants, immigrant teacher candidates, immigrant teachers, or organizational agents who endeavour to teach, support, or provide programs for teacher candidates.

After I examined the transcripts in a way that honoured the voices of the participants and gave voice to their experiences as they described them, I then started to look more deeply at the data as "actively constructed narratives" (Silverman, 2003, p. 346) to consider the richness and complexity of the stories told from various positions of power, privilege, race, class, gender, and language. It's at this point that the inadequacies of my original conceptual framework became clearer. At the outset of this study, I believed that I was going to regard the teacher candidates as my unit of analysis and that the analysis would inform organizations about the challenges and supports that this group identified. While this approach is helpful to organizations, and certainly this level of analysis is at play in the thesis, I came to understand that I was thinking of the data at an organizational level and that it was within this domain that I needed to focus my analysis.

While still pondering my conceptual framework, I spent more time with the teacher candidate data before moving on to work with the instructor and support staff interview tapes. Having identified central themes and concepts described by the immigrant teacher candidates, I created a table to map the data across respondents so I could start to see themes that were shared among the respondents.

Next, I transcribed the interviews with instructors and support staff. During the transcription process, I started to see a disconnect between the experiences of the immigrant teacher candidates and the perceptions of the instructors participating in the study. While transcribing the interviews of the support staff, this tension became more evident as the support staff described ways that the organization could do more to facilitate the full participation of immigrant teacher candidates as future teachers.

After I transcribed the interviews with instructors and student support services staff, I followed a process similar to that which I applied to my analysis of the immigrant teacher

candidate transcripts. I read each transcript several times. During the first reading I made notes in the margins to flag themes that were being described. During the second reading I pulled together related instances throughout each transcript. The third reading provided an opportunity to think more deeply about what was at the heart of each individual's perceptions of immigrant teacher candidate participation in the initial teacher education program. I did not prepare narratives to capture the input of the instructor and support staff participants as they hadn't been invited to tell their own story, but rather to comment on what they considered to be the challenges and supports experienced by internationally educated teacher candidates.

During my fourth reading of the instructor and support staff transcripts I mapped their insights to the data table I constructed based on input from the immigrant teacher candidates. I noted in the table instances where instructors or support staff identified similar challenges and supports, minimized the significance of a theme or concept described by the immigrant teacher candidate group, or identified issues that hadn't been raised by the immigrant teacher candidates participating in this study.

Having worked with the data for several months, I was now ready to revisit my original conceptual framework. Although I hadn't set out to engage in a process of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I found myself in the midst of this approach. By recognizing that my original conceptual framework was inadequate I released many assumptions that I had made prior to data collection and considered what I had learned from the study participants. Having identified salient themes and concepts from the data, I set about to connect these themes and concepts to theories and frameworks developed by previous researchers. I studied earlier research examining organizational theory, organizational learning, pedagogies of difference, educational responses to difference and diversity, and the

experiences of minoritized immigrant teachers and teacher candidates. When I came across the model that Cummins (1996) developed to capture dynamics influencing responses to English language learners in K-12 schools, I found that it captured many of the dynamics that I was seeing in the data with the exception of concepts related to the ways that the immigrant teacher candidates described feelings of exclusion from and acceptance within the teaching profession. The communities of practice model developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) provided a framework that captured complexities of professional membership. I incorporated into the Cummins model concepts related to communities of practice and developed the conceptual framework described in Chapter 2 and represented in Figures 2.2 and 2.3.

The framework built through the grounded theory process enabled me to centre responses to difference in the integrative critical analysis of the data presented in Chapter 7. Organized around the conceptual framework described in Chapter 2, my analysis is presented in sections related to: a) Relations of Power; b) Ideology and Discourse; and c) Regimes of Competence discussed as interactional dynamics influencing responses to difference experienced by the teacher candidates in this study. Certainly, these concepts figured within my original critical theoretical and conceptual frameworks, but by foregrounding them in this way, I am able to present and discuss my central findings with greater clarity.

**Ethical Considerations**

In accordance with Tri Council ethical standards and in compliance with the ethical standards of the university research site where I recruited the study participants and collected data, all participants signed letters of informed consent stating the purpose of the research, detailing possible venues for disseminating results of the research, and inviting participants to request a summary of the study to be made available upon completion. All data have been

retained in a secure, confidential location and electronic files (e.g., transcripts) are coded in such a way that the participants and the research site cannot be identified.

Participants were informed that they could refuse to respond to any questions asked during the process of data collection and that they could ask to terminate their participation in the study at any time.

The use of pseudonyms preserves the anonymity of the immigrant teacher candidates participating in this study. Initial teacher education program staff are described by their job title, for example, as Instructor-A or Support-B.

# Chapter Five: Teacher Candidate Narratives

## Introduction

This chapter presents, in a narrative format, the data collected through interviews with the eight teacher candidates participating in this study. Presenting the data as narratives enables the voice of each teacher candidate to convey the challenges and supports they experienced in their initial teacher education program. The narratives also provide insight into the varied histories, qualifications, experiences, and perspectives that these teacher candidates bring to their work as developing teachers. The experiences described in the narratives reveal significant challenges and meaningful supports encountered at UCU and in field experience placements.

Challenges that figure most prominently across the teacher candidate narratives are related to: perceptions of English language proficiency; feelings of inadequacy and discouragement associated with English language proficiency; responses from mentor teachers and administrators in field placements that question the legitimacy of these teacher candidates; feeling disadvantaged for lack of familiarity with schooling in Canada; tensions associated with Canadian identity; the re-classing and de-skilling of immigrants; and recognition of prior learning and credentials. The data representing challenges described by the teacher candidates are summarized in Table 5.1.

Supports described in the narratives include: assistance provided by student support services (e.g., academic support, unevaluated first practicum, specialized practice teaching support and purposeful placement with a supportive mentor teacher); supportive and encouraging relationships with individual UCU instructors and mentor teachers in practice teaching schools; positive social networks; and an elective course for internationally

educated teacher candidates. Supports described by the teacher candidates are summarized in Table 5.2.

It should be noted that five of the eight teacher candidates in this study (Lanying, Hannah, Catherine, Sal, and Gavin) experienced significant challenges in their first practice teaching placements and their mentor teachers assessed them to be at risk of failing. Catherine failed the first placement and Gavin removed himself from what he described as an abusive situation. Lanying, Hannah and Sal received a marginal pass from their first mentor teachers. While the first practicum placements are made in a random matter with primary consideration given to the geographical and teaching experience needs of teacher candidates, the subsequent placements for these candidates were made with the intent to match them with mentor teachers known by ITE program staff to be supportive of teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds. All five of these teacher candidates reported significantly more positive relationships with the mentor teachers that were selected for their history of supporting future

**Table 5. 1 Summary of Challenges Described by the Teacher Candidates**

| Challenges described by Teacher Candidates | Teacher Candidate(s) /8 participants | Representative Quote(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **Perceptions of English language proficiency** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Sal**<br>**Gavin**<br>**Laila** | I tried to do the things she said I should do, but there was always something I wasn't doing. So everyday, she always found something new. '[Gavin] you weren't doing this,' or '[Gavin] you said platoo instead of plateau' and she wouldn't do it discreetly, she would do it right in front of the class. This was very embarrassing and it was affecting me so much it was disturbing and hard for me because in my whole lifetime I was digging deep to try and think of someone who did this to me and I couldn't find anything. (Gavin)<br><br>One of my [mentor teachers] used to correct me in front of the class, my English, but I never took it personally. I always thanked him after the class. Maybe I didn't like it, the way he did it, but I knew he did it because he wanted to help me so I never took it personally. It's important for teacher candidates not to take things personally and try to work it out. Maybe, even if it's tough and the [mentor teacher] is not working the way you want to work, and you think they are sometimes wrong, you still have to do it their way. (Laila) |
| **Feelings of inadequacy or discouragement associated with English language proficiency** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Gavin**<br>**Laila**<br>**Sal** | For the first time in my life I felt like I was illiterate in a class. Before this, I did my Master's Degree in England so I've been in English-speaking universities but the difference is I was in a technical field; not a humanities field. When you're in a technical field, your knowledge is more important than your presentation skills or language skills because as long as you know how something is done, you can go to the board and explain yourself. . . .Most of my classmates, maybe 30 out of 32 were English language speakers; native English language speakers and even if they were from immigrant families, they were educated in Canadian schools so I consider them to be native English speakers. . . .When they want to explain their ideas, they use these sophisticated sentences and they speak so beautifully that I felt like I'm an idiot in the class. Up until that point, I was the type of student who contributed in class. I used to talk about my ideas and be an active participant in the class, but that day, I simply started to be quiet. . . . I was feeling really depressed because I simply couldn't contribute to the conversation. I had good ideas, but I was frightened to speak out loud because I knew that my language skill is not good enough and my sentences are not going to be as perfect. (Laila) |
| **Responses from mentor teachers in field placements that question their legitimacy as teacher candidates** | **Hannah**<br>**Karen**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Sal**<br>**Gavin** | The first week was fine. The first day of the second week – boom! She said that I don't have initiative. She complained that I was preparing lessons for another class while I was in her class. The first week she gave me feedback with good stuff and things to improve. The second week, she just gave me feedback that was all bad things. The third week, she didn't give me feedback at all, and the fourth week she started screaming at me in the middle of the class. (Sal)<br><br>I figured that there were some things that I didn't know and I tried my best to learn about them from my mentor teacher but I found that she was very reluctant to give me the resources. I don't know if she thought that I needed to go and buy the book, but she didn't want to give me the manuals to teach, or show me what I would be doing. She wasn't very supportive. I'll state it that bluntly. . . .It really hit me one day and I thought, 'Oh my God, this woman is really setting me up to fail.' (Gavin) |

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| | | I was in an elementary school as part of my unevaluated first practicum observation experience at [UCU] and I was observing a grade three/four split class and the teacher clearly told me that she thinks it's not a good idea that someone who doesn't speak English as their first language might be a teacher in this system. (Laila) |
| **Feeling disadvantaged for lack of familiarity with schooling in Canada** | **David<br>Catherine<br>Sal<br>Gavin<br>Laila** | If I were to stay here to teach, the challenge I would face is the culture in the classroom for sure. For example, I'll give you one scenario that happened to me during my practicum. . . .There was one student – I think she's very difficult – and I was stupid enough to engage in a power struggle with her so the situation escalated. . . .and what I said was, "Oh, shut up", and all the students said "oooooh" then I realized I said something wrong. I think that incident tells me that I don't understand the Canadian culture well enough to be in a Canadian classroom because if I were to say the same thing in a classroom full of Chinese, I know how far I can go. . . .So that incident tells me that I don't know the Canadian context well enough. . . .from that instance on, I knew that I don't know the Canadian context well enough to teach in a Canadian classroom. (David)<br><br>It's people who, because you were not born or raised in Canada, people always have doubts about you; if you'll be able to do a good job. They will always prefer somebody who was born here because you didn't go in the system; because you don't know the system inside and out, or because you still have an accent while speaking English. (Catherine) |
| **Tensions associated with Canadian identity** | **Lanying<br>Hannah<br>David<br>Karen<br>Catherine** | It's funny. It's not from people from other races. It's actually from our own race. One student said he's ashamed to be Chinese. I was shocked to hear that. Why would he say that? I don't know. He was born here in Canada. Even though we're all Chinese, we're different. Another said, "I prefer to call myself a Canadian." He doesn't want to be called a Chinese-Canadian. I don't know why. They should be proud to be Chinese. (Lanying)<br><br>I think the best word is integration but for my part, or in my case, for me to integrate, I need to break away, but that doesn't apply to everyone– it's only my experience. I'm so engulfed in my own culture that for me to integrate the mainstream or Canadian culture I need to change my own identity. I need to break away from that. It's like a pendulum. In the past few years I swing and then I swing back. (David) |
| **De-skilling and re-classing of immigrants** | **Lanying<br>Karen<br>Sal** | . . .the loss of status I think is something that you never get used to. Whereas before, you were used to being treated as a professional and now you're doing a low paid job. That was difficult. (Karen) |
| **Recognition of prior learning and credentials** | **Karen<br>Laila** | I had spent these years studying and now they're telling me I can't get in – I was very indignant – and now they're telling me that I have to study again or something because they were telling me that I don't have enough credentials and when I came here (to the university campus) they told me verbally that it was because of a letter. (Karen)<br><br>I prepared a resume and thought my credentials were good enough having a Master's Degree to go and at least sit and observe a math class and help the teacher. I gave my resume to my local high school and I even had the police clearance, but they told me no. I was shocked because I thought if you were willing to volunteer and help, they would be welcoming but I was shocked when they told me no, we don't want you to be a volunteer here. (Laila) |

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| **Disconnect between inclusive pedagogy discussed in coursework and instructional approaches at UCU** | **David**<br>**Sal** | In a predominantly White classroom [at UCU], I think the power structure is in a way very imbalanced. Even though we talk about anti-discrimination in our coursework and we hypothetically imagine what happens in this scenario and that scenario, I think the imbalanced power structure exists in the [UCU] classroom still. (David)<br><br>Instructors treated us all the same – both native English speakers and others like myself. Perhaps they should be aware of the fact that… you know my little story about how we need so much more time. …At [UCU], if they think we can give value to the school board and to the students here, then I think they should also consider our own situation. The fact that I had to go to the [academic support centre] in order to be understood – [the support worker] at the [centre] was incredible and if it wasn't for someone special for the support, maybe we can get the support from a regular teacher. (Sal) |

**Table 5. 2 Summary of Supports Described by the Teacher Candidates**

| Supports described by the Teacher Candidates | Teacher Candidate(s) /8 participants | Representative Quote(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **Student support services (practicum support)** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Sal**<br>**Gavin**<br>**Laila** | That's how I felt but then [my faculty practicum advisor] kept telling me that she wasn't giving up on me. I really appreciated that; that [she] wanted to make me believe that I should not jump to conclusions but that I should give myself another chance to know myself better. I was thankful for that. [She] helped me when I was at my weakest point. Maybe [she] doesn't know, but without [her], I wouldn't have continued. (Catherine)<br><br>The [unevaluated first practicum] program, I think, in many ways, gave me an advantage. I personally feel that it gave me an advantage because when I had those experiences, something happened. I don't know what it was, but I suddenly realized that I can actually do this. (Gavin)<br><br>I was so grateful for the support I had from [student support services] because that was more than teaching. That was my wellbeing. Wellbeing of myself. (Sal)<br><br>I had an opportunity to observe classes before the program started. I knew nothing about schools in [this province] – in Canada, actually. The only thing I knew was by watching TV and movies so I had a chance to see a little bit what inside schools is like and I got to see working teachers in different classes; special ed., students at risk, and in different subjects that are not my teachables just to see a different side. We talked with administration as well. I liked that. (Sal) |
| **Supportive and encouraging relationships with mentor teachers** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Gavin**<br>**Sal**<br>**Laila** | In my last placement, I really loved my [mentor teacher]. She was very flexible, very understanding, very thoughtful, and she dealt with me not as a student, but as a colleague and we had mutual respect. (Catherine)<br><br>Luckily enough, one of my [mentor teachers] was an English as a second language speaker himself. He had an accent. He had a Polish background and he was not a native English speaker and I really enjoyed the experience. The first thing he said to the class was, 'Again, you are going to have a teacher who doesn't speak English as her first language, but I think she speaks better than me.' This was grade 12 and everyone had a good laugh. I think that was a very good experience. To see a successful teacher in the system who is now a [mentor teacher] and he was not an English as a first language speaker. (Laila)<br><br>My second practicum, she didn't really care about my language which gave me more confidence in the classroom and I felt a lot better. It doesn't mean that I did badly in the first practicum, I did a lot better in the second practicum – maybe because I learned a lot from the first practicum, maybe because I felt more comfortable and that incident about my language never happened in the second practicum. (Hannah) |
| **Positive social networks** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Karen**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Sal** | I enjoyed my classmates very much. In the beginning, they saw me as an immigrant; as a stranger not from their culture so they weren't talking to me much. But then after we started having group work and sitting together we made personal connections and I was very happy. (Catherine) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Also, try to find somebody who is nice, patient. I found somebody. Two girls in [my program cohort], they really encouraged me and helped me in the hard times. Talk to the teacher more. I wish I had done that more. Don't be too shy. (Lanying) |
| **Elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates** | **Lanying**<br>**Sal**<br>**Laila**<br>**David** | It felt like home – everybody like me, speaking English with accents. We went through the same thing. We call ourselves survivors. We went through the same struggles. We felt isolation. (Lanying)<br><br>I'm so happy I took it. I wanted to take a classroom management, or pop-culture course just to get exposure to the classrooms in Canada are all about, but I'm glad I took that course because it gave me the foundation. It was students like me so we talked about our challenges and our goals. We would express things more freely in the course than in other courses because the instructors in the course, they could understand us more than other instructors. (Sal) |
| **Supportive and encouraging relationships with individual ITE instructors** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Catherine**<br>**Laila** | He really gave me support and encouragement and told me that my English is good and everyone understands me. Why shouldn't they hire you? He was so supportive. He gave me hope that I stand a chance in the Canadian education system. I think it's very, very important for the instructors here to be supportive and to show to the minority students and ones who have English language problems or language skill problems that there is hope for them in the system. (Laila) |
| **Student support services (academic support)** | **Hannah**<br>**Sal**<br>**Laila** | …because of [the student support services staff], I started to ask for help in my written assignments and that really helped me because first it helped me improve my writing skills and second, it gave me some kind of support because I knew there is someone there. If I think my answer is not enough, it's not the end of the world. There is someone there to help me; to have a second look. That person is not my teacher, or one of my colleagues. This is a person who is willing to help. I have to admit that [the student support services staff] helped me a lot. Maybe it helped me improve my self-esteem and psychologically helped me because they were there. It was very important for me. (Laila) |
| **Optimism in discourse related to diversity and diversifying the teacher workforce** | **Lanying**<br>**Hannah**<br>**Sal** | I know I can contribute a lot to a school because of my background experiences and culture and life I bring with me. This is not my first career so I know [this city] is a place full of immigrants and there is more and more diversity here. As a person who comes from a diverse background, I think I can contribute a lot to the wellbeing of newcomers or the children of newcomers and help them integrate into their new home. (Sal) |

teachers from diverse backgrounds. The teacher candidates were not aware that ITE program staff intervened in this manner but this flexibility and response on the part of the organization should be recognized as a source of support.

This chapter concludes with a summary overview of the challenges and supports described by the teacher candidates.

## Lanying

> **"I have to clean the floors – it was a really big adjustment. In China, I worked in an office in a very respected job but here, all of a sudden I change my job and I feel like I'm at the bottom of the world."**

> **"I'm a come-from-behind runner"**

Lanying has been in Canada for 15 years. She was the top student in her graduating class at a university in China and she says she was "the lucky one" because entrance exams and limited spaces in China's universities resulted in a mere 1 in 25 chance of being accepted to an undergraduate degree program. Lanying studied mathematics and sciences and graduated with a degree in Meteorology. As the top student, she was assigned by the government to work for China's Meteorology Centre in a prestigious position as Editor of the country's Meteorological Press. She worked in this capacity for 7 years, until an opportunity for professional development in Canada was offered in 1990. At the age of 30, and having prepared for her trip to Canada for several years by saving money and studying English so she could pass the required English proficiency test, Lanying left her husband behind in China for what was to be a relatively brief but necessary separation, and came to Canada as a visitor.

Lanying's story of participation in initial teacher education is one of struggle, sacrifice, persistence, and optimism. Lanying is a very hard worker. Her years of labouring among the working poor have aged her beyond her 45 years.

**Challenges.** Lanying's narrative of participation in communities of practice associated with the elementary initial teacher education (ITE) can advance organizational learning by shedding light on challenges related to: the de-skilling and re-classing of immigrants through under-employment in Canada; outsider feelings as an English language learner in an ITE program; and, inhibited expressions of cultural identity and feelings of invisibility in university and school contexts.

***The de-skilling and re-classing of immigrants through under-employment.*** Lanying describes her early days in Canada as a "dream come true". . . "a honeymoon." As part of a visiting delegation from China, she traveled to Niagara Falls and other tourist destinations and enjoyed the beauty of Canada and the camaraderie of the group. She felt during those early months that she was living her dream and she decided that she would build a future for herself and her husband in Canada. After 6 months, the rest of her delegation returned to China and Lanying moved in with a "Canadian family. The woman was a vice-principal of a junior high school, the man was a store manager, and they had two kids." Lanying took a position with this family as a nanny and housekeeper so she could save money to fund her future plans in Canada. In particular, Lanying was determined to save money for tuition to attend university in Canada study journalism.

Domestic household work was difficult for Lanying. Not only did she feel de-skilled and under-employed, she also felt that she did not have enough experience to do the job well. As the youngest child of three, she was not required or invited to help with household chores

and when she married and moved into her husband's home, her mother-in-law and grandmother-in-law managed the household, thus, as Lanying describes, working as a nanny was difficult.

> I have to clean the floors; it was a really big adjustment. In China, I worked in an office in a very respected job but here, all of a sudden I change my job and I feel like I'm at the bottom of the world.

Lanying worked as a nanny and housekeeper from Monday to Friday and to supplement her income, she sold flowers in the streets of Toronto on weekends. It was her experience as a street vendor that brought her first and fleeting success as a journalist in the city. After 2 years in Canada, Lanying took a journalism course at an Ontario university. As part of her course, she wrote an article about her experiences selling flowers on the street and her article was published in the Toronto Star, one of Canada's most widely circulated newspapers. She believes that her story was unique because most street vendors do not have her level of education.

> People here who have very good education don't usually sell flowers. The people here who do sell flowers in the street have very low education – they don't write articles so I was in a unique position. That's why the editor said my article is fresh because I spoke in a way people don't expect. I wrote about how I felt during the four seasons, what people I meet when I sell flowers.

Selling flowers on the street was a very difficult job, especially as inclement weather started to take its toll:

> I remember in the winter. Valentine's Day is a big day for us and everything was frozen. We put the flower in the bucket and the water would freeze. I had to keep kicking the bucket because I didn't want the water to freeze. My hands were so numb that day. There was lots of money, but it's a hard time to count because it's so cold.

Loneliness, deskilled underemployment, persistence, and optimism are enduring themes throughout Lanying's narrative. She remained in Canada for almost 5 years, "waiting in separation", before she was granted landed immigrant status and was able to sponsor her husband's immigration to Canada. During those five years, Lanying worked as a domestic labourer, sold flowers on the street, and studied journalism at universities in Ontario and Manitoba. She saved her money to pay tuition fees (without landed immigrant status she did not qualify for financial aid) and to pay $6,000 to an immigration counselor, a service and fee she later learned was not necessary. When she learned that tuition fees and the cost of living were cheaper in Manitoba, Lanying left Ontario and studied there for one year. She describes her year in Manitoba as "the worse year."

> Maybe that's why I have four children. I don't want them to feel lonely like I did in Manitoba in the middle of the night when all I could hear was the train whistle. Very lonely. So lonely. All alone. But everything has a good side and a bad side. It makes you stronger. You could easily break.

Lanying often speaks of strength and perseverance. She completed several university courses in journalism but set her dreams of being a journalist in Canada aside to start a family with her husband. Their four children are a constant source of pride and activity for Lanying and she is very involved in their schooling. It was through her volunteer work at her children's school that the idea of becoming a teacher started to resonate with Lanying. The

principal and several teachers at the school mentioned to Lanying that she would be a good teacher and that she should enter the profession. While she did not immediately agree with their suggestion, Lanying recalled her mother's work as a teacher in China and the time she spent as a teenager helping her mother at the school on weekends. She also enjoyed the environment where her children attended school, and she volunteered to give presentations about Chinese history and writing, and started to see that she had something to offer. With her degree in meteorology and her undergraduate degree credits from universities in Canada, Lanying was accepted to the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program at Urban Canada University (UCU). The challenges, however, and Lanying's need to call on her strength and perseverance persisted throughout her participation in the ITE program and intensified right up until the final days of classes.

***Outsider feelings as an English language learner.*** Lanying is an English Language Learner and although she has been in Canada for 15 years and has studied English for almost 20 years, she indicated that she still struggles to communicate verbally in English. She described feelings of being an outsider in UCU academic classes where she felt excluded from conversations and frustrated by her efforts to communicate within these communities of practice:

> …especially spoken language and listening. When you talk to each other, not talk to me, when you talk to each other, it's fast to me. Too fast. I only get an idea. Written language and reading, I don't have too much trouble. Just spoken English. How to express (pause) sometimes it makes me frustrated when I say something and people didn't get it. That's when I feel (pause) oh, my (pause) that's when I feel really

> frustrated. My children correct me – 'My teacher didn't pronounce like that'. All the time.

English also presented challenges for Lanying during her practice teaching blocks. As she describes:

> Courses – I can take a bit of time; I can finish an eight-page report, I can do it tomorrow. But in the class, they [the students] are coming. Kind of, oh my God, they're coming and it makes me so nervous and you have to be able to act fast. The students will ask you questions and how do you answer correctly?

Lanying was cautioned during her second practicum (the final practicum placement in the published program structure) that she was at risk of receiving a failing evaluation for that component of the program. Lanying's mentor teacher expressed concerns about Lanying's ability to manage the behaviour of students in the Grade 6 classroom. She told Lanying that she needed to work on establishing a stronger teacher presence because the students were taking advantage of her less assertive communication style. The mentor teacher repeatedly directed Lanying to use a louder voice when speaking to the students; especially when she was attempting to redirect or correct their misbehaviour.

Although Lanying was told that an additional practicum placement would be arranged for her, and hence another opportunity to be successful should she fail this second practicum, she was very upset by the prospect of failing. Having graduated at the top of her undergraduate class in China, failing was not something that she had previously experienced in a university program. When Lanying talks about this time in her program, her strength, persistence, and optimism shine through:

> I had a mental set. I came here and I wanted success. I don't want to fail. I will be strong. Things happen. It's not the end of the world. Like the last practicum, when I might fail, I was heartbroken. That time, I tell myself, you can. You have to try harder. You have to work harder than other people and just be strong. Never give up. Never.

Lanying considers herself an underdog in the initial teacher education program. Much of her narrative is brought to life through sports analogies:

> Never give up. Never. I like soccer. When you see those teams play you realize that two goals behind, they still can come back and win 3 to 2. Miracles do happen. Miracles. I like sports. I like running. I'm a come-from-behind runner. In the 1500 metre, I don't have speed so I let them go. Go, go, go. Fast. One by one, I eat them up. I know we're not at the same level but I still think I will make it if I try my best. Right now I'm watching the soccer [the World Cup] and I'm watching the underdogs and the long shots. But the long shots do win, right? So I think I'm a long shot. Like in horse racing, the long shots do beat the favourites, right? Sports help me to keep my spirits up. If I don't do a good job this time, maybe next time.

Lanying sees herself as an underdog in the teacher education program and in the job market. She believes that she has disadvantages such as a lack of cultural understanding of teaching and learning in Canada because she had not been a student in Canadian schools and shortcomings, one being a difficulty with verbal English that Canadian-born teacher candidates do not have. Regardless of her perceived shortcomings, Lanying believes that she has strengths that she can capitalize on and that with hard work and persistence she will succeed in the job market and as a teacher. In particular, Lanying believes that her strong

academic knowledge of mathematics and science – subjects where specialists are in demand – puts her at an advantage as does the current rhetoric within Canada's urban school districts that they are committed to diversity and diversifying the teacher population. Lanying also believes that her fluency in Mandarin and Cantonese will be regarded favourably in some school communities. But still, as optimistic as she tries to be, with four children to support, maintaining a positive focus on her strengths is difficult:

> We [ITCs] all feel insecure and still feel we're not good enough – inadequate. This morning, with another class, my math teacher said never put yourself down. We always put ourselves down. We put down our English all the time. We always think about it automatically. Like if two people try for a job, we always think that we're definitely not the first choice. If you read the professional magazine, it says that internationally educated teachers, like us who are educated elsewhere, don't have enough respect to those people. Immigrant teachers have a higher percentage of working as a supply teacher. I know. I feel. That's the reality we have to deal with. …I need to work to my advantage. You want to work confidently. I feel badly. Not as good as others. I struggle with that daily – all the time.

Lanying is committed to working hard and continuing her training in order to be successful in her search for a teaching job. Immediately after graduation, she took two additional qualifications courses (one that would enable her to teach Senior Mathematics, and one that would qualify her for work as an ESL teacher). The fees for these courses (approximately $700 per course) represented a significant financial hardship to Lanying and her family but it was an investment that she felt was necessary to make her more marketable

to prospective school employers. In addition to persistence, optimism and playing to her strengths, Lanying believes that it's important to be prepared when opportunity strikes.

> I watch the soccer [World Cup] and I really feel for them; they are losing but they still have to play. You have to finish – they still have to battle – we are the underdog – a long shot. I always wish the away team to win – or even a draw is better – is a victory for them. Like Trinidad, they got a draw and it felt like a win. You just have to be strong and never give up. Just keep hoping. And be prepared! If the opportunity comes, if the ball is in front of the net and you don't have that kind of skill – you need the skill so that if the opportunity arises you can score. One to one, still they can't score because they don't have the skill – not just physically, but mentally.

***Inhibited expressions of cultural identity and feelings of invisibility.*** Although Lanying described challenges and situations that might well be attributed to racism, linguisism, and gender inequity, when asked if she had experienced any effects of these socially constructed dynamics of difference, she only discussed what she described as a surprising source of racism from fellow TCs who shared Lanying's Chinese heritage, but were born in Canada or arrived in Canada as young children and did not have memories of living in China.

> It's funny. It's not from people from other races. It's actually from our own race. One student said he's ashamed to be Chinese. I was shocked to hear that. Why would he say that? I don't know. He was born here in Canada. Even though we're all Chinese, we're different. Another said, "I prefer to call myself a Canadian." He doesn't want to be called a Chinese-Canadian. I don't know why. They should be proud to be Chinese. Look at ancient China – so many inventions. They really made a

> contribution to the world. Only that made me uncomfortable. Other than that, nothing because of my race.

Although she didn't articulate experiences of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, language, class, or religion (in spite of the direct question asked as part of the semi-structured interview), Lanying described feelings of invisibility in the practicum school context. To illustrate her feelings of invisibility, Lanying described a situation after graduation from the program where one of her host schools had asked 60 TCs to volunteer to help supervise students in the gym on the last day of school:

> The people who are warm make our struggle less stressful. Just a smile and a few casual words; but others, they don't even say hello. Like, I went back to one of my practicum schools to do some volunteer work. Only me and another TC went. It was such a hot day and four classes watched a movie they didn't want to watch and the teachers and the principal didn't even bother to say hi. So I feel why did I come all this way? They didn't even say thank you, they didn't say hi. It was like I didn't exist. That made me feel so bad. They asked 60 people to volunteer that day and only two responded. Maybe that's the reason. I have a big heart. I helped the kids and that's good. I'm really sensitive and it troubles me because I feel things all the time. That's not good. Good if you're going to write poetry; or to write an article. But for other things it's distracting and makes you want to isolate yourself to study and just never mind.

**Supports.** Lanying's narrative sheds light on the importance of organizational and social supports. Lanying described several benefits of her participation in the elective course developed specifically to support internationally educated teacher candidates at UCU. She

also described interaction with the course instructor as a positive influence. Additionally, Lanying appreciated support and encouragement that she received from a UCU faculty practicum supervisor and from fellow teacher candidates.

***Honest and helpful feedback.*** When asked about the supports that helped her during her studies in the ITE program, Lanying talked about the importance of honest and helpful feedback from teachers in the field and her faculty supervisors. During her first practice teaching experience, Lanying's host teacher was very positive about Lanying's work, was sensitive to her needs as an English language learner and did not indicate any areas for improvement. This supportive stance, however, was not considered to be in Lanying's best interest by the UCU faculty supervisor assigned to support Lanying's practice teaching experience. The faculty supervisor informed the host teacher that Lanying was not meeting even the basic expectations of the program. She was not developing and delivering lesson plans as required and she was not teaching lessons related to the provincial curriculum.

Honest feedback and an action plan for improvement enabled Lanying to enter her second practicum with a more realistic concept of the program expectations and workload. Although she was identified as at risk of failing her second practicum, daily and focused feedback from her mentor teacher and faculty supervisor, and her own efforts to deliver what was required, enabled Lanying to pass the practicum, and hence the program. By relating the experience of another ITC, Lanying described the importance of an effective mentor teacher: "One TC, her [mentor teacher] told her from the very beginning that she would fail. She didn't even teach her how to be good. We need a balance. You will succeed, but here is how you will be a success."

***The elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates.*** The elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates was a significant support to Lanying

during her year in the ITE program as this course offered a safe space, a group of peers with similar challenges, and a supportive and empathetic instructor.

> It felt like home – everybody like me, speaking English with accents. We went through the same thing. We call ourselves survivors. We went through the same struggles. We felt isolation. English. The language problem – we all had that kind of fear. For example, I teach mathematics. I have to know the terms – how to pronounce. Some words are really hard like parallelogram and acute angle, obtuse angle. I learn how to say these words from my children.

Lanying also described the course instructor as particularly helpful and sensitive to the needs of ITCs:

> I think she is different. She knows our needs better. Even she speaks English slowly. Other courses, they speak normal, but she speaks very slowly and very clearly so we all don't misunderstand anything. Also, she encourages. I think she has a background teaching ESL so she knows how we feel. She encourages more.

When asked what advice she would give to future students who are in a situation similar to hers, Lanying offered the following:

> Don't isolate yourself. You know, we tend to be shy – like my English is not good – they are going to laugh at me. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. We're all human beings. We all make mistakes all the time. I made a goal at the beginning to do my best. If you know the answer, raise your hand, even if your heart is beating so fast. Also, try to find somebody who is nice, patient. I found somebody. Two girls in [my program cohort], they really encouraged me and helped me in the hard times. Talk to

> the teacher more. I wish I had done that more. Don't be too shy. That's the reality. You can't compete with native Canadians. Your English is probably always going to be with a bit of an accent and may not be perfect but if you're willing to take the risk, you will improve.

**Hannah**

> **"When I'm speaking to my friends I'm ok, I find my English is ok enough to communicate but especially if I have to talk in front of people or in front of someone important like teachers or principals or interviewers, then I lose my grip of English and I suddenly feel like I'm all the way back to my first years of immigration. I was much more self-conscious. I didn't have confidence to speak in front of the class, but once I got used to it, I think I was better."**
>
> **"I don't really expect a lot of things this year. I don't expect to become a full-time teacher. I'll be satisfied as an occasional teacher but that doesn't mean that I'll give up – I'll just try to improve myself."**

Hannah was born in Korea and immigrated to Canada with her parents when she was in Grade 9. She has lived in urban Canada for 10 years and she and her family are very active members of the city's Korean community.

When Hannah arrived in Canada, she was anxious to "fit in" and to make new friends with English speaking peers.

> When I came to Canada the most thing I worried about was friends. Because I heard a lot of bad stories about Korean immigrants who didn't quite fit into Canadian society and they could not make friends in Canada and that means it will take away the opportunity to learn English. So that was the most thing I worried about – being snubbed by the other people, or being bullied by the other people because I could not speak English because if you don't speak English, even though you do have normal,

> average academics, people will not think that you have learned much because you sound kind of stupid even though you're not.

Hannah did not make many friends during her studies at a Canadian high school. She found her closest friends in the ESL class that she attended for periodic support throughout secondary school.

> Mainly I had to find my friends from the ESL class. I could not find any other friends outside of the ESL class because I just think that they didn't really have tolerance to listen to my accent or my bad English but my ESL friends were all in the same situation so even though our skin colours are different, it was much more comfortable to hang around with ESL friends rather than Canadian friends.

When she first arrived in Canada, Hannah was considering becoming a veterinarian or an artist. As she became more involved in the Korean Catholic Church community as a Sunday School teacher, and as a native languages teacher helping second and third generation Korean-Canadian children learn to speak the language spoken by their parents and grandparents, Hannah became more interested in pursuing a career in teaching. Her mother had been a teacher in Korea and she encouraged Hannah to follow in her footsteps.

**Challenges.** Hannah's story of participation in the elementary initial teacher education (ITE) program at UCU sheds light on: challenges to the competency and authority of ITCs who are English language learners; incidents of inter-cultural racism; and restricted access to employment as a teacher.

***Challenges to competency and authority as an English language learner.*** Hannah's confidence in her ability to communicate in English was challenged in several aspects of the

ITE program and she felt that her developing English skills posed significant impediments to her ability to understand her instructors, communicate with peers, faculty and Associate Teachers, complete written assignments, and interview successfully for employment as a teacher. Hannah believes that if she had immigrated to Canada at a younger age, her English skills would be much stronger.

> Throughout the whole program I always wondered why didn't my parents immigrate a little bit earlier so I could speak better English and maybe that would give me a better chance to offer better education to my students and that kind of affected me I think as well as writing essays was difficult. I always had to go to the helping centre to fix my grammar and punctuation. When I'm speaking to my friends I'm ok, I find my English is ok enough to communicate but especially if I have to talk in front of people or in front of someone important like teachers or principals or interviewers, then I lose my grip of English and I suddenly feel like I'm all the way back to my first years of immigration. I was much more self-conscious. I didn't have confidence to speak in front of the class, but once I got used to it, I think I was better.

Hannah described her first practicum as the most challenging experience she faced during her participation in the ITE program. Her first host teacher was "very worried" about Hannah's English proficiency. She often corrected Hannah in front of the students and always emphasized the enunciation of key terms before she would teach a lesson. While Hannah feels that she learned a lot from this experience, her confidence was shaken, especially when the students started to make reference to her English skills.

> Something happened in my first practicum and children in my class, you know they all try to test the new teacher, and they were trying to not listen to me. They tried to

> pretend and some students also mentioned about my language and that was a most difficult time during my experience at the university. I tried my best to improve my language or to try to teach my students more creatively but if the students are not listening to me then that really affected my English because it lessened my self-confidence and lessened my self-esteem so I had to control myself to not go with those student tricks.

The students in Hannah's first practicum school were "mostly white" but there were also several Asian students in the class. Hannah didn't feel teased or harassed by the Asian students and she suggests that having parents who are also English language learners may have contributed to what she perceived as empathy among the Asian students.

> My first practicum, about half of the students were Chinese or Asian background and I really didn't have a problem with those students because as far as I know, their family and their parents are also ESL speakers so they understand.

Hannah was not content to accept the behaviour of the students in her first practicum and she addressed the situation directly with the students involved. In her discussions with the students, she asked that they understand her situation as a teacher candidate.

> During the practicum – my situation was students arguing about my language – this is what I did for those students. I had to talk one to one with those students during recess or lunch time. I talked to my students nicely and reasonably – I used logic. I explained my situation and I told them that I don't want to argue with them but I want to explain my situation to them as a teacher candidate. That I would like to help the students, not go against, or be too bossy around them so I asked for their help, nicely,

> and that they understand my situation and understand my willingness to help the students.

Throughout our interview, Hannah referred to herself as an English language learner (an "ESL student"), and she often assumed responsibility for the linguistic challenges she faced as an ITC at UCU and for her inability to comprehend everything that was presented to her.

> Sometimes I could not get what I had to do or what I had to prepare. It just kind of slipped through. Instructors clearly speaking about it, but sometimes I just could not get it. Maybe they were speaking too fast, maybe there wasn't a visual context. If they speak verbally, orally, maybe I could not get it. That is my fault still, though.

***Inter-culture racism.*** Hannah was perplexed to find herself the target of inter-cultural "teasing." One of her peers at UCU, who was born in Canada but shares Hannah's Korean heritage, often made jokes about Hannah's English proficiency. She suggests several reasons why this person might have felt his jokes at her expense were acceptable and not hurtful, but to Hannah, his comments were offensive.

> There is someone in my option who is also a Korean person – he was born here and speaks perfect English but he doesn't really speak Korean. He just kind of teased me about my language – but it's just teasing – nothing serious – but for them it's funny, but for me, sometimes it would hurt my feelings. It's funny that he was also Korean. Maybe the other students are aware of the situation – maybe he thought because he's Korean it's more comfortable for him to tease me. But it's nothing so serious. Just some jokes. Maybe they are in the gap between first and second generation. Maybe

> they grew up in Canadian society and maybe they never had a chance to become a Korean in Canada. Maybe that's why. Or maybe they're thinking that if they make a joke about my language, maybe it will not hurt me because he's Korean too. Maybe that's why, because I notice the other people are really careful, are really aware of situations of races and languages. Maybe he thought that because he's Korean his joke wouldn't be offensive to me.

Hannah believes that "other people" in her program were careful not to make racial comments or to make her feel uncomfortable about her English proficiency. She also suggests that children of immigrant Koreans who are born in Canada may be less understanding of Hannah's circumstances because as Canadian-born citizens, they have never experienced being "Korean in Canada."

***Restricted access to employment as a teacher.*** Hannah believes that her best option for employment in the current job market for teachers is to work as an occasional teacher as there are very few opportunities for full-time employment in local school districts. Unfortunately, for many new teachers in the province, work as an occasional teacher is also difficult to obtain as the process in many school districts for being placed on the occasional teacher roster is very competitive. With this in mind, and having had a stressful and unsuccessful interview with one school district, Hannah and her fellow TCs at her second practicum school approached the principal and asked if she would interview them for her school district and consider recommending them for employment.

> Also, about the job interviews, the principal from my second practicum did the interview because she did have some confidence in me because I did my best and I

> did good work with the students and she knows about me. She was a lot better than the other interviewers so we asked her to interview me so she did it.

The principal did not recommend Hannah for hiring or for the occasional teacher roster in her district, but she did tell Hannah that she could be an occasional teacher at her school. While this limits her opportunities for earning an income, Hannah is happy that the principal is willing to give her an opportunity to work as a teacher and to improve her teaching and English skills.

> I'm just on the principal's list. And that's a great opportunity for me because I also had an interview with (a school board) and it was not good – I received a response that I cannot get on their list. It happened right after my first practicum and I wasn't ready for it so maybe it will be good advice for students in my situation – if the principal has a positive image of you, it's better to have an interview with her or him because she knows that my English is not good, but that I can do it and I'm doing my best to improve the situation to overcome my challenge. That I'm not the type of person who will sit around and do nothing. I think that's good advice for the other students.

Hannah is determined to be a teacher in Canada but she believes she is being realistic about both her chances of attaining full-time employment, and about her need for continued studies in English. She is not going to be idle while looking for a teaching job as she has plans for ongoing personal and professional development.

> I don't think I can get a full-time job this year but I think that's ok – I need to take more time for myself and I still have a lot of things to learn. As an occasional teacher,

> I will still learn a lot. In the meantime, I'm going to take a course in English writing and grammar so I will keep learning and improve myself as a teacher. I don't really expect a lot of things this year. I don't expect to become a full-time teacher. I'll be satisfied as an occasional teacher but that doesn't mean that I'll give up – I'll just try to improve myself.

**Supports.** Hannah's narrative describes the following supports: recognition of her linguistic strengths in supporting English language learners in diverse school contexts; organizational assistance provided by student support services staff, the academic support centre, and a supportive instructor; and social support from friends.

***Recognition of linguistic strengths in the school context.*** Hannah's second practicum placement was a much more positive experience. Her second host teacher did not draw attention to Hannah's English skills and Hannah found the students were more receptive to her instruction and authority as a teacher.

> My second practicum, she didn't really care about my language which gave me more confidence in the classroom and I felt a lot better. It doesn't mean that I did badly in the first practicum, I did a lot better in the second practicum – maybe because I learned a lot from the first practicum, maybe because I felt more comfortable and that incident about my language never happened in the second practicum. I also felt maybe it's because my first practicum teacher was really conscious about my language and she really worried about me. Maybe that kind of influenced the kids too. I thought that, too, because the students listen to their teacher too. Maybe they noticed this from the teacher too.

Hannah's skills in speaking Korean were recognized and valued by the principal at her second practicum school. She spoke with Hannah and asked her if she would provide support for a student who had recently arrived from Korea and was having difficulty adjusting.

> In my second practicum, the principal knew that I was an ESL student – she worried about me, of course, but she also used my ability to speak Korean so she put me with a Korean student from 8th grade and she asked me to help him – so she kind of used my ability to speak Korean because that particular student could not speak English very well so I had a chance to help that student.

***Academic writing support.*** Hannah received frequent assistance from student support services at UCU. In particular, she took her assignments to the academic support centre and asked the tutors to help her edit grammar and punctuation. Hannah also asked her friends to help with her written assignments and she found the support of her Korean friends particularly helpful.

> And my friends helped me a lot. Friends who have been here a lot – friends who immigrated here in early childhood or who majored in English. I used that help a lot. I felt comfortable to use my friends' help because they are Korean and some of my friends translated from Korean to English so maybe you can't understand what I mean, but my friends can understand because they are Korean speakers, too. So they would suggest how about this sentence, maybe this is better – maybe this is smoother in English.

In addition to assistance from UCU student support services and friends, Hannah appreciated that one of her instructors met with her for clarification of arguments Hannah

made in her papers, or to suggest ways in which she could improve the assignments and re-submit them for grading.

> My [instructor] helped me a lot, too. Such as, she gave me a second chance. She would go through the essay with me and would say this one I don't understand, maybe I should change the sentence or something like that.

Although Hannah acknowledges that she experienced difficulties as an ITC and as an English language learner, and she was aware of institutional supports available to ITCs by way of the unevaluated first practicum option and the elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates, Hannah did not take advantage of these supports because she did not want to be singled out as "special" among the other teacher candidates.

> Actually, I went to a workshop for teacher candidates who were educated outside of Canada and they talked about it but I thought it would be better to take the same one with the other students because I didn't want to be too special. I wanted to have the same opportunity with the other students. I didn't really go with that idea. … I didn't think about that course [for internationally educated teacher candidates]. I kind of looked at it, but I took another elective. …digital computer technology for teachers. I was more into technology – that's why.

**David**

> **" The Chinese community is so strong here that basically before I came into the program I didn't feel like I was a Canadian at all. I felt like I was only Chinese – I watched Chinese TV, I was reading Chinese newspapers, and everything was in Chinese so only at the school that I partnered with at that time did I use English. But at [Urban Canada University] I saw them 5 days a week and it was like total culture shock to me and I had to adjust all over again."**

David emigrated to Canada from Hong Kong in 1978 when he was 16 years of age. At that time in China, there were limited opportunities to attend university and the highly competitive admissions selection process suggested to David's parents that his only chance of a university education was as an international student. David came to Canada without his family to attend boarding school for Grades 10-13 and then completed an undergraduate degree at a Canadian university. He described his settlement in Canada as a very sad and lonely period. When he graduated from university, David did not plan to become a teacher. He worked as a social services worker supporting students in schools located in a largely Chinese-Canadian community. David worked in schools as a social services worker for more than 10 years and felt that he was "plateauing" in his field. Those feelings, coupled with what he describes as a "mid-life thing", prompted David to pursue teaching as a new career.

David does not intend to teach in Canada in the near future as he is returning to Hong Kong after almost 30 years in Canada to teach an English immersion program. Some of the factors that contributed to David's decision to return to Hong Kong are presented later in this narrative.

**Challenges.** David's story of participation in the initial teacher education program at UCU describes challenges associated with: complex dynamics of identity negotiation among long-settled immigrants who maintain close ties with their cultural community; cultural experience and knowledge as it relates to teacher interaction with students; and, the perception of organizational intolerance as it relates to diverse religious beliefs of teacher candidates and teachers. David's narrative does not describe instances of more collaborative power relations as part of his participation in the ITE program at UCU.

***Complex dynamics of identity negotiation.*** Although he has lived in Canada for almost 30 years and worked as a youth social services worker in a Canadian secondary school for more than 10 years, David describes his time in pre-service teacher education at Urban Canada University (UCU) as a period of "culture shock." To David, adjusting to the cultural environment of his teacher education program and the elementary schools where he completed his practice teaching blocks proved most challenging. At 44 years of age, David felt a generational gap between himself and his fellow TCs, most of whom were female, had recently graduated from an undergraduate degree program and were in their mid-20s. This generational and gender gap was exacerbated by cultural differences.

> First of all, the program, we have only 38 students in the program and the majority were female TCs and most of them were a lot younger than I am because they just came up from university. Also, a majority of them were Caucasian. Many of them were white. I think it was hard for me to break into that group.

David describes how prior to coming to UCU he was "only Chinese" and was able to immerse himself in Chinese culture and language because of the well-established Chinese community in the city.

> The Chinese community is so strong here that basically before I came into the program I didn't feel like I was a Canadian at all. I felt like I was only Chinese – I watched Chinese TV, I was reading Chinese newspapers, and everything was in Chinese so only at the school that I partnered with at that time did I use English.

David describes his personal and cultural identity as "like a pendulum" because he has not found a way to maintain a balanced identity while interacting within both the Chinese-

Canadian community and the broader Canadian culture. While he argues that it may work well for others, integration is not something that David sees as possible in his experience.

> I think the best word is integration but for my part, or in my case, for me to integrate, I need to break away, but that doesn't apply to everyone– it's only my experience. I'm so engulfed in my own culture that for me to integrate the mainstream or Canadian culture I need to change my own identity. I need to break away from that. It's like a pendulum. In the past few years I swing and then I swing back.

When asked to elaborate on his cultural identity pendulum, David suggested that his tendency to change his identity and cast aside one in favour of the other may stem from his perception of power and power imbalance and feelings of "fitting in" and being accepted "as one of them."

> Maybe, [pause], maybe [pause], in order to integrate into the other culture I think it might have something to do with the imbalance of power because I feel that I'm not in the dominant position so I have to fully break away so that I appear, not pure white [pause] so I can identify more with them [pause] or they would perceive me as one of them. And after I have the confidence that I am one of them, then I can go back to put the two together.

David believes that his perceptions of dominance and power stem from an Eastern culture that respects Western culture and considers it a dominant power in the world.

> I don't think anyone coming from Canada to the Orient brings a sense of dominance with them consciously. It is from the East, people from the East, people from the Orient, I think, perceive them as dominant. The perceived dominance, I believe, still

> exists internationally I think, regardless if you're in the East, the Orient, in Hong Kong, in China, in Korea, in Japan, or in [Canada]. I think it is the East and West issue instead of the majority in terms of numbers issue.

Although he has maintained his fluency in Mandarin and Cantonese during his 28 years in Canada, David has also developed fluent English language skills and he describes as a gift his ability to speak all three languages in a manner that is considered standard and free of "accent". He argues that his education and credentials from Canadian English schools and universities and his ability to speak Standard English without an accent made him a strong candidate for a teaching position in Hong Kong where private schools rigorously compete for students and use the English and Western experiences of their staff as features in their marketing initiatives.

> I think a function of the program [at UCU] – I believe it gives me an advantage over someone else who finishes a program in Hong Kong. I think that's why I'm hired right now as an English teacher. They interviewed me in English. The reason is that I do speak English. …So I think for them, well, that made for me getting a job, relatively easy. It's because I have that background and they need an English teacher and English is an important subject in Hong Kong because people have to learn English to compete since English is an international language. So I think that coming from [UCU] and the [ITE] program will definitely give me an advantage over others, and also my ability to speak English.

When he returns to Hong Kong to assume his teaching position, David anticipates experiencing other complex dynamics of identity and power as he has been hired to teach English in a school with predominantly Chinese teachers and students and although he 'looks

Chinese' and has been immersed in Chinese-Canadian culture, he has been hired as a Western English-speaker and has been directed to speak only English to students and staff. He hopes that this does not set him once again at the margins of the majority group, but recognizes that this is a possibility as he returns to Hong Kong and is potentially perceived as a dominant and powerful Westerner among his Chinese colleagues.

For David, attending Urban Canada University and being immersed in Caucasian-Canadian culture was challenging and he felt that in trying to "fit in" he "had to adjust all over again." Socially, although he found his interactions with colleagues to be friendly and positive, he did not develop any close friendships in the way other TCs do during their intense participation in the teacher education program. He found it disconcerting that he could not relate to cultural references to television programs, books, and musical artists frequently made by his fellow TCs – "That whole cultural context I was not familiar with so I was feeling quite lost in a way."

In terms of race, age and gender, David felt very firmly that he was in a minority position in the ITE program. He believes that creating an experience of inclusion and acceptance in the program is the responsibility of both TCs and instructors. For his part, David describes how he showed initiative in trying to interact and make connections with his colleagues:

> I think the teachers need to be sensitive to the issues that the students are facing and on the other hand I think that the students need to try to voice out and also, for example, if there is a cultural barrier, in my case, I tried to integrate into the classroom, to hang out with them, initiate the phone calls, initiate the talking instead of passively waiting for others to approach me.

David goes on to describe his impressions of a power imbalance in the program based on his perception of white dominance in the program among students and instructors:

> I believe that students need to take the initiative. They need to be pro-active instead of passive. But, I think it takes courage. And also, in a predominantly white classroom, I think the power structure is in a way very imbalanced. Even though we talk about anti-discrimination in the classroom, we can hypothetically imagine what happens in this scenario and that scenario, but I think the imbalanced power structure exists in the classroom still.

David confirmed that he is referring both to classrooms in school districts as well as classrooms in the ITE program and he expressed his belief that UCU provides many opportunities for TCs to learn about anti-racism and inclusive teaching practices in schools but that same commitment to equity and inclusion is not modeled to the extent that it might be in the ITE program in terms of the TC student experience. For David, taking initiative to connect with his predominantly white and female colleagues required courage. He suggests that instructors might have been able to mitigate the need for such courage if they understood and responded to the issues TCs are facing, if they attended to the power imbalance and white dominance in the program, and if they recognized and critiqued their assumptions that all students bring knowledge of Canadian culture and the culture of teaching and learning in the province to the program.

***Cultural experience and knowledge relative to teacher-student interaction.*** In terms of advice he would give to future TCs in similar situations, David urges future TCs from minority ELL backgrounds to recognize the need to become familiar with dominant Canadian culture. He argues that TCs need to have knowledge not only of the culture of

teaching and learning in schools, but also of the cultural experiences and knowledges transmitted through Canadian English television, popular books, and music.

> I think it is not only in the classroom, but it is also outside the classroom that a person needs to integrate himself or herself into the wider Canadian context outside of their own culture and their own community because that helps you know not only in the pre-service program but it will help you eventually in the classroom because in the classroom, it depends on which school, but there will be a good chance that you will end up with mainstream culture in your classroom. So I think to prepare yourself you need to break away – not break away, maybe that's the wrong term, you need to integrate your culture with the mainstream Canadian culture so that your perspective will be widened by watching CBC, [and local TV stations]. I would tell ESL students that you really need to do that.

David repeatedly makes reference to breaking away from heritage cultures in order to understand Canadian culture sufficiently to "fit in" with colleagues and to be effective and appropriate as a teacher. Although he clarifies that others may not need to break entirely from their cultural community, he feels very strongly that this is what he needed to do in order to be successful in the program.

Even with his efforts to immerse himself in Canadian culture, David encountered a situation during his practice teaching that prompted him to re-examine his plans to be a teacher in Canada. As a result of this experience, David decided that he lacked sufficient cultural knowledge and experience in Canada's elementary schools to teach in the province. This incident shook David's confidence, heightened his feelings as an outsider, and played a significant role in his decision to return to Hong Kong after almost 30 years.

> If I were to stay here to teach, the challenge I would face is the culture in the classroom for sure. For example, I'll give you one scenario that happened to me during my practicum. I was placed in a school and my [mentor teacher] was absent one day and they could not find a replacement teacher so the other teachers were supposed to stay with me because I was not allowed to stay in the classroom by myself. Some of the teachers did not come so I was left for half of the day by myself in the classroom. There was one student – I think she's very difficult – and I was stupid enough to engage in a power struggle with her so the situation escalated. The other students were the bystanders – they were watching us, you know. And what happened was, one of the students said, "they're arguing" and what I said was, "Oh, shut up", and all the students said "oooooh" then I realized I said something wrong. I think that incident tells me that I don't understand the Canadian culture well enough to be in a Canadian classroom because if I were to say the same thing in a classroom full of Chinese, I know how far I can go. For example, I didn't say "SHUT UP!", I just said, "Oh, shut up". Now I know that shut up is not appropriate language in the classroom but we use it all the time. So that incident tells me that I don't know the Canadian context well enough. We, as a society, we just say oh, shut up, like it's a casual thing. I didn't know that shut up is not appropriate in the classroom and there might be a lot more words that I don't know about and are not appropriate in the classroom. So from that instance on, I knew that I don't know the Canadian context well enough to teach in a Canadian classroom.

David spoke with one of his instructors about this incident but did not receive assurance from the instructor that many new teachers struggle to establish their teacher presence and to hone the language they use as teachers. This incident occurred during David's second practicum

and he carried his feelings of cultural insufficiency throughout his subsequent field placements.

David was reluctant to approach his instructors for support and guidance. He indicated that prior to our interview, he hadn't thought about his reluctance to seek assistance and he wondered if it stemmed from not wanting to appear in need of special support.

> Maybe (pause) now I'm just thinking (pause) maybe I don't want to appear as incompetent in a way that they need to pay special attention to me or take care of me in that sense. I'm not sure. Maybe that's the case. I guess that might be a barrier for me to participate in the program.

For David, approaching instructors was not something that he had considered. He suggests that support for TCs needs to be made more visible at UCU and that instructors need to be aware of available supports. David cautions, however, that instructors walk a "tightrope" in terms of the support they provide for TCs. He argues that instructors need to be "culturally sensitive" and aware of the issues facing their students, but notes that,

> We are walking on a tightrope here because if the instructors are overly caring, then people will say, why do you single me out? And if they are not caring, then people will say that they are negligent so it's like a tightrope.

***Intolerance of religious diversity.*** David feels that his religious beliefs as a Christian were excluded and discredited in the UCU initial teacher education program, in the university as a whole, and in the public schools where he completed his practice teaching. He felt the need to suppress his beliefs and did not feel comfortable engaging in discussions of religion throughout his participation in the teacher education program. According to David,

"Christians are always labeled as conservative and very intolerant." In particular, David argues that there wasn't a space for him to share his views and beliefs regarding same-sex marriages and homosexuality.

> I think there is always a conflict of interest because the Canadian classroom, may it be at [the university], may it be in the field, there is always a conflict of positions and again, I'm not sure if that has anything to do with power, too, but as long as you agree with the mainstream then it's OK but you cannot hold views that are different from the mainstream because then you will be labeled as intolerant or conservative or right-winged. So, in a way it is open and in a way it is not.

**Karen**

> **"I would advise them to get a mentor. I think it really helps to have someone who can advise them professionally on what to do because I think teacher candidates in my situation, they certainly need a lot more help and guidance because there are certain areas of education that they might not know because they didn't grow up here."**
>
> **"Academically, socially, emotionally – I really liked the teaching. I loved the instructional strategies that we were learning. I thought that I was growing professionally and I really appreciated what the instructors were teaching us because I could always go back to my teaching experience and relate it to my actual teaching experience."**

Karen has been living in Canada for 6 years. She came to Canada to be a nanny under the Live-in Caregiver program. Karen was a nurse in the Philippines where she completed a 4-year B.Sc. degree in Nursing. Karen did not enjoy her career in nursing and spent her last 4 years in the Philippines working as a Kindergarten teacher in a bi-lingual Mandarin/English school. Karen's first language is Chinese (Fukienese) and she is also fluent in English, Mandarin and Tagalog.

**Challenges.** Karen's story of participation in the initial teacher education program sheds light on challenges related to: loss of status and lowered self-esteem as an immigrant in Canada; the assessment of international academic credentials; generational influence on identity conception; feelings of disconnection within the communities of practice formed in UCU classes; and, resistance in practicum schools to the application of newer teaching strategies introduced through the ITE program.

***Loss of status and lowered self-esteem.*** Karen's settlement in Canada was "quite a shock." She had never lived with another family, or with strangers, and she struggled with her sudden loss of privacy, personal space, and professional status. The loss of status was most difficult for Karen as she had spent the last 4 years working as a professional and had become accustomed to "being treated like a professional."

> Dealing with five people in the household and having to adjust to different personalities and living with them 24/7 – the loss of privacy and other stuff. It was quite difficult because I wasn't used to it and I had to take care of three kids and the loss of status I think is something that you never get used to. Whereas before, you were used to being treated as a professional and now you're doing a low paid job. That was difficult.

Karen was reluctant to tell people that she was working as a nanny because she felt they would consider her less intelligent, less educated and less ambitious.

> But what I wasn't prepared for was the loss of self-esteem I felt working as a nanny. At first I would be hesitant when I'd talk to people and they would say what are you doing, I would sort of skirt around the issue and not say that I work as a nanny. It sort

> of seemed like you were less educated and you weren't as smart and why haven't you gone further in your field or your profession so that was something that was really difficult for me to come to terms with.

During the first 6 months of settlement, Karen was lonely, she missed speaking her Filipino languages, and she seriously considered returning to the Philippines. To Karen, "it was a 50-50 decision making process of whether [she] would stay or go back." She describes an incident that is an indication of her loneliness at this time.

> When I came here, I didn't know anybody so in my first 2 months there was this incident in Canada where I just started to talk to this lady who looked Filipino because I missed speaking the language – and I had never talked to a complete stranger before, but I started to talk to her because I just wanted to speak to somebody from there.

After her nanny contract was fulfilled, Karen worked for a data and coding company. She found a "high immigrant workforce" at this company and felt comfortable and connected with people who shared "a lot of similarities going through the whole immigrant experience."

***Prior learning and international credential recognition.*** Having worked for 4 years as a teacher in the Philippines, becoming a teacher in Canada was part of Karen's long-range plan when she applied to come to Canada as a nanny. Soon after her arrival in Canada, Karen started to research the provincial process for becoming a teacher. She had her educational credentials assessed and was told that in spite of her B.Sc. in Nursing, she would require 2 more years of undergraduate study, in addition to her 4-year undergraduate degree in order to be considered for admission to a B.Ed. initial teacher education program. This was

determined on the basis of her years of elementary and secondary compulsory schooling which were deemed insufficient. In the Philippine education system where Karen went to school, students attend primary and secondary school for 10 years. In the assessment process, Karen was credited with Grades 1-10. As Karen describes the educational process, however, these 10 years do not include the time she spent in educational pre-school when she was 4 and 5—years that are widely considered essential for academic development.

> That's the Philippine system – you only have 6 years of elementary and 4 years of high school and 4 years of university, but I went to private school and we had 3 more additional years – they called it a pre-school program. So I had 3 years of pre-school from ages 5-7 and started Grade 1 at age 8 so in total I had 13 years of schooling before university but they only started counting my schooling from Grade 1.

In order to meet the requirements for admission to an initial teacher education program, Karen waited until she became a landed immigrant (to avoid paying international tuition fees) and used the money she saved working as a nanny to pay for 2 years of online undergraduate study through a university in British Columbia (BCOU). Even with her 4 year degree from the Philippines and her 2 years of undergraduate study in Canada, Karen's offer of admission to the initial teacher education program at Urban Canada University (UCU) was rescinded because Karen had sent the transcripts from the B.C. university, but she hadn't requested a letter from the registrar assuring UCU that Karen would complete the courses indicated on her transcript as "in progress." Karen petitioned UCU to re-instate her offer of admission and pointed to the fact that other students graduating from undergraduate programs need only send their transcripts and aren't required to request special letters to be sent on their behalf.

> They told me that I should have given them a letter from BCOU saying that I was in the distance ed. program and that I would finish the program. So I went through the appeal process and I told them that I was looking at their admissions requirements and they only asked for transcripts and I wanted to know why I would be different from regular students who were in class – I mean, there are no guarantees that they would finish their program either and they just need transcripts. So they told me I could be accepted.

Karen felt that she was being held to a different standard than other applicants because her first degree was from the Philippines and because she was taking her additional courses online. Karen believes that it was her anger that prompted her to take the initiative to appeal UCU's decision to rescind her acceptance to the initial teacher education program.

> I used my own initiative because I was so mad. I was really mad because they told me that I had qualified experience-wise and education-wise and it seemed like all they needed was a letter and I was just so mad that I wrote them a letter saying maybe I should have contacted them to clarify what they wanted because I just asked BCOU to send a transcript and when I looked at their admissions requirements all they required was a transcript. I had spent these years studying and now they're telling me I can't get in – I was very indignant – and now they're telling me that I have to study again or something because they were telling me that I don't have enough credentials and when I came here (to the university campus) they told me verbally that it was because of a letter.

***Generational influence on identity negotiation.*** After working as a nanny, Karen worked as part of a largely immigrant workforce at a data and coding company. She enjoyed

this work environment and the opportunity to interact with people who shared similar immigration experiences. Karen contrasts this cultural environment with the one she found at UCU where she felt "there were less similarities" because "you come in contact with people who haven't really gone through the immigrant experience and the struggles." For Karen, coming to UCU "was the biggest challenge in terms of social setting." While most conversation among the immigrant workers at the data company was about their heritage cultures and challenges of immigration, Karen found it challenging at UOU to talk about such things.

> One of the challenges I felt was that it seemed like there is a certain reticence about asking about people's cultural background. Like you had to be very tactful, whereas before in the data company, there were such a common similarity of experiences that you just bonded a little, but here, people come from such different backgrounds that it was more difficult. Like some people didn't want to talk about their cultural background – like I'm Canadian –

To Karen, there was much more diversity among the teacher candidates at UCU than she had previously encountered and she found it difficult to learn about and understand the many different backgrounds that her colleagues represented, especially those teacher candidates who are second or third generation Canadians.

> I think it's because it's all about identity too because when I say people don't want to talk about their cultural background I'm referring to second or third generation children of immigrants and if you talk to them, you have to be careful because they consider themselves more Canadian so you have Canadian-Chinese from Hong Kong or from Taiwan or from different parts of the world. They didn't really talk so much

> about where they came from but more about what they're doing. They didn't talk about the past as much as they talk about the present and it's more culture neutral.

***Disconnection within communities of practice formed in UCU classes.*** In addition to lacking the shared experience of immigration, Karen also felt a disconnect with her fellow teacher candidates on the basis of age and teaching experience. At 35 years of age, she felt that much of the social behaviour of the younger teacher candidates reminded her of "high school" with the formation of cliques centered largely around race and gender.

> In my class, the people bunched together according to race. Just like in high school. So you had all the Asian people in one group, all the Caucasian people in one group. All the guys sitting together. It was funny. …I think age had something to do with it too. I had some classmates who I thought were really young and I couldn't relate to that. People seemed to go out in groups. I had classmates who had to eat together and go to the washroom together or after school, just stay in one bunch together. … Socially, I didn't feel that I really made friends there. I have acquaintances. We didn't really speak to each other. We had polite conversation while we were there, but now that I'm out of the program, I don't think I'll keep in touch with anyone.

Karen really enjoyed building on her professional knowledge as a teacher through her participation in initial teacher education program and she found that she couldn't agree with the many colleagues who often argued that much of the teacher education program was "useless":

> I loved the instructional strategies that we were learning. I thought that I was growing professionally and I really appreciated what the instructors were teaching us because I

> could always go back to my teaching experience and relate it to my actual teaching experience so that was another area in which I had some difficulty in terms of my classmates because a lot of them were saying that it was useless; that they thought it was all up in the air stuff and they wanted more hands on stuff, and I would say that I like the program and that I'm really learning a lot and they would say that it's not really helping them and it's not teaching them how to teach.

Karen believes that her prior teaching experience put her in a better position to benefit from what was being taught in the initial teacher education program because her ability to relate the theories and philosophies of teaching and learning to her own experience gave her a greater appreciation of the program.

> I think it's because when you don't have enough teaching experience you want very concrete and hands on lessons and you don't really appreciate the philosophies and the big picture. You just want the smaller pieces that you can get your teeth on and use in the classroom. Like classroom management. I think it's very hard to teach classroom management because it depends on so many factors. But if you're somebody who doesn't know classroom management, you want something very tangible. You want somebody to tell you if student A does this, you do this. If student B does this, you do this. But you can't really teach classroom management that way. I guess the lack of experience really. If I didn't have 4 years of really being a teacher and having my own classroom, I would have felt the same way.

***Resistance in practicum schools to the application of new teaching strategies.*** Karen learned about new approaches to teaching and learning during her studies at UCU and she was disappointed when she didn't see these approaches applied by teachers in her practicum

schools. She was also discouraged by teachers in the field who commented that what she was learning at UCU wasn't applicable in the real world of teaching.

> There were teachers who weren't really teaching according to the pedagogy; good teaching practices. I wanted to see teachers teaching the literacy program and during the first practicum I didn't see that. Nothing like that at all. So there's this hunger to see it in the real class setting. That was one challenge because at [UCU] they teach you about guided reading groups and I hadn't seen that during the first practicum so coming back to [UCU] I still didn't know exactly how you would manage that in detail because I didn't see it in practice. My second practicum was good. It was better than the first because my [mentor teacher] included some literacy components in her teaching. So the challenge in the practicum was compiling what you see and learn at [UCU] and what you see in actual schools and having teachers come up to you in the staff room and tell you that this is the real world and you can't really practice that; that group work stuff won't really work. So the challenge would be being motivated to practice what you learn here.

**Supports.** Karen's narrative describes the support of an encouraging mentor who is familiar with teaching in the province and who provides support as an established member of the teaching profession.

***Interaction with an encouraging mentor.*** Karen advises all ITCs to find a mentor who can help them understand the context and culture of teaching and learning in Canada. In Karen's case, she felt that having a mentor who was both a teacher in the city, and a 10-year graduate of UCU's initial teacher education program was a significant source of support, encouragement and guidance. In particular, her mentor was able to help her guard against the

attitudes in the field that suggested to Karen that what she was learning at UCU wasn't applicable in the real world. Her mentor, who was also her fiancé, was familiar with many of the approaches and strategies taught at UCU and he was able to assure her of their benefit.

> I think I'm lucky in that my fiancé was very positive. He said that it really works; that what they teach here really works in the classroom, and makes students more motivated and interested in learning, and makes for a better classroom overall.

Karen's mentor supported her through his encouragement and insight and he also gave her career guidance that was strategic in terms of improving her salary rating and strengthening her position in the job market. At the suggestion of her mentor, Karen completed additional qualifications courses in ESL and Special Education during the months that followed graduation. While she had looked forward to a break from the intense and time consuming workload of the initial teacher education program, she appreciates the professional development that she experienced through her participation in these courses and argues that while they supported her employment-related goals, they also supported her goal of "just being a good teacher."

**Catherine**

> **"The first placement, I had to leave and then the second placement, I wasn't getting good feedback at all. In anything you start, you have to encourage yourself and you have to find encouragement. If people cannot encourage you and if you cannot encourage yourself, then you feel like you cannot do it because you haven't experienced success and if you don't experience success and get encouragement, then how can you proceed?"**
>
> **"It's the same challenge that I faced when I went to my first placement – it's people who, because you were not born or raised in [Canada], people always have doubts about you – if you'll be able to do a good job. They will always prefer somebody who was born here."**

Catherine came to Canada from Egypt in 1994 at the age of 27 and is fluent in French, Arabic and English. As a Christian living in Egypt, Catherine and her family felt threatened by the religious tensions between Christians and Muslims and when Catherine's father passed away and her two brothers emigrated to France, Catherine and her mother did not feel safe living in Egypt. Catherine came to Canada with an undergraduate degree in computer science from Egypt and a M.Sc. in Artificial Intelligence from the University of Edinburgh. Shortly after her arrival in Canada, Catherine was able to find employment that paid a decent wage in the technology industry and she soon sponsored her mother's emigration to Canada. Catherine provides full financial support for her mother.

Catherine had considered becoming a teacher when she was in Egypt but her parents didn't feel that she could support herself on a teacher's salary and Catherine followed her parents' direction to study science and technology. When the technology boom in Canada started to decline and her employer started talking about outsourcing and downsizing, Catherine was feeling dissatisfied with her work in the technology field and started to search for a profession that would bring more meaning to her life. She thought about her "original dream of becoming a teacher" and researched becoming a teacher in Canada.

> I don't know if it's a mid-life crisis, I'm a bit older, but I felt a very strong need – a very profound need to be able to love and to give. I'm not married so I felt that I had to find some way to satisfy that need. I thought about adopting a child but there is a very big problem with that. So I thought ok, what can I do? Maybe I can change careers. I thought of becoming a teacher especially because I felt I had a big appreciation of teaching and my teachers and I felt how much they made a difference

> in my life and I felt I would love to make a difference in a child's life the same as my teachers did in my life.

Catherine's participation in ITE was modified to accommodate her needs. She left her first practicum placement because she did not feel that she was being provided with adequate professional resources and she felt that she could benefit from the opportunity for an unevaluated practicum during the time remaining in the first practicum block. Catherine was not successful in her subsequent practicum placement but she did go on to successfully complete two practicum placements as required for completion of the B.Ed. degree and for teacher certification in the province.

**Challenges.** Catherine's story as a teacher candidate sheds light on the ways that challenges experienced in the initial teacher education program influence feelings of being disadvantaged, unwelcomed, and pre-judged as an immigrant teacher candidate to be unsuitable for teaching in Canadian schools.

***Feeling disadvantaged and unwelcomed in Canadian schools.*** Catherine felt disadvantaged because she wasn't educated in Canada and did not have any classroom teaching or volunteer experience. In addition to feeling unfamiliar with the culture of teaching and learning in Canada's schools, Catherine also felt unprepared to manage the behaviour of students. Her concern stemmed not only from her perception of students in Canada as more active and outspoken than students in Egypt but that she lacked experience in "controlling" the behaviour of others.

> In the beginning, I found myself in an awkward position as I was looking at my colleagues – the students who were with me in my program. They were already ahead

> of me because they were very experienced teachers coming from abroad but they have already taught for many years, or they were born in [Canada] and went to school in [Canada]. So for me, I felt like the only one person who didn't have much experience in the classroom – not necessarily in [Canada] but also with 30 students in a classroom. Even the ESL volunteer work that I did [in Egypt], I didn't have 30 – I had 20, 24 and it's different. In Egypt it's different; especially with the children. They are quiet, they are not active, not very outspoken. So classroom management was one thing that was really affecting me a lot. I was really nervous about it and I wasn't really sure if I knew how to do it or if I had all the tools of how to manage a classroom. Especially as a person who doesn't control things. I'm not a person who controls; I've never been in control of anything. I don't have a family yet so I don't control my own children, or my husband or whatever and I always listen to my mother so I'm always giving respect to her. I've never demanded something from somebody.

Catherine did not feel welcomed or supported in her first two placement schools. In the first school, she was told by her mentor teacher that she was at a disadvantage because she hadn't attended Canadian schools. Although the mentor teacher stated that Catherine was at a disadvantage, Catherine found that the mentor teacher did not make an effort to provide support in the form of curriculum support materials that Catherine needed in order to teach herself the material that she was expected to teach the students. To Catherine, it was very difficult to teach material in Social Studies and Language Arts that she didn't know and that she hadn't learned herself as a student in elementary school. Catherine felt disadvantaged due to her lack of familiarity with the curriculum content and became frustrated by her mentor teacher's insistence that she would not provide resources that would help her learn the

required content and prepare teaching and learning activities for the classroom. In addition to a lack of resources, Catherine also felt overwhelmed by the number of subjects that she was expected to learn and teach.

> One of the things as well that was not easy was during the first placement, my mentor teacher was giving me different lessons but in 4 different subjects so I had to learn about Geography, about Language, about Religion and about Health all in 1 week. That was a lot. I was only preparing one lesson for each day, but still, I'm looking at four different subjects. So this also contributed to my stress. I was not strong enough emotionally to take all of this and I thought maybe I should quit teaching in general because if it's this stressful and I am weak, I cannot take this stress and maybe I shouldn't be in teaching.

In her second placement school, Catherine felt that her host teacher and other school staff did not make an effort to welcome her or to invite her to join them in staff room conversations. She felt that she was an outsider both socially and physically and suggested that this may have been due to the fact that the students and staff at the school were predominantly white. Catherine also felt excluded from social conversation in the staff room because she was unmarried and while the teachers chatted about their husbands and children, Catherine didn't have anything to contribute.

> Then my second placement school, I felt intimidated. I really thought about it and I thought one of the things that made me feel intimidated was I went into the school and all the people were white. Only the vice-principal was black, and maybe one teacher. It was not a mixed culture that I'm used to seeing because I was used to seeing different cultures and different races etcetera and I went into a school where

> the population is white; not just the students but the teachers. This was a little bit intimidating. Second, nobody came to speak to me. Nobody came to make me feel that I was part of the school. Nobody introduced me to the school; except for my [mentor teacher]. I mean, all the other people were kind of foreign to me and nobody was even saying hello when I saw them in the corridor. This as well intimidated me and when I would go to eat lunch in the lunch room, nobody would start a conversation with me and I didn't know how to start a conversation. Well, I tried, but I didn't know as well because our lives are different, our experiences are different. Most of the people are married and they have children.

Catherine felt intimidated by the staff in her first two practicum schools and struggled to maintain a positive outlook in an environment that she found unwelcoming.

> It's hard not to be intimidated by people who are different from you and you can't relate to them very well. It's hard not to let it impact you, but I let it impact me.

Catherine often felt defeated and overwhelmed during her first two practicum attempts and she seriously considered withdrawing from the program. Her second host teacher, her faculty practicum advisor, and a counselor with student support services suggested to her that she might be happier pursuing another profession. Although Catherine would tell others that she wanted to quit the program, she was really looking for people to tell her that she should continue and that she would be successful.

> I went to talk with him [a counselor in student support services] and he suggested that maybe I should leave the program and try something else but that wasn't what I wanted to hear. It's what I was thinking, but I wanted to hear, no, you can do it. No,

> go ahead and do it. I wanted to gain the confidence that I lost over the bad experiences that I had. I had great encouragement from my coordinator and I needed great encouragement during this because as I said, I have never been a teacher and I'm changing careers. I'm not a young person – I'm older than most of my classmates so I really needed encouragement and I needed someone to believe that I could do it – to believe in me so I can believe in myself. My [instructor] provided that support. She told me that she can't give me faith in myself – that I have to find it within myself and I did find it with the help of positive experiences from the practicum, from my mentor teachers, and even positive comments from the people I've been working with – from the other student teachers – which I wasn't hearing a lot during the first two placements where I was only hearing a lot of negative comments.

***Pre-judgment of immigrant teacher candidates.*** Catherine believes that she was pre-judged as an ITC and that the pre-judgment of her first two mentor teachers contributed to her lack of success in those practicum placements. Catherine felt very strongly that her first two mentor teachers and other staff members in those schools considered her unsuitable for membership in the teaching profession.

> I don't know if it's a bias. It could be a bias in some way, but I think it's a pre-judgment that even without seeing you they feel you are not the right person. You shouldn't be a teacher. I think it's the same challenge that I faced when I went to my first placement. It's people who, because you were not born or raised in Canada, people always have doubts about you; if you'll be able to do a good job. They will always prefer somebody who was born here because you didn't go in the system; because you don't know the system inside and out, or because you still have an accent

> while speaking English. I think these are the problems. Even if you make mistakes, people assume that you made the mistake because you don't know English, it's not like typos, it's not because you made a little typing error. It's things like that. It's a type of pre-judgment that comes from not being an immigrant and not knowing what it's like to not be born or raised in Canada.

**Supports.** Catherine's narrative describes support experienced by practice teaching in a welcoming and collaborative school context, encouragement from a UCU faculty practicum advisor, and positive relationships with instructors and fellow teacher candidates at UCU.

***Practice teaching in a welcoming and collaborative school context.*** Having withdrawn from one practicum placement and having received a failing evaluation in the second practicum school, Catherine was intentionally placed by her UCU faculty practicum advisor in more culturally diverse schools known for having supportive mentor teachers for her final two placements. In the third practicum school, she felt welcomed and interacted positively with staff as a legitimate peripheral member of their community of practice. In keeping with the collaborative teaching model already established between the host teacher and the teacher in the neighbouring classroom, Catherine was able to team teach with another teacher candidate. After failing the previous placement, this experience strengthened Catherine's confidence in her ability to be successful in the program at UCU and to work as a competent teacher in Canada.

> I was feeling very comfortable with my mentor teacher. He was very good and the students were very good; very responsible and very well behaved. I was able to work with another teacher candidate and plan together and even we would go to each other's house on the weekend to plan the lesson so I didn't have any problems at all.

> We were sharing the work and she was very responsible too. She had great ideas and we collaborated very well.

With one successful practicum completed, Catherine felt more confident entering her fourth placement school. The mentor teacher at this school provided Catherine with encouragement and resources, and once again, she flourished and felt that she was welcomed as a legitimate member of the community of practice.

> In my last placement, I really loved my [mentor teacher]. She was very flexible, very understanding, very thoughtful, and she dealt with me not as a student, but as a colleague and we had mutual respect. She would listen to me. I would listen to her and we would exchange ideas. I really enjoyed working with her. I felt like I was working with a real colleague.

***Encouragement from a UCU faculty practicum advisor.*** One of Catherine's faculty practicum advisors had a significant influence on her participation in the program and contributed greatly to the more positive experiences she enjoyed during her third and fourth practicum attempts. This practicum advisor arranged both placements, was familiar with the schools and the mentor teachers and felt confident that these contexts would provide the ideal environments for Catherine to develop as a confident teacher. More significantly, this practicum advisor encouraged Catherine when she was feeling defeated in the program and assured her that her next placements would be more positive.

> That's how I felt but then [my faculty practicum advisor] kept telling me that she wasn't giving up on me. I really appreciated that; that [she] wanted to make me believe that I should not jump to conclusions but that I should give myself another

> chance to know myself better. I was thankful for that. [She] helped me when I was at my weakest point. Maybe [she] doesn't know, but without [her], I wouldn't have continued.

***Positive relationships with instructors and fellow teacher candidates.*** Although she experienced many challenges in the ITE program, Catherine feels very positive about her participation and values the learning and the connections she developed throughout the year. Her start in the program was difficult and she felt that she was pre-judged and excluded because she was an immigrant teacher candidate, but she made much progress and finished the program feeling that she fit in with her fellow graduates from UCU.

> I think I had a great experience. Forget about all of the challenges but I enjoyed it a lot and I wish this year could come back and I could re-live this year; every moment was precious. I enjoyed all the things that I learned and I enjoyed the connections that I made with my teachers whether it was with [my faculty practicum advisor], or my coordinator, or my teachers. I enjoyed my classmates very much. In the beginning, they saw me as an immigrant; as a stranger not from their culture so they weren't talking to me much. But then after we started having group work and sitting together we made personal connections and I was very happy. Only toward the end, when I hadn't had my two placements and everybody else was finished I felt bad. Luckily it only lasted for 2 weeks before classes were over and I could start my practicum. I have always had very good relationships with my colleagues and even now we speak on the phone. They were very happy for me that I finished and that I have a job interview.

**Sal**

> **"As a person who comes from a diverse background, I think I can contribute a lot to the wellbeing of newcomers or the children of newcomers and help them integrate into their new home."**

Sal came to Canada from Argentina in 1997 with an undergraduate degree in computer science and was able to find employment earning a decent wage in the technology industry until the IT bubble burst and he was laid off in 2000. Sal's first employer in Canada required that he volunteer for 3 months prior to earning a wage. He worked for free for 3 months while his employer charged his clients $80/hour for Sal's labour. While Sal thought this was very unfair, he believed that this "rite of passage" was necessary and he felt "lucky [he] wasn't driving a taxi or delivering pizza [and he] was doing exactly what [he] was trained to do in [his] old country."

Sal's mother joined him in Canada for a few months to help him settle. In particular, Sal believes that his mother's help was essential when he applied to rent his first apartment. Without any associates in Canada, Sal believes that when people saw him with his mother, they could see that he "must be a decent guy because he helps his mom." Sal's mother doesn't speak English, but he believes her presence gave people confidence in his character and trustworthiness.

After he was laid off in 2000, Sal was not able to secure another full-time job and supported himself with occasional contract work. During this time, Sal was feeling unsatisfied with his work life.

> I always found myself uncomfortable working in the corporate world. I wanted something to fulfill my heart. …Two years ago, in 2004, I was a bit adrift. I wasn't sure what to do. A friend of mine suggested I try teaching because I have teaching

> experience from Argentina. I was a teaching assistant in university for several years and I liked it very much.

Sal worked part-time for 10 years as a teaching assistant at the University of Buenos Aires School of Engineering. As a teaching assistant, he taught lessons, prepared tests and exams, graded student work, and supported student learning. Sal researched teaching in Canada and he came to believe that there is a demand for teachers, especially teachers with degrees in computer science.

**Challenges.** Sal's narrative describes challenges experienced as discouraging and criticizing comments made by a mentor teacher in a practice teaching school that influenced his experience in the practicum and potentially jeopardized his opportunities for employment.

***Discouraging and criticizing comments made by a mentor teacher.*** Sal experienced considerable difficulty in his first practicum placement.

> The first week was fine. The first day of the second week – boom! She said that I don't have initiative. She complained that I was preparing lessons for another class while I was in her class. The first week she gave me feedback with good stuff and things to improve. The second week, she just gave me feedback that was all bad things. The third week, she didn't give me feedback at all, and the fourth week she started screaming at me in the middle of the class.

Toward the end of the second week, Sal spoke with his TES instructor about his relationship with his mentor teacher and his practicum experience. She told him that his mentor teacher has a "slow personality."

Fortunately, Sal's second practicum was "exactly the opposite" and his second mentor teacher was surprised to hear that his first placement wasn't very positive. When Sal told his second mentor teacher that he had not been called for an employment interview with the local school district, his second mentor teacher spoke to the principal on his behalf. Sal was subsequently granted an interview at the request of the principal and Sal believes the interview went very well.

At the time of my meeting with Sal, the local school district had contacted him to request the report from his first practice teaching block. This request to complete his employment application file is an indication that Sal was recommended for hiring based on a successful interview and positive reference checks. Sal was concerned, however, that the difficulty he experienced with his mentor teacher during first practicum, and the mediocre teaching evaluation he received at the conclusion of that placement would have a significant impact on his job prospects.

> To be honest, [the interview] went well, but today they called me and asked me for a report from my first school because I didn't give it to them. So now I have a big problem so I called my math instructor because she said she would be a reference so I'll have to see what happens. If they called me for references, it means that the interview was fine, so it would be very sad if I don't get a job because of that person.

Like many adult students, Sal is in dire need of a job. His income is very limited, and was significantly reduced during his full-time participation in the teacher education program. Sal is very concerned that his job prospects may be irrevocably diminished because of the power of one mentor teacher and he believes that UCU should be able to do something to intervene in these inequitable high stakes situations.

**Supports.** Sal described supports manifested through assistance he received from student support services, supportive relationships with fellow teacher candidates, his perception of UCU and the local school district as safe and diverse environments, and his belief that the contributions he can make as an immigrant teacher will be valued by the local school district.

***Support from student support services.*** Sal described the assistance he received from student support services during his difficult first practicum as invaluable. A teaching assistant from student support services visited Sal several times at the practicum school during the last 2 weeks of this trying experience.

> I was so grateful for the support I had from [student support services] because that was more than teaching. That was my wellbeing. Wellbeing of myself.

Through student support services, Sal had the opportunity to observe several Elementary and Secondary classrooms, to observe teachers teaching and students learning, and to chat with school administrators about teaching and learning in Canada. This was a very valuable opportunity early in Sal's ITE program and he suggests that this opportunity could be enriched by the addition of school tours and conversations around such aspects of school culture as co-curricular activities and parent associations.

> I had an opportunity to observe classes before the program started. I knew nothing about schools in [this province] – in Canada, actually. The only thing I knew was by watching TV and movies so I had a chance to see a little bit what inside schools is like and I got to see working teachers in different classes; special ed., students at risk, and in different subjects that are not my teachables just to see a different side. We

> talked with administration as well. I liked that. I wish they had given us a tour of the school as well because the education system in my country is very different from here. Here you have more of a sense of community and I didn't see that when we had the observations. We just observed classes and lessons being taught. We didn't see the different rooms and the different parts of the school or the different extra-curricular activities that happen in the schools. I would have found that very valuable.

Sal felt supported in the ITE program. He was offered an opportunity to participate in the unevaluated first practicum option offered by student support services but he declined to participate in the program because he was advised by one of his instructors that the local school district hires on the basis of the first practice teaching evaluation and without that evaluation, Sal could not be considered for a job with the board during the first round of interviews.

Through student support services, Sal did, however, participate in a co-curricular certificate series of five workshops available to all TCs at UCU but targeted toward ITCs. He describes this support as "fundamental." During this series of workshops, Sal learned more about "oral English, written English, classroom management, youth, and pop culture."

Sal also benefited from support offered through student support services to improve his academic use of English both verbally and in his writing. He suggested that he would have made even more use of the academic support centre if he had been more organized and if he had prepared his assignments more in advance. That said, Sal did make increased use of the centre as his program progressed and he made full use of the services during his studies in an additional qualifications course specializing in ESL teaching.

> I think the program made me see things more clearly and on a personal relationship level, I feel more confident and things are more clear. I'm a better planner. I was a good planner before and now I'm a better planner – I have no choice. Before, I didn't think about using the [academic support centre] because I would do my assignments at the last minute. Now, when I do my ESL [course], I don't wait until the last minute, so I'm grateful for that.

Sal appreciated the recognition of issues facing ITCs that the elective course instructor and the teaching assistants providing support in the academic support centre demonstrated and he suggested that this type of recognition and support should be more prevalent throughout UCU. He suggested that while his course instructors were supportive and approachable,

> [i]nstructors treated us all the same – both native English speakers and others like myself. Perhaps they should be aware of the fact that… you know my little story about how we need so much more time.

Sal argued that the type of support that he received from student support services and the instructor of the elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates should be demonstrated by all instructors at UCU. In particular, Sal suggested that the needs of ITCs could be considered and the course work could be differentiated in light of the extra time ITCs need in order to read assigned readings and complete course assignments. For Sal, consideration for the needs of ITCs is a source of validation:

> At [UCU], if they think we can give value to the school board and to the students here, then I think they should also consider our own situation. And I think we do give

> value, and I'm not saying anything teachers won't say here. We do give value. The fact that I had to go to [student support services] in order to be understood – [the support worker] at the [academic support centre] was incredible and if it wasn't for someone special for the support, maybe we can get the support from a regular teacher.

"Don't be shy," is the advice Sal offers to future students in a situation similar to his. He recommends that they take advantage of the resources that are offered by the university. To Sal, the university is a "safe place to be yourself – to research – to think wide – to explore." Sal urges future ITCs to take as many workshops as possible and to access financial assistance that is available.

***Positive relationships with fellow teacher candidates.*** Sal emphasized the importance of the support he received from his colleagues in the initial teacher education program. This support took many forms and was found in several different cohorts with which Sal interacted. His first cohort of support was within a class group of 30 teacher candidates that Sal described as predominantly white (28 of 30) native-English speakers. Although there were a few exceptions, Sal was impressed by the broad experiences of his fellow teacher candidates. He found them to "have a wider sense of things which makes things easier and makes them more open minded and open to people who are not the same." Another community of practice for Sal was created among colleagues in his curriculum instruction courses (mathematics and science) where he found much more cultural diversity among his colleagues and many more immigrant teacher candidates. For Sal, "[w]ith other ITCs, we would share more about what's going on, what was happening at school and so on." Sal's third community of practice was the elective course for internationally educated teacher

candidates where all of his colleagues were ITCs and where the group spoke freely about their experiences in the ITE program.

> I'm glad I took that course because it gave me the foundation. It was students like me so we talked about our challenges and our goals. We would express things more freely in the course than in other courses because the instructors in the course, they could understand us more than other instructors.

***UCU and the local school districts as safe and diverse contexts.*** When asked if he experienced any effects based on race, class, gender, or religion, Sal began his response by discussing his age and how he was "pleasantly surprised" to find that his much younger classmates made it easy for him to integrate into their social activities. As a single person, Sal was surprised to be included in the social activities of his married and partnered colleagues. He was also pleased that as a Jewish man he was able to become great friends with a Muslim ITC from Iran. If there were any tensions among his classmates, Sal believes that they stemmed from a lack of experience among his younger colleagues who "come from places in the country where it is mostly white" and he argued that these instances were the exception.

As a gay man, Sal described the university and the program as gay-friendly:

> This is a safe place. I feel safe here. It doesn't mean I will carry a rainbow flag and wave it everyday – I am kind of quiet in that way. I have my orientation but I don't expose it. I have some colleagues who are gay or lesbian and eventually we came out. I didn't come out with everyone. With some people I came out, to others I didn't have to. With some instructors I came out, because of the situation; like we have to work on an assignment and talk about our lives. It was fine. Fine, fine, fine.

Sal did, however, observe some homophobic behaviours and attitudes among students in his practicum schools but found that the teachers in the schools were quick to respond to these behaviours and several displayed gay-friendly space rainbow signs in their classrooms.

In spite of his feelings of safety, inclusion, and intolerance toward homophobia at UCU and at his practicum schools, Sal was cautioned that not everyone employed by the local school board invites diversity and responds without prejudice to people who are gay. Sal asked a counselor in student support services to help him prepare for his interview with the school district and he asked for direction in terms of diversity and how much he should say in the interview regarding his own diverse characteristics. Sal was preparing a response to highlight the ways in which he is well suited to support the diverse needs of students. He also consulted one of his instructors who recommended that he not mention his sexual orientation in the interview.

> I discussed that with my instructor when we were talking about the interview questions. I don't mean to say I'm gay. I actually asked her. I came out to her last week when we asked about the interview questions because like I told you, I come from a diverse background and I can be good for students, first language, ethnic background, place of origin, and I said should I mention religion – I'm Jewish, and sexual orientation? And she said, religion, no, sexual orientation, what if you have an Anglo, white, old-fashioned principal interviewing you? So I said I just won't mention it and when I'm inside, exactly – I'm in and I can do it then.

Through this exchange, Sal learned that he still has to be cautious about stating his sexual orientation in some situations but he will continue to "come out" to individuals as circumstances permit and he didn't express a perceived need or desire to keep his orientation

hidden once he is employed, or "inside." Although there may be some sites of discrimination and prejudice, Sal is excited by the prospect of teaching in one of Canada's largest cities, but he has reservations about teaching in some of Canada's more rural districts.

> I'd love to teach with the [local] school board because I think it's very progressive – they have an amazing, amazing number of initiatives to protect students and teachers from all forms of discrimination. I see that in the surrounding boards. (pause) I would teach in the other boards, but I think I would be more cautious. That's my perception.

***Positive beliefs about the contributions of immigrant teachers.*** Sal commented on the racial imbalance between teachers and students that he observed in his practicum schools. In most schools he visited, the majority of the students were non-white while almost all of the teachers were white. Sal sees himself as someone who can contribute to what he perceives as the local school district's efforts to diversify the teaching profession and he believes that he can make positive contributions to the education of immigrant and minority students.

Moving forward, Sal feels very positive that as long as he can overcome the requirement to provide the school district with the report from his first practicum, he will be able to gain employment as a teacher in Canada because he has qualifications in Mathematics and Science which are high demand content areas. Sal believes that he has much to offer students in Canada and that and schools, and that Canada's increasing diversity plays to his advantage as an immigrant.

> I am lucky I am going to teach math because math is a very highly required subject. I know I can contribute a lot to a school because of my background experiences and culture and life I bring with me. This is not my first career so I know [this city] is a

> place full of immigrants and there is more and more diversity here. As a person who comes from a diverse background, I think I can contribute a lot to the wellbeing of newcomers or the children of newcomers and help them integrate into their new home.

After Sal graduated from the teacher education program at UCU he enrolled in an additional course that would qualify him to teach ESL programs. Sal finds it ironic that as someone who "doesn't speak English as a first language" he will be certified to teach English as a second language. "I think it's funny, but I think I can do it. I won't teach Shakespeare or ancient English." Sal believes that he is able to make strong connections with students who are learning English.

> Maybe I have an accent – I mean, everyone has an accent, but I have a non-Canadian standard English accent and maybe they can associate that with their parents. Their parents don't have a standard accent either so maybe they can relate and they can feel confident. Does that make sense? I found it all the time. When I taught Grade 12, in my second practicum, students from visible minorities, they would be more respectful to me.

**Gavin**

> **"So everyday, she always found something new – [Gavin] you weren't doing this, or [Gavin] you said platoo instead of plateau and she wouldn't do it discreetly, she would do it right in front of the class. This was very embarrassing and it was affecting me so much it was disturbing and hard for me because in my whole lifetime I was digging deep to try and think of someone who did this to me and I couldn't find anything."**
>
> **"If there wasn't the [unevaluated first practicum observation] program, I wouldn't have graduated this year. I don't know if there was anything else, if there were other options to move to**

> **another school, but that distraction, being able to step aside, is why I'm here today graduating. I had reached the point where I might have given up right there and then it was so stressful. But I was not willing to go through any more abuse. And for me it was emotional abuse. That's the way I saw it."**

Gavin immigrated to Canada from Guyana in October, 2005, less than 1 year before enrolling in the ITE program at UCU. He researched employment opportunities before coming to Canada and determined that while it would be very difficult to continue the work in sports journalism that he enjoyed in Guyana, his diverse temporary teaching experiences as an unqualified teacher in Guyana and St. Lucia might enable him, after the completion of a B.Ed. degree, to pursue a lucrative career as a qualified teacher in Canada. Although Gavin's father (a school Principal), mother (an educational officer), and sister (a teacher), all work as educators in Guyana, Gavin rejected his parents' suggestions that he make a career of teaching in Guyana because there were more profitable jobs for men in Guyana than teaching.

> I was getting all of these experiences and then my mom was saying to me that by now I should have my college degree and a B.Ed. or whatever. She was kind of forcing me and I was kind of rebelling. No, I don't want to be a teacher [because] as the country progressed, the rewards for teaching did not match what was happening in the economy so you found other jobs like going to the interior for gold, or farming, or working in transportation, were more lucrative. So what eventually happened, especially with the male population, was most of the males couldn't survive on a teacher's salary. That was my main problem. I was thinking, why would I go into teaching for about $1,500 Canadian a month?

When he arrived in Canada, Gavin joined his wife who had arrived several years earlier and who had already established a household for their baby and several members of her extended family. Gavin's first employment in Canada began in December when he started to work as a casual warehouse labourer with a temporary labour agency. As a "stop-gap measure," he worked from December until September as a warehouse labourer and, by distinguishing himself as a hard worker, was eventually "bought out of the agency" by a client company and worked as a full-time employee earning $16/hour; a "good income."

That Gavin was earning a decent wage and had been accepted to the ITE program at UCU became a source of tension in his personal life as several relatives who were second generation Canadians, or who came to Canada as children and later "dropped out" of school, felt that Gavin had to "toe the line." The situation escalated to the point where Gavin and his wife decided to sell the house where they were living with extended family so they could move to a home where they could live as a nuclear family.

> I had some negative experiences that were more related to the people I was staying with; my family and my wife's family. My negative part of that was they felt that, to put it bluntly, one of these guys told me I have to tow the line so to speak. It's like if I do well, it's not something good. I don't know how to describe it. That might be the reversal of what you would expect, but it wasn't viewed that way.

**Challenges.** Gavin's story of participation in the initial teacher education program sheds light on challenges manifested through a discouraging and undermining mentor teacher relationship, deficit perceptions of a 'non-standard' English dialect, and perceptions of racism and gender imbalance in teaching.

***A discouraging and undermining mentor teacher relationship.*** When Gavin started his observation days leading up to practicum in a Grade 4 classroom, he was enthusiastic and looked forward to learning from his mentor teacher. Unfortunately, he found that his mentor teacher was reluctant to share resources with him and wasn't clear in describing what areas of the curriculum she wanted Gavin to address in his early lessons. He was discouraged and challenged by the tensions he felt with his mentor teacher and was particularly dismayed when she suggested that he might not be well suited for teaching.

> When I started my [observation] days I was in a Grade 4 class. I figured that there were some things that I didn't know and I tried my best to learn about them from my mentor teacher but I found that she was very reluctant to give me the resources. I don't know if she thought that I needed to go and buy the book, but she didn't want to give me the manuals to teach, or show me what I would be doing. She wasn't very supportive. I'll state it that bluntly. And I kind of tried to tolerate it as best as I could. I didn't want to say much because it wasn't my classroom, but I felt constrained initially and I didn't know where to turn. I thought I could handle it on my own, and I was going to swallow some things and let certain things go; certain comments she made. One time we were talking and she went so far as to say that she doesn't think this is for me. She also added that she's not telling me to stop coming to [UCU] but maybe when I'm finished I can do something else. It was shattering for me to hear this. It kind of really dented my confidence. I was at an all-time low. At that point in time I was starting to believe that maybe this really isn't for me and I was beginning to believe what she was saying. I was becoming depressed and it affected me. The next days I was in the school these words kept ringing in my ears. I found maybe

> when I was in front of the class I wasn't as confident and I didn't project enough confidence.

Gavin spoke with his faculty practicum advisor about the situation and was counseled to make every effort to "work out something." Gavin believes that he tried to make the situation work. He spoke directly with the mentor teacher and expressed his concerns but ultimately felt that his mentor teacher was "setting [him] up to fail." Gavin felt that she was inconsistent in her expectations, that she didn't provide adequate positive encouragement, and that by correcting his pronunciation in front of the students, she was embarrassing him and undermining his credibility with the students.

> I was thinking to myself, it seems to me that she was setting me up for failure. And she even threatened me one time. One of the first assignments was to record a lesson in the class and then you play it back and listen to see where you can improve and I was supposed to do that the next day, but I had to get permission and all of that from her and she knew that. So after we had a disagreement she said, 'Do you really want to do that recording tomorrow or not?' I said to her, 'That's what I'm here for and I have to do it.' She said, 'It doesn't seem that you want to do it; I don't think I might give you the time to do it.' I felt so threatened. I was cold. I was thinking this is part of my mark and if I didn't get it done, I knew it could have impacted a lot on my grade. It was hurtful in many ways because I couldn't understand what it was that I was doing wrong, or what I was and wasn't doing. Most of the time I think I was trying to solicit this from her to get her to tell me what is it I'm not doing. So the next day, I tried to do the things she said I should do, but there was always something I wasn't doing. So everyday, she always found something new. '[Gavin] you weren't

doing this,' or '[Gavin] you said platoo instead of plateau' and she wouldn't do it discreetly, she would do it right in front of the class. This was very embarrassing and it was affecting me so much it was disturbing and hard for me because in my whole lifetime I was digging deep to try and think of someone who did this to me and I couldn't find anything. It was so disturbing and that's what I said to her the last day. I said, 'When I came here, I came with an open mind. I came here to learn from you. I know you have many years of experience and I was willing to learn, but you are not willing to share.' I said that straight up to her. I said, 'It seems to me that you're not willing to share. You are not willing to help. All you are doing is nitpicking and being nasty to me.' She was like, 'Oh ya?' And I said, 'Yes. I don't see a willingness on your part to share what you know. You have the resources and I feel constrained in a way, like you go into someone's home, and I wouldn't go to someone's home unless I knew them really well and go into their fridge and take out their food.' That's what she would say to me. If I needed paper or something, I could go and take it and I would say, 'No, this is your classroom.' Unless she was trying to bait me and was waiting for me to do that so she could say I shouldn't touch her stuff, 'You should ask me first.' That is what I was getting from her. She was setting things up for me to do and then she would turn around and say, 'Oh, no, you shouldn't do that.' So after I sensed that, I was walking on eggs. I didn't want to aggravate her, or get her annoyed. And eventually, this person would grade me, or fail me, or whatever. So I was thinking that under those circumstances, anyone would want to impress the person, or do the things you're asked to do so the [mentor teacher] can say that this is a person who can give you a great grade on your evaluations. It really hit me one day and I thought, 'Oh my God, this woman is really setting me up to fail.' I realized that I had

> done the best I could. It was a lesson plan and I used the expectations from the text, and she was marking me level one to four and on that she gave me level three or four but for everything else, she marked me just under the fail mark and gave me a level two. I looked at it and I thought, 'I'm not going to be able to make it here.' It was so stressful.

Concerned that he was going to fail the first practicum, Gavin contacted his faculty practicum advisor and informed her that he was dropping out of the practicum and that he was going to enter the unevaluated first practicum program for internationally educated teacher candidates.

> If there wasn't the [unevaluated first practicum opportunity], I wouldn't have graduated this year. I don't know if there was anything else; if there were other options to move to another school, but that distraction, being able to step aside, is why I'm here today graduating. I had reached the point where I might have given up right there and then it was so stressful. But I was not willing to go through any more abuse, and for me it was emotional abuse. That's the way I saw it.

Leaving the practicum seemed like the only alternative to Gavin and he's very happy with that decision. When faced with the power the mentor teacher held in terms of access to classroom resources and evaluating his performance, he was certain that staying in the practicum would not result in a positive outcome.

Gavin suggests that future ITCs in similar situations should engage their mentor teacher and faculty practicum advisor in a conversation aimed at determining the issues at hand and moving forward to improve the mentoring relationship. If that doesn't yield favourable results, then the ITC should request a removal from the mentor teacher's

classroom. He knows that several of his colleagues were very unhappy and felt unsupported in their practicum placement, but for Gavin, unacceptable circumstances can, and must, be remedied rather than suffered at the expense of the ITC.

> Try to discuss it in a mature, professional way which is what I tried to do. If that doesn't work, the next step would be to call your coordinator and most times they would try to have a meeting with yourself and your [mentor teacher] and then to see what the problem is and if anything can be worked out. Last but not least, if nothing works, you can talk to your support people [at UCU] who can maybe arrange something else, but try not to let things deteriorate for too long, or let your practicum go too far before you address the situation because I know quite a few people who cried throughout their practicum because their [mentor teachers] were not very supportive and they just tolerated it because they knew they had to complete a practicum and do it successfully.

***Deficit perceptions of 'non-standard' English.*** As an ITC who speaks English as a first language, Gavin did not anticipate any significant challenges related to verbal or written communication. He found, however, that his first mentor teacher took issue with his Guyanese dialect and often corrected his pronunciation in front of the students. As Gavin worked to build relationships with students and to anticipate that they may, on occasion, have difficulty understanding his "accent," he acknowledged to the students that his English may differ from theirs and he invited them to ask for clarification whenever necessary.

> [My first mentor teacher] told me that I have an accent and I have to be careful how I speak to the kids. I never thought at the time – I know in between there are a few words that I may not enunciate properly but I never thought that I had a huge accent

> problem. But I took her comment in stride and the next day I went in I tried to speak a little bit slower because she said I was speaking too fast as well. So I tried to speak slower and I also tried to say words a little bit better to her satisfaction but I figured that if I had a little language problem, it wasn't that huge and most times I found that if the kids didn't understand something I said, they would ask me and I would go over it again. That's one of the reasons why, when you enter a room, you have to let them know that they should ask for clarification if they don't understand anything I say, or any word, they should ask for an explanation. I used to say to the students that they may find that I have an accent, that I don't think I have an accent, but they might think I have an accent, and if I say something in class, or if there's a word that I read or I call or you don't understand, put your hand up and I'll be willing to clarify for you.

***Perceptions of racism and gender imbalance in teaching.*** When asked if he encountered or observed any issues related to race during his participation in the ITE program, Gavin described a couple of circumstances that he thought might be related to race, but he hesitated to identify these as instances of racism. The first situation that he recounted involved a black female student in his first practicum classroom. Gavin believes that this student was not invited by the mentor teacher to participate in classroom discussions to the same extent that her white peers were engaged.

> On the very first [practicum observation day] I did notice what I think was a race problem. The class had one female black child. The class was heavily white but there was this one black kid there and I did observe how the teacher worked with the students and I noticed that when the teacher was questioning, she rarely went to that

> kid; to the point it was so blatant. She would ask all the kids three times, three different questions, and not even once did she ask the black child. So I thought it was just an oversight, but then I kept observing and I saw it again so it was obvious that it was a pattern. It wasn't just a chance, and I also noticed that child's reaction. She was so frustrated. She wanted to say things, but there wasn't equitable questioning around the classroom at all. Also, the other thing I noticed with that one kid is that she was placed at the very back of the class. You could say that it's not racial, but that was just what I noticed.

Gavin's second racial incident involved his relationship with his first mentor teacher and while Gavin was once again reluctant to describe the tension as being racial, and he does not use the term "racism," he does suggest that his mentor teacher may have been uncomfortable with his being a black man.

> In the field, I had an incident there, but I didn't want to apply race to it. I wanted to say more of a prejudicial type of behaviour; 'I'm better than you, I have 25 years of teaching experience; I'm the authority here.' But then you know, a lot of our feelings are very subjective so it may be hard sometimes to reach inside someone to analyze what they are thinking but by and large, most of us can read body language quite well and my feeling was, in terms of body language that I was getting from my [mentor teacher], was first I was black and I was male and I don't know if she felt threatened by that. I don't know if in the past maybe she had bad experiences with a male black person who wasn't a teacher; maybe someone in the community, but I was feeling as if maybe she was feeling threatened by me in some way; unconsciously or not. I don't know, and maybe that's why she needed to make me feel uncomfortable or be harsh

> toward me. I just got this feeling that she wasn't really happy being in the same room with me.

In addition to circumstances related to race, Gavin also observed that there was a significant gender imbalance in the ITE program at UCU and he considered several possibilities for this disparity, including the possibility of discrimination in the selection of candidates to the program.

> It was very obvious that there were so many females in the class. That was self-evident. You didn't even need to guess. You could just pop your head in the door and you would see so many women. It kind of, I'm not sure if it bothered me so to speak, but I never really paid much attention to it because I felt that they were qualified to be there so they should be there. Maybe there weren't many men who applied to do the program. Maybe there aren't many men who are interested in teaching for whatever reason. In terms of gender at the university, I would say if there is any hint of discrimination, it may have to come from those who select the candidates.

**Supports.** Gavin's narrative describes support experienced through the organizational opportunity for ITCs to engage in an unevaluated first practicum placement.

***Organizational opportunity for an unevaluated first practicum.*** When Gavin experienced difficulty in his first practicum, he took advantage of the unevaluated first practicum observation program for internationally educated teacher candidates to "step aside" and spend some time in other school environments. This opportunity to leave his first practicum enabled Gavin to avert the possibility of a failed practicum and to re-build confidence in his ability to be an effective teacher in Canada. Leaving the first practicum and participating in the unevaluated practicum program were not options that were presented to

Gavin by his faculty practicum advisor or student support services staff at UCU. Gavin recalled hearing about the program during his orientation at UCU and he took the initiative to argue that he should be permitted to join this program even though he was almost midway through the first practicum and the program was already 2 weeks into its delivery. He is thankful that he was given permission for late enrolment.

> The [unevaluated first practicum] program was a blessing in disguise in many ways. When I went to those schools and I got good reactions from the teachers, from the kids, and they were supportive, I had to reassess myself. Eventually it bore out when I went to my next school. I made such a huge connection with those kids. The [unevaluated first practicum] program, I think, in many ways, gave me an advantage. I personally feel that it gave me an advantage because when I had those experiences, something happened. I don't know what it was, but I suddenly realized that I can actually do this.

In addition to re-gaining his confidence, Gavin also learned more in the unevaluated first practicum program about teaching and learning in Canada and about the diversity of the urban school district's student population.

> I got so much more understanding of the schools and I never realized that I didn't know about how the school works. Simple things like the pledge, and how the school day is organized. I didn't know much about ESL and we didn't talk much about behavioural kids and kids with special needs. When I went to some of these schools and I saw the diversity there, then I got to really grasp what ESL exactly was. I also realized that some of the students really didn't not know the work, it is because their

> first language isn't English and maybe that's part of the reason they aren't doing well. I never really understood that could be a problem. That was a very good experience.

Gavin's second and third practicum attempts were very successful. He enjoyed positive and supportive relationships with his mentor teachers and he felt that he was well received by the school communities. Gavin believes that these positive experiences and his successful completion of the ITE program were made possible by the unevaluated first practicum program.

> [The reaction from the field] was very favourable, especially in my last two schools. There were very favourable responses. They offered me help and they also let me have some fun with the students. We had an outing and I was included in that. We went snow tubing. We had a great time. In my first practicum [the first evaluated practicum after he pulled himself out of the program's first practicum placement] I was feeling so good, I was saying to myself that nothing was going to stop me. I just felt so confident. I knew that I had most of the tools. I had more to learn but I was just feeling so confident and I attribute that to the [unevaluated first practicum] program.

**Laila**

> **"When I applied for this course, I realized that I have to be a teacher that I expect my daughter's teacher is going to be."**

Laila and her husband came to Canada from Iran in 2000 when Laila was 26 years old. They both hold Master's Degrees in Computer Engineering, were employed in their field within 3 months of their arrival and they earned comfortable salaries. Unfortunately, as Laila describes, "the bubble had a blast" and after only 1 year of employment, both Laila and her

husband were terminated from their jobs and were looking for work in a very different job market than the one they encountered when they immigrated to Canada.

After engaging in IT-related courses and aggressively seeking employment for more than a year to no avail, Laila started to consider other career options. She decided that she wanted to be a teacher. Although Laila had a passion for teaching as a top graduate student and teaching assistant in Iran, she didn't study to become a teacher because "in Iran, where my origin is, you normally don't go for teaching if you are a top student in school – you go for medicine, law, or engineering." Although Laila believes that teachers are more respected in Iran, she describes the teaching profession in Canada as more respected due to the middle class compensation for teachers compared to below middle class wages for teachers in Iran where teachers often work second jobs, like driving taxi cabs, in order to support their families.

> Unfortunately, back home, teachers are not considered middle class – they are a little bit below middle class in society. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter how rewarding your job is or how people have respect or no respect for you, when the status of your life is below the average, then that job doesn't have the respect it should have. When it comes to teachers, the respect teachers have from parents and students in Iran is much more than what you have here as a teacher. Here, sometimes, students are really disrespectful to you.

Laila is proud to be a certified teacher in Canada and is committed to ongoing professional learning and improvement to be the best teacher she can be. When she was working in an office environment she often felt that her time was wasted. Laila does,

however, believe that some people in Iran will think that immigration has resulted in a loss of status.

> But now I know in 35 years when I retire and look back, I'm going to appreciate what I've done for the system, for society. I think I'm going to have a better conscience working as a teacher. Maybe some people, when they hear back home that I've done this, they might think that I've gone one step down. I know that, but I'm at a point in my life that I don't care what other people think.

Laila's story of participation in the initial teacher education program at UCU is one of determination, strategy, political acuity and skill, competency, accessing support, and consideration of individual merit. Laila believes that immigrant teachers should be hired on the basis of their knowledge and skills as teachers, and not for social reasons of diversity, inclusion, or social justice. As the mother of a toddler, Laila argues that she has high standards in teaching for her child, and that these same high standards should be met for all children. In particular, although she is an English language learner, Laila insists that all teachers should be able to communicate effectively in English as one of the primary languages of instruction in Canada. Although she expects the university to provide supports to help students grow and improve throughout their participation in the teacher education program, Laila argues that each individual teacher candidate, and other immigrants considering teaching as a profession, should assume individual responsibility to identify their areas of "weakness" and work toward improvement. In particular, Laila advises prospective participants in a teacher education program to prepare for participation in the program by improving their English language skills as she sees language as one of the most significant challenges for ITCs.

**Challenges.** Laila's story as a teacher candidate can advance organizational learning by shedding light on challenges experienced through: the significance of, and barriers to, gaining classroom experience in Canada; challenges to identity and self-confidence as an English language learner; political navigation to gain entry to communities of practice in schools; prejudice toward English language learners as unsuitable for teaching in Canada; and, the lack of a central repository of verified official documents from international sources.

***Significance of and barriers to gaining experience in Canadian classrooms.*** Becoming a teacher in Canada was not an easy process for Laila. Although she had a Master's Degree, excellent grades, teaching experience as a teaching assistant in her undergraduate and graduate studies, and experience as a tutor since high school, Laila's application to Bachelor of Education programs in Canada were rejected. After speaking with the Registrar's Offices at two universities, Laila determined that insufficient classroom experience in Canada was limiting her access to an initial teacher education program. Laila was surprised to discover how difficult it would be for her to gain even volunteer teaching experience in Canada.

> For me, this was like a cycle. If you want a teaching certificate, you have to have teaching experience. If you want to teach somewhere, you need a teaching certificate so it was like this cycle going on and on so I thought, 'OK, I'll be a volunteer and I'll work in my local high school.' I prepared a resume and thought my credentials were good enough having a Master's Degree to go and at least sit and observe a math class and help the teacher. I gave my resume to my local high school and I even had the police clearance, but they told me no. I was shocked because I thought if you were

> willing to volunteer and help, they would be welcoming but I was shocked when they told me no, we don't want you to be a volunteer here.

Laila persisted in her efforts to gain teaching experience in Canada. She went to the public library to see if she could volunteer with their programs and was told that she was welcome to help stack books. Laila didn't accept this offer as she didn't see where this experience could be considered relevant to teaching. She then went to a community volunteer centre where different volunteer opportunities were posted. One of the workers at the centre suggested that social services for children might have suitable volunteer opportunities. Laila contacted social services and was told that they are always looking for math tutors to support children in foster care homes. Laila became a volunteer for social services, but this opportunity to gain teaching experience in Canada was not easy to fulfill as Laila often had to travel for more than an hour to tutor one student for 90 minutes.

Laila made the most of her volunteer work with children in foster care and describes the experience as both valuable and rewarding in spite of the effort required and the distance traveled. Through this experience, Laila became familiar with education in the province; curriculum, text books, report cards, and assessment materials. When one of the students Laila tutored showed her something that she had not seen before, Laila would use the internet to research the item. Also, as a result of her work as a tutor, Laila decided that if she wanted to teach in a secondary school in the province, it would be a good idea for her to be a student in a local secondary school. Laila applied as a student to participate in a summer session Grade 11 English course to become more familiar with secondary education, and to improve her written English. Laila informed the instructor of the English course that she was working toward becoming a teacher and she appreciated the time that the teacher spent before class talking with her about his work.

***Challenges to identity and self-confidence as an English language learner.*** Laila's efforts to familiarize herself with teaching and learning in Canada resulted in an offer of admission to a Bachelor of Education degree program (B.Ed.) at UCU leading to secondary school teaching qualifications. Prior to her participation in the B.Ed. program, Laila anticipated many challenges, particularly during practicum where she had heard that "even native English speakers had very tough experiences during their practicum." Laila believed that she would experience the same challenges as other teacher candidates but she also anticipated language difficulties with her associate teacher and the students in her host school.

> Because English is not my first language, I thought I might have problems with my mentor teacher or with students. They might pick on me, or I might not be able to explain things in different ways when it comes to my language skills so I knew I was going to have a tough year.

What Laila didn't anticipate was the extent to which participation in the B.Ed. program would prompt her to question her own skills and competencies.

> The first day I started my class here, my first class was my educational psychology class. For the first time in my life I felt like I was illiterate in a class. Before this, I did my Master's Degree in England so I've been in English-speaking universities but the difference is I was in a technical field; not a humanities field. When you're in a technical field, your knowledge is more important than your presentation skills or language skills because as long as you know how something is done, you can go to the board and explain yourself but when they started to have discussions here, luckily enough I was in a cohort that didn't have many ELLs. Most of my classmates, maybe

> 30 out of 32 were English language speakers; native English language speakers and even if they were from immigrant families, they were educated in Canadian schools so I consider them to be native English speakers. So what happened on the first day, when they started to have conversations, I realized that my vocabulary is very small compared to their vocabulary. When they want to explain their ideas, they use these sophisticated sentences and they speak so beautifully that I felt like I'm an idiot in the class. Up until that point, I was the type of student who contributed in class. I used to talk about my ideas and be an active participant in the class, but that day, I simply started to be quiet because if I wanted to talk about something, I had to practice it in my mind so many times before talking about it because I wanted it to be perfect like the others and then it wouldn't be perfect because I didn't know as many sophisticated words as they did. For the first few weeks, I was feeling really stressed in my Humanities classes; not in my math and computer science class because that was different; but in my Humanities classes, I was feeling really depressed because I simply couldn't contribute to the conversation. I had good ideas, but I was frightened to speak out loud because I knew that my language skill is not good enough and my sentences are not going to be as perfect.

Laila felt competent in the B.Ed. math and science courses and often felt that her knowledge in these areas was stronger than that demonstrated by her English speaking colleagues. In addition to Laila's self-consciousness around her spoken English, she found the demands for written work in the Humanities and Social Sciences classes challenging. With the full-time course load, Laila and her classmates were required to submit at least one piece of written work each week. Examples of written assignments included reflective papers, summaries of articles, and essays. While she acknowledges that her facility with English compounded the

workload in the program, Laila believes that "the volume of work was too much even for native English speakers."

Although the volume of the coursework was time-consuming, Laila did not find the work difficult. For her, the workload became a challenge of time – a challenge of balancing family time with her husband and infant daughter, and time required to participate in the teacher education program.

> For me, it was even twice, or three times more difficult because I had to write the sentence and if it wasn't good, I had to change it many times. A native speaker would write a paragraph in ten minutes but in my case, one sentence would take ten minutes.

In spite of the challenges she faced as an English language learner, Laila expressed hegemonic attitudes toward other teacher candidates who have "accents;" particularly those who speak "Asian" first languages:

> Many people have told me that I do not have much problem with my spoken English; that I can be understood, so maybe it's not my case, but I know I have some other internationally educated colleagues from other parts of Asia, mostly South Asia, and their written English was better than mine, but they had problems because their accent in spoken English was a major problem for them. In that case, they have to work on their spoken English as well.

Laila believes that ITCs must recognize their areas of "weakness" and take steps toward improvement. Laila believes that ITCs have many strengths, especially where knowledge of subject specialty content is concerned, and that they must simultaneously highlight those strengths and take action to improve their English language skills. As a mother, Laila holds

high expectations of teachers and the education system and she believes that people who want to become teachers must accept responsibility for developing the required language skills.

> So you have to find for yourself what your weakness is and work on your weakness. I think the most important thing is to prepare. You have to work on improving your English, otherwise there is no point. You cannot be a teacher in this system. I truly understand that because I have a kid now and I don't want my kid's teacher to not be able to speak English and communicate with my kid, even though I'm not a native English speaker, that's my expectation of the education system. When I applied for this course, I realized that I have to be a teacher that I expect my daughter's teacher is going to be. And they have to seek help because there are many sources of help here. …You always have to compensate for your weaknesses. That's the rule of the world. So if your English is not good, you should be better in something else, otherwise, what's the point of you being a teacher in the system? Honestly, maybe it's not the right way to say this, but I understand that if my English is not good and I'm not good in math, why should a school board be interested in hiring me? Are they looking for a charity case? No.

***Political navigation to establish legitimacy as a teacher.*** Laila was the only ITC in this study who had already accepted a full-time teaching contract with a local public school board at the time of our interview (June). Her contract position was to commence in September. In spite of a very tight job market in the province, Laila was hired to teach Mathematics at a secondary school in a predominantly white, affluent and prestigious community. Laila believes that she was hired to this school for several reasons, but most

significantly because she had a very successful practice teaching block at the school, she made a favourable impression on the head of the Mathematics department, and with the support of student support services staff at the university was very well-prepared for her job interview.

> I got a job in one of my practicum schools. I was lucky enough to work with a [mentor teacher] who is the head of the math department at my second practicum and luckily enough, there was an opening in the math department and the whole math department liked me so much that when I applied for the job on the website, there were 183 applicants for that job and the principal picked seven candidates for interviews and luckily enough, because she knew me in the school, and because she knew that the math head is so happy with me, I was one of the candidates. So I was given the chance to represent myself and I did a very good interview and I have to say again that I got support from [UCU]. I came [to the campus] and [a student support services tutor] practiced a mock interview with me the day before my interview and I got the job. So again, when it comes to jobs, I won't say that it's so much networking like it is in business, but again, it's networking.

Laila emphasized understanding interpersonal politics in schools and "fitting in" with the community of practice as significant for teacher candidates who are trying to gain employment as teachers. For Laila, this meant being "flexible;" recognizing the power of mentor teachers, avoiding "personality conflicts" with teachers in the practicum school, doing "what they want . . . their way," and being appreciative of criticism or correction of English language usage. By offering advice for future teacher candidates, Laila described the strategy that she used to position herself favourably as an applicant for a teaching position:

> They have to make themselves visible in the schools. They have to try to show that they belong to the community; to the education community. Then it will help to get a job. Getting a job is a real struggle. I see many of my friends are still looking for a job. The job market is not as good as before. It's very important to get support and be successful in the practicum, and something I've realized, that I saw personally among my friends, is that some people didn't have a successful practicum experience because they had personal problems with the [mentor teacher]. I was lucky or unlucky that I had four [mentor teachers]. They had to share me with another teacher in both of my practicums so I had to work with four different personalities and I have to say with one of them had a personality that I could easily have a personality clash with, but maybe because of the experience I have in life working in business before I came to [UCU], I had the opportunity to realize in this one month, I have to be flexible. Even if what they ask me is not what I want to do as a teacher, I have to do it their way so I can please them. Many student teachers, especially the young ones, don't understand that and that's what causes the problems in their practicum. I think it's important, especially when you are internationally educated, to do the things, and get support from your mentor teacher.

Laila believes that her age and experience enabled her to navigate the challenging and imbalanced power dynamics in the relationships between TCs and mentor teachers. She believes that TCs, and ITCs in particular, should be more strategic in the way they respond to the various circumstances of practicum. To Laila, the mentor teacher holds the power to advance the TC's career through networking, providing reference, and, as was the case in her practicum school, by advocating on behalf of the TC during the job application process. Laila describes this relationship as a potentially de-humanizing circumstance where ITCs are

particularly vulnerable, especially when mentor teachers correct their verbal or written English in front of the students.

> One of my [mentor teachers] used to correct me in front of the class, my English, but I never took it personally. I always thanked him after the class. Maybe I didn't like it, the way he did it, but I knew he did it because he wanted to help me so I never took it personally. It's important for teacher candidates not to take things personally and try to work it out. Maybe, even if it's tough and the [mentor teacher] is not working the way you want to work, and you think they are sometimes wrong, you still have to do it their way.

In the practicum context, Laila argues that ITCs should adapt to the behaviour and expectations of the mentor teacher and consider correcting a TC in front of the students as "acceptable" and "justified" by the mentor teacher. Laila believes that TCs, in their insubordinate position, should not question or confront this behaviour, and to the contrary, should express appreciation to the mentor teacher for their "support" and instruction, even if being corrected in front of students may compromise the ability of the ITC to manage student behaviour and build positive, mutually respectful relationships with students and mentor teachers.

***Prejudice toward English language learners as unsuitable teachers in Canada.*** Laila understands schools as political spaces and the position of teacher candidates as one that must be carefully navigated, especially for ITCs who are English language learners as some teachers and administrators harbour reservations about the appropriateness and competency of English language learners as teachers in Canadian schools.

> It's better to have good politics and be a good people person and I think that's something even more important for internationally educated students because some of the teachers here are still reluctant to the fact that some teachers may not speak English as their first language. I was in an elementary school as part of my unevaluated first practicum observation experience at [UCU] and I was observing a Grade 3/4 split class and the teacher clearly told me that she thinks it's not a good idea that someone who doesn't speak English as their first language might be a teacher in this system. She said it clearly to my face, and even in that case, I just smiled and I said, you know what, maybe people have different needs. I learned that there is no point in arguing with people who do not make policies.

In spite of this prejudiced response in the unevaluated practicum context, when asked if she experienced or was aware of any issues related to race, class, gender, language or religion during her participation in the program, Laila spoke only of the language issues she generated within herself and heard of through colleagues. Laila considers herself to be her most challenging critic and described her own feelings of incompetence as self-imposed.

> Language. Maybe I've seen problems, but I haven't seen any prejudice towards me at [UCU] because of language. The problems I had were because I felt incompetent, not because other people thought I was incompetent. I have to be clear about that. If I didn't feel comfortable, it doesn't mean that my colleagues or my instructors made me feel uncomfortable. It was me who thought I was not good.

Moving forward with her career in teaching, Laila feels confident about her ability to work effectively with the students and her colleagues. Her fears, however, are centred around her relationships with parents in the community.

> My fear for next year is not the students or the staff. My fear is the parents because I'm not sure if a problem happens with the parents are they going to take advantage of the fact that I don't speak English as a first language? …Because of the nature of the school; this school is located in a very affluent community; the parents are causing problems for the teachers all the time anyway because even if their kids are not good, they want them to have a certain mark for admission to university. The teachers are under a guillotine anyway; even the native English speakers. I see the struggle going on in the department every day. I have a fear that maybe because English is not my first language, they are going take advantage of that.

Laila argues that there should be a support system in the school board that provides services similar to those provided by student support services at the university. Laila would like to have a service that she can consult for language and culture support; for proofreading and guidance in her communication with parents, that is outside of her school workplace. To Laila, with her strong content knowledge that is "stronger than many teachers in the field right now," any support that the provincial government and her school district can provide to improve and support her English skills will benefit students and the system.

***The lack of a central repository of verified official documents.*** Similarly, Laila argued that if the Canadian government is supportive of immigrants and is committed to facilitating their ability to gain entry to such bureaucratic organizations as universities and self-regulating licensing bodies, it will do more to help immigrants navigate complex processes for securing and providing authentic documents. Laila described significant challenges that she and other ITC colleagues experienced as part of the application process to the university and the certification process to teach in the province. In particular, Laila found

the requirements for original, sealed documents from source countries to be prohibitive for ITCs and she argues that there should be a central repository of official documents in Canada so internationally educated immigrants aren't required to repeatedly engage in difficult processes for obtaining official documents from source countries.

> The problem with the [application processes]; and I know the reasons, but my complaint is that when I applied for university, because my transcripts and my degree are from an international institute, they have to come here sealed from the Registrar of your university. It's not an easy task. My father back home is not a young person and in many countries I've heard from many people that it isn't an easy task to go to the university and ask them to send an English version of your transcript to a university in Canada. The reason is because you have to tell somebody and they don't want to do it. In my case, I was lucky because my father is still there but there are many people who don't have anyone there to do it for them. I did it once to get admission to the university. But the thing that really bothers me is that there is no central system here so I had to do it once more for [certification] so once more my dad had to go there and ask them to send my transcripts and everything here. Another one for the rating for my salary. So why isn't there a central system? Once a copy of my degree and transcript comes here, then it's here and they all should be able to access it. Why can't the university and [the other regulatory bodies] refer to the same document from a central system?

**Supports.** Laila described supports through organizational programs, encouragement from an instructor at UCU, and empowerment through working with a mentor teacher who is an English language learner and speaks with an "accent,"

***Supportive organizational programs.*** Laila demonstrated the same self-directed learning in the teacher education program that she displayed in her efforts to enter the program. She recognized areas where she wanted to improve her skills and she sought assistance through student support services.

> Because of [the student support services staff], I started to ask for help in my written assignments and that really helped me because first it helped me improve my writing skills and second, it gave me some kind of support because I knew there is someone there. If I think my answer is not enough, it's not the end of the world. There is someone there to help me; to have a second look. That person is not my teacher, or one of my colleagues. This is a person who is willing to help. I have to admit that [the student support services staff] helped me a lot. Maybe it helped me improve my self-esteem and psychologically helped me because they were there. It was very important for me.

Laila attributes her willingness to seek help to her "very good self-esteem" and her readiness to acknowledge that she needs help. She believes that some people didn't know about the assistance available through student support services, and others would not have accessed support anyway due to their own insecurities when it comes to acknowledging their need for help.

Another organizational source of support for Laila was found in her participation in the self-selected elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates. For Laila, this was one of her favourite and most helpful courses "because all the students in the class were internationally educated so the good thing is that I felt really good to contribute to the class because everybody else had language problems like me; they had accents like me."

Laila believes that the assignments for this course were both reasonable in the amount of time they required, and helpful in the amount that she learned as a result of the assignments. This course is offered during the first semester and Laila believes that it was instrumental in supporting her success in practice teaching as it provided a stronger foundational understanding of schooling in Canada.

In addition to the content and the shared experiences of the participants, Laila was impressed by the skillful facilitation of the course instructor who has a strong background in language acquisition and has an understanding of the challenges faced by ITCs. The teaching assistant for the course was herself an English language learner and for Laila, "it was really nice to see that the person who is somehow in charge of giving you an assignment is someone who understands your problems and your struggles."

Laila emphasized that the strengths and benefits of the elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates extend beyond content and are closely connected to the teaching style and skill of the instructor who

> made us feel so special. She made us all feel like contributing and she would share her own experiences and teaching experiences which was really important. Sometimes she would share her personal experiences involving her kids and school and the education system with us. The first day, the way she introduced us to each other and we had to come up with a pre-fix for our names. Like I was [loyal Laila] and we had to find a word that started with our initial and it really helped us warm up in the class. Every day we had the class was activity day. Every day we had different group assignments. She used many strategies that I'm going to use in my own teaching. So it wasn't only her course outline, but the way she taught the course as well. I think these two things are both important. You might look at other course

> outlines. Like you might look at the outline for school and society and it looks like a very interesting course, but it depends on how you are going to teach that class.

***Encouragement from an instructor at UCU.*** Another source of support for Laila came through one of her instructors, a seconded principal, who encouraged her to contribute to class discussions and boosted her confidence in her suitability as a teacher. During her early participation in the program, Laila questioned whether she had made the right decision to pursue teaching. The job market for teachers is tight and Laila wondered if she was being unrealistic to think that a school might hire her. Her instructor encouraged her:

> He told me if I were a principal I would hire you because I love your background. I love the way you contribute to the class. I love your background, your knowledge. So I thought, OK, maybe there is one more principal out there like him in the school board. He really gave me support and encouragement and told me that my English is good and everyone understands me. Why shouldn't they hire you? He was so supportive. He gave me hope that I stand a chance in the Canadian education system. I think it's very, very important for the instructors here to be supportive and to show to the minority students and ones who have English language problems or language skill problems that there is hope for them in the system.

***Support from a mentor teacher who is an English language learner.*** Although Laila witnessed linguistic prejudice in her first observation experience, her practicum placements were very positive and supportive. Indeed, one of Laila's mentor teachers was himself an English language learner and working with him was a very empowering experience for Laila.

> My second practicum school, where I got hired, is a very white, Anglo-Saxon community. I did not have even one ESL student in my class and there isn't an ESL class in the school. This is a very homogeneous, white community where I'm going to teach and where I did my practice teaching. Honestly, I never had a problem with the students. I had a feeling that they were going to laugh; that they were going to pick on me, they were going to make fun of my accent, but it never happened. …Even in the department, I would ask someone to proofread my writing for me, and they were supportive and they would help me. Luckily enough, one of my [mentor teachers] was an English as a second language speaker himself. He had an accent. He had a Polish background and he was not a native English speaker and I really enjoyed the experience. The first thing he said to the class was, 'Again, you are going to have a teacher who doesn't speak English as her first language, but I think she speaks better than me.' This was Grade 12 and everyone had a good laugh. I think that was a very good experience. To see a successful teacher in the system who is now a [mentor teacher] and he was not an English as a first language speaker.

## Summary

Overall, the narratives of the teacher candidates in this study suggest that they experienced similar challenges and supports in the initial teacher education program at UCU. The following sections of this chapter provide a summary of the ways that they described aspects of the program that challenged or supported their efforts to develop as teachers in Canada.

**Teacher candidate perceptions of challenges.** All of the six teacher candidates who are English language learners or who speak non-standard English experienced challenges

related to perceptions of their English language proficiency in the university and practice teaching contexts. While they described self-imposed feelings of inadequacy in the academic program (i.e., that they weren't able to articulate their thoughts as eloquently as their English speaking peers), they identified intolerant and discouraging responses of mentor teachers as the source of language-related challenges in practicum contexts. All six of these teacher candidates encountered at least one mentor teacher who expressed significant concern about their suitability as teachers in Canada and they felt better supported in their development as teachers when they were assigned to mentor teachers who were more accepting of their linguistic differences. Articulating an alternative perspective, Laila, herself an English language learner who experienced language-related challenges at the university and in practice teaching contexts, indicated that concerns about the English language proficiency of prospective teachers are justified. She argued that English language learners have an obligation to identify English as an area of "weakness" and to improve their communication skills before assuming the responsibilities of a teacher. As a mother, Laila expects that the education system will ensure that her daughter's teacher will be able to speak English and that English language learners won't be hired as teachers out of a sense of "charity" at the expense of her daughter and other students.

Five of the eight teacher candidates described ways that they felt disadvantaged because they did not have experience in Canadian schools as students or as teachers. They indicated that these disadvantages influenced both their practice as teachers and the ways that mentor teachers assessed their legitimacy as teachers. With regard to their teaching practice, lack of familiarity with education in Canada challenged their ability to deliver curriculum content, especially in social studies courses that require knowledge of Canadian history and geography. They also felt limited in their ability to effectively manage and respond to student

behavior and to use a shared awareness of popular culture to develop positive relationships with students. In terms of the ways that they were judged by mentor teachers, these teacher candidates perceived that some mentor teachers did not interact with them in a collegial manner and did not include them in more personal staffroom conversations with other teachers because they did not share similar backgrounds. As Catherine stated, “They will always prefer somebody who was born here because you didn’t go in the system; because you don’t know the system inside and out, or because you still have an accent while speaking English.”

Five of the teacher candidates in this study described tensions related to their identities as Canadians. They described feeling less Canadian than people who were born in Canada. Lanying and Hannah observed that some Canadian-born children of Chinese and Korean immigrants, and fellow teacher candidates who came to Canada from these countries as young children distanced themselves from their heritage culture and shunned being referred to as ‘hyphenated’ Canadians (e.g., Chinese-Canadians). David talked about two distinct and incompatible identities; one as a Chinese-Canadian and one as a Canadian. He described these two cultures as distinctly different and he believed that in order to be a teacher in Canada, he would need to “integrate the mainstream or Canadian culture” and “break away” from his Chinese identity. To the five teacher candidates who spoke about the significance of Canadian identity, being ‘less Canadian’ challenged their efforts to be recognized as legitimate teachers.

Four teacher candidates described challenges associated with insufficient recognition of their prior education and experience and an underestimation of their potential contributions as trained professionals. Lanying, Karen and Sal described experiencing a loss of social and economic status when they immigrated to Canada. Lanying and Karen worked

as domestic labourers and found the experience humiliating in comparison to the professional status they achieved prior to their move to Canada. Sal was able to find work in his area of expertise but he was not paid for the first 3 months in spite of the fact that his employer billed clients $80/hour for his labour. Karen and Laila found that their credentials were not considered sufficient by educational organizations. For Karen, her combined years of compulsory and post-secondary education leading to nursing qualifications, and her experience as a teacher in the Philippines were not enough for admission to an initial teacher education program in Canada and she was required to take additional undergraduate courses. Laila was told that her lack of experience in Canadian classrooms was impeding her application to an initial teacher education program. When she attempted to gain the required experience by volunteering in a school, she was frustrated to discover that despite her educational credentials, including a Master of Science degree from a university in England, she was unable to persuade a school to give her the opportunity to volunteer.

Sal and David described what they considered as a disconnection between the inclusive pedagogy that they were learning about in their initial teacher education program and the pedagogies employed by instructors at UCU. To these teacher candidates, treating all teacher candidates the same and failing to recognize the challenges faced by minoritized teacher candidates indicate that all instructors might not be as committed to the principles of inclusion in their own work as teacher educators as they profess to be in relation to the education of children. Sal and David suggested that if instructors at UCU believe that teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds have much to contribute as members of the teaching profession, then more instructors would make an explicit effort to support their success and this support would not be provided solely by specialized staff in student support services.

**Teacher candidate perceptions of supports.** Six teacher candidates emphasized the significance of the practice teaching support they received from student support services. For these teacher candidates, the encouragement and assistance they received from student support services enabled them to persevere in the program by bolstering their confidence and perceptions of themselves as legitimate teachers in Canada. The opportunity to engage in an unevaluated first practicum placement and intensive one-to-one support and encouragement in practice teaching contexts were particularly helpful.

The six English language learners who faced challenging and discouraging relationships with their first mentor teachers but went on to more successful practice teaching experiences when they were specifically assigned to mentor teachers known by UCU program staff for their positive approach to supporting teacher candidates talked about the importance of supportive and encouraging relationships with mentor teachers. While their first mentor teachers focused on their English language skills, corrected them in front of students, and questioned their legitimacy as teachers, their subsequent mentor teachers established more collegial relationships with the teacher candidates and fostered their professional growth.

Five teacher candidates indicated that they benefitted from positive social networks with fellow teacher candidates who encouraged them and validated their participation in the program. These relationships were fostered in their UCU classes where instructors provided opportunities for teacher candidates to communicate with each other and to share their experiences.

Four of the teacher candidates in this study described the elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates as a source of support at UCU. They indicated that the course instructor modeled the application of inclusive pedagogy and in so doing

valued the experiences and educational backgrounds of the teacher candidates while building their understanding of schooling in Canada. For teacher candidates like Sal, this course provided a safe learning environment where they could “express things more freely” because the course instructor understood them “more than other instructors.” Lanying described the course as a place where internationally educated teacher candidates could support each other “through the same challenges.”

Encouragement from individual instructors was identified as a source of support by four teacher candidates. Like Laila, they recalled interactions with individual instructors who reassured them that they have strengths that will benefit students and that they “stand a chance in the Canadian education system.”

Three teacher candidates availed themselves of writing support offered through the academic support centre at UCU. They described feeling more confident in the quality of their assignments when they were able to develop their writing skills with the one-to-one help of an advisor.

Finally, three teacher candidates described having a sense of optimism that their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds would be viewed as an asset to the education system. This optimism stemmed from their familiarity with discourses at UCU and in local school districts that purport to value diversity and the diversification of the teacher workforce. As Sal stated, “I know that I can contribute a lot to a school because of my background experiences and culture and life I bring with me.”

# Chapter Six: Instructor and Student Support Staff Perceptions

## Introduction

In this Chapter I present data collected through semi-structured interviews with four instructors and five student support service staff working within UCU's initial teacher education program. As faculty and staff working with racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates, these study participants generate and observe dynamics that challenge and support their efforts to develop as teachers in Canada.

The chapter begins with an examination of the responses provided by the instructors and then proceeds to provide a presentation of the data gathered through interviews with members of the student support staff. I conclude the chapter by summarizing the data and discussing similarities and differences of perspective within and across the two participant groups.

## ITE Program Instructors: Perceptions of challenges

> **"It was almost like look, you're trying to assimilate. You don't want to look like you're different from the culture that's there." (Instructor-A)**

The instructors participating in this study perceived challenges related to: lack of familiarity with schooling in Canada; responses to linguistic, racial and religious differences in practicum contexts; reluctance of ITCs to access support; program pedagogy; teaching aptitude; and credential recognition. A summary of the data related to instructor perceptions of challenges influencing the participation of ITCs is presented in Table 6.1.

**Table 6. 1 ITE Program Instructor Perceptions of Challenges Influencing the Participation of Immigrant Teacher Candidates**

| Challenges described by Instructors | Instructor(s) /4 | Representative Quote(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of familiarity with schooling in Canada** | **A, B, C, D** | The issue was around the expectations of students – what can I expect of students in terms of behaviour? In terms of the teacher-student relationship, and a little bit around the whole structure of schools in [Canada] – like, what does the principal do in a school and how might that be different from my experience with a headmaster or a director in my own school? What is my relationship to my colleagues in the school? How do teachers interact with each other? There was some surprise at the informal relationships in schools – as simple as teachers calling each other by their first names and teachers openly sharing course materials – that hadn't been their experience in their own school. They were also not as familiar with the role of parents in the school and they were also surprised that parents would sometimes challenge teachers and question classroom practices and call teachers by their first name and pop into classrooms because that hadn't been their experience. There were some issues around classroom management that came up because we have very specific guidelines around discipline and what you can and can't do with students in terms of, you know, our practices around corporal punishment and the use of detentions – so some of that came up as well. (Instructor-B) |
| **English language proficiency** | **A, B, C, D** | [There are ITCs who] have come into [UCU's] B.Ed. program and have managed to get through the basic English language requirements for entrance but are not proficient enough for working in the classroom. I had a student whose English was very, very poor and in addition, she had a very pronounced accent and she was unrealistic regarding what she needed to do in order to succeed. The kids could not understand her. She came from Hong Kong and had studied for her degree in England so not only was her English weak, she had a Manchester-English-Chinese accent. She even had a doctorate and in the classroom, they couldn't understand what she was saying. She passed but I don't know if she'll ever get a job in a high school. (Instructor-C)<br><br>Teachers have to teach so if a [mentor teacher] says, "Oh my God, my class is going to fall apart," or, "I'm not meeting my expectations," or, "I can't put in my energy to help this person," I'm not saying that I blame them. It's a whole other dynamic, so yes, they don't have the language but at this expense." (Instructor-D) |
| **Responses to linguistic, racial and religious differences in practicum contexts** | **A, B, C, D** | I think racism is alive and well in our city and in our schools and the things that the [mentor teacher] is writing about or complaining about – really they couldn't say that you're being racist. You couldn't call them on being racist because what they were actually saying to me – you know she doesn't have control of the class – she doesn't have – the [mentor teacher] would be very negative giving a lot of negative feedback to that candidate. So that it made it more and more difficult for the candidate to teach to strive. If you are in the classroom and the teacher is constantly on you – yes, and it was all about – classroom management, or delivery of a math lesson and not – so the [mentor teacher] . . . really played the role of observer and watching for the failure. (Instructor-A)<br><br>This is something I don't think I've really dealt with. Does race or class impact how they deal with themselves in the school? I would say that the schools are so diverse that it doesn't impact them. But then, I don't know. Maybe they feel that. Unless they're going to communicate that to me, or I see it, I have no way of knowing. If it had an effect, what effect would it have? It would affect how they can present themselves in the classroom, how they would feel intimidated in terms |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | of their role. I don't know. It's impossible. I really have trouble answering that one. (Instructor-C)<br><br>Sometimes for the students, if there are problems in the practicum, do we have a [mentor teacher] who can support them? The academic program is one aspect, but when they're in the schools, challenges emerge and where are their supports? That's when the [mentor teachers] have to have an accepting understanding of what their background is; if they've been trained elsewhere. 'Well they're in Canada now and they have to do it our way.' Well, it's a big leap for a lot of people so I think there are many players involved in this. |
| **Reluctance of ITCs to access support** | **A, B, C, D** | I'm also thinking that the whole idea of the [academic support centre] is really important and somehow we need to help people make good decisions around getting support there – that it's a good thing to go. It's like the student at your school who really needs learning centre support but there's some resistance because there's fear of a label or fear of some repercussions and we have to make sure it's barrier-free. (Instructor-B)<br><br>It was almost like look, you're trying to assimilate. You don't want to look like you're different from the culture that's there. (Instructor-A) |
| **Program pedagogy** | **A, B, C, D** | . . .[t]hat [ITCs] are exposed to a different kind of culture in the classroom that is different than ours so they would be large grouped, they would be very test oriented, they would be very textbook oriented. So when I try to build a cooperative learning community, an assumption is that they are not familiar with that. (Instructor-D) |
| **Teaching aptitude** | **C, D** | The issue is as well that for some of these students, they might not be totally proficient for teaching in their own language. We're dealing with a group of candidates who themselves are successful. I keep saying to my candidates, "You're part of the 15-20% of the population who were successful," so the students that we've got have in their mind that schema, that picture of what is success. For them, the idea… and I tell them that they are teaching 100% of the population. The shift that you have to make when you are in a classroom of kids who are not successful. How you involve kids in learning is very different. (Instructor-C) |
| **Credential recognition** | **C** | Anybody who is not a Canadian citizen, or even is a Canadian citizen but has taught in another country has tremendous troubles dealing with the whole registration procedure with the Ontario College of Teachers. I had one student who after completing the B.Ed., he found that he could not register as a teacher in Ontario. He came from Trinidad, and the OCT did not accept his undergraduate degree. And I've had students from the United States who cannot register to teach in Ontario because they must be Canadian citizens. And after that instance that I had, and the following year I had another student who had a similar story of not being a Canadian citizen so now I tell my students early on that they better check it out because before you spend a year doing this, you might have some problems later on. I had one student who came from India who taught there for many years who had an enormous amount of problems getting her degree recognized. I'll tell you from my own personal experience in terms of documentation; it's one of the most intimidating things because you feel that what you have is treated as something less than what it should be. (Instructor-C) |

**Lack of familiarity with schooling in Canada.** All of the instructors in this study indicated that immigrant teacher candidates (ITCs) face challenges in the program as a result of their not having been educated in Canadian schools. They identified a need for these teacher candidates to learn about schooling and schools in Canada:

> What does it mean to go to school in Canada? How does the system operate? So, what is it? And how does it operate? How does the school work? And there's so many layers. Who's in charge? Who's next? What kinds of systems are in place to support students? Students with issues. There's a lot with our system. (Instructor-A)

Instructors identified managing behavior as one of the most significant areas where being new to the Canadian school context puts teacher candidates at a disadvantage. As one instructor observed,

> The students who come in have no idea what a Canadian classroom looks like, or where to draw the line in terms of behaviour. So they come to a Canadian classroom and many of the candidates are absolutely shocked at the lack of formality in some of the classrooms and they have difficulty distinguishing what is outrageous behaviour and what is within the bounds of acceptability. So they will react to something a student will say, they'll over-react, or they'll come and complain, 'Where I come from, these kids would (pause) nothing like this would be tolerated,' and they are very critical of the Canadian education system. (Instructor-C)

Another instructor described ITCs as unfamiliar with what teachers can reasonably expect from students in terms of their behavior and their achievement in the class. This instructor

also described ITCs as requiring opportunities to become familiar with the norms of professional interaction between fellow teachers and between teachers and parents:

> What is my relationship to my colleagues in the school? How do teachers interact with each other? There was some surprise at the informal relationships in schools – as simple as teachers calling each other by their first names – teachers openly sharing course materials – that hadn't been their experience in their own school. They were also not as familiar with the role of parents in the school and they were also surprised that parents would sometimes challenge teachers and question classroom practices and call teachers by their first name and pop into classrooms because that hadn't been their experience. (Instructor-B)

**English language proficiency and issues related to dialect.** The instructors in this study expressed varied responses relative to the English language proficiency of ITCs. While two instructors described some ITCs as having inadequate English communication skills to teach effectively in Canada despite having met the university's language proficiency requirements, another instructor described such responses to English language learners and different English dialects or "accents" as instances of racism that are described more fully in the next section of this chapter. The fourth instructor described offering to intervene on behalf of an ITC experiencing difficulty in the field placement but also emphasized the importance of being able to connect with students. This instructor stated that while it is unrealistic to expect significant growth in English language skills during a 4-week practicum or even during a 9-month program, difficulties related to communication skills might also influence organizational skills and "can grow to bigger things" (Instructor-D).

This same instructor described a tension between the expectations of ITCs regarding their capacity to develop their English language skills throughout the duration of the program, and the expectations of mentor teachers that the learning of the students in their classrooms won't be compromised:

> But the other reality is that they have 4 weeks and they have to deliver. Teachers have to teach so if [a mentor teacher] says, 'Oh my God, my class is going to fall apart,' or 'I'm not meeting my expectations,' or 'I can't put in my energy to help this person.' I'm not saying that I blame them. It's a whole other dynamic there so yes, they don't have the language but at this expense. (Instructor-D)

Instructor-D considers it unreasonable to expect significant English language development during the course of the program so to identify communication skills repeatedly as an area requiring improvement is redundant, especially in light of this instructor's perception that ITCs are acutely aware of the ways that their English communication skills are perceived and received, and they have little need to be reminded. That said, Instructor-D also considers that in some cases providing classroom teaching time to ITCs who are English language learners can be at the expense of student learning. Instructor-D's strategy for responding to instances where mentor teachers don't give ITCs a chance to teach because they feel student learning is being compromised is to "help the students see it as a perspective:"

> A Chinese student had troubles with her [mentor teacher] who told her that she has to learn to speak English so she was in tears and tears and tears, so I said, 'Do you want me to talk to your [mentor teacher]? No, no, please don't do that.' She got through it. I absolutely wanted to talk to the [mentor teacher] but I tried to look at the positive things this student was doing and she was a very hard worker. She knows she can't

> speak English well so how is it going to help her by saying your English has to improve when in a 4-week practicum it isn't going to happen. She's aware of her English skills.

Instructor-C described an ITC who she perceived in the UCU classroom context as having insufficient oral communication skills in English but who performed at a significantly different level in the field placement:

> She had difficulty with her English and with her quiet voice and how she was going to present herself that I immediately had a lot of questions whether she would succeed. I had suggested that she get support for it and she rejected that. She didn't want the program to be modified in any way. I then followed up and saw her teach and she was very effective. She was very determined.

**Responses to linguistic, racial and religious difference.** All of the instructors identified ways that language influences the participation of ITCs in the initial teacher education program. For two of the instructors, language challenges are perceived as deficits individual to each ITC and these challenges limit their ability to communicate effectively in UCU classrooms and in practicum contexts with students and mentor teachers. The other two instructors described some teacher candidates as demonstrating English language skills that limited their ability to communicate effectively, but both of these instructors also suggested that they "don't think the issue of language is the most overriding factor" (Instructor-C) because the ITCs were required to pass an English literacy test in order to be accepted to study in the initial teacher education program at UCU. Instructor-C didn't describe what the most overriding factor might be but Instructor-A was insistent that prejudice, bias, and

racism are stronger influences on ITC participation in the program than their English communication skills.

Two of the instructors described ITCs as vulnerable to incidents of racism in their practicum schools. Instructors-A and -C recalled hearing racist statements directed at ITCs in practicum schools and they pondered how ITCs should be advised to respond to these incidents considering the significant power imbalance between mentor teachers and teacher candidates. As Instructor-A stated:

> I think racism is alive and well in our city and in our schools and the things that the [mentor teacher] is writing about or complaining about. Really, they couldn't say that they're being racist. You couldn't call them on being racist because what they were actually saying to me was, 'You know she doesn't have control of the class.' The [mentor teacher] would be very negative giving a lot of negative feedback to that candidate. So that it made it more and more difficult for the candidate to teach to strive. If you are in the classroom and the teacher is constantly on you; yes, and it was all about classroom management, or delivery of a math lesson and not (pause) so the [mentor teacher] was more very, very watchful and not willing to help. So he really played the role of observer and watching for the failure.

Instructor-A described a specific example where racism influenced an ITC in practicum:

> I heard stories of actual racist comments that happened in the classroom to the children. For example, there was in a Grade 1 class a little kid who was black and the [mentor teacher] said something like, 'I'm not going to get him to do his homework. He's not going to go on to be anything anyway.' It is almost like he's going to have

> the life of a criminal, it was just an assumption. So to that teacher candidate, who was black, that was jarring.

Instructor-A lamented that these incidents didn't start to come to the fore until much later in the program when the teacher candidates were engaged in critical discussions of racism and other prejudices in schools and in society.

Instructors-A and -C also described incidents of vastly different responses to ITCs in their field placements. In one placement, the response was very positive but in another placement, the ITC either failed the practicum, or was described as being at risk of failing the practicum and received a marginal pass that contrasted sharply with the positive evaluation of their performance in another practicum context. Instructor-A, for example, described an incident where she ultimately removed the ITC from a practicum placement due to what the instructor considered as "racist issues" that made the ITC feel "uncomfortable" in the mentor teacher's classroom:

> We had a good student teacher who had an accent so there were these kinds of racist issues. I had to move the student teacher. The [mentor teacher] actually had said, 'If she's not a Canadian citizen she shouldn't be in this program.' [I responded that this] student teacher was accepted into the program and she met all the requirements to become a teacher in [the province]. She met the requirements and the university recognizes her ability and now she's in training. An accent doesn't represent a level of intelligence or ability.

To Instructor-A, dealing with racism in schools is difficult but important work that involves supporting teacher candidates while attempting to preserve relationships with mentor teachers:

> I think we can't screen every [mentor teacher] to see if they are racist. So it's somehow to let the teacher candidate know that we will provide support for them if they need it, but without cutting off our [mentor teachers]. Like, it's also, let the [mentor teachers] know that this is our commitment and then ask what do they need to help support us in this endeavour.

Both of the instructors who described themselves as Jewish suggested that religion might have an influence, especially between Muslim students/teachers and Jewish students/teachers in light of the September 11th bombing in the United States and tensions in the Middle East. In particular, the Jewish instructors expressed concern for the comfort of Muslim students in their class who might wonder what their Jewish instructors think about them, or what assumptions their Jewish teachers might make.

Instructor-C described having personal experience with religious discrimination in Canada. She described the impacts of these experiences as long-lasting and as a source of empathy she has for ITCs who she believes stand among students and mentor teachers and wonder what they are thinking:

> They're Muslims, or they're Jewish, or any racial minority and so on, and they have faced these kinds of discriminatory practices and so you always carry it within yourself. When you go into schools, or you go into a new classroom, you're going to wonder, 'What do they think of me?' 'What do they think that I'm thinking?' . . . And how would they deal with that in the schools? Do they go in a little bit more defiant, or do they go in a little bit intimidated?

Instructor-C suggested that race, class and gender probably have an impact in UCU classes but didn't elaborate and also suggested that the impact in schools is likely to be minimal:

> I would say that the schools are so diverse that it doesn't impact them. But then, I don't know. Maybe they feel that. Unless they're going to communicate that to me, or I see it, I have no way of knowing.

**Reluctance of ITCs to access support.** All of the instructors described ITCs as reluctant to seek or take advantage of support offered to them. The instructors suggested that ITCs might resist assistance because they fear being labelled or that receiving support in the program might have repercussions in terms of their prospects for future employment. Instructor-A expressed thoughts ITCs might have that would deter them from accepting support:

> It was almost like look, you're trying to assimilate. You don't want to look like you're different from the culture that's there.

**Initial teacher education program pedagogy.** All of the instructors in this study described aspects of the UCU classroom environment that might not be comfortable for ITCs. In particular, the instructors described some ITCs as unfamiliar with cooperative pedagogies that emphasize group work and minimize lecture-style approaches by instructors. Instructor-D acknowledged that this concept of ITCs may be grounded in stereotypical assumptions:

> . . . [t]hat [ITCs] are exposed to a different kind of culture in the classroom that is different than ours so they would be large grouped, they would be very test oriented,

> they would be very textbook oriented. So when I try to build a cooperative learning community, an assumption is that they are not familiar with that.

Two of the four instructors indicated that they knew very little about the individual backgrounds and histories of their teacher candidates. Instructor-B indicated that while UCU collects data about teacher candidate educational histories, this information wasn't used in a way that informed her understanding of the teacher candidates. Instructor-D described considering all students as having a different culture and that "the odd time you get one person who will reveal what their background is. I'm looking at them as any student."

**ITE Program Instructors: Perceptions of supports**

> **"We're truly making our system more global by bringing in their experiences being educated in other countries and I think that can only help enrich our own practice. . ." (Instructor-B)**

The instructors participating in this study perceived supports related to: an equity focus at UCU; student support services that benefit ITCs and instructors; program flexibility; commitment to supporting the diversification of the teaching profession; and supportive learning communities in the initial teacher education program. The data representing instructors' perceptions of supports influencing the participation of immigrant teacher candidates are summarized in Table 6.2.

**Table 6. 2 ITE Program Instructor Perceptions of Supports Influencing the Participation of Immigrant Teacher Candidates**

| Supports described by Instructors | Instructor(s) /4 | Representative Quote(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **Equity focus at UCU** | **A, B, C, D** | In my conversations in [the teaching foundations course], we have a thrust on equity so they know my understanding of it and my support. A) because it comes from UCU, B) because it comes from a personal commitment, and C) because it's a way to build community and address everybody's individual identities, so I think having a thrust to raise social diversity and equity gives us a chance to promote that understanding with our students and these students are examples of that. But every student is an example of that. (Instructor-D)<br><br>I strongly believe in equity and I strongly believe that coming to Canada and the immigration experience is not an easy one and I will fight for equity because everybody has a right to live in Canada equally and to have a say. (Instructor-C)<br><br>We have a mandate to admit people from different special designations and that includes visible minorities. (Instructor-B)<br><br>How do we support them? We say, "We want you to be teachers. We want the face of our Urban District School Board teachers to be representative of the children that they're teaching. We have a commitment to that. We want you." (Instructor-A) |
| **Student support services benefit TCs and instructors** | **A, B, D** | We have [several staff in Student Services] that I can go to and say this issue – or I can go and just say this doesn't feel right to me. And then they would say – no, you're right – that's a racist comment – they would actually be able to affirm my feelings and then also give me the tools or help give me the tools – the communication tools to support that teacher candidate. (Instructor-A)<br><br>I recognize that in our system and in a teacher education program, they have to have support systems that will enrich them and encourage them and if I know that it's not me, I know that it could be my other coordinator, a group of students in the classroom, an associate teacher, or somebody from student services. If they're struggling, if it's language or something that they're not understanding, I want to make sure that they have some support systems. (Instructor-D) |
| **Program flexibility** | **A, B, D** | The TC was finding it really uncomfortable being in that classroom. A lot of negative feedback from the AT. In talking with the teacher candidate I ended up talking to the AT and ended up moving her to another school. Because the AT said that she, you know, couldn't understand [the TC] so the TC couldn't teach, and so it was a pretty clear move. (Instructor-A)<br><br>I did end up supporting a couple of teacher candidates who I became aware of were internationally educated by offering them the opportunity to defer that first practice teaching session. (Support-B) |
| **Commitment to supporting the diversification of the teaching profession** | **A, B** | I think the benefits are they're going to be teachers in our system I hope. So many of the kids that I worked with were from so many different places around the world and I knew didn't see themselves represented in our teaching staff so I really do believe we need to diversify our teaching staff. So not just in terms of many of them are members of visible minorities but also we're bringing that – we're getting rid of the boundaries, we're truly making our system more global by bringing in their experiences being educated in other countries and I think that can only help enrich our own practice… (Instructor-B) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | We need to have them graduate and teach and be hired and be prepared. …Then we are going to have a teaching force that looks and sounds more like the students of our multicultural city. Teachers that represent the students. The other benefits are the wealth of background experience to come into [the initial teacher education program]. We're going to learn, to really look at our students as resources for transforming education. (Instructor-A) |
| **Supportive learning communities in the initial teacher education program** | **C, D** | One of the things I've found is that as lecturers, we create a classroom environment. When students feel that you model and practice what you preach, they will feel comfortable and will learn and apply and all the rest of it. And when they have somebody who shows less than that; less than an understanding of where they're coming from, whether they are from another country, or Canadian-born, they will reject what is being said. (Instructor-C)<br><br>I've had students who are religious Jews who when food is brought into the classroom, cannot eat the food because it's not kosher. So maybe it's because of my background, I make sure that when I bring in food, it's kosher. Or for religious Muslims who will not eat anything unless it is Halal. These kinds of little things do influence how students feel accepted into the group. I know that sometimes we don't go far enough with issues of equity and we really need to look at more issues." (Instructor-C)<br><br>We work really hard to build a community in our option and having been [an instructor] for a number of years, it seems to work. (Instructor-D) |

**Equity focus at UCU.** All of the instructors described equity as a foundational principle at UCU that benefits ITCs. They also indicated that their personal commitment to equity guides the work they do to support teacher candidates. As Instructor-D stated, "Having a thrust to raise social diversity and equity gives us a chance to promote that understanding with our students and these students are examples of that."

Specifically, the instructors indicated that the equity focus at UCU has prompted changes to the admissions process that are intended to increase the diversity of the teacher candidate enrolment. As Instructor-D stated, "We have a mandate to admit people from different special designations and that includes visible minorities." To support this mandate, the university has introduced professional development for faculty, programs for internationally educated teacher candidates, and specialized student support staff to build the capacity of the organization to address the diverse needs of students. All of the instructors indicated that they appreciate these initiatives and that they feel well supported in their work.

To Instructor-A, the equity focus at UCU represents a commitment to welcoming diverse teacher candidates to the teaching profession:

> How do we support them? We say, we want you to be teachers. We want the face of our Urban District School Board teachers to be representative of the children that they're teaching. We have a commitment to that. We want you.

**Student support services.** Three of the instructors described specific ways that student support services at UCU assist immigrant teacher candidates directly through programs and one-to-one support and indirectly by providing professional development and counsel for faculty. Instructor-D emphasized the importance of having a coordinated support system that enables teacher candidates to access assistance from a variety of sources:

> I recognize that in our system and in a teacher education program, [teacher candidates] have to have support systems that will enrich them and encourage them and if I know that it's not me, I know that it could be my other coordinator, a group of students in the classroom, an associate teacher, or somebody from student services. If they're struggling, if it's language or something that they're not understanding, I want to make sure that they have some support systems. (Instructor-D)

Similarly, Instructor-A acknowledged the vast expertise available to instructors:

> We had [several staff in Student Services] that I could go to and say this issue – or I could go and just say this doesn't feel right to me. And then they would say – no, you're right – that's a racist comment – they would actually be able to affirm my feelings and then also give me the tools or help give me the tools – the communication tools to support that teacher candidate.

For Instructor-B, the availability of staff to provide one-to-one support for teacher candidates interested in improving their academic writing skills was particularly helpful for immigrant teacher candidates.

**Program flexibility.** Three instructors described the importance of flexibility in the program to respond to the needs of teacher candidates relevant to their practice teaching placements. They indicated that the opportunity for internationally educated teacher candidates to spend the first practicum period engaged in unevaluated classroom observation with opportunities to develop and deliver lessons at their discretion supported their participation in the program.

These instructors also described instances where program flexibility enabled them to re-assign a teacher candidate to a new practice teaching context if they believed that the teacher candidate was being subjected to unfair or discriminatory criticism from their mentor teacher. Instructor-A provided a specific example of such circumstances:

> The teacher candidate was finding it really uncomfortable being in that classroom. A lot of negative feedback from the mentor teacher. In talking with the teacher candidate I ended up talking to the mentor teacher and ended up moving her to another school. Because the mentor said that she, you know, couldn't understand [the teacher candidate] so the teacher candidate couldn't teach, and so it was a pretty clear move.

**Commitment to supporting the diversification of the teaching profession.** When asked to discuss the benefits of supporting immigrant teacher candidates, two of the instructors emphasised the importance of contributing to the diversity of the teacher workforce. Instructors-A and -B talked not only about the visual representation of teacher candidates in schools where they would more closely mirror the diversity of student populations, but they also discussed the benefits of shared knowledge:

> Then we are going to have a teaching force that looks and sounds more like the students of our multicultural city. Teachers that represent the students. The other benefits are the wealth of background experience to come into UCU. We're going to learn, to really look at our students as resources for transforming education. (Instructor A)

Similarly, Instructor-B suggested that increased diversity among the teacher workforce would serve to break down boundaries and build global school communities:

> We're truly making our system more global by bringing in their experiences being educated in other countries and I think that can only help enrich our own practice because I'm not sure we have it 100% right yet in North America so I think we should be open to listening to how systems in other countries work.

Furthermore, Instructor-B expressed interest in bringing more of the ITC voices into UCU classrooms, especially to support understanding of English language learners:

> I would like to make more use of immigrant teacher candidates in terms of their voice in our classrooms about helping others understand working with students who are [learning to speak English] so I'd like to do some more work around what it means to be an English language learner because I think as adults now, they've had a tremendous experience that I haven't personally had and I don't think my experience struggling to learn French is the same. So I'd like their voices more in terms of building understanding around the kids but I haven't figured out how to do that.

While two of the four instructors considered immigrant teacher candidates as resources for educational transformation, the other two instructors argued that all teacher candidates are agents for change in schools and they did not describe immigrant teacher candidates as playing a particular or especially significant role in the change process.

To Instructors-C and -D, the benefits of supporting immigrant teacher candidates are no different than the benefits of supporting all teacher candidates at UCU:

> It's the same benefits of supporting students born in Canada. We want them to be good teachers. That's the benefit. We're going to have good teachers teaching the diverse population of kids and for every student who at UCU succeeds and becomes a really good teacher, we have benefited every student in every school who comes in contact with them. (Instructor-C)

Quoted earlier, Instructor-A described immigrant teacher candidates as significant to the transformation of education. Instructor-C, on the other hand, described all teacher candidates as instruments of educational change and sees instructors, through their work to prepare future teachers, as having power to generate change:

> I'm reluctant to say "power," but we have power in the system to facilitate change in the education system that doesn't exist elsewhere. Our students listen to us and model what we do. I think that we reflect our own views of society in what we do and we make a difference.

**Supportive learning communities in the initial teacher education program.** Instructors-C and –D indicated that they support all teacher candidates, including immigrant teacher candidates by intentionally cultivating a sense of community among students in their initial teacher education classes. Instructor-C, for example, expressed pride in the ability to get to know students and argued that impacts of social difference in UCU classrooms become less significant as the instructor and students work to create a learning environment where everyone feels secure. To demonstrate the effect where teacher candidates don't feel supported in a safe UCU classroom environment, Instructor-C described the way that teacher candidates reject instructors who do not 'walk the talk' of creating a safe and supportive learning environment:

> When students feel that you model and practice what you preach, they will feel comfortable and will learn and apply and all the rest of it. And when they have somebody who shows less than that; less than an understanding of where they're coming from, whether they are from another country, or are Canadian-born, they will reject what is being said. I cannot tell you, and I do not entertain it, but I've had students come to me and say that they disagree with an instructor because you should see what goes on in that classroom and we don't agree.

To Instructor-C, engaging future teachers in supportive and collaborative learning environments throughout their initial teacher education program is a strong indicator of the support they will provide to minority students in their own classrooms.

Instructor-D described building a sense of community by engaging all teacher candidates in discussions of identity through storytelling but does not consider the stories of immigrant teacher candidates as distinct from stories that any other teacher candidate might share:

> I support them by having them tell a story. If I'm talking about classroom management, or lesson planning, if they give examples from their own past, I would build on it. I would support it, I always believe that I need to support their understanding but always challenge and stretch them as well. I would do that with any candidate.

**Student Support Staff: Perceptions of challenges**

> **"I guess what I'm talking about are the assumptions that are made about people who are immigrants, visible minorities and ELLs (English language learners) that we are not as good as or we are not good enough or we are only good for certain things." (Support-E)**

The student support services staff expressed very strong commitments to principles of equity and collaborative power relations, and they described UCU as an organization in the midst of change with regard to policies and practices to support marginalized and traditionally excluded teacher candidates, including immigrant teacher candidates (ITCs). Challenges perceived by student support staff are related to initial teacher education pedagogy at UCU, perceptions of difference as deficit at UCU and in practice teaching contexts, complex perceptions of English language proficiency, and differing stances regarding strategies for assigning teacher candidates to practicum placements. The data representing student support staff impressions of challenges influencing ITCs are summarized in Table 6.3.

**Table 6. 3 Student Support Staff Perceptions of Challenges Influencing Immigrant Teacher Candidates**

| Challenges described by Student Support Staff | Student Support Staff /5 | Representative Quote(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **ITE program pedagogy at UCU** | **A, B, C, D, E** | They both don't like me being in their group, because my language level is lower, so the group members don't really want me participating, because they're concerned about the mark, which is a group mark. And if I'm the slower one with language, I may drag the mark down.' And I think that's where leadership from the educator has to come in and sort of mediate these perceptions and issues. (Support-A)<br><br>I think one of the big issues is confidence building with teacher candidates; internationally educated teacher candidates in classrooms and I think confidence building is very layered. You know, it can be delivered in a multitude of ways; teaching approaches and classroom dynamics and classroom culture, and I think that's really where I see from working with candidates in [student support services programs]. That's where I see the weakest link; in the issue of confidence. And confidence may be related to language proficiency, but it's also related to how they're valued and how their perceptions are being respected and valued in the program and in the practicum experiences. . . (Support-A)<br><br>So you have to be more sensitive to your ESL students. In teacher education programs you need to make sure that the internationally educated teacher candidates are supported enough. They have a voice. They're being used to enrich the program and you are doing that by empowering them in the classroom. (Support-B)<br><br>A major one continues to be the fact that the university has an equity policy but it is not a living document. Somehow we need to bring it to life and make sure that the messages that are imbedded in that document are spread far, wide, and deep. (Support-C) |
| **Perceptions of difference as deficit at UCU** | **A, B, C, D, E** | I'd probably say that some examples are when teacher educators may sort of see the internationally educated students aren't participating much for example. They're laid back, lay low, and that may be interpreted as lack of interest or lack of motivation when it really may be language difficulties or maybe a cultural approach to not responding unless one is asked. It may be interpreted by the teacher educator through their cultural filter that this individual is not motivated, is not trying hard. The other students are boisterous and participate regularly and are extroverted while the other ones may be seen as introverted and the teacher educators think 'Well, how're they going to be teachers?' (Support-A)<br><br>I see that the ELLs, visible minorities and to some degree, immigrants of many cultures and ethnicities, it is seen as though there is a deficit and although you've made it here, what you bring with you is not as valued. When I say here, I also see here as both the university and the school system because these two work in collaboration with each other and so this deficit witnessing, or deficit labeling, whatever you call it, is sometimes done by people at the university as well as people in schools in terms of the [mentor teachers] who may not have had the kinds of broad experiences, or the broad interactions that I feel they should have to qualify them to be really valuable to teacher education candidates who are immigrants and who are visible minorities. . . .I guess what I'm talking about are the assumptions that are made about people who are immigrants, visible minorities and ELLs that we are not as good as or we are not good enough or we are only good for certain things. (Support-C) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Difference as deficit in practicum schools** | **A, B, C, D, E** | [Mentor teachers] sometimes don't understand when they are in the process of infantilizing adults who have come with a wealth of experience and are ready to share that. (Support-C)<br><br>The other thing is their lack of recognition of multiple ways to teach and learn. There's not only one way to teach whatever subject. We know multiple ways and you've got to be able to open and accommodate those kinds of multiple ways and be open to assessing those and be open to also giving feedback on how to make that person, who is the TC, become the best possible teacher in the ways that person can teach. (Support-C)<br><br>I think one of the big challenges is really transforming the cultures of – not necessarily intolerance but of the ways we approach diversity that have been patterned in and established – that exist. Our schools have raised cultures – classrooms have cultures that have a certain flavour and certain degree of tolerance or degree of interacting with diversity with cross-cultural communication and with validating rather than marginalizing other languages and other races, religions, etc. And these are pretty fundamental and often sort of internalized – ingrained areas that are hard to break through. (Support-A) |
| **Complex perceptions of English language proficiency** | **A, B, C, D** | The whole notion that some accents are more valued than others and accent is linked to achievement and performance, very much so, and accent is linked to how far into the inner circle you can step. So accent can sometimes move you away from the margins into the centre and they can move you back into the margins quite easily so accents can be very much (pause). You know, it's something that I hear a lot in my role and I hear it from [mentor teachers] who say, 'We get a lot of calls from parents who say my child does not understand his or her student teacher.' I get a lot of that. They can't understand what they're saying, or parents themselves come to parent interviews and they speak with student teachers who may be part of the interview process and they go away from that interview process saying, 'I don't understand what that teacher said to me at all,' meaning the TC, and 'how could that person be teaching in the school when that person is not clear in how they present.' (Support-C)<br><br>I would say that for internationally educated teacher candidates we have a very poor admission process in terms of measuring language proficiency. The university protocol is if you've studied three years in an English university, a university where English is the medium of instruction, you're exempt from taking any proficiency tests. What that means is that for example for someone with a biology degree, a math degree in a university in Canada, in the US, any English university, they're not required to take language proficiency tests. So those are internationally educated teacher candidates who are exempt from this test, and others who are required to take a proficiency test are required to take a TOEFL test, or another TOEFL-type test. Now those types of tests are not designed to measure a teacher's language proficiency. For the most part, the whole purpose of designing those tests is to determine whether a person can perform in an academic context. The skills that you need as a student are very different from the skills you need as a teacher to explain, to elaborate, to agree with someone, to disagree. The teaching-specific functions are very different from the functions tested in a TOEFL test. So I think in respect to academic proficiency and testing academic proficiency for admissions purposes, I think that's where our main issue stems from when we get teacher candidates who don't have a high proficiency. (Support-B)<br><br>We judge and interpret their intelligence based on how they can communicate. Language learners experience this when we're speaking a second language, we can't communicate at the rate we're thinking, and it comes out with grammatical errors. So it shapes our identity in that language and how we perceive ourselves |

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| | | and how we then sort of interact with others with this self perception and it makes us self conscious, and sort of, alienates us, not only from others alienating us but from ourselves, alienating ourselves. Sort of feeling that we're not really valuable in the system. . . (Support-A) |
| **Differing stances regarding strategies for assigning teacher candidates to practicum placements** | **B, C, E** | I think we can think of some candidates this past year, where the practicum experience was very difficult for them to negotiate and it requires on our part then making a choice and that choice is do we just literally stick them into a school or do we do everything we can to place them thoughtfully and I think that there's probably some difference of opinion as to whether or not we should be doing that thoughtful placement and shouldn't they be able to teach what they know in any school situation. (Support-E)<br><br>A lot of my experience tells me that it's not always the teacher candidate, it's also the amount of support that they receive so when they're coupled with a [mentor teacher] who's willing to support them and who prepares the students in advance, that type of reception would make a huge difference as opposed to the [mentor teacher] who rejects this teacher candidate and that would definitely make a difference in how the students will receive this teacher candidate. So I think the [mentor teacher] has in that sense, a huge role in preparing the students and supporting that teacher candidate in that. My experience tells me in contexts where the [mentor teachers] are very supportive, it makes a huge difference. It's the same individual, you can see they're willing to put in the same amount of effort, but they have totally different practicum experiences based on who they were working with in that context. (Support-B) |

**ITE program pedagogy at UCU.** All of the student support staff participating in this study identified pedagogical aspects of the UCU initial teacher education program that influence the participation of immigrant teacher candidates. Critical pedagogies that "promote and respect diversity and intercultural communication at various levels and validate a range of diverse international experiences" (Support-A) were described by the student services staff as essential to the authentic inclusion and full participation of ITCs.

Building a sense of self-confidence was identified as crucial, and to some student support staff, like Support-A and Support-B, insufficient opportunities to build confidence represents the "weakest link" (Support-A) in the ITE program. Confidence development or erosion was described by support staff in relation to perceptions of English language proficiency but also in relation to the ways that self-perceptions of their proficiency and the ways that their instructors and peers responded to their communication skills influenced the self-confidence of ITCs:

> Confidence may be related to language proficiency but it's also related to how they're valued and how their perceptions are being respected and valued in the program. (Support-A)

Group work assignments were identified as particularly threatening to the self-confidence of immigrant teacher candidates. Support-A recalled a statement made repeatedly by ITCs to student support staff:

> 'They both don't like me in their group because my language level is lower, so the group members don't really want me participating because they're concerned about the mark, which is a group mark. And if I'm the slower one with language, I may drag the mark down.'

Support-A believes the tensions immigrant teacher candidates feel as group participants could be mitigated by effective instructional leadership: “I think that’s where the leadership from the educator has to come in and mediate these perceptions and issues.” Similarly, to Support-B, instructor support and sensitivity is key:

> You have to be more sensitive to your ESL students. In teacher education programs you need to make sure that the ITCs are supported. They have a voice. They’re being used to enrich the program and you are doing that by empowering them in the classroom.

**Perceptions of difference at UCU and in practicum schools.** All of the student support staff discussed deficit perceptions of difference at UCU and in practicum schools as significant to the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates. Support-E elaborated on this notion of difference as deficit:

> I guess what I’m talking about are the assumptions that are made about people who are immigrants, visible minorities and ELLs [English language learners] that we are not as good as or we are not good enough or we are only good for certain things. By that I mean sometimes teacher candidates who are hired in schools or hired or inserted into staffing are inserted for folks to be able to say we’ve got a diverse teaching body, or we’ve got a diverse teacher candidate body but are their voices really listened to when they say here are some things you need to take a look at from our point of view. You are sometimes seen as a shit disturber, you’re sometimes seen as, we don’t want to listen to that right now.

Support-C suggested that deficit perceptions of difference lead not only to the dismissal of ITCs and their experiences, but also steer some mentor teachers in practicum schools to infantilize immigrant teacher candidates:

> [Mentor teachers] sometimes don't understand when they are in the process of infantilizing adults who have come with a wealth of experience and are ready to share that.

Support-C also suggested that reluctance to validate difference influences the ways in which mentor teachers narrowly conceptualize effective teaching and teachers and discourage their openness to differing approaches:

> The other thing is [mentor teachers'] lack of recognition of multiple ways to teach and learn. There's not only one way to teach whatever subject. We know multiple ways and you've got to be able to open and accommodate those kinds of multiple ways and be open to assessing those and be open to also giving feedback on how to help that person, who is the teacher candidate, become the best possible teacher in the ways that person can teach. Sometimes what I hear is that the [mentor teacher] wants to make that person become the best possible teacher in the way the [mentor teacher] teaches which is not being open to difference.

Support-A described the challenge of supporting ITCs in initial teacher education programs as a challenge of transforming cultures that have become fixed in their responses to difference and diversity:

> I think one of the big challenges is really transforming the cultures of (pause) not necessarily intolerance but of the way we approach diversity that have been patterned

> in and established; that exist. Our schools have raised cultures. Classrooms have cultures that have a certain flavour and certain degree of tolerance or degree of interacting with diversity with cross-cultural communication and with validating rather than marginalizing other languages and other races, religions, etc. And these are pretty fundamental and often sort of internalized and ingrained areas that are hard to break through.

**Complex perceptions of English language proficiency.** Support-A emphasized a strong connection between language, language proficiency, perceptions of language proficiency, and identity and described how language is often used as a measure of intelligence and competency in a way that can alienate ITCs:

> We judge and interpret their intelligence based on how they can communicate. Language learners experience this when we're speaking a second language, we can't communicate at the rate we're thinking, and it comes out with grammatical errors. So it shapes our identity in that language and how we perceive ourselves and how we then sort of interact with others with this self perception and it makes us self conscious, and sort of, alienates us, not only from others alienating us but from ourselves, alienating ourselves. Sort of feeling that we're not really valuable in the system, so it's sort of an internalization of this, internalization of this marginalization that can occur depending on how we're sort of dealt with and how we're supported in the educational programs in the classrooms and in our interactions with colleagues.

In a similar way that points to dominant responses to language and language learners, Support-C talked about the notion of "accents" and the ways in which some accents are

valued more than others, are more helpful than others in moving a person into the centre of the social context, and can be used to call into question a person's candidacy as a teacher:

> I see ELLs [English language learners] and the whole notion of accents and how we speak as being very, very critical to how [ITCs] are accepted within our institution and within the practicum settings that they go into. The whole notion that some accents are more valued than others and accent is linked to achievement and performance, very much so, and accent is linked to how far into the inner circle you can step. So accent can sometimes move you away from the margins into the centre and they can move you back into the margins quite easily so accents can be very much, you know. It's something that I hear a lot in my role and I hear it from [mentor teachers] who say, 'We get a lot of calls from parents who say my child does not understand his or her student teacher.' I get a lot of that. They can't understand what they're saying, or parents themselves come to parent interviews and they speak with student teachers who may be part of the interview process and they go away from that interview process saying, 'I don't understand what that teacher said to me at all,' meaning the [ITC], and how could that person be teaching in the school when that person is not clear in how they present?

Similarly, Support-B emphasized the influence of stereotypes on the experiences of ITCs, especially stereotypes anchored in perceptions of accents:

> Stereotypes that individuals and teachers have towards certain visible minorities or how they will be received get us back to the whole language proficiency and accents issue, and how these teachers will be received by their students. This teacher was speaking with a different accent, or what in the eyes of the student was a funny

> accent, can this teacher teach me? Can this teacher be a good biology teacher? A good math teacher?

As Support-B went on to describe by relating the experiences of a particular immigrant teacher candidate, anxieties related to perceptions of competence associated with language proficiency can have a very physical detrimental effect:

> One teacher came in here who was from Russia, and shared with me his mispronunciation, or different pronunciation of certain words. An example he provided was salary and celery. So he said, 'I was trying to (pause) I was sweating. I was trying in the classroom, and the minute I opened my mouth, explaining, and I don't know which one.' I think he was a math teacher trying to say 'salary' and students were making fun of him that he was referring to 'celery' for example. And he used the example also of natural numbers in math, and how natural and nature, and neutral and natural, both were examples and he said, in the first month that he started teaching he lost 12 pounds, that's 6 kilograms, he was very exact. Trying to survive the classroom during the 1-month practicum that he had.

Support-B expressed concern that the UCU admissions policies related to language proficiency are inadequate in determining an applicant's ability to use English as a language of instruction. In particular, Support-B questions the policy that exempts applicants from formal proficiency testing if they have studied at an English university for at least 3 years:

> I would say that for [ITCs] we have a very poor admission process in terms of measuring language proficiency. The university protocol is if you've studied 3 years in an English university, a university where English is the medium of instruction,

> you’re exempt from taking any proficiency tests. What that means is that for example for someone with a biology degree, a math degree in a university in Canada, in the US, any English university, they’re not required to take language proficiency tests.

Support-B went on to critique the appropriateness of TOEFL and similar language proficiency tests as measures of an individual’s ability to communicate effectively as a teacher in English schools:

> Those types of tests are not designed to measure a teacher’s language proficiency. For the most part, the whole purpose of designing those tests is to determine whether a person can perform in an academic context. The skills that you need as a student are very different from the skills you need as a teacher to explain, to elaborate, to agree with someone, to disagree. Teaching-specific functions are very different from the functions tested in a TOEFL test.

Supports-A, -B, -C, and -D described the need for outreach and professional development for instructors at UCU, mentor teachers, and school administrators in order to develop their capacity to support immigrant teacher candidates. To Support-B, supporting ITCs requires a collaborative effort that involves everyone, including individual ITCs:

> Collaboration and understanding within the school boards and the university. Because what we really do hear is that these teachers [ITCs] need to be practicing and then, for example, there are school principals who hear an accent and say, ‘Oh this person cannot teach.’ So what’s the purpose? So it has to do, I would say, with stronger networking with associate teachers like the type of work that we’re doing, and with school administrators, and also on themselves.

**Placement of ITCs in practicum schools.** Three of the five student support staff participating in this study discussed tensions and conflicting opinions with regard to the placement of ITCs in practicum schools. They indicated that on one hand some instructors argue that ITCs should be placed in practicum schools according to the same random process applied to place all other teacher candidates. The premise behind this position is the belief that ITCs "should be able to teach what they know in any school situation" (Support-E):

> I can think of some teacher candidates this past year where the practicum experience was very difficult for them to negotiate and it requires on our part then making a choice and that choice is do we just literally stick them into a school or do we do everything we can to place them thoughtfully in spite of some difference of opinion as to whether or not we should be doing that thoughtful placement. (Support-E)

Support-B, Support-C and Support-E indicated that ITCs meet with responses ranging from supportive to discouraging in their practicum placements and that ITCs experience significant challenges if they are not well supported and validated in the practicum placement. As Support-B observed:

> My experience tells me in contexts where the [mentor teachers] are very supportive, it makes a huge difference. When they're coupled with a [mentor teacher] who's willing to support them and who prepares the students in advance, that type of reception would make a huge difference as opposed to the [mentor teacher] who rejects this teacher candidate. It's the same individual, you can see they're willing to put in the same amount of effort, but they have totally different practicum experiences based on who they are working with in that context.

To Support-C the response to ITCs in their practicum placements is a reflection of deficit perceptions of difference and the possibility that some mentor teachers lack the experience required to adequately support immigrant teacher candidates:

> This deficit witnessing, or deficit labelling, whatever you want to call it, is sometimes done by people at the university as well as people in schools in terms of the [mentor teachers] who may not have had the kinds of broad experiences, or the broad interactions that I feel they should have to qualify them to be really valuable to teacher education candidates who are immigrants and who are visible minorities.

**Student Support Staff: Perceptions of supports**

> **"The whole notion of diversity is one of the building blocks of our nation and we have to show the world how it can be done and how it's being done. The future is about diversity in whatever form; and teaching is where it begins." (Support-C)**

Perceptions of supports described by student support staff were associated with direct services provided by their unit, walking the talk of inclusive policies, and endorsing diversification of the teaching profession. Direct support described by the student services staff emphasizes one-to-one support in all aspects of the program including academic writing at UCU, practicum support, and counselling related to experiences in the program that might be considered inequitable or discriminatory. Additionally, the student support staff articulated considerable knowledge of UCU and provincial equity policies and described ways that these policies are reflected in the organizational support they receive in response to proposals for new initiatives to enhance the experiences of ITCs. They described ways that provincial and organizational policies support the work they do and want to do to support immigrant teacher candidates but argued that more work needs to be done in order for the

policies to be brought to life throughout the organization. To student support staff, providing supportive, inclusive, and empowering contexts for immigrant teacher candidates to develop their skills and enter the teaching profession contributes to democratic nation building by diversifying the teacher workforce and creating opportunities for shared learning and knowledge construction. The data representing student support staff perceptions of supports that influence the participation of immigrant teacher candidates are summarized in Table 6.4.

**Table 6. 4 Student Support Staff Perceptions of Supports that Influence the Participation of Immigrant Teacher Candidates**

| Supports described by Student Support Staff | Student Support Staff /5 | Representative Quote(s) |
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| **Student Support Services (e.g., one-to-one consultation, intensive practicum support, pre-program workshops for ITCs, and counselling in relation to instances of discrimination)** | **A, B, C, D, E** | We have in the past advocated for students and that's how the [academic support centre] has become what it is today. It originally started as a writing clinic about five years ago but more and more I can see that centre developing further programs and services to assist students who are new Canadians, students who are facing particularly difficult issues related to their being new Canadians. (Support-D)<br><br>There is opportunity for one-on-one consultation – on all aspects of the program. So they can come and have an assignment for example, feedback on a particular assignment, they can bring their lesson plan, they can come to improve pronunciation, general writing skills. . . (Support-B)<br><br>Myself and a colleague were assigned this extra role that if these teachers have issues in their practicum, they can ask for extra practicum visits in addition to their [UCU faculty advisors]that usually [assume] that role. . . .I worked as a mediator between the associate teacher who had maybe no sense of the challenges of understanding what does it mean to be an immigrant and what does it mean to have language and culture-like gaps in your language and cultural knowledge in the classroom. (Support-B)<br><br>Level 1 is being there for students to have a contact where they can talk about – here's what I'm feeling, here's what is happening to me. Is this racism? Is this linguicism? Is this one of the isms? Help me deconstruct what is happening to me here and help me make some decisions about how I go forward, or about how I address it – do some scripting here for me as to what I might try. (Support-C) |
| **Walking the talk of inclusive policies** | **A, B, C, D, E** | I feel very good about working in a place where the equity policy recently passed says that (the university) is committed to equity, diversity, and social justice in everything it does. This means that (pause) I think we're a long way from really living and breathing that in everything we do but I think that's a guiding principle that's a very important one and it's one that has been convenient to me who is by nature equity minded and operates from a place of guiding principles related to social justice in everything that I do and everything that I think about and make decisions about. So it's actually a very good fit and a good place to be working at this particular moment in time. It's also convenient and I have used this opportunity to some advantage to be able to advocate for further resources and to get further support for the work that this combined unit is doing. (Support-E)<br><br>So it's knowing how to go through back doors, and channels, and building credibility and it's establishing relationships and trust and all of that, to be able to quickly address something. And I really feel good about that, I KNOW we can help students, and I know HOW we can do it. We'll push until we finally can, so I think the experience I have and the place I'm at in my life affords me that opportunity to take some of the risks I might not have taken 20 years ago. (Support-D) |
| **Endorsing diversification of the teaching profession** | **A, B, C, D, E** | The whole notion of diversity is one of the building blocks of our nation and we have to show the world how it can be done and how it's being done. The future is about diversity in whatever form and teaching is where it begins. Everybody comes to school. You can go shop wherever you want, but somehow we come |

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| | | together in schools. I think education is at the heart of the future of our city and our country. We haven't talked about some of the racialized violence that is happening all around us but I think that one way of combating that is really through teacher education and teacher education about youth and the diverse youth we have in this city. (Support-C)<br><br>Urban centers I think in Canada are experiencing with sort of internationally educated professionals coming in varying professions whether it's nursing, teaching, engineering, and I think it's a fact that trying to exploit the wealth, the experience and the assets that these people bring into the province, and trying to tap into those, and also have that experience shared with people who've been born here. And trying to really broaden everyone's horizons in the process, because our student populations are increasingly diverse, having these teachers as models in the classroom is empowering for immigrant children. (Support-A)<br><br>I think particularly given the large immigrant influx into [this city] that these individuals have direct experience of another culture, another system, I think that allows them to have empathy and a sense of having walked in the shoes of many of the students they'll teach and I think it also equips them with a frame of reference and a richness of experience that serves to enhance what it is they know and how it is that they share what they know. It's not just about the curriculum. It's a context for the curriculum that I think is of huge benefit. (Support-E) |

**Student Support Services.** All of the student support staff participating in this study indicated appreciation for the organizational support their unit receives that enables them to work for the benefit of all students and to develop new programs for ITCs. Programs recently developed specifically to address the needs of immigrant teacher candidates include increased opportunities for one-to-one consultation, intensive practicum support, a pre-program workshop for internationally educated teacher candidates, and support from an equity and anti-racism advisor. As Support-E stated:

> I think there's the institutional will and it's been my experience anyway that when I've gone looking for money or resources to do more it's usually been met favourably.

***One-to-one consultation.*** Support-E described the services available to ITCs as having evolved over a relatively short period of time. Developed in response to ITC needs related to language development and familiarity with teaching and learning cultures in Canada, student support services has expanded their staffing to increase opportunities for one-to-one mentorship and tutoring and to provide workshops specifically designed to address the needs and interests of ITCs. Recruitment to hire new student support services staff broadened the skills sets required of more traditional writing centre staff and stated a preference for applicants with teaching experience and an understanding of the complexities related to teacher preparation in Canada. During its recent evolution to better meet the needs of ITCs, student support services maintained its emphasis on academic writing support but also started to provide mentorship for such teaching related activities as lesson planning and lesson delivery:

> There is opportunity for one-to-one consultation on all aspects of the program. They can come and have feedback on a particular assignment, they can bring their lesson plan, they can come to improve pronunciation, general writing skills, and so on. (Support-B)

***Intensive practicum support.*** Additionally, student support services has grown to include intensive practicum support for ITCs. Support-B described one type of practicum support:

> I worked as a mediator between the [mentor teacher] who had maybe no sense of the challenges of understanding what it means to be an immigrant and what it means to have gaps in your language and cultural knowledge in the classroom. Also with this teacher candidate, I provided extra help and support with how they can modify their role in the classroom in terms of their activities or how they can make them more learner-centred. How they need to rephrase. How they need to paraphrase. How they need to not eliminate their accent but make themselves more articulate and clear in the classroom. So strategies include making your sentences shorter. Script your lessons in advance because when you have the language, you think about the language prior to going to the classroom.

***Pre-program workshops for ITCs.*** Part of the "significant shift" (Support-E) at UCU involved approval for student support staff to collect data from incoming students that would enable them to identify internationally educated and immigrant teacher candidates. Additionally, organizational support was provided for student support staff to send targeted invitations for this group of incoming teacher candidates to attend a pre-program workshop in August. This workshop provided an overview of supports available to ITCs, described the

unevaluated first practicum observation opportunity, invited ITCs to register for a series of seminars for internationally educated teacher candidates, and provided a brief overview of teaching and learning in the province.

***Counselling in relation to instances of discrimination.*** Student support services staff also described support for students who believe they may be experiencing instances of harassment, racism, or other forms of prejudice. One of the staff members providing this type of counseling service described their work around equity and anti-racism:

> At the moment, my role has been very much interventionist in the sense that when TCs and instructors encounter issues that may be equity-based they see me as a key contact for taking a look at the issue and maybe co-analyzing, co-problem solving, co-looking at directions to take and maybe follow up and maybe also make decisions on how to not let it happen again. So seeking sort of a pro-active space for the support. Level 1 is being there for students to have a contact where they can talk about, 'Here's what I'm feeling, here's what is happening to me. Is this racism? Is this linguicism? Is this one of the isms? Help me deconstruct what is happening to me here and help me make some decisions about how I go forward, or about how I address it;do some scripting here for me as to what I might try.' I suggest a variety of options. Unless it's something that has to be absolutely confidential, I consult with the instructor and together we make decisions. So far, I have not spoken to a [mentor teacher]. That part of the internal process has not been clarified if there is going to be an opportunity for that or even if there should be an opportunity for that. (Support-C)

As a further measure to advance notions of equity and anti-racism, student support services staff offered to provide workshops for all teacher candidates. At the invitation of the course

instructor, student support staff spoke with classes of teacher candidates about power imbalances in schools and in the relationship they will have with their mentor teacher. Student support staff described an understanding of personal power and power in schools as essential but often lacking among teachers:

> The whole notion that the power basis can be situational and an awareness that each of us has power whether we know it or not are important. It's interesting that when I talk in equity about recognizing one's own power and privilege and I ask students, as in students in high schools, wherein lies the power in this space, they're able to identify it. When I ask teachers in schools that question, they tell me it lies with the principal or the superintendent or the director, or whatever. They don't recognize their own power and privilege in the classroom. It's incredible; and they don't understand how that interrupts learning all the time. To be conscious of that is important. (Support-C)

One of the student support staff who identified as being from a minoritized group described tensions around being a person of colour who is engaged in equity work and also described organizational tensions around "who does what" in the organization to support teacher candidates with issues related to equity:

> It's almost a double-edged sword in the sense that when there is a person like me, it falls on our shoulders to deliver the bad news or to say (pause). People who have the role as equity people with whatever identities they have; race, class, gender and the whole bit, sometimes what happens is that you, your judgment can be called into question. Are you responding to your experiences, or are you responding truly to what is happening to the candidate? When you say, here is what I think should be a

> direction we should go in, who does that? Is that me, an instructor, who? Who does that type of follow-up work once an identification of the issues is made. We have to make that internal process clear and we are working on that right now.

**Walking the talk of inclusive policies.** All of the student support services staff described various ways that they apply UCU and Human Rights policies to support immigrant teacher candidates. To Support-E, although there is still more work to be done in terms of policy implementation at UCU, the policies act as guiding principles that support efforts to advocate for programs to support students:

> I think we're a long way from really living and breathing [the equity policy] in everything we do but I think that's a guiding principle that's a very important one and it's one that has been convenient to me who is by nature equity minded and operates from a place of guiding principles related to social justice in everything that I do and everything that I think about and make decisions about. So it's actually a very good fit and a good place to be working at this particular moment in time. It's also convenient and I have used this opportunity to some advantage to be able to advocate for further resources and to get further support for the work that [student support services] is doing.

Similarly, Support-D described working with and around university policies to provide support needed by students:

> It's knowing how to go through back doors, and channels, and building credibility and it's establishing relationships and trust and all of that, to be able to quickly

> address something. And I really feel good about that, I KNOW we can help students, and I know HOW we can do it. We'll push until we finally can.

Support-A described the equity policies of UCU and the local school districts as calling for critical pedagogies to create and sustain equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students:

> I'd have to say it's like critical pedagogy. So looking at issues of identity, identity investment and that sort of thinking about how to respect diversity in the classroom and the fact of validating first language, first languages, first cultures in the class, and not just saying 'it's time for you to learn English' and 'you must become an English sort of person' but sort of valuing the experience that people bring to the class, whether they're the teachers, or whether they're the students, and having that broaden everyone's horizons.

To Support-C, the equity policy at UCU is not having the impact that it could or should have because it is not "a living document. Somehow we need to bring it to life and make sure the messages embedded in that document are spread far, wide, and deep." Support-C expressed disappointment with UCU physical messaging related to equity and would like to see UCU beliefs and principles become more salient throughout the faculty building much in the way that many corporations make efforts to make their mission statements public:

> The university is not a corporation, I understand that, but it's an institution that a lot of people look to for leadership in education, and equity and excellence are two major facets of education. Where do we see the messaging of this at UCU? It's not visible.

> You don't feel it. It's not tangible. It's not there. It's not in our pores. People don't know about it. They don't feel it. They don't work with it. They don't make it the centre of what they do. We're still at the stage where equity is seen as the work of certain people and not of others. It's the environment. When you scan this environment you don't get the sense that this is what we all believe.

Support-C described the experiences of some immigrant teacher candidates as instances of racism and linguisism and argued that the equity policy will have effect only to the extent that it raises consciousness and changes practice:

> It is about linguisism and racism. It is about othering. It is about marginalizing certain people and things. It is about infantilizing. It is about all of those things but I think that sometimes those are hot button words and when you say it's power and when it's coming from me they'll say, there she's throwing out that R word again and what I would like to say about this all is it is all about having a really conscious approach to what equity is.

In spite of Support-C's frustration that more could be done to support students and to advance UCU's commitment to equity, Support-E saw the student support services staff and the organization generally as deserving a moment to celebrate the work that had been done to support immigrant teachers:

> I have to say that I'm very pleased and proud to be part of a place where we are thinking around the corners and we are coming together around what we can do as a collective for this group of individuals as well as what is it that we can do differently this year above and beyond what was done last with a view to further support as well.

> So I think the momentum is very much in a forward direction around this issue and I do think there is an increased kind of sense that this is a priority and people are on the bus with respect to supporting it.

**Endorsing diversification of the teaching profession.** All of the student support staff participating in this study described supporting the success of immigrant teacher candidates as supporting the much needed diversification of the teacher workforce in Canada. They described benefits in terms of knowledge sharing from diverse perspectives and experiences, and reflecting the diversity of student bodies as particularly important. To Support-D immigrant teacher candidates reflect "what's out there in the real world beyond the ivory tower" and to Support-A, they are "models in the classroom that are empowering for immigrant children." To Support-E, immigrant teacher candidates will have empathy for many children in their classrooms who share a similar immigration experience and this empathy will frame the way in which they approach the curriculum:

> Given the large immigrant influx into Canada and that these individuals have direct experience of another culture, another system, I think that allows them to have empathy and a sense of having walked in the shoes of many of the students they'll teach. I think it also equips them with a frame of reference and a richness of experience that serves to enhance what it is they know and how it is that they share what they know. It's not just about the curriculum. It's a context for the curriculum that I think is of huge benefit.

Support-C described a need to encourage immigrant teachers to be leaders and change agents in education. Having recently attended a district-wide meeting of school leaders, Support-C was disappointed to see only one black man among the group:

> I thought that the leadership at the schools has changed but it hasn't changed to the degree that it needs to change and this institution has a lot to do with that in who we accept here. Not just who we graduate here, but who we inform here about the fact that you can become leaders in schools. You will become leaders in schools and you can bring about change in the system.

Support-C emphasized that the benefits of supporting immigrant teacher candidates extend far beyond the reaches of the classroom. To Support-C, the support and inclusion of ITCs is about nation building and about being a model for the world of what a multicultural society can be:

> When we look at this city, when we look at this country, where is the growth coming from? It's coming a great deal through immigration so I can do all of the motherhood statements that I want about the value of immigrants and the value about how we are seen as a nation. It's about nation-building and education. One of the quotations I use a great deal says that the chief architects of the modern nation are school teachers. If you really look at that in terms of nationalism, we have to support [immigrant] teacher candidates. If we are the architects of the nation, the architects have to look like what we want this nation to look like.

To Support-C, schools are where teachers, the nation's architects, gather and encourage future generations of architects, and for this reason, schools are the heart of the nation:

> The whole notion of diversity is one of the building blocks of our nation and we have to show the world how it can be done and how it's being done. The future is about diversity in whatever form; and teaching is where it begins. Everybody comes to

school. You can go shop wherever you want, but somehow we come together in schools. I think education is at the heart of the future of our city and our country.

**Summary**

The responses of the initial teacher education program staff reflect diverse and at times conflicting perspectives of the challenges and supports experienced by teacher candidates. While there are some points of agreement within each group, considerable differences between the two groups surfaced. In this summary section, I provide a brief overview of the more dominant perspectives offered by each group and I discuss the similarities and differences expressed within and across the groups.

**ITE program staff perceptions of challenges.** All of the program staff described ways that teacher candidates experience challenges related to English language proficiency. However, the perspectives that they shared regarding this tension reflect considerably different stances. Within the faculty group, two instructors expressed concerns that some teacher candidates who are English language learners do not have necessary communication skills to be effective as teachers, a third instructor described mentor teacher criticisms of English language skills as incidents of racism, and the fourth instructor indicated that while some teacher candidates "don't have the language," there is no point in making an issue of it because little can be done to improve their communication skills during the span of a 9-month program. Within the student support staff group, there was little disagreement on this issue. All of the study participants from this group spoke from a critical theoretical perspective about linguistic differences and they demonstrated a deep understanding of the psychological impact suffered by teacher candidates who are English language learners. The student support staff critiqued perceptions of "accents" and pointed out that some accents are

valued while others are associated with lower levels of intelligence and competence. One participant from this group did, however, express concern that the admissions standards for English language proficiency may be insufficient resulting in the enrolment of some teacher candidates who do not have the vocabulary necessary for engaging students in academic dialogue. Four of the five student support staff respondents indicated a need for professional development among instructors, mentor teachers, and school administrators to expand their understanding of prejudices that often drive deficit perspectives of linguistic differences.

When asked to discuss ways that race, class, gender and language influenced the participation of teacher candidates in the initial teacher education program, a similar pattern of differing perspectives emerged. Two instructors described teacher candidates as vulnerable to racist responses in practice teaching contexts, the other two instructors indicated that they weren't aware of tensions related to race, class or gender but they suggested that there might be some discomfort between students and instructors who have different religious beliefs. In response to the same question, once again there was considerable commonality expressed among the student support staff. They indicated that deficit perspectives of difference challenge the participation of teacher candidates in both the UCU and practice teaching contexts. The student support staff described ways that "deficit labeling" calls into question the legitimacy of teacher candidates, provokes resistance to considering different approaches to teaching and learning, and encourages intolerance of linguistic, religious, and other forms of difference. Instructor-A expressed a similar understanding by describing a mentor teacher who, after having formed the opinion that a teacher candidate was ill-suited for the profession, withdrew support and "played the role of observer watching for the failure."

While all of the instructors in this study emphasized the significance of familiarity with schooling in Canada and indicated that lacking experience in Canadian schools disadvantages immigrant teacher candidates, this stance was not expressed by the student support staff. To student support staff who offer specialized programs that provide opportunities for teacher candidates to develop their understanding of schooling in Canada, this is a curriculum need that can be addressed through coursework, workshops, and focused classroom observation. They argue that the significant challenges faced by teacher candidates are systemic and ideological and are manifested in the ways that they are judged by more dominant and powerful groups. The responses from student services support staff suggest that they perceive the emphasis on Canadian experience as a reflection of hegemony and unwillingness to consider alternative world views and educational approaches. To these respondents, legitimate concern for teacher candidates who are not familiar with education in Canada relates to their vulnerability as individuals who are engaging with unknown dynamics in practice teaching contexts. As newcomers entering a foreign context, immigrant teacher candidates often lack self-assurance and require support and encouragement to build their confidence.

All of the respondents from both program groups talked about pedagogy at UCU as a source of tension for teacher candidates but once again, their perspectives differed. The instructors indicated that collaborative and inquiry-based pedagogical approaches at UCU often challenge immigrant teacher candidates who are accustomed to less interactive lecture-style pedagogy. Student support staff, on the other hand, talked about pedagogy in initial teacher education in terms of its capacity to empower all teacher candidates. To student support staff, instructors have the opportunity to build the confidence of teacher candidates

by validating their voices and enabling their experiences and perspectives to enrich the program.

**ITE program staff perceptions of supports.** There is more agreement between faculty and staff in their descriptions of supports that benefit teacher candidates than they expressed in their discussions of challenges. Both groups identified the specialized programs and services offered through student support services as beneficial to teacher candidates. Additionally, two instructors and all of the support staff talked about their commitment to diversifying the teacher workforce.

One area of subtle tension surfaced, however, and it relates to the ways that each group talked about the equity focus at UCU. All of the instructors talked about their personal beliefs regarding equity and they indicated that an equity focus at UCU has brought about changes to the admissions process and has framed a professional development agenda for instructors. Student support staff talked more critically about equity at UCU and made specific reference to its equity policy as a vehicle for change that has been harnessed by a few actors in the organization but that work needs to be done to have its influence felt more widely. Student support staff talked about using the UCU equity policy to bolster their proposals for support initiatives aiming to foster the success of a diverse teacher candidate population. In this sense, they expressed an emphasis on advocacy and action as reflective of their commitment to equity.

# Chapter Seven: Integrative Critical Analysis

## Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an integrative critical analysis of the responses to difference presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Considered in relation to the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2, I analyze the responses to difference reflected in role definitions and educational structures developed, expressed, and enacted through regimes of competence in the university and practice teaching contexts. The role definitions and educational structures described by the study participants are complex and varied within and across contexts. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ways that responses to difference generated through regimes of competence reflect relations of power and ideological stances that invoke discourses of nationhood, citizenship and diversity as relevant to the induction of new teachers to the profession.

## Responses to Difference Expressed Through Regimes of Competence

As described in Chapter 2, regimes of competence establish what it means to be a "competent participant, an outsider, or somewhere in between" (Wenger, 1998, p. 137) and by exerting their influence, they convey ideologies generated through relations of power in the broader society. The legitimacy afforded to teacher candidates is reflected in roles and structures within initial teacher education that are defined and enacted in ways that challenge or support their development as prospective members of the teaching profession. The following sections of this chapter examine role definitions and educational structures as expressions of the responses to difference generated through regimes of competence at UCU and in practice teaching contexts.

**Role definitions.** The ways educators interact with students reflect the ways that they define their roles in terms of their mindset, expectations, and attitudes. Role definitions frame educators' views of students' possibilities and the messages they communicate to students that convey an assessment of their potential contributions to society (Cummins, 1996). Varied role definitions can be discerned within and across the participant groups in this study. The greatest consistency was expressed within the student support staff group where the respondents described a uniform commitment to advocacy and professional development roles. The teacher candidates also demonstrated consistency as a group in that they described similar characteristics of persistence and willingness to work hard to develop their knowledge and skills as teachers. While most of the teacher candidates enacted a conciliatory stance in their role, one teacher candidate demonstrated self-advocacy and refused to remain in what he described as a psychologically damaging relationship with a mentor teacher.

The most significant variation surfaced among the instructors and mentor teachers. Within the instructor group, two study participants described ways that they adjust their role to support the needs of immigrant teacher candidates while the other two instructors indicated that they treat all teacher candidates the same. Inferred from the data provided by the teacher candidates and program staff, it seems that some mentor teachers were perceived to have enacted a gate-keeping role that limited the opportunities for teacher candidates deemed unsuitable for the profession. However, other mentor teachers were described in terms that reflected a more collegial stance and a commitment to supporting the development of teacher candidates.

***Role definitions in the university context.***

*Teacher candidates.* In their roles as students taking courses in the university context, the teacher candidates were very focused on learning in order to develop knowledge and

skills for teaching. The expectations they held of themselves included working toward becoming the best teacher possible and positioning themselves favourably for employment in a competitive teacher labour market. As students in the initial teacher education program, they expected their instructors to support their efforts, encourage them through their mistakes, and validate them as potential teachers in Canada. As Lanying stated, the teacher candidates in this study were willing to work hard, but they yearned for external validation that they could succeed in the program: "We need a balance. You will succeed, but here is how you will be a success."

The five teacher candidates in this study who were English language learners (Lanying, Hannah, Catherine, Sal, and Laila) described ways that their English language proficiency influenced the enactment of their roles as students in academic courses at UCU. For most of these teacher candidates, their feelings of inadequacy and lowered self-esteem relative to their native English speaking peers prompted them to play the role of silent and frustrated observer in their classes. As Laila described, "For the first time in my life I felt like I was illiterate in a class." In addition to feeling that they weren't participating as actively in classes as they would if they had felt more confident communicating in English, Lanying and Sal also indicated that their roles as students were more demanding by virtue of the fact that they exerted significantly more time and effort in order to read and understand course materials and to complete written assignments.

Finally, Catherine and David described being in an outsider role in some of their classes. David found it difficult to "break into" his group of fellow teacher candidates because the differences in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity were too great. While Catherine perceived that she was an outsider during the first weeks of the program, she felt that she was accepted by her peers once they got to know her better:

> In the beginning, they saw me as an immigrant – as a stranger not from their culture so they weren't talking to me much, but then after we started having group work and sitting together we made personal connections and I was very happy. (Catherine)

*Instructors.* With regard to the ways that they define their roles as instructors in the academic components of the initial teacher education program, two different stances emerged in this study. While two instructors (A and B) described immigrant teacher candidates as having unique needs, the other two instructors (C and D) argued that all teacher candidates have needs and therefore they treat all of their students the same way. That said, although Instructors A and B indicated that immigrant teacher candidates face unique challenges related to English language proficiency and familiarity with schooling in Canada, when asked to describe the ways they support these teacher candidates they did not indicate that they adjust their teaching strategies to address these challenges in the academic program. Both did, however, state that they support immigrant teacher candidates by validating them as future teachers: "How do we support them? We say, 'We want you to be teachers'" (Instructor-A).

Reflective of their stance that all teacher candidates have needs and should be treated the same, Instructors C and D indicated that they support all teacher candidates, including immigrant teacher candidates, by creating positive learning communities among the students in their classes. David offered a teacher candidate's perspective on tensions related to differentiated instruction to address individual needs of teacher candidates:

> We are walking on a tightrope here because if the instructors are overly caring, then people will say, why do you single me out? And if they are not caring, then people will say that they are negligent so it's like a tightrope.

For the most part, the instructors in this study aimed to support immigrant teacher candidates within the current university context without proposing changes that might enhance the inclusion of immigrant teacher candidates in university courses. Instructors A and B did, however, indicate ways that they would like to change their practice in the future by making "more use of internationally educated teacher candidates in terms of their voice in our classrooms about helping others understand working with students who are English language learners" (Instructor-B) but they indicated that they weren't sure how they would go about it. Perhaps paradoxically, Instructor-B also stated during the interview that, "I have to say that I couldn't tell you exactly who was internationally educated in our classroom this year because it's a question [the Registrar's Office and Student Support Services] asks them, but I didn't track that data."

Two teacher candidates (David and Sal) suggested that the tendency of instructors to treat all students the same reflects a disconnection between the inclusive and anti-discrimination discussions in courses aiming to prepare teacher candidates to apply inclusive pedagogies as teachers, and what they saw as inconsistency in the application of inclusive pedagogy among UCU faculty. As Sal stated:

> Instructors treated us all the same – both native English speakers and others like myself. Perhaps they should be aware of the fact that… you know my little story about how we need so much more time. …At [UCU], if they think we can give value to the school board and to the students here, then I think they should also consider our own situation. The fact that I had to go to the [academic support centre] in order to be understood – [the support worker] at the [centre] was incredible and if it wasn't for someone special for the support, maybe we can get the support from a regular teacher.

*Student support staff.* Acting as advocates for teacher candidates figured prominently in the ways that the student support staff in this study defined their roles. As advocates, they used their understanding of equity and their awareness of the challenges teacher candidates face in the program to propose, develop and deliver new initiatives to provide support. All of the student support staff pointed to ways that contexts for learning and teaching in the initial teacher education program disadvantage immigrant teacher candidates and they described their roles as change agents in the support that they provide for this group of teacher candidates.

The student support staff role appears from data in this study to be dual-tracked. In playing out one aspect of their role they provide direct services for teacher candidates and instructors through programs and one-to-one advising. Enacting another aspect of their role, they engage in a political role as advocates who "go through back doors" (Support-D) and counter "deficit witnessing" (Support-C) to advance the organization's commitment to equity. Empowered by their formal job descriptions and the UCU equity policy, the student support staff described themselves as agents of change through initiatives that include: professional development for instructors related to critical pedagogy; partnership building and mutual learning with senior administration from local school districts; partnership building and mutual learning with an advisory group of mentor teachers; providing workshops to help all teacher candidates understand the ways power imbalances influence their work as teacher candidates and as teachers; and providing a student support staff mentor for teacher candidates who experience challenges or tensions related to equity/inequity and inclusion/exclusion during their participation in the initial teacher education program.

To Support-C and the other support staff participating in this study, their work is about recognizing linguisism, racism and "othering." It is about "having a really conscious

approach to what equity is." Furthermore, Support-C considers initial teacher education as significant to the building of Canada as a nation and sees the role of people working to educate and prepare future teachers and educational leaders as one that nurtures future architects of the nation:

> The chief architects of the modern nation are school teachers. If you really look at that in terms of nationalism, we have to support [immigrant] teacher candidates. If we are the architects of the nation, the architects have to look like what we want this nation to look like.

*Mentor teachers.* Mentor teachers were not invited to participate in this study and this limitation is discussed more fully in the next chapter. For the purpose of analysis, the ways that mentor teachers define their roles are inferred from the data provided by teacher candidates, instructors and student support staff. With regard to the academic program at UCU, a comment by Karen and input from the initial teacher education program staff suggest that the experiences of teacher candidates would benefit from a stronger mentor teacher role association with the academic program. As Karen stated:

> There were teachers who weren't really teaching according to the pedagogy; good teaching practices. …So the challenge in the practicum was compiling what you see and learn at [UCU] and what you see in actual schools and having teachers come up to you in the staff room and tell you that this is the real world and you can't really practice that; that group work stuff won't really work. So the challenge would be being motivated to practice what you learn here.

Karen's comment indicates that she perceived a disconnection between the program at UCU and what mentor teachers described as "the real world" of the practice teaching classroom. Furthermore, her observation suggests that mentor teachers expressing this stance do not define their roles from a collaborative stance in relation to the broader initial teacher education program.

Similarly, the instructors and student support staff described tensions between mentor teachers and UCU program instructors that create a context of inconsistency in the mentorship and modeling experienced by teacher candidates in field placement. They indicated that steps are being taken to strengthen these partnerships. Advisory groups have been instituted to assist in this undertaking but the participants in this study recognized that while initial steps have been taken, more work needs to be done to build relationships with individual mentor teachers.

***Role definitions in practice teaching contexts.***

*Teacher candidates.* In their practice teaching contexts, the teacher candidates defined their role with the same commitment to improving their professional practice and positioning themselves favourably for employment that they expressed relative to their academic course work. They welcomed the opportunity to learn from experienced teachers. That said, the teacher candidates adjusted the ways they enacted their roles in response to the relationships they experienced with their mentor teachers. For example, six of the eight teacher candidates felt a loss of confidence in contexts where their mentor teachers were critical of their English language proficiency. They described ways that this loss of confidence contributed to feelings of nervousness during the delivery of their lessons and reinforced their role as a subordinate. Laila, for example, commented that she always thanked her mentor teacher for correcting her use of English in front of the class because she believed that even when a

teacher candidate thinks their mentor teacher is wrong, they “still have to do it their way.” From Laila’s perspective, playing the role of a subordinate in these situations was a strategic response and she indicated that other teacher candidates, “especially the younger ones,” encountered tensions with their mentor teachers because they didn’t understand that teacher candidates need to be “flexible” in order to “please” their mentor teachers.

The reluctance of immigrant teacher candidates to seek support when they experienced tensions with their mentor teachers was described by the instructors and student support staff. Even in situations where instructors indicated that they wanted to intervene by speaking with mentor teachers about the ways that they were being discouraging or unsupportive, the teacher candidates asked that instructors not become involved because they did not want to be perceived as requiring special attention. In this sense, the teacher candidates wanted to be perceived as playing the same role as any other teacher candidate. They were very aware of the power that their mentor teachers held with regard not only to their success in the program, but also with regard to their prospects for future employment as teachers and they did not want to risk an escalation of the conflict.

In practicum contexts where relationships with mentor teachers were more positive, the teacher candidates appreciated that they had the opportunity to play a more collegial role. Catherine described what she experienced as a supportive mentor teacher: “She was very flexible, very understanding, very thoughtful, and she dealt with me not as a student, but as a colleague and we have mutual respect.”

Gavin was the only immigrant teacher candidate in this study who expressed a sense of self-advocacy related to his role in practice teaching contexts. Unlike the other three teacher candidates who endured and persisted through very difficult practicum relationships with their mentor teachers until the point of being removed from the placement and receiving

a “fail” for the attempt (Catherine), or to the point of completing the practicum with a marginal pass and a written report that posed a potential threat to opportunities for employment (Lanying, Sal), Gavin removed himself from his first practicum placement. In spite of the missed deadline to engage in the unevaluated first practicum observation period, Gavin advocated on his own behalf to join that program and avoid a marginal or failing final report:

> I had reached the point where I might have given up right there and then it was so stressful. But I was not willing to go through any more abuse, and for me it was emotional abuse. That’s the way I saw it.

Gavin indicated that he knew of

> quite a few people who cried throughout their practicum because their [mentor teachers] were not very supportive and they just tolerated it because they knew they had to complete a practicum and do it successfully.

Gavin advised that teacher candidates in similarly difficult practicum contexts should address the situation directly by communicating their needs to instructors or student support services staff.

Lanying, Hannah and Sal considered themselves ideally suited for supporting diverse student populations in Canadian schools and they were optimistic that educational discourse related to diversity would eventually support their efforts to find employment in spite of the competition they faced from Canadian-born teacher education program graduates. In this regard, they considered themselves playing a role to represent and support the diversity of students. As Sal stated, “As a person who comes from a diverse background, I think I can

contribute a lot to the wellbeing of newcomers or the children of newcomers and help them integrate into their new home."

*Instructors.* In their work relative to the practice teaching component of the program, all of the instructors in this study indicated that there are times when they are required to assume an interventionist role to mediate tensions between teacher candidates and mentor teachers. The interventions they described ranged from providing a sympathetic ear to reassigning the teacher candidate to a different school and mentor teacher for the remaining practicum period. Instructor-D, for example, described suggesting to a distraught teacher candidate that she regard the critical and discouraging feedback from her mentor teacher as "one perspective." Guided by the assumption that "racism is alive and well in our city and in our schools", Instructor-A recalled perceiving that a teacher candidate was being treated unfairly by a mentor teacher who was expressing a racist attitude and responding by moving the teacher candidate to a new placement.

Catherine's account of the assistance she received from an instructor during practicum illustrates the impact of instructors who enact their roles from a supportive and encouraging stance:

> [my faculty practicum advisor] kept telling me that she wasn't giving up on me. I really appreciated that. … [She] helped me when I was at my weakest point. Maybe [she] doesn't know, but without [her], I wouldn't have continued.

In addition to their interventionist role in practice teaching contexts, Instructors-A and –B expressed interest in playing a more pro-active role to support teacher candidates by working with mentor teachers in order to develop their understanding of UCU's commitment to equity and the ways that mentor teachers can help support that commitment. Additionally,

they considered that their work to support immigrant teacher candidates enabled them to play a role in supporting the diversification of the teaching profession so that the teaching force "looks and sounds more like the students of our multicultural city" (Instructor-A).

*Student support staff.* Acting as advocates for teacher candidates figured prominently in the ways that the student support staff in this study defined their roles. As advocates, they used their understanding of equity and their awareness of the challenges teacher candidates face in practice teaching contexts to propose, develop and deliver new initiatives to provide support. One significant initiative of student support staff is the unevaluated practicum program during the first practice teaching period. This 4-week program for internationally educated teacher candidates is designed to provide opportunities for focused observation of classroom culture and for well-supported practice teaching in a mentorship relationship where tensions related to a final evaluation are not present.

Support-B indicated that some student support staff are assigned an "extra role" during practice teaching periods. In this role, they are available to provide "extra practicum visits" and to mediate tensions with mentor teachers who might have "no sense of the challenges" immigrant teacher candidates face in Canadian classrooms.

All of the student support staff indicated that by supporting the professional development and inclusion of immigrant teacher candidates they play a role in fostering the diversification of the teaching profession. They expressed discourse similar to that articulated by Support-A who stated that, "…because our student populations are increasingly diverse, having these teachers as models in the classroom is empowering for immigrant children."

*Mentor teachers.* The narratives of the teacher candidates and the responses of the initial teacher education program staff suggest that mentor teachers play out varied role

definitions across practicum contexts. While some mentor teachers appear to enact a gate-keeper role by judging some teacher candidates, especially those who are English language learners, unacceptable for the profession, others approach their role in a more collegial and supportive manner.

In cases where mentor teachers deny legitimacy to a teacher candidate, the data suggest that they subsequently limit access to resources, criticize teacher candidates in front of students, and discourage them from pursuing a teaching career. For example, Gavin's first mentor teacher suggested that he consider alternatives to teaching and Lanying recounted a comment made to one of her peers: "One TC, her [mentor teacher] told her from the very beginning that she would fail. She didn't even teach her how to be good."

Instructor-A described an exchange between a black teacher candidate and a white mentor teacher that reflects one way that prejudice and racist discourse can define the roles of some teachers:

> There was in a Grade 1 class a little kid who was black and the [mentor teacher] said something like, 'I'm not going to get him to do his homework. He's not going to go on to be anything anyway.' It's almost as if he's going to have the life of a criminal, it was just an assumption.

Instructor-C indicated that some mentor teachers might find it difficult to recognize and value the perspectives and international experiences of immigrant teacher candidates and define their role in terms of preserving the "Canadian way:"

> When they're in the schools, challenges emerge and where are their supports? That's when the [mentor teachers] have to have an accepting understanding of what their

> background is; if they've been trained elsewhere. 'Well they're in Canada now and they have to do it our way.'

Similarly, Instructor-A reported a comment made by a mentor teacher who said that if a teacher candidate is "not a Canadian citizen she shouldn't be in this program."

Mentor teachers who approach their roles from a more collegial stance have a significantly positive impact on the self-confidence and professional growth of teacher candidates. In these relationships, teacher candidates felt validated, supported, and encouraged. They felt that they have something to contribute as teachers and that they are capable of competent performance.

The role of mentor teachers working with UCU teacher candidates is complicated by a tension between mentoring and evaluating. Mentor teachers are asked by UCU to help teacher candidates develop their knowledge and practice as teachers, and at the same time they are in a position to make the final decision as to whether or not a teacher candidate has passed the practicum component of the initial teacher education program. Mentor teachers write letters of evaluation at the conclusion of the practicum. Teacher candidates are required to provide these letters of evaluation to local school districts as part of the employment application process. UCU does not send the evaluation letters directly to the school districts, leaving distribution to the discretion of individual teacher candidates. That said, the impression is made very strongly that an offer of employment may be jeopardized if a teacher candidate refuses to provide the required evaluation letters.

**Educational structures.** Educational structures refer to policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation that frame the organization of schooling (Cummins, 2003). These structures are not fixed as they are often contested and

the ways that resources are allocated and curriculum is set can change as organizations establish different priorities in response to contestation.

The teacher candidates in this study interacted with structures in two educational contexts: the higher education setting at UCU where they participated in the academic component of the program, and public education classrooms where they engaged in mentored practice teaching. The following sections describe the ways that complex educational structures conceived and enacted through regimes of competence in these two contexts reflect responses to difference that challenged or supported the teacher candidates as prospective members of the teaching profession.

***Educational structures in the university context.*** Educational structures at UCU that were found to exert significant influence over the experiences of the teacher candidates are the UCU equity and admissions policies, initial teacher education curriculum and pedagogy, programs for internationally educated teacher candidate, English as the language of instruction, and the evaluation of group assignments. The data suggests that some aspects of UCU policies, curriculum and pedagogy challenge the participation of teacher candidates while other dimensions are experienced as supportive. The programs for internationally educated teacher candidates were uniformly described as supportive and validating. English as the language of instruction and the evaluation of group assignments were discussed as educational structures that challenge some teacher candidates.

*The UCU equity policy.* The equity policy at UCU appears salient in the work of the student support staff, but lacks prominence in the work of instructors and in the agency of the teacher candidates. While the student support staff described ways that the equity policy enables them to advocate for change on behalf of students, the instructors and teacher

candidates expressed little awareness of the policy or its implications in terms of the impact it might generate relative to the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates. As Support-C described, the equity policy is not visible:

> You don't feel it. It's not tangible. It's not there. It's not in our pores. People don't know about it. They don't feel it. They don't work with it. They don't make it the centre of what they do. We're still at the stage where equity is seen as the work of certain people and not of others.

Indeed, when asked to identify departmental, institutional, or systemic policies that guide their work to support immigrant teacher candidates, all of the instructors appeared somewhat uncomfortable with the question and either paused before responding or began their response by saying, "I don't know" (Instructor-C). Instructor-C described being guided by a personal commitment to equity and a strong belief that "coming to Canada and the immigration experience is not an easy one." This instructor went on to state, "I will fight for equity because everybody has a right to live in Canada equally and to have a say."

Instructors-A and -B made reference to the local school district equity policy and provincial human rights legislation as policies that guide their work to support teacher candidates. They also recalled that equity is a stated priority of the university but they didn't mention the existence of a UCU equity policy. Instructors-A, -C, and –D did, however, suggest that policies guiding student support services allow for program modifications that enable teacher candidates to have opportunities for unevaluated observation during the first practicum block and also provide for additional support for teacher candidates through workshops and intensive on-site practicum support.

The student support staff described their awareness and application of the UCU equity policy and the ways that this policy supports their efforts to initiate new programs for immigrant teacher candidates. The instructors on the other hand, did not describe this level of awareness and application of UCU's equity policy. For both of these groups within the university, their level of engagement with the UCU equity policy correlates with the ways they considered the needs of immigrant teacher candidates and their responsibility as organizational agents to respond to these needs. Additionally, their engagement with the policy reflects the degree to which they described broader and deeply rooted social inequalities and prejudices as relevant to the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates.

*UCU admissions policies.* Three aspects of the UCU admissions policy were critiqued by participants of this study: language proficiency evaluation; prerequisites related to years of compulsory education; and requirements related to Canadian classroom experience. Support-B questioned the effectiveness of the language proficiency measures specified in the policy and suggested that the current tests are insufficient for the purpose of determining a person's ability to provide instruction in English. To Support-B, language skills required for academic study and evaluated by UCU-approved tests like TOEFL differ significantly from communication skills required of teachers:

> The skills that you need as a student are very different from the skills you need as a teacher to explain, to elaborate, to agree with someone, to disagree.

Karen found the UCU admissions policy requirements regarding prerequisite years of study to be unreasonable and unfair. As an immigrant teacher candidate with a professional degree in nursing and 4 years of teaching experience, Karen found it very difficult to believe that she was required to complete an additional 2 years of undergraduate education because

she was assessed as having insufficient years of study in the K-12 context. Karen described herself as “mad” and “indignant” that after engaging in 2 years of online undergraduate study, she was required to submit a letter from the online university attesting to the anticipated completion of her courses that were in progress. To Karen, this was a request that was not made of the many other applicants who applied to the initial teacher education program during their last year of undergraduate study and had courses that were still in progress at the time of application. Karen believed she was discriminated against as an immigrant from the Philippines and as a student taking undergraduate courses from an online university.

Laila found that ITE admissions policies that favoured experience in Canadian schools represented a significant barrier to her acceptance to the program. With a Master’s Degree, excellent grades, teaching experience as a teaching assistant in her undergraduate and graduate studies and experience as a tutor since high school, Laila’s application to Bachelor of Education programs in Canada were nonetheless rejected, and she received feedback that she lacked experience in Canadian classrooms. Gaining this experience posed yet another challenge as Laila found that she was unable to persuade a school in her region to allow her to volunteer in a classroom. The year that Laila was admitted to UCU was the first year that the organization revised its admissions requirements to consider teaching related experience more broadly and to eliminate requirements related to specified hours of classroom experience.

*Initial teacher education curriculum related to equity.* The data suggest that initial teacher education curriculum at UCU lacks adequate focus on power relations in schools and the ways that schools disadvantage and discourage students associated with minoritized groups. As recent graduates of the program, the teacher candidates seemed ill-equipped to

identify instances of racism and other forms of discrimination within their own experiences. When explicitly invited to talk about the ways that race, gender, language, religion and other socially constructed differences influenced their participation in the initial teacher education program, none of the English language learners described the responses they received in their practice teaching schools as incidents of racism or linguicism. Two of the teacher candidates pointed to racist comments and jokes made by students who shared their Chinese heritage and wondered why they would want to distance themselves from their Chinese culture, but these future teachers did not connect incidents of inter-cultural racism with racism in the broader society. Gavin described what he thought might have been a racist response to a black student in a practicum classroom but he didn't suggest that he had been prepared by the initial teacher education program at UCU to respond to such incidents. Gavin also expressed that his identity as a black man might have threatened his first mentor teacher and contributed to the way that she subjected him to "emotional abuse." Overall, however, the teacher candidates in this study appeared to lack understanding and vocabulary to discuss issues of prejudice and discrimination in schools.

Similarly, with the exception of Instructor-A, the instructors did not provide particularly critical responses when asked to consider ways that race, gender, language, religion and other social constructions of difference influence the participation of immigrant teacher candidates in the program. Two instructors described tensions that Muslim students might feel in relation to Jewish instructors. Instructors-A and -C described immigrant teacher candidates as vulnerable to instances of racism and all of the instructors described language deficits and perceived language deficits as challenging for immigrant teacher candidates. None of the instructors described supporting immigrant teacher candidates by helping them develop strategies to respond to incidents of racism and discrimination in schools. Support-A

described this shortcoming of the initial teacher education curriculum and proposed that UCU should provide professional development for instructors and teacher candidates that promotes understanding and application of critical pedagogies.

In contrast to the limited understanding of social inequality and inequity articulated by the teacher candidates and instructors in this study, the student support staff described racism, discrimination and power imbalances as being at the heart of teacher candidate participation in the program and they saw it as an important challenge to provide all teacher candidates with the tools they need to name and counter prejudice in schools. To Support-C, for example, "it is all about having a really conscious approach to what equity is."

*Initial teacher education pedagogy at UCU.* Student support staff identified a need in initial teacher education for critical pedagogies that "promote and respect diversity and intercultural communication at various levels and validate a range of diverse international experiences" (Support-A). They described ways that inclusive pedagogical approaches can help foster the self-confidence of teacher candidates and enrich the program through shared learning that empowers teacher candidates to express their diverse perspectives. Similarly, Instructors-A and –B indicated that they consider the wealth of background experience that immigrant teacher candidates bring to initial teacher education as "resources for transforming education" (Instructor-A).

In their description of the support they received through their participation in the elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates, Lanying, Sal, Laila and David emphasized the positive impact of the instructor's pedagogical stance as it validated their experiences and the challenges they faced in the program. Sal and David argued that this stance was not shared among all initial teacher education instructors and they considered that the pedagogy of some instructors contradicted the inclusive strategies that they were teaching

candidates to apply in their practice with students. Sal stated that if UCU values the contributions of immigrant teacher candidates, the supportive roles enacted by student support staff and the instructor of the course for internationally educated teacher candidates would be played out by all instructors and teacher candidates would not have to seek support from "someone special."

*Programs specifically developed for internationally educated teacher candidates.* Several programs initiated by student support services were described as extremely beneficial to immigrant teacher candidates. The elective course and workshops for internationally educated teacher candidates provided a much needed sense of community and support for the teacher candidates in this study. As Lanying described:

> It felt like home – everybody like me, speaking English with accents. We went through the same thing. We call ourselves survivors. We went through the same struggles. We felt isolation.

To the teacher candidates, the elective course and the workshops provided opportunities to learn about Canadian culture and being a teacher in Canada but they also provided, through the pedagogical approaches of the instructors, significant sources of encouragement. Laila described one instructor who really stood out from the rest:

> [She] made us feel so special. She made us all feel like contributing and she would share her own experiences and teaching experiences which was really important.

Laila also appreciated that the teaching assistant for the elective course was an English language learner and felt "it was really nice to see that the person who is somehow in charge of giving you an assignment is someone who understands your problems and your struggles."

The structural support provided at the academic success centre was very helpful to the teacher candidates. They accessed the centre for advising related to academic writing, lesson planning, lesson delivery, making presentations in front of a group, writing resumes and cover letters, and preparing for interviews. The support they received from the centre had a positive influence over their success in the program. For Sal, the opportunity to have a mock interview with one of the centre's advisors contributed significantly to his success during his interview with a local school district.

One of most significant structural supports for teacher candidates in this study was the program that gave them the option to engage in an unevaluated first practicum observation period. Gavin stated that if that option to leave the first practicum hadn't been available, he would not have graduated from the program:

> If there wasn't the [unevaluated first practicum opportunity], I wouldn't have graduated this year. I don't know if there was anything else; if there were other options to move to another school, but that distraction, being able to step aside, is why I'm here today graduating. I had reached the point where I might have given up right there and then it was so stressful. But I was not willing to go through any more abuse, and for me it was emotional abuse. That's the way I saw it.

To Gavin, being able to leave the first practicum environment was only one aspect of the practicum observation period that changed the course of his experience at UCU. Perhaps even more significantly, he saw the unevaluated time in schools as an opportunity to regain his confidence:

> In my first practicum [the first evaluated practicum after he pulled himself out of the program's first practicum placement] I was feeling so good, I was saying to myself

> that nothing was going to stop me. I just felt so confident. I knew that I had most of the tools. I had more to learn but I was just feeling so confident and I attribute that to the [unevaluated first practicum] program.

The recently developed programs at UCU that were initiated by student support staff to support immigrant teacher candidates are examples of the ways that organizational structures can be adjusted to meet the needs of students. Expanding the mandate and staffing of the writing centre to include broader support for the development of teaching related communication skills, developing a new credit course specifically for internationally educated teacher candidates, and modifying the practicum schedule to provide 4 weeks of unevaluated observation in schools for immigrant teacher candidates represent significant structural responses to the needs of teacher candidates. Such supportive responses reflect a validation of immigrant teacher candidates as participants in the initial teacher education program.

*Language of instruction at UCU.* For the six teacher candidates who are English language learners, English as the language of instruction at UCU posed significant challenges in terms of their confidence and the amount of time required to complete course readings and assignments. They described feeling inadequate and illiterate in the company of their English speaking colleagues and these feelings limited their participation during class discussions, especially during the first term of the program. These teacher candidates made statements similar to that expressed by Laila who said, “I was feeling really depressed because I simply couldn’t contribute to the conversation. I had good ideas but I was frightened to speak out loud.”

The student support staff recognized the psychological toll on English language learners in the academic program. Like Support-A, they talked about ways that second language learning

> shapes our identity in that language and how we perceive ourselves and how we then sort of interact with others with this self perception and it makes us self-conscious, and sort of alienates us, not only from others alienating us but from ourselves, alienating ourselves.

Support-B suggested that instructors can support English language learners by valuing their linguistic diversity, speaking slowly and clearly when addressing the class, inviting teacher candidates to ask for clarification as needed, and ensuring that all teacher candidates participate in group discussions.

The instructors emphasized challenges that English language learners face in practice teaching classrooms and mentioned that some teacher candidates benefit from help with their academic writing. They did not mention the extra time that these teacher candidates require in order to complete course readings and assignments, nor did they talk about the reasons that they might feel reluctant to contribute to class discussions.

*Evaluation practices related to group assignments.* The evaluation of group work, a common pedagogical and evaluative dimension in the initial teacher education program, was described by some of the teacher candidates and student support staff as a source of tension and anxiety for immigrant teacher candidates. In particular, teacher candidates and student support staff described ways that assessment based on group projects can make teacher candidates who are English language learners vulnerable to feelings of exclusion and inadequacy. Support-A reported that immigrant teacher candidates often comment during

one-to-one academic mentoring sessions that their English speaking colleagues don't want them in their group because they believe that having an English language learner in their group will bring their mark down. To teacher candidates, a group mark often prompts their English speaking colleagues to exclude them from the project, or to assign them relatively menial or insignificant tasks.

***Educational structures in practice teaching schools.*** English as the language of instruction in practice teaching classrooms, program flexibility, evaluation practices in practicum, and curriculum structure and interpretation surfaced in this study as educational structures that influence the participation of teacher candidates in practice teaching contexts. While program flexibility was described as a source of support for teacher candidates, all other structures that the study participants discussed relative to practicum were described as dynamics that challenged their development as teachers.

*Language of instruction in practice teaching classrooms.* Language of instruction was found in this study to exert the most significant structural influence on the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates in their public school field placements. The emphasis on "monolingual instruction in English" (Cummins, 2003, p. 45) created a context where the linguistic strengths of the teacher candidates were discredited as largely irrelevant to the task of teaching. Hannah, for example, was asked to provide support for a student who recently arrived in Canada from Korea, but she was not given the impression that her ability to provide this kind of support was anything more than a happy coincidence. Providing first language support to students was not described as a priority in the school that warranted the allocation of resources and purposeful planning. Even with her linguistic strengths and her ability to support a sizeable Korean speaking student population within the school district,

the principal would only agree to put Hannah on the occasional teacher list for that particular school. This restriction on her scope of work within the board suggests that in spite of her Korean language skills, or more likely because of them, the principal was not willing to facilitate Hannah's access to employment more broadly within the school district.

Within this context of English as the only language of instruction, and perceptions of linguistic differences as deficits, the immigrant teacher candidates were not validated and encouraged for their linguistic skills. Moreover, their suitability as teachers within the hegemonic English context was called into question.

*Program flexibility.* Data from all of the participants in this study indicate that some teacher candidates encounter difficult and untenable circumstances in practice teaching contexts that are most often experienced as unsupportive and invalidating relationships with mentor teachers. Three of the instructors described instances where program flexibility that allows for the re-assignment of teacher candidates to a different practicum placement provided them with an option to support teacher candidates they perceived as being treated unfairly. In all such instances described by the instructors, consideration to move a teacher candidate to a different placement was driven by concern that the mentor teacher's intolerant response to the teacher candidate's "accent" reflected prejudice or racism.

Three of the student support staff talked about a tension at UCU with regard to the placement of teacher candidates. They indicated that while some faculty and staff believe that immigrant teacher candidates should be purposefully placed with mentor teachers who are known to be supportive of teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds, others argue that teacher candidates should be required to demonstrate that they are "able to teach what they know in any school situation" (Support-E). The data suggest that the stance for purposeful

placement is prevailing, perhaps as more program staff at UCU observe, like Support-B, the impact of mentor teachers who "reject" some teacher candidates:

> My experience tells me in contexts where the [mentor teachers] are very supportive, it makes a huge difference. It's the same individual, you can see they're willing to put in the same amount of effort, but they have totally different practicum experiences based on who they are working with in that context.

*Evaluation practices related to practicum.* In the practicum context, the dual role that mentor teachers play as mentors and practicum evaluators made teacher candidates particularly vulnerable. As has been previously discussed, the data show that teacher candidates met with vastly different responses in their field placements that ranged from dismissive and exclusionary to accepting and collegial. For teacher candidates, when their mentor teacher was not supportive and encouraging, the tension was too great and the risk was too high to make mistakes. Lanying talked about a fellow teacher candidate who had been told on the first day of practicum that she would fail the placement. It is difficult to imagine that the remaining 4 weeks were pleasant and productive. To Catherine, some mentor teachers pre-judge teacher candidates and in these situations, success is unlikely:

> I don't know if it's a bias. It could be a bias in some way, but I think it's a pre-judgment that even without seeing you they feel you are not the right person. You shouldn't be a teacher.

For Sal, the evaluation by his first mentor teacher placed his employment opportunities at risk. When he was interviewed by a local school district, Sal's application file was incomplete as he had not submitted the required copy of his first practice teaching evaluation.

Although Sal believed that he had a good interview with the school district and they had called his references, he was very reluctant to let the board see the report that his first mentor teacher wrote as it contradicted many of the positive comments that were made in his second evaluation. The positive impression that Sal made in his second practicum school had a significant influence that resulted in his having an interview with the board and he did not want to jeopardize the impact of that favourable appraisal. The school district indicated that it could not move forward with a decision regarding Sal's application until it received the missing report.

*Curriculum structure and interpretation.* Of lesser significance in terms of identity development as a teacher, but nonetheless significant in terms of her opportunity for success, Catherine experienced difficulty with the way that the elementary curriculum and teaching assignments were structured and interpreted by the mentor teacher in her first practicum placement. Most elementary school teachers in Canada are required to teach several different curriculum subjects which may include language arts, mathematics, history, geography, religion, physical education, science, and the arts (music, drama, visual art). Without the benefit of a Canadian elementary school education, Catherine found that she was not familiar with some curriculum content including Canadian history, geography, and literature, and she had to learn these subjects before she was able to develop strategies that she could apply to help students with their own learning. Catherine struggled with the demands of her mentor teacher in terms of curriculum delivery, and she believed that it was unreasonable to expect her to learn several different curriculum areas at the same time that she was struggling to develop essential teaching strategies related to lesson planning, lesson delivery, and student engagement. Catherine believed that she would have had a better chance for success in the practicum if she had been given the opportunity to focus on one curriculum area:

> One of the things as well that was not easy was during the first placement, my mentor teacher was giving me different lessons but in 4 different subjects so I had to learn about Geography, about Language, about Religion and about Health all in 1 week. That was a lot. I was only preparing one lesson for each day, but still, I'm looking at four different subjects. So this also contributed to my stress. I was not strong enough emotionally to take all of this and I thought maybe I should quit teaching in general because if it's this stressful and I am weak, I cannot take this stress and maybe I shouldn't be in teaching.

## Discussion

The varied role definitions and educational structures enacted through regimes of competence in the UCU and practice teaching contexts reflect relations of power ranging from hegemonic to collaborative and they suggest the influence of assimilationist and multiculturalist ideologies. The discourses used to express these different stances invoke notions of nationhood, citizenship, difference and diversity. While hegemonic power relations and assimilationist ideologies influenced role definitions and educational structures that framed the teacher candidates as outsiders, collaborative power relations and multiculturalist ideologies fostered role definitions and educational structures that affirmed the teacher candidates as legitimate peripheral members of the teaching profession.

**Relations of power, ideology and discourse in the UCU context.** All of the teacher candidates in this study who speak English as an additional language lamented that their instructors at UCU did not acknowledge the additional time that they required to complete readings and assignments. They typically described requiring 300% more time than native English speakers to read materials and complete assignments. They also talked about

psychological difficulties they faced as English language learners in an English academic context. That their instructors did not recognize these challenges, or offer to accommodate their needs was seen as a contradiction of the differentiated pedagogies instructors were training teacher candidates to apply in their own classrooms to address the diverse needs of students. Sal, for example, indicated that all teacher candidates in his UCU classes were treated the same. He appreciated the specialized support that he received from student support services and suggested that such support should be provided by all instructors. As Instructor-C indicated, if teacher candidates don't feel that their instructors "model and practice what [they] preach," they will lose credibility with their students. Instructors who do not consider and accommodate the diverse needs of teacher candidates, and who do not recognize and validate what can be learned from their prior experiences, express hegemonic relations of power and assimilationist ideologies cloaked by what is often considered a fair discourse of treating everyone the same. Relatedly, assigning group grades for collaborative assignments assumes that the groups are homogeneous, that everyone will have equal opportunities to contribute, and that their contributions will be valued equally. As Support-A pointed out, for immigrant teacher candidates, these assumptions obstruct instructor recognition of their vulnerability to exclusion in group assignment situations.

For the most part, the instructors aimed to support teacher candidates within the current contexts without proposing tangible ways that the contexts themselves might be changed to be more inclusive of all teacher candidates. Similarly, the role definitions enacted by the teacher candidates suggest the influence of assimilationist ideology as they seemed most driven to become part of the system and they didn't express interest in changing it. While on one hand they wanted to be acknowledged as having unique needs and histories, on

the other hand, they did not want to be singled out as different. As Instructor-A observed, teacher candidates "don't want to look like [they]'re different from the culture that's there."

That the teacher candidates in this study did not perceive a disconnect between educational rhetoric related to multiculturalism and the discouraging responses they experienced in some of their field placements suggests that the initial teacher education curriculum did not adequately equip them to critique multiculturalism as an ideology. Instructor-A and the student support staff in this study often referenced anti-racism discourses when they identified racism and other forms of prejudice as part of the experiences of teacher candidates but it appears that their critical stance was not shared with the teacher candidates. To these initial teacher education program staff, superficial representation and celebration of diversity promoted through a multicultural lens do not address or change societal inequality and injustice and they often, to the contrary, mask the very existence of social discrimination.

> Sometimes teacher candidates who are hired in schools or hired or inserted into staffing are inserted for folks to be able to say we've got a diverse teaching body, or we've got a diverse teacher candidate body but are their voices really listened to when they say here are some things you need to take a look at from our point of view? (Support-E)

As was discussed in Chapter 2, those who are marginalized are often persuaded by assimilationist ideologies and consider it not only in their best interest to assimilate within dominant cultures, but they also come to see it as their responsibility. By embracing what they regarded as hopeful aspects of multiculturalist discourse, the teacher candidates did not

critique imbalanced discriminatory power in society and they framed the benefits of their work in schools as representational rather than emancipatory.

The programs provided by the student support staff advanced UCU's commitment to equity by recognizing the unique needs of immigrant teacher candidates and by providing opportunities for them to engage with peers and empathetic advisors. The support they provided reflects the influence of collaborative relations of power and they justified their work by invoking multiculturalist and anti-racism discourses that emphasize the need for greater diversity within the teacher workforce, the significance of immigrant teachers as models that empower students from diverse backgrounds, and the opportunity for shared learning.

The data from this study suggest that both assimilationist and multiculturalist ideologies are at play in schools and at the faculty of education in the role definitions of teacher candidates, instructors, and mentor teachers and in the educational structures that frame the program. Multiculturalist and anti-racism ideologies appear to influence the work of the student support staff and Instructor-A. As discussed in Chapter 2, other responses to counter ideologies of assimilation and multiculturalism in society and in schools have been advanced by academics and educators but these more critical and integrative stances were not invoked in relation to the experiences of the teacher candidates in this study, nor were they referenced in relation to teacher candidate perceptions of their experiences.

The student support staff talked about UCU's equity policy and the ways that it empowers them to support the diverse needs of teacher candidates. They also indicated that influence of the policy is not felt broadly throughout the organization. There are several dynamics that might contribute to this inconsistency in the implementation of the policy. As discussed in Chapter 2, one dynamic relates to the limitations of policies to generate

organizational change, especially in cases where strategies for policy implementation do not provide for relevant inclusive and educative dialogue among all actors within the organization. The influence of the equity policy at UCU appears typical of most policy initiatives in that the aims of the policy are enacted by a small group of actors who embrace and advance these intentions with varying consequence. Another dynamic at UCU that might contribute to differentiated awareness and application of the policy is the prevalence of assimilationist ideologies like those found in this study to influence curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation in the initial teacher education program. It's reasonable to consider that adherents of assimilationist ideology might consciously or unconsciously resist changes in role definitions and educational structures implicated by the equity policy.

**Relations of power, ideology and discourse in practice teaching contexts.** All of the teacher candidates in this study engaged with at least one mentor teacher who fostered collaborative relations of power. These mentor teachers validated and encouraged the teacher candidates as members of the teaching profession and had a significantly positive impact on their self-confidence and optimism as developing teachers. While interactions with collaborative mentor teachers were described favourably, these relationships in the field were made even more significant in relation to the difficulties the teacher candidates experienced with mentor teachers who exercised hegemonic relations of power. In practice teaching contexts where mentor teachers considered some immigrant teachers unacceptable for induction to the teaching profession, the influence of assimilationist ideology eroded the confidence of the teacher candidates and prompted them to question their legitimacy as teachers in Canada.

One way that hegemonic relations of power came into play was in the complex responses constructed by instructors and mentor teachers relative to the issue of English

language proficiency. Their emphasis on perceived linguistic deficits of the teacher candidates who are English language learners negated any consideration for the ways that their linguistic diversity might support the learning of immigrant students.

In practice teaching contexts, the teacher candidates also felt the influence of assimilationist discourses related to what it means to be a Canadian and they perceived that being recognized as a "real Canadian" correlates positively with the degree of legitimacy afforded to teacher candidates. To counter this phenomenon, Support-C argued the need for a strong vision of the nation that reframes citizenship discourses around an ideology of Canada as a nation built by immigrants that serves as a model of diversity for the rest of the world.

Discourses regarding familiarity with the culture of teaching and learning in Canadian schools are complex. On one hand, the teacher candidates described a lack of confidence in their work as teachers in the practicum context because they were concerned that they might unknowingly make mistakes. On the other hand, as much as the teacher candidates may have lacked confidence regarding the context and culture of teaching and learning in Canada, the responses that most of the teacher candidates received in the field from mentor teachers who enacted hegemonic relations of power did not assuage these anxieties. "Difference as deficit" discourses at play in these practicum relationships cloaked responsibility mentor teachers might have felt to alleviate the anxieties of teacher candidates. Seen through a discursive difference as deficit lens, the phenomenon of familiarity with teaching and learning in Canadian schools becomes a palpable source of anxiety for teacher candidates who have themselves bought into the discourse, and it becomes a mask of rationality for mentor teachers, faculty practicum advisors, and other gatekeepers who question the suitability of immigrants as teachers in Canada.

To the student support services staff and Instructors-A and -E, hegemonic responses to difference experienced by immigrant teacher candidates are often driven by racism and other forms of prejudice. They suggested that people who are perceived as different, as in the case of immigrant teacher candidates, are often considered "not as good as we are, or not good enough, or only good for certain things" (Support-E). These study participants indicated that "racism is alive and well in our city and in our schools" (Instructor-A) and that work needs to be done to develop the capacity of mentor teachers to support UCU's commitment to equity and diversity. For these reasons, these respondents advocated for program flexibility to enable teacher candidates to be reassigned to more supportive mentor teachers during practicum. Additionally, they advocated for the intentional placement of immigrant teacher candidates until such time that UCU could have greater confidence that random assignment would result in association with a mentor teacher committed to supporting the development of all teacher candidates.

Tensions related to evaluation within the practicum-based regimes of competence fostered potential consequences for the teacher candidates that were both psychological and economic. Subjecting the teacher candidates to such significant relations of power made them vulnerable to the ideological stances of individual mentor teachers who were empowered to enact the authority of the profession in determining the legitimacy of the teacher candidates.

In spite of the challenges they faced in discouraging and exclusionary field placements, all of the teacher candidates in this study (with the exception of David who made arrangements to teach in China), felt optimistic about their work as teachers in Canada and expressed belief that they had much to offer the education system. Bolstered by multiculturalist discourses in education and positive engagement with collaborative relations

of power in practice teaching contexts, the teacher candidates believed that they would, as teachers, contribute significantly to both the education and settlement of Canada's many immigrant families.

# Chapter Eight: Summary and Implications

## Introduction

This study examined responses to difference expressed through regimes of competence associated with an initial teacher education (ITE) program in Canada. Conducted during the months of July and August, 2006 at a university in one of Canada's most diverse urban centres, this research was informed by data collected through pre-interview questionnaires (Appendix E) and semi-structured interactive interviews (Appendix F) with eight immigrant teacher candidates who graduated from an initial teacher education (ITE) program in June of 2006. Data were also collected through interviews with five student support staff (Appendix G) and four program instructors (Appendix H).

During the interviews, the teacher candidates were asked to describe the challenges and supports they experienced during their participation in the program. They were also asked to talk about the ways that other teacher candidates, ITE program staff, and mentor teachers responded to them in various contexts. Additionally, the teacher candidates were asked to describe any influences related to race, class, gender, language and other forms of difference that they experienced or perceived in the program. During the interviews with the ITE program staff, these participants were asked to summarize their role in the program and to describe their perceptions of issues significant to the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates, including any impacts related to race, class, gender, language and other forms of difference. The ITE program staff were also asked to talk about policies or other factors that support their work with immigrant teacher candidates and to discuss what more can be done to improve or enhance assistance to this group of teacher candidates. Finally, this group of respondents was asked to describe what they perceive as benefits to supporting immigrant

teacher candidates at UCU. The audio-recorded interviews ranged in duration from 45 to 90 minutes and the tapes were transcribed by the principle researcher.

In this final chapter, I summarize the major findings of the research by formulating responses to the research questions developed in Chapter 1. Additionally, I discuss implications for integrative critical theory as it relates to the study of immigrant teacher candidates; for role definitions and educational structures (i.e., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation) within the university and practice teaching contexts; and for future research. I conclude the thesis by describing ways that responses to difference are influenced by relations of power that limit or support immigrant teacher candidate participation in an initial teacher education program.

**Summary of Major Findings**

This study was framed by an integrative critical stance that considers responses to difference to be influenced by hegemonic to collaborative relations of power that generate and sustain ideologies and discourses expressed within regimes of competence that enact role definitions and educational structures (e.g., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation). The following questions were developed to guide the analysis and discussion of the data:

1. a) What responses to difference do racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates encounter during their participation in an initial teacher education (ITE) program?

   b) How do these responses influence their participation in the academic university-based components of the initial teacher education program?

   c) How do these responses influence their participation in school-based practice teaching components of the program?

2. a) How do ITE program staff perceive and understand the responses to difference experienced by racial and linguistic minority immigrant teacher candidates?

b) How do these perceptions and understandings influence the work they do?

The narratives of the teacher candidates and the perceptions of the ITE program staff indicate that the teacher candidates experienced varied responses to difference during their participation in the initial teacher education program. Through engagement with several different localized regimes of competence in the university and practice teaching contexts, they navigated complex relations of power ranging from hegemonic to collaborative that supported or challenged their participation in the program. In hegemonic relationships, role definitions and educational structures constructed and enacted through regimes of competence reflected assimilationist ideologies that prompted the teacher candidates to feel deficient, excluded, and illegitimate as teachers in Canada. In collaborative relationships, multiculturalist ideology fostered role definitions and educational structures that validated, encouraged and supported the teacher candidates as legitimate prospective members of the teaching profession.

Influences of both hegemony and collaboration were found in the university and practice teaching contexts where individuals enacted assimilationist or multiculturalist ideologies. The only uniformity of stance within a group of respondents was expressed by the student support staff who consistently described ways that their work to support teacher candidates is framed by collaborative relations of power. In practice teaching contexts, while all of the teacher candidates in this study engaged in at least one collaborative relationship with a mentor teacher, six of the eight teacher candidates (i.e., all of the linguistic minority teacher candidates in this study) described hegemonic power relations with mentor teachers that were significantly invalidating, discouraging, and damaging to their self-confidence.

Within the university and practice teaching contexts, responses to difference were expressed and experienced through role definitions and educational structures (i.e., policy, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation). In the university context, instances of hegemonic power relations influenced program pedagogy and interactions in initial teacher education courses where some of the teacher candidates described feeling excluded as English language learners. This sense of exclusion was both self-imposed through their own feelings of relative ineptitude, and externally generated by interaction with English-speaking peers and instructors. For example, some teacher candidate colleagues resented or limited the participation of immigrant teacher candidates in group assignments, and some who shared similar cultural histories distanced themselves from newcomers by rejecting their relationship with their heritage culture and by ridiculing the "accent" of peers who were more recent immigrants. Some of the teacher candidates and student support staff indicated that feelings of exclusion were also fostered by instructors who did not validate the prior experiences of immigrant teacher candidates, recognize their linguistic strengths, or demonstrate awareness of the challenges they face in the program.

On a more positive note, for the most part, the teacher candidates in this study felt supported and encouraged by predominantly collaborative relations of power within the university setting and they indicated that the opportunity to participate in structural initiatives specifically developed for internationally educated teacher candidates, and to receive support and encouragement from student support staff contributed to their persistence and successful completion of the program. Although the data point to areas for further organizational development through policy implementation and professional development related to inclusive and critical pedagogy that will be further discussed in this chapter, the work that the organization does to support immigrant teacher candidates had a profoundly significant

influence on the teacher candidates in this study. Such positive responses to difference experienced within the university context projected a sense that the local regime of competence considered these teacher candidates to be legitimate potential members of the teaching profession who warranted support.

Responses to difference experienced by the teacher candidates in practice teaching schools varied considerably from one classroom and mentor teacher to another. Hegemonic power relations with mentor teachers exerted pressure on the teacher candidates to assimilate within existing communities of practice. Representing a localized regime of competence, mentor teachers in these contexts appear to have measured the legitimacy of teacher candidates against a standard that favours a conception of "real teachers" and "real Canadians" as predominantly Euro-white native-English speakers. The underlying aim of education expressed through this measure of teaching competency is to contribute to the development of a cohesive society in which immigrant and minority groups are absorbed into the culture established by dominant groups. Driven by an assimilationist ideology, the question posed within such hegemonic relations of power is, 'Is this person Canadian enough to teach Canadian students?' Criticizing and correcting teacher candidates' pronunciation of English in front of students, commenting that English language learners should not be teachers in Canada, withholding teaching resources, and failing to facilitate the inclusion of teacher candidates as legitimate prospective colleagues in the broader school-based community of practice are examples of mentor teacher responses to difference that reflected hegemonic relations of power.

When they encountered hegemonic relations of power in practice teaching schools, the teacher candidates felt excluded from the community of practice, questioned their own legitimacy as teachers in Canada, and suffered a significant loss of confidence. Some of the

teacher candidates sought organizational support to terminate their placement in such marginalizing contexts while others persisted by resigning themselves to their subordinate position in the relationship, by accepting the public criticisms made by mentor teachers who corrected their pronunciation and grammar in front of students, and by doing whatever they were asked to do in the school without suggesting alternative approaches or strategies. Lanying, one of the teacher candidates in this study, stated that immigrant teacher candidates who, like her, faced challenging responses yet persisted to complete the initial teacher education program, referred to themselves as "survivors." In contrast, when the teacher candidates encountered collaborative power relations with mentor teachers they felt supported and encouraged in their efforts to develop their skills and identities as teachers in Canada. In these more multiculturalist contexts, the teacher candidates felt engaged as colleagues in their relationship with the mentor teacher and the community of practice.

The teacher candidates in this study articulated an understanding of power as it related to their feelings of powerlessness in their relationships with mentor teachers and to their feelings of disadvantage in the teaching employment market. In the practice teaching context, the teacher candidates applied strategies for navigating hegemonic relations of power with mentor teachers that ranged from self-effacing acceptance of harsh criticism that called into question their legitimacy as teachers in Canada, to self-withdrawal from the placement. Strategies the teacher candidates described as measures to counter disadvantages in the employment market emphasized capitalizing on their linguistic, cultural, and academic strengths. Several of the teacher candidates in this study did not take issue with the hegemonic power relations they navigated in practice teaching schools. Instead, they endorsed assimilationist attitudes by describing the challenges faced by immigrant teacher candidates as personal deficits related to linguistic and cultural proficiency that are an

individual's responsibility to change without critiquing the system or the organization in ways that they considered might compromise the maintenance of high standards.

Student support staff at UCU articulated a deep understanding of the ways that power relations influence the participation of immigrant teacher candidates in the initial teacher education program. They described aspects of educational structures in the academic program and in practice teaching school contexts where hegemonic relations of power infantilize immigrant teacher candidates by imposing a deficit perspective of difference, undervaluing the prior knowledge and experience of immigrants, and minimizing opportunities for shared learning through engaged dialogue. With regard to the influence of more collaborative relations of power, student support staff described ways that organizational and provincial policies empower them to work as a community of practice to anticipate and respond to the needs of teacher candidates, and they suggested the need for the aims, implications, and possibilities of these policies to be understood and advanced more saliently throughout the initial teacher education program, its partnership schools, and the organization. Student support staff described collaborative relations of power as essential to the inclusion of immigrant teacher candidates in the teaching profession and described ways that collaborative relationships value and validate the past experiences of immigrants and their linguistic strengths, and foster the development of self-confidence and competency as teachers in Canada.

The student support staff in this study defined their roles as advocates at UCU and they described ways that their understanding of the challenges faced by immigrant teacher candidates fostered the development of specialized support programs. Programs initiated and delivered by student support staff include an opportunity for unevaluated classroom observation and intensive mentoring during the first practicum session, workshops and an

elective course to provide opportunities for internationally educated teacher candidates to develop their understanding of teaching and learning in Canada, and one-to-one advising through the academic support centre with emphasis on developing written and verbal communication skills.

Initial teacher education instructors in this study articulated an understanding and awareness of imbalanced power relations in practice teaching schools. Two instructors expressed concern that prejudice and racism motivate some mentor teachers to discourage immigrant teacher candidates, limit their access to resources, and exclude them from the school-based community of practice. The other two instructors described such conditions of imbalanced power as unavoidable realities in school contexts where individual mentor teachers are likely to express different perspectives regarding the performance of teacher candidates. All of the instructors made reference to the power mentor teachers hold in the evaluation of teacher candidates as their evaluation is significant not only to the ability of teacher candidates to graduate from the ITE program, but it also influences their entry to the teacher workforce as all teaching evaluation reports are required as part of the employment application process to local school districts.

The instructors defined their roles in two predominantly different ways. Two of the instructors indicated that their role is to support all teacher candidates and that they perform this role by treating all in the same manner. They did not indicate that they perceive or take into consideration unique needs of immigrant teacher candidates in the work that they do. The other two instructors indicated that they recognize immigrant teacher candidates as having unique needs and that some of those needs originate with racist and other prejudicial responses that these teacher candidates might encounter in their relationships with mentor teachers in practice teaching contexts. These instructors indicated that they are starting to

think about ways that they can validate the contributions of immigrant teacher candidates, create opportunities for shared learning, and build the capacity of mentor teachers to support and advance UCU's commitment to equity and the diversification of the teaching profession.

**Implications for Integrative Critical Theory**

As was discussed in Chapter 2, the original framework that I developed to examine the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates in an initial teacher education program identified what I categorized as systemic factors (e.g., policies related to access to educational opportunities, funding for higher education, ideologies of merit, and responses to diversity), institutional factors (e.g., admissions policies, support for students, and recruitment to increase the diversity of students, faculty and staff), and individual factors (e.g., persistence, income, family history, language proficiency, and academic skills) significant to the experiences of "non-traditional" students in higher education (e.g., Bird, 1997; Bowl, 2001, 2003; CMEC, 1999; Reay, Ball, & David, 2002; Redovich, 2002; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Zamel, 1995). With its emphasis on numerous and largely discreet variables, this framework proved inadequate for the analysis and discussion of the themes that emerged from the data. In particular, the original framework lacked sufficient emphasis on the ways that responses to difference relate to the legitimacy afforded to teacher candidates as prospective members of the teaching profession and it failed to consider how this legitimacy is determined.

To frame and understand the data in a way that would better emphasize the dominant themes that emerged, I developed an integrative critical framework that converged theory related to critical anti-racism (Dei, 2000), relations of power (e.g., Cummins, 1996; Tierney, 1991; Trifonas, 2003), critical organizational theory (e.g., Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Mills et al., 2005), and regimes of competence in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991;

Wenger, 1998). While previous research identified numerous challenges and supports experienced by diverse student groups in higher education, by providing for an examination of these challenges and supports as responses to difference, the revised framework proved helpful in structuring a more robust analysis of dynamics affecting the experiences of the teacher candidates. In particular, recognizing the influence of regimes of competence deepened my understanding of the ways that relations of power influence role definitions and educational structures that prompted the teacher candidates to feel excluded as non-legitimate outsiders or included as legitimate potential insiders of the teaching profession.

In relation to the revised framework, this study found that responses to difference experienced by immigrant teacher candidates in a Canadian initial teacher education program were manifestations of power relations. Ranging from hegemonic to collaborative, relations of power were found to foster ideologies and discourses that influenced the ways that localized regimes of competence in the university and practice teaching contexts determined the legitimacy of the teacher candidates. The role definitions and educational structures developed and enacted within regimes of competence in response to the legitimacy they extended to teacher candidates served to challenge or support their development as prospective teachers.

**Implications for Role Definitions in Regimes of Competence**

The ways educators interact with students reflect the ways that they define their roles in terms of their mindset, expectations, and attitudes. Role definitions frame educators' views of students' possibilities and the messages they communicate to students that convey an assessment of their potential contributions to society (Cummins, 1996). Varied role definitions were found within and across the participant groups in this study. The greatest consistency was expressed within the student support staff group where the respondents

described a uniform commitment to collaborative relations of power enacted through their advocacy and professional development roles. The teacher candidates also demonstrated consistency as a group in that they described similar characteristics of persistence and willingness to work hard to develop their knowledge and skills as teachers. While most of the teacher candidates enacted a conciliatory and subordinated stance in their role, one teacher candidate demonstrated self-advocacy and refused to remain in what he described as a psychologically damaging relationship with a mentor teacher.

The most significant variation surfaced among the instructors and mentor teachers. Within the instructor group, two study participants described ways that they adjust their role to support the needs of immigrant teacher candidates while the other two instructors indicated that they treat all teacher candidates the same. Inferred from the data provided by the teacher candidates and ITE program staff, some mentor teachers were perceived to have enacted a hegemonic gate-keeping role that limited the opportunities for teacher candidates that they deemed unsuitable for the profession. However, other mentor teachers were described in terms that reflected a more collaborative collegial stance and a commitment to supporting the development of teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds.

The findings of this study suggest the need for professional development to foster greater consistency in terms of mindset, expectations, attitudes, and capacity to support the diverse needs of teacher candidates within the initial teacher education program at UCU. In the university context, student support staff described UCU as an organization that had recently articulated its commitment to equity through the passing of its equity policy and they indicated that work needs to be done to advance the policy's influence more widely. For example, two of the instructors indicated interest in playing more supportive roles. They expressed aims to build the capacity of mentor teachers to encourage the development of

teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds, and to validate the prior experiences and perspectives of immigrant teacher candidates in their courses, but they stated that they did not know how to play out these roles. The teacher candidates in this study identified student support staff, collegial mentor teachers, and several empathetic and encouraging instructors as having a significantly positive influence on their participation in the initial teacher education program. Two of the teacher candidates, however, suggested that supporting immigrant teacher candidates should not be limited to the work of individuals playing specialized roles within the program but should be incorporated in the role definitions of all ITE program staff.

In practice teaching contexts, defining the role of mentor teachers as collaborative rather than hegemonic would foster more positive relationships with teacher candidates. By building the mindset and capacity of mentor teachers to support the diverse needs of teacher candidates, ITE program staff at UCU might have more confidence that the random assignment of immigrant teacher candidates to mentor teachers would result in a supportive learning experience. Inherent to enacting a collaborative role as a mentor teacher is a willingness to consider multiple approaches to teaching. As Support-C stated, “Sometimes what I hear is that the [mentor teacher] wants to make that person become the best possible teacher in the way the [mentor teacher] teaches which is not being open to difference.” Mentor teachers who are open to considering other ways of approaching the work of the teaching profession are more apt, in acting as a localized regime of competence, to consider immigrant teacher candidates as legitimate peripheral members of the teaching profession. Conversely, mentor teachers who define the work of teachers narrowly as mirror images of what is already occurring in the classroom are more apt to assess immigrant teacher

candidates as outsiders and resist affording them the opportunity to engage in practical learning needed for advancement toward full recognition as teachers.

The role mentor teachers enact is significant to the experiences of teacher candidates. As will be further discussed in the next section of this chapter, their influence is made even more consequential by a component of their role that gives them the independent authority to evaluate teacher candidates. Greater consistency to provide assurance that mentor teachers define their role in a way that advances UCU's commitment to equity would have benefitted the teacher candidates in this study.

Finally, this study found that the roles of teacher candidates within the initial teacher education program are largely enacted as passive and subordinate. The teacher candidates lacked necessary self-confidence and assertiveness to play a collaborative role in the university and practice teaching contexts, and they appeared ill-equipped to respond to hegemonic relations of power. As was suggested by the student support staff, teacher candidates would benefit from opportunities to engage in discussions related to their role as teacher candidates in order to develop a sense of their agency in the program and to consider strategies for navigating power relations within academic and professional contexts.

**Implications for Educational Structures in Regimes of Competence**

In this section, implications for educational structures (i.e., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation) in the university and school-based practice teaching contexts are discussed as shared responsibilities across organizational communities of practice. In keeping with inclusive theory (e.g., Ryan, 2006), and in response to concerns expressed by student support staff that work to advance the university's commitment to creating an inclusive environment has been taken up by some individuals but that the commitment and work needs to be more widely distributed throughout the

organization, I do not direct implications for structural change to particular regimes of competence. Rather, I propose that these implications be explored, at the initiative of ITE program staff, through educative dialogical processes across the organization (including teacher candidates, instructors, student support staff, and UCU leadership) and with partnership schools in order that they might be taken up through shared commitment to collaboration, equity and inclusive practice.

**Policy.** Student support staff in this study described ways policies aiming to address social inequities and create inclusive educational communities advance their work to support immigrant teacher candidates. They argued, however, that these same policies do not have similar observable influence throughout the organization. As Support-C stated,

> Somehow we need to bring [the equity policy] to life and make sure the messages embedded in that document are spread far, wide, and deep. . . . [The policy's] not visible. You don't feel it. It's not tangible. It's not there. It's not in our pores. People don't know about it. They don't feel it. They don't work with it. They don't make it the centre of what they do. We're still at the stage where equity is seen as the work of certain people and not of others.

Given the complex power relations encountered by immigrant teacher candidates in this study, and the ways that their legitimacy as teachers in some contexts was measured against assimilationist constructions of "real teachers" as necessarily "real Canadians," educational policies intending to foster authentic inclusion strike to the heart of deeply held notions of nationhood, citizenship, and the aims of schooling. Contemplating this policy challenge, and the observations of student support staff that UCU's equity policy informs, guides, and supports the work of "certain people" but not others in the organization, suggests the need for

an examination of strategies to promote inclusive and educative policy processes to advance organizational learning and to build the capacity of all stakeholders to reflect policy intentions in their actions.

**Curriculum.** The limited responses provided by the teacher candidates and instructors when asked to describe the ways that social constructions of race, gender, class, language, religion and other axes of difference influence the participation of immigrant teacher candidates in the initial teacher education program suggest an absence of critical discussions of difference, including linguistic difference, in the ITE program at UCU.

As was mentioned earlier with regard to role definitions, the teacher candidates in this study appeared insufficiently equipped to respond to tensions manifested through hegemonic relations of power. Input from student support staff suggests a need for initial teacher education programs to place greater emphasis on socially constructed power, privilege and inequity to provide opportunities for instructors and teacher candidates to critically examine ways that relations of power influence social identities, exert pressure on school cultures, and foster experiences of inclusion or exclusion. Critical consciousness among educators is essential to the development of an inclusive society. As Ryan (2006) states,

> [i[deally, those who acquire this critical consciousness will possess both the skills and the desire to engage in constructive criticism. They will also know enough to direct their critique at a very particular object – their social circumstances. (pp. 113-114)

The course designed specifically for internationally educated teacher candidates was described by the teacher candidates in this study as particularly helpful on several levels. In terms of curriculum, the course provided opportunities for immigrant teacher candidates to develop their understanding of Canadian school contexts, norms, and practices. On a more social level, the course provided an opportunity for the teacher candidates to network on a

regular basis and to share their questions, concerns, challenges, and triumphs. The course instructor distinguished herself to the teacher candidates as a unique instructor who delivered a program to meet their specific needs and in so doing provided a context for mutual support, encouragement, and learning. The responses of the teacher candidates who participated in this course suggest that providing such a course as an elective for internationally educated teacher candidates indicates organizational awareness of the challenges they face in the program and provides a level of support that validates their participation in initial teacher education.

**Pedagogy.** Student support staff and some instructors described the need for all teacher candidates, including immigrant teacher candidates, to be engaged and validated through critical pedagogy in an initial teacher education program. Support-A, for example, described critical pedagogy as a process that would "promote and respect diversity and intercultural communication at various levels and validate a range of diverse international experiences." Described as both a philosophy and a methodology, critical pedagogy aims to achieve "educational quality, access, and excellence, and social equity, freedom, and justice for culturally diverse groups" (Gay, 1995, p. 156) generated by the "empowerment of subordinate groups through shared understanding of the social construction of reality" (Livingstone, 1987, p. 8). Engaged dialogue that critiques the ways that socially constructed relations of power, and the ideologies and discourses that sustain these relations of power, create and reproduce discriminatory social relations on the basis of such axes of difference as race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and ability is at the centre of critical pedagogy.

While the student support staff in this study articulated a deep critical understanding of socially constructed difference, marginalization, and prejudice, the instructors and teacher

candidates did not express the same level of awareness. Opportunities to engage in critical dialogue would enable all initial teacher education actors to recognize and examine the roles they play, as members of dominant and subordinate groups, to construct social reality. Through collective reflection, they would also develop the capacity to recognize their own transformative agency (Livingstone, 1987) and to expand ideological and discursive conceptions of Canadians to include immigrants who contribute cultural and linguistic knowledge that expands the world views of all Canadians through educative engagement with "other ways of knowing" (Cho, 2010, p. 18).

As a pedagogical stance, critical pedagogy

> can help us a) relate to students' experiences and [learn] how to take their needs and problems as the starting point; and, b) instruct us in how to re-educate teachers so that in their classroom practices they may, in turn, educate their own students in the language of possibility and critique, and empower those students so that with their own efforts they might help to bring about a more democratic and just society for everyone. (Rezai-Rashti, 1995, p. 17)

By developing among instructors and teacher candidates a deeper and more critical understanding of socially constructed power relations and their agency to maintain or reconstruct relations of power, this understanding can be brought forward into practice teaching schools once ITE instructors and teacher candidates have developed a language of possibility and strategies for challenging inequity and oppression.

**Programs.** Several programmatic implications are suggested by the findings of this study. In this section, I discuss implications related to programs and workshops provided by student support staff, and initiatives for educative dialogue between agents of the initial teacher education program and agents associated with practice teaching schools.

Data from this study endorse the continuation of programs and workshops provided by student support services. The immigrant teacher candidates indicated that the workshops developed specifically for internationally educated teacher candidates were helpful in developing their understanding of educational structures and school cultures in Canada. Additionally, the workshops provided opportunities for the teacher candidates to network with peers who were experiencing similar challenges as English language learners and who also faced a range of power relations in practice teaching schools. Such interactions with fellow immigrant teacher candidates were described as encouraging and reassuring.

Another initiative of student support services, the opportunity for unevaluated observation during the first practice teaching block, was particularly significant for several immigrant teacher candidates in this study who indicated that had it not been for the opportunity to engage in an unevaluated first practicum, and to receive one-to-one advising and encouragement from student support staff, they might have terminated their participation in the program. The findings from this study suggest that this program should continue to be offered as an opportunity for immigrant teacher candidates to build their knowledge of classroom practices in Canada and to build confidence in their teaching abilities.

Hargreaves and Jacka (1995) suggest that faculties of education should direct efforts for educational reform more broadly beyond their relatively narrow focus on initial teacher education. The findings from this study endorse their suggestion by shedding light on the disparate responses and relations of power that immigrant teachers navigate in practice teaching schools. The experiences and insights of the study participants emphasize the importance of programs to build collaborative relationships with associated practice teaching schools in order to foster a shared commitment to inclusion and a shared recognition of immigrant teacher candidates as legitimate peripheral members of the teaching profession.

Ryan's (2006) framework for inclusive leadership is instructive for faculties of education interested in working with partnership schools and school districts to create inclusive learning contexts. With this outcome in mind, Ryan recommends the involvement of

> school and community stakeholder groups in formulating objectives for schooling that supports all students. An important element in sponsoring successful implementation of inclusive practices is to involve key stakeholders in initial discussions; their support will be crucial to the outcome. They must have the opportunity to air their concerns and to be assured that their worst fears will not come true. It is also useful to involve as many community groups as possible. These may include professional associations, businesses, heritage and religious groups, and community-oriented agencies. (p. 107)

Initiatives to facilitate educative dialogue and shared learning include conferences, ongoing workshops, community forums, discussion of research and videotapes of inclusive schools, and visits to inclusive schools (Ryan, 2006).

**Language of instruction.** Cummins (2003), an advocate for multilingual instruction in schools, argues that educational structures that frame linguistic diversity as problematic and as an impediment to academic achievement restrict students from opportunities to build upon their first language and deny them the opportunity to develop identities in schools that include an appreciation of their linguistic strengths. English as the primary language of instruction, and a deficit perspective of linguistic diversity exerted significant pressure on the immigrant teacher candidates in this study, and in other similar Canadian studies (e.g., Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Cho, 2010; Schmidt & Block, 2010), to deny their linguistic and cultural strengths and histories, and to question their legitimacy as teachers in Canada.

Based on the findings from this study, and research asserting that multilingual instruction contributes to the academic development of English language learners (e.g.,

Cummins, 1996, 2003; Friedenberg, 2002), faculties of education and school districts are encouraged to consider the "linguistic capital" (Cho, 2010; Yosso, 2005) of immigrant students and immigrant teachers. By recognizing the linguistic capital of prospective teachers, school districts would have the opportunity to better support linguistically diverse student populations through the validation and provision multilingual instruction.

In the university context where English is the language of instruction, findings from this study suggest a need for greater understanding of the ways that immigrant teacher candidates who are English language learners feel inferior and incompetent in their ability to contribute to class discussions. Instructors, like the instructor of the elective course for internationally educated teacher candidates, who understand the needs of immigrant teacher candidates and make accommodations to support their learning (e.g., using a slower rate of speech), help these teacher candidates feel that their participation in the program is valued. Additionally, given that immigrant teacher candidates can feel excluded from group projects, instructors might consider structuring group assignments in such a way that group members will value the contributions of immigrant teacher candidates.

**Evaluation.** The findings of this study suggest the need for significant consideration of practices related to the evaulation of teacher candidates in their practice teaching schools. The instances of hegemonic relations of power that almost all of the immigrant teacher candidates in this study experienced in at least one practice teaching context shed light on the ways that the power of mentor teachers to evaluate the performance of teacher candidates makes them vulnerable to prejudice driven by assimilationist ideology. Mentor teacher evaluation of teacher candidates is consequential not only to the successful completion of the program, but also to the candidates' application for employment as a teacher. While the conceptual framework developed to guide this study describes ways that agents representing

regimes of competence exert significant influence over a potential member's acceptance into a professional community, institutionalizing the power of evaluation as the independent discretion of mentor teachers accentuates this power and the vulnerability of teacher candidates.

The relationships that teacher candidates have with mentor teachers are already fraught with tension as mentor teachers frequently critique the performance of teacher candidates in order to provide feedback intended to promote improved practice. For the immigrant teacher candidates in this study who felt excluded and invalidated by their relationship with a mentor teacher, their development as teachers was impeded by their depleted self-confidence, fear of harsh criticism, and restricted access to resources.

The data from this study suggest that the evaluative power of mentor teachers heightens the necessity of collaboration between faculties of education and partnership schools. If mentor teachers continue to exercise power in the high stakes evaluation of teacher candidates, educative dialogue between faculties of education and partnership schools is essential to promote commitment to authentic inclusion by furthering their understanding of socially constructed power relations, recognizing instances of oppression, and cultivating strategies to reconstruct values and beliefs underlying imbalanced power relations. Additionally, in keeping with inclusive practice, the findings from this study suggest the need for the development of a strategy for a more collaborative evaluation process that incorporates input from a variety of sources including ITE faculty, teacher candidates and mentor teachers. Distributing the power of evaluation to include insight from a variety of perspectives would foster a more positive learning environment for teacher candidates and a more robust assessment of their strengths and areas for growth.

**Limitations of the Study**

As with any study of one organization that involves a relatively small number of participants (i.e., 8 immigrant teacher candidates, 4 initial teacher education program instructors, and 5 student support staff), there are limitations that affect the generalizability of the findings. The experiences, observations and comments of the participants in this study may differ from those of their counterparts at UCU, in other Canadian initial teacher education programs, or in programs outside of Canada. Additionally, the participants in this study, particularly those from the immigrant teacher candidate and instructor groups, represent only a small sample of these groups in the larger organization. Other immigrant teacher candidates and other instructors may have provided counter-narratives that might have resulted in different findings. Another limitation is the exclusion of input from non-immigrant teacher candidates. Consideration of the experiences of these teacher candidates might have prompted different findings. Finally, mentor teachers were not included as informants in this study and the accounts of the relationships they formed with immigrant teacher candidates are expressed from the viewpoints of the teacher candidates, instructors and student support staff without the benefit of the mentor teachers' perspectives. Input from this group might have directed me toward different findings.

Other critical researchers have pointed to limitations that are inherent in the research process. For example, Tierney (1991a) argues that "knowledge is not objective, and the researcher's interpretations, however carefully made, are provisional and subjective" (p. 7). I have considered the data in this study through the integrative critical lens presented in Chapter 2. Researchers applying a different lens may emphasize the significance of different findings.

In keeping with the understanding that knowledge is not objective, I recognize that the information provided to me by the informants, and my capacity to understand racism and marginalization are limited by my perspective as a white, middle-class woman engaged in doctoral studies. As Bowl (2003) explains,

> The stories we tell and are told will vary according to the assumptions made about the listener and her understanding of, for example, racism. I can only understand racism from a white perspective, not from the perspective of someone who has experienced it from day to day. (p. 9)

Although I believe that the participants in this study spoke freely about their experiences, they may have responded differently if they had considered me as someone who has a personal understanding of their circumstances. My interpretation of the experiences of the teacher candidates and the ways that they were influenced by relations of power in regimes of competence might differ from an interpretation formed by someone who shares their experiences as immigrants, English language learners, and minoritized teacher candidates.

Despite these limitations, this study provides insight into responses to difference within an initial teacher education program as they are manifested through the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates and interpreted from my position as a white, middle-class woman researcher. Although situated within a single organization and informed by a comparatively small representation of teacher candidates and ITE program staff, when considered in relation to the research discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, several similar themes emerge that support the theoretical and practical implications of this study. Other researchers in Canada have found that immigrant teachers (e.g., Bascia, 1996b; Bascia & Thiessen, 2000; Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Ontario College of Teachers, 2006b; Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009; Schmidt & Block, 2010) and immigrant teacher candidates (e.g., Cho, 2010; Faez, 2010; Myles, Cheng & Wang, 2006; Schmidt, 2010)

experience challenges in their induction to the teaching profession in Canada that are similar to those described by the participants in this study.

At a theoretical level, findings from previous studies explicitly point to hegemonic responses to cultural, racial and linguistic differences as sources of tension and marginalization for immigrant teacher candidates (e.g., Beynon et al., 2004; Cho, 2010; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Schmidt & Block, 2010). Relatedly, Ragnersdottir (2010) found that the legitimacy of immigrant teacher candidates in Iceland was measured in relation to dominant conceptions of nationhood and citizenship that equated their legitimacy as potential teachers with their perceived Icelandic-ness. Similarly, a racial minority teacher in a study by Bascia (1996b) argued the need to avoid drawing attention to social differences in order to survive and achieve in schools and in society.

At a practical level, other researchers have described similar ways that initial teacher education programs might modify curriculum, pedagogy and support services to better support the needs of racial and linguistic minority teacher candidates (e.g., Beynon et al., 2004; Cho, 2010; Faez, 2010; Gambhir, 2004; Ragnersdottir, 2010; Schmidt, 2010). Findings from this study, considered within the growing body of research describing challenges that minoritized teacher candidates and teachers face in their efforts to be inducted into Canada's teacher workforce may substantiate and frame inquiry, discussion and initiatives in other organizations interested in examining their responses to diversity and their progress toward fostering authentic inclusion.

## Directions for Further Research

While this study provides insight into the ways relations of power influence the experiences of immigrant teacher candidates participating in an initial teacher education

program, there are several remaining aspects of this phenomenon to explore in order to advance our understanding of the dynamics involved.

This study is limited by the exclusion of input from mentor teachers. When I developed my research plan, I was interested in examining the responses to difference experienced and perceived in the initial teacher education program and I underestimated the significance of the mentor teacher role. As was described earlier, the data from this study prompted me to revise my original framework in order to emphasize the influence of power relations. The ways that the study respondents described challenging and supportive relationships with mentor teachers were significant to my decision to revise the framework. Now that I have developed an integrative critical conceptual framework that adequately provides for an analysis of complex dynamics that influence responses to immigrant teacher candidates within regimes of competence, I'm better situated to explore these dynamics with mentor teachers. Whereas I neglected to explicitly ask the teacher candidates, instructors and student support staff in this study to discuss their understanding of power relations associated with communities of practice, a future line of inquiry would include this type of explicit questioning of mentor teachers. I would like to gain a better understanding of the ways that mentor teachers define their roles and perceive relations of power between teacher candidates and mentor teachers. I would also like to pursue an explicit inquiry into the connections that mentor teachers articulate between conceptions of "real teachers" and "real Canadians." Ideally, this study would apply a mixed methodology to gather data through surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews in several school districts across Canada.

Following a similar line of inquiry, another direction for further research would include the participation of parents and students to advance understanding of the dynamics that influence their perspectives of, and relationships with, immigrant teacher candidates. It

would also be interesting to investigate whether parents and students describe similar responses to experienced immigrant teachers. Additional questions to consider are: Is there a correlation between responses to immigrant teacher candidates or teachers and the diversity of the student population? Is there a relationship between responses to immigrant teacher candidates and the social histories of the existing members of the community of practice? Does the leadership of the principal have an effect on responses to difference?

Another direction for future research examines the perspectives of school administrators and their attitudes toward inclusive educational theory. I would like to ask a number of principals from practice teaching schools to describe their understanding of the relations of power between mentor teachers and teacher candidates, to describe what measures they have taken in their school and school community to foster inclusion, and to describe their responses to immigrant teacher candidates and immigrant teachers.

This study provides insight into the diversification of the teaching profession only through the inclusion of immigrant teachers and does not examine dynamics that discourage or encourage people from other minoritized groups in Canada (e.g. 2nd, 3rd, or 4th generation Canadians of colour) to pursue careers as teachers. A direction for further research would include the perspectives and experiences of non-immigrant teacher candidates of colour in order to examine whether race becomes a more prominent target of discrimination when English language proficiency is not considered an issue.

Yet another direction for future research would encompass an opportunity to study theory in practice. I would welcome the opportunity to engage an educational organization, be it a faculty of education or school, in an inclusive critical policy process whereby agents of the organization would engage in educative dialogue related to the organization's commitment to inclusion. The aim would be to promote shared knowledge and policy

construction. Following this early stage of policy development, I would then engage the group in a discussion to plan for a collaborative and dynamic process of policy implementation and ongoing review. At various stages of implementation, and over a longitudinal timeframe, I would like to study the outcomes of the process as measured by the perspectives of the organization's agents as to the degree to which the organization has become more inclusive as a result of the process.

**Concluding Remarks**

This thesis began with a discussion in Chapter 1 of Canada's social diversity and a growing emphasis in Canadian educational systems on diversifying the teacher workforce in order that it might better reflect the cultural, racial, religious, and linguistic diversity of Canada's student population. Despite efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, Canada's teachers continue to be predominantly white, middle-class, Euro-Christians who speak English as their first language (Bascia, 1996b; Cho, 2010). By examining responses to difference that challenged or supported immigrant teacher candidates in an initial teacher education program, I identified complex dynamics that discouraged or encouraged their efforts to become members of the teaching profession in Canada. In particular, I found that role definitions and educational structures (i.e., policies, curriculum, pedagogy, programs, language of instruction, and evaluation) were enacted as challenging or supportive relative to the legitimacy localized regimes of competence extended to these teacher candidates as prospective teachers in Canada. Hegemonic relations of power within some regimes of competence expressed assimilationist ideologies of "real teachers" and "real Canadians" that marginalized the immigrant teacher candidates while collaborative relations of power within other regimes of competence expressed multiculturalist ideologies that fostered collegial interactions and validated the contributions these teacher candidates could make as teachers.

While I have proposed implications of this study related to integrative critical theory, role definitions, and educational structures, the ways that powerful ideologies related to nationhood and citizenship influence responses to difference generated through regimes of competence make it imperative for educational organizations and their agents to exert concerted effort toward redefining what it means to be Canadian so as to include the capital of immigrants. Immigrants must be critical collaborators in this inclusive deconstructing and redefining process. As Bannerji (2000) writes,

> [T]he possibilities for constructing a radically different Canada emerge only from those who have been "othered" as the insider-outsiders of the nation. It is their standpoints which, oppositionally politicized, can take us beyond the confines of gender and race and enable us to challenge class through a critical and liberating vision. In their lives, politics, and work, the "others" hold the possibility of being able to expose the hollowness of the liberal state and to provide us with an understanding of both the refined and crude constructions of "white power" behind "Canada's" national imaginary. They serve to remind us of the Canada that *could* exist." (p. 81)

Although this work to reconstruct notions of Canadian nationhood and citizenship can and should take place in initial teacher education programs, Hargreaves and Jacka (1995) suggest that if faculties of education want to generate real educational reform, they should look beyond their immediate organizational interest in teacher preparation to the larger issues of teacher development and school development. Hargreaves and Jacka argue that

> [A]s long as new teachers entering their first positions have to confront conditions of physical isolation, teacher cultures of non-interference and individualism, absence of administrator or collegial support, and school staffs who are unreceptive to the new methods that beginning teachers can bring, then no amount of tinkering with teacher preparation is likely to work. . . . Perhaps a better beginning question behind teacher education reform would be "what unique and distinctive role can faculties of education play to help transform the conditions and cultures of schooling in general (and not just a few professional development schools in particular)?" – for these are the very cultures and conditions that currently defeat so many new teachers and the efforts of those who are trying to prepare them better. (p. 60)

Similarly, Levin and Riffel (2000) argue the need for educators to extend their reform efforts even further to reach beyond schools and universities to effect broader social change as:

> The strongest drivers of change in schools are changes in the larger social environment. In the long run, the nature of schooling and the work of teachers are far more powerfully affected by changes in families, in the economy, in law or in technology than they are by any number of curriculum revisions or school board policies. (p. 179)

As Support-C suggested, "if equity matters," and if UCU, other faculties of education, and local school districts are serious about diversifying the teacher workforce and about promoting the full social, economic, and political inclusion and participation of Canada's immigrants, then work needs to be done to advance a deeper understanding of multiculturalism that promotes a redefinition of Canadian identity. Certainly, redefining what it means to be Canadian is no simple task. As Ryan (2006) points out,

> [P]roponents of a more general approach to inclusion must acknowledge the inevitable resistance to inclusion. Many will oppose initiatives for more inclusive processes in regard to gender, class, and race. This resistance will come not just from overtly sexist, racist, homophobic individuals but also from supporters of gender, class, and race rights who take for granted the subtle privileges that they enjoy from their membership in certain groups. It is important for leadership processes to acknowledge this resistance and to find ways to advocate for inclusive ideals and practices. (p. 97)

Ryan's reference to the significance of leadership in the process of social change is important. Indeed, efforts to redefine Canadian identity will require the collaboration of many Canadian leaders. Initial teacher education programs in Canada can play an essential role in cultivating educational leaders who will, as teacher leaders, have the conviction, critical knowledge, courage, commitment, and agency to develop Canada as an authentically inclusive nation. As Support-C declared, teaching is where nation building begins:

The whole notion of diversity is one of the building blocks of our nation and we have to show the world how it can be done and how it's being done. The future is about diversity in whatever form; and teaching is where it begins.

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**Appendix A:**

**Flyer to Invite Student Participation in the Study**

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED!

**If you are an immigrant to Canada who has just completed the Bachelor of Education program your input is needed!**

I am conducting research for my Ph.D. thesis that examines the challenges and supports experienced by immigrant and English language learner teacher candidates.

Please contact me before May 31st at 416-244-9447 or email cchassels@oise.utoronto.ca

All participants will receive $25 for completing a one page pre-interview survey and participating in a 45-60 minute interview.

Immigrant and English Language Learner
TC research cchassels@oise.utoronto.ca

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## Appendix B:

## Email to Invite Immigrant and Minority English Language Learner Participation

Date:

Dear (Name)

I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and I am hoping that you will take the time to participate in my doctoral thesis research examining challenges and supports experienced by immigrant and minority English language learners participating in an Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education degree program.

In particular, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to ask you questions about the supports and challenges that you have experienced during your participation in the Bachelor of Education program.

With your consent, I would like to audio-record my conversation with you and I will provide you with a copy of the interview transcript so you can make revisions for clarity and accuracy as you see fit. I anticipate that our conversation will last between 45 and 60 minutes.

I would like to meet with you sometime during (indicate 2 week period). Please let me know what date and time is best for you.

I'm looking forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Carrie Chassels, Ph.D. Candidate

OISE/University of Toronto

## Appendix C:

## Letter of Informed Consent

(Date)

To the participants in this study,

The purpose of this doctoral thesis research is to examine the challenges and supports experienced by immigrant and minority English language learners participating in an Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education degree program (ITE B.Ed.) at a Canadian university. At least ten immigrant and minority English language learners who have recently completed an ITE B.Ed. program, four Student Services Support Staff, and six ITE B.Ed. Instructors will participate in this study.

Funded in part by the Social Studies and Humanities Research Council of Canada through its doctoral fellowship program, this research will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Berta Vigil Laden, Theory and Policy Studies in Education of OISE/UT and with the support of Dr. Nina Bascia and Dr. Ben Levin. The data collected during your interview is for the purpose of a Ph.D. thesis and may inform subsequent research articles and conference presentations.

A pre-interview questionnaire will be provided to collect background information from teacher candidate respondents. All respondents will be asked to participate in an interview of approximately one hour's duration. During the interview you will be asked questions about the challenges and supports experienced by immigrant and minority English language learner teacher candidates. In addition, you will be asked to consider the ways in which race, class, gender and language may influence their participation in an ITE B.Ed. program.

With your consent, I will audio-record our conversation and I will take brief notes to make record of our discussion in the event of technical malfunction during the audio-recording process. You have the option to decline consent for the session to be audio-taped. Within 30 days following our interview, the audio-recording will be transcribed and I will send to you, via email, a copy of your interview transcript to provide you with the opportunity to revise, correct, or add information as you see fit and return your

comments and/or revisions to me within 15 days following receipt of the transcript. The information obtained through the interview process will be kept in strict confidence and your name will not appear on any data as you will be assigned a coded moniker. All raw data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and a password protected computer file. All information will be reported in such a way that the university site of data collection and individual respondents cannot be identified. All raw data (i.e. transcripts, questionnaires, field notes) will be destroyed five years after the study's completion.

You may at any time refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process. You may request that any information, whether written or audiotaped, be eliminated from the project. At no time will your responses or your university be evaluated or judged. Furthermore, should you have any questions about the research and your involvement with it, please do not hesitate to contact me or my doctoral supervisor.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Carrie Chassels
Ph.D. Candidate, Theory and Policy Studies in Education, OISE/University of Toronto
Telephone: 416-244-9447
Email: cchassels@oise.utoronto.ca

Dr. Berta Vigil Laden
Professor, Theory and Policy Studies in Education
OISE/University of Toronto
Telephone: 416-923-6641 ext.2503
Email: bvladen@oise.utoronto.ca

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By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in this study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

I consent to the audio-recording of this interview: ☐

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ I would like to receive a summary of the study findings: ☐

## Appendix D:

## Email to Invite Support Staff and Instructor Participation in the Study

(Date)

Dear (Name)

I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and I am hoping that you will take the time to participate in my doctoral thesis research examining challenges and supports experienced by immigrant and minority English language learners participating in an Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education degree program.

In particular, I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to ask you questions about the work you do to support immigrant and minority English language learners and your perceptions of the challenges and supports they experience.

With your consent, I would like to audio-record my conversation with you and I will provide you with a copy of the interview transcript so you can make revisions for clarity and accuracy as you see fit. I anticipate that our conversation will last between 45 and 60 minutes.

I would like to meet with you sometime during (indicate 2 week period). Please let me know what date and time is best for you.

I'm looking forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Carrie Chassels, Ph.D. Candidate
OISE/University of Toronto

## Appendix E:

### Pre-Interview Questionnaire for Immigrant Teacher Candidates who have recently completed an Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education Degree Program

Dear (Participant),

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study to examine the challenges and supports experienced by immigrant and minority English language learner Teacher Candidates during their participation in an Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education degree program in Canada.

Your interview has been scheduled for (**DATE**) at (**TIME**) and will take place in (**LOCATION**).

Prior to your interview, please complete this brief survey to provide some background information about your personal, educational and work history.

*All responses to the questions contained in this questionnaire will be held the in strictest confidence and will be used only for the purposes of the research project in which you have consented to participate. Once this pre-interview questionnaire is matched with your interview transcript, your name will be removed from the document and your information will be assigned a coded identifier.*

# PERSONAL and FAMILY HISTORY

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NAME**: | | ☐ M ☐ F | **AGE:** | |
| **MARITAL STATUS:** | ☐ Single ☐ Partnered ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed | | | |
| **CHILDREN:** | ☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three or More | **YEARS IN CANADA** | | |
| **What country did you live in before coming to Canada?** | | **How many years did you live there?** | | |
| **What other countries have you lived in? (Put the number of years in brackets beside each country)** | | | | |
| **What is your first language?** | | | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **What other languages do you speak?** | | |
| **For how many years have you been learning English?** | | |
| **What do/did your parents do to earn a living?** | **Mother:** | **Father:** |

# EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

**What degrees have you earned?**

☐ High School ☐ Bachelor Degree ☐ Honours Bachelor Degree ☐ Masters Degree ☐ Doctorate ☐ Other

What are your areas of specialization? (e.g. Science, Philosophy etc.)

***In what country did you earn your diplomas and degrees?***

| | |
|---|---|
| High School | Masters Degree |
| Bachelor Degree | Doctorate |
| Honours Bachelor Degree | Other (including additional Bachelor Degrees) |

**List any professional certification and/or qualification that you have earned and indicate the country in which you earned the qualification.**

# WORK HISTORY

In the spaces below, please list the your past employment experiences including the position you held, the number of years you worked in that position, and the country in which you worked

| POSITION | EMPLOYER | COUNTRY | # OF YEARS |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

## Appendix F:

**Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Interviews with Immigrant and Minority English Language Learner Teacher Candidates who have Recently Completed an Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education Degree Program at Urban Canada University**

The following questions outline a semi-structured interactive interview protocol.

1) I see from your survey that you have been in Canada for (X) years. Tell me a bit about experience as an immigrant. (Probes: How have you adjusted to living in a new country? Have you adjusted? Are there aspects of your life that are still in a period of adjustment? How has your immigration experience compared to what you expected when you started this journey?)

2) Tell me a bit about your teaching and teaching related experience in (your country of origin). How many years of teaching experience do you have? What were your teaching assignments? What education and certification did you require to do that work?

3) You have spent the last year studying at X university in the Initial Teacher Education program. Was it your goal to attend a teacher education program when you made the decision to immigrate to Canada? Why/Why not? What was your goal? What are your goals now?

4) What challenges did you face during your studies at X university?

5) What kind of support have you received that has helped you during your studies at X university?

6) What advise would you give to future students who are in a situation similar to yours? (Probe: What strategies were most effective for you? Would you recommend this program to others in a situation similar to yours?)

7) What opportunities and challenges do you see as you move toward beginning a teaching career in Ontario? (Or goals from question 2 if participant does not plan to pursue a career in teaching.)

8) Did you see or experience any effects of the following during your studies at X university: Effects related Race? Class? Gender? Language? If so, how did you perceive them? How did they have an effect on you? On others? How did you, or others, deal with the effects?

9) How did the students, staff, instructors and teachers in the field seem to respond to you? What kind of impression did you get from students, staff, instructors, and/or teachers regarding their views on diversity? Did this seem similar or different to how you felt you were treated by them?

10) Can you think of anything else that that affected your studies at X university and influenced your experience there in some way? Are there any other challenges and/or supports that you experienced as part of your work to become a certified teacher in Ontario?

## Appendix G:

### Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Interviews with Student Support Staff at UCU

The following questions outline a semi-structured interactive interview protocol.

1) Let's begin with a brief overview of your role and your work here at X university.

2) What issues do you think are significant to teacher education candidates at X university who are: Immigrants? Members of visible minority groups? English language learners?

3) How do you and your department support immigrant teacher education candidates? Teacher education candidates who are members of visible minority groups? Teacher education candidates who are English language learners?

4) Do you believe, or have found the following to have an impact on immigrant minority and English language learner teacher candidates: Social class? Race? Language? Gender? If so, how do they have an effect and what are the effects?

5) What or who supports you in your work with immigrant minority and English language learner teacher candidates?

6) What departmental, institutional and/or systemic policies guide the work you do?

7) Based on your experience, what more can be done to improve or enhance assistance to immigrant and minority English language learner teacher candidates?

8) What are some of the challenges you and your department face in providing support to immigrant teacher candidates?

9) What are the benefits of supporting immigrant students at X university? How can these benefits be increased?

## Appendix H:

### Semi-Structured Protocol for Interviews with Instructors of the Initial Teacher Education Bachelor of Education Degree Program at UCU

The following questions outline a semi-structured interactive interview protocol.

1) Let's begin with a brief overview of your role and your work here at X university.

2) What issues do you think are significant to teacher education candidates at X university who are: Immigrants? Members of visible minority groups? English language learners?

3) How do you and your department support immigrant teacher education candidates? Teacher education candidates who are members of visible minority groups? Teacher education candidates who are English language learners?

4) Do you believe, or have found the following to have an impact on immigrant minority and English language learner teacher candidates: Social class? Race? Language? Gender? If so, how do they have an effect and what are the effects?

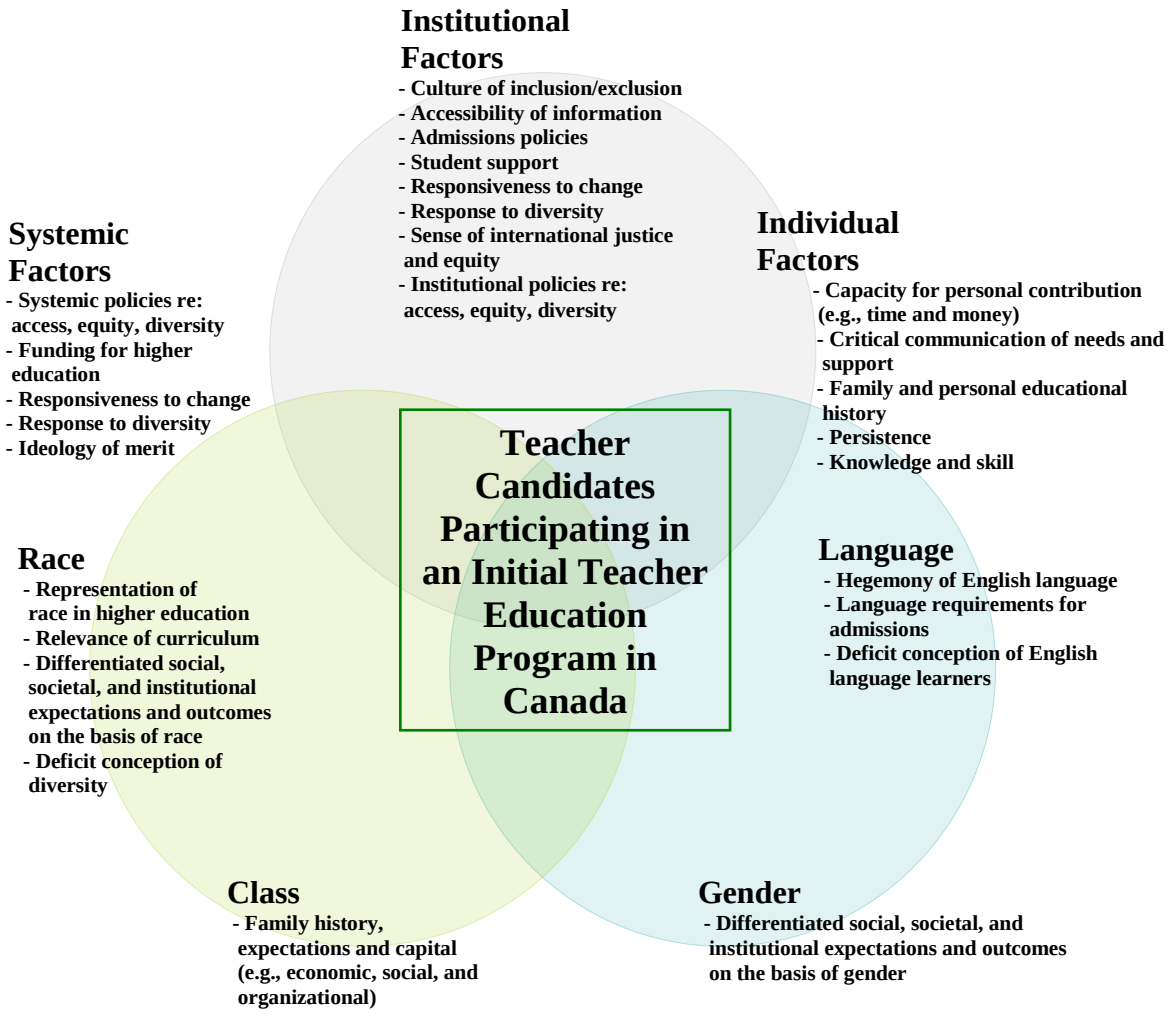
5) What or who supports you in your work with immigrant minority and English language learner teacher candidates?

6) What departmental, institutional and/or systemic policies guide the work you do?

7) Based on your experience, what more can be done to improve or enhance assistance to immigrant and minority English language learner teacher candidates?

8) What are some of the challenges you and your department face in providing support to immigrant teacher candidates?

9) What are the benefits of supporting immigrant students at X university? How can these benefits be increased?

## Appendix I:

## Original Conceptual Framework