

Graduating Teacher Experiences of Factors Relating to Teacher Burnout and Attrition during
Their Teacher Training

By

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Abstract

The following study presents qualitative case studies with an interpretive emphasis informed by hermeneutics, on how pre-service teachers have experienced, responded to, and thought about factors relating to teacher burnout and attrition. The topic, problem and purpose came about because of personal experiences of the researcher and a current gap in the literature. The importance of the research relates to understanding the emotions of future educators, which may lead to insight into the high rates of teacher burnout and attrition in Alberta. The procedure involved interviewing two participants who had either recently completed, or were in the final term of completing their teacher training program. Case studies were developed for each participant, and then the case studies were analyzed in order to find common themes. The themes identified included: 1) Desire to be the best teacher they can be, 2) Professional guidelines hinder the helping relationship, 3) Autonomy is important as a teacher, 4) Leading an authentic life will be meaningful, 5) Having a profession, and 6) The future as a teacher is uncertain. Each theme will be discussed in relation to the literature, and implications and limitations conclude the thesis.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Christie-Lee Steedman. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “The Experience of Hope in Graduating Teachers” No. 00039205, 6/4/2013.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The researcher in Context

When I was 15 years old, I decided I wanted to be a Child Psychologist. And due to my practical nature, I decided that the best route for me to accomplish this would be to complete my undergraduate degree in education. I thought teaching would be a natural fit for me. When I was a child I would line up my toys and teach them lessons. I forced my brother to sit through my “lectures”, and I had an insatiable desire to learn. Going through the education program, I knew that I never intended to make a lifelong career out of teaching. This did not make the experience any easier for me. The first two years of my teacher preparation felt like a breeze, but once I entered the classroom in my first practicum everything felt different. My confidence transformed into self-doubt and deprecation. My excitement for learning turned into fear that I could never know enough to teach. I placed an immense amount of pressure on myself to do well, yet I could never accept positive feedback. I couldn’t escape the feeling that I passed my practicums based on pity. In addition to the emotional rollercoaster I was on, I was exhausted. In my first practicum, I remember sitting in the middle of my kitchen crying while I spent 4 hours working on just one lesson plan for the next day. To top it all off, there was a constantly swirling rumor that those of us in the education program would never be able to find jobs after graduation. While I knew I wanted to go to graduate school, I had hoped to work as a teacher for at least a couple of years before applying. Hearing that it would be nearly impossible to find work diminished my last flames of hope. I would like to note here though, that while I did not have a positive experience in my teacher preparation, I loved working with the children and developed some strong bonds. They are the reason I kept pushing myself through.

Not long after these student teaching experiences, I had to face a new challenge (and frankly a fear): my master's thesis. My fear for this thesis was exacerbated by my misguided belief that I would need to do a quantitative study on something I wasn't all that interested in. However, I learned that I would be able to choose whatever topic I wanted, and that qualitative work would be perfectly acceptable. With infinite possibilities for topics, I decided that I wanted to understand the experiences of other pre-service teachers. Once I started to look into the research, I realized I was not unique in my experience. Many student teachers have reported negative experiences, and the education system is suffering due to high rates of teacher burnout and attrition. And in a way, I also wanted to understand my own experience better by learning about the experiences of others. So in this short history, that is how I arrived to my current study.

It is important to acknowledge my closeness to the research topic because not openly acknowledging my experience could impact the research process in an undesirable manner. While bias can never be removed from anything in life, openly accepting my own experiences means that I can remind myself to be open to experiences different than my own. It also means that I approach the data with a larger lens than I might if I don't accept my pre-understandings of pre-service teacher experiences. I hope that by accepting my pre-understanding, I have been better able to honor the individual and unique experiences of the participants in this study.

Problem Statement

The Government of Alberta (2011) estimates that teacher attrition rates within the first five years of teaching reach above 25 percent, with numerous studies reporting that rates can reach as high as 50 percent. This means that at least one in four new teachers will leave the profession within the first five years of teaching, due to various reasons which can include

teacher burnout. With this many teachers leaving the profession so early, it is important to not only understand “on the job” factors that contribute to them leaving the field, but also whether or not there are contributing factors present before they even start their career. This is why I believe it is important to study the experiences of pre-service teachers who are completing their programs. The problem then, is that new teachers are leaving the profession in large numbers, and the experiences and future outlook of graduating teachers is a topic which has not been significantly addressed in academia.

Purpose of the Research:

This study was designed to explore the experiences of graduating teachers in an effort to understand how they have experienced, responded to, and thought about what kinds of phenomena result in teacher burnout and attrition.

Research Question:

How have graduating pre-service teachers already experienced, responded to, and thought about phenomena that result in teacher burnout and attrition? What are the similarities between the participant’s experiences and the literature on teacher burnout and attrition?

Thesis Overview:

The current chapter established the context of the researcher in the present research topic, in addition to outlining the reason this research is important, the problem it is addressing, and the research question which guided the research process. Chapter two reviews the literature on topics related to the present study. Chapter three outlines the methodology and methods of the study. Chapter four includes a brief review of the analysis process, the two case studies, and the critical

summaries. Chapter five is the integration chapter which will outline the themes, quotes to substantiate the themes, and discussion on how each theme relates to the existing literature. Chapter six includes the closing remarks.

Definition of Terms

Pre-service teacher: Will generally refer to individuals who are currently enrolled in an Education degree program.

Graduating teacher: For the purposes of this study, the pre-service teachers who participated were in the last term of their degree, or had completed their degree in the last six months but have not started working in a teaching position. Therefore the participants will at times be referred to as graduating teachers, since they are approaching graduation from the Education program.

Teacher preparation: Will refer to education degree programs preparing students for teaching careers.

Teacher burnout: Will refer to the experience of stress while working as a teacher. This work based stress is widely referred to as having three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Attrition: Will refer to leaving the act of leaving the teaching profession, which may or may not be due to the experience of burnout.

IPT: The Introductory Professional Term is the first student teaching placement for education students at the University involved in the study. This is a five week field placement.

APT: The Advance Professional Term is the second and last teaching placement for education students at the University involved in the study. It is a nine week field placement.

PAT: Provincial Achievement Tests are Province wide exams administered to grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 in the core subjects. They are designed to test the progress of students and ensure accountability of schools and teachers.

IB: International Baccalaureate is a world-wide and advanced program that Alberta students may enroll in.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review covers the topics of: teacher burnout and attrition, student teacher/teacher preparation research, self-determination theory research, and emerging adulthood research. These are areas that were meaningful to the topic of study, and research areas that relate to the topics and themes uncovered in the data analysis. In addition to this, a few case studies relating to the current topic of study were reviewed.

Teacher Burnout and Attrition Research

Burnout and attrition are important factors to consider when justifying the need to research training teacher experiences because of a general desire to prepare educators for successful careers. It is a concern that leaves me wondering: who experiences it, what causes it, what does it look like, and what steps can be taken to understand the phenomena better in order to lessen its effects? Burnout is essentially the experience of stress while working in a profession that requires serving the needs of others (Howard & Johnson, 2004), while teacher attrition refers to leaving the teaching profession entirely. The two do not have to occur together; however, they often do.

Christina Maslach is a leading figure in research on job burnout, and describes the phenomenon as having three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of having no more emotional resources, depersonalization refers to a detached approach to the job, and reduced accomplishment refers to having feelings of incompetence and inability to meet goals (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). These three facets to job burnout are widely referenced in the literature when describing teacher burnout (For example: Fives, 2007; Hill, 2011). Burnout in

teachers is described as tension, frustration, depression (Howard & Johnson, 2004), and a lack of emotional regulation (Chang, 2009).

Who experiences burnout? Any teacher can, but the following is some information on the populations related to the proposed research. One study from Hultell (2013) found that new teachers were generally healthy with low levels of burnout; however, their levels of burnout were found to be increasing over the years. However, a stable finding in research on teacher burnout and attrition is that attrition is the highest in new teachers (Chang, 2009; Gavish, 2010; Guarino, 2006; Hoigaard, Giske, & Sundsli, 2012). Subsequently, novice teachers and their experience of stress is a specific component of teacher burnout emphasized in the literature. In addition to this, some research has suggested that stress and burnout can begin in teacher education programs, before teaching careers even begin (Chan, 2003; Gavish, 2010; Morton, 1997). Klassen and Chiu (2011) found that those pre-service teachers who have more stressful pre-service teaching assignments exhibit lower levels of occupational commitment, and those with higher levels of occupational commitment are less likely to quit teaching. Bloomfield (2010) suggests that student teachers may be keeping negative emotions and experiences hidden, based on her interviews with a pre-service teacher on practicum who discussed feelings of isolation, inadequacy, resentment, and vulnerability. However, other research suggests that it is not clear whether or not burnout can begin in the student teaching experience (Fives, Hamman, & Olivarez, 2007). In addition to this, in a study by Hong (2010), it was found that many pre-service teachers acknowledge that emotional burnout is a large factor in the field of teaching, however, many pre-service teachers expressed beliefs that burnout was related to personality and internal and uncontrollable factors. For those pre-service teachers who attribute burnout to stable

and internal characteristics, they are more likely to leave the job when they experience burnout (Hong, 2010).

Research by Klassen and Chiu (2011) found that practicing teachers reported higher levels of intention to quit teaching than pre-service teachers, and that they reported lower levels of commitment to teaching and higher levels of stress. This research suggests that graduating teachers may exhibit higher levels of commitment to the field, but then once these individuals begin teaching they begin experiencing stress and declining levels of commitment. Additional research suggests that teacher burnout is more common in female teachers, possibly due to higher levels of emotionality at responsibilities in the home (Caglar, 2010). However, research by Yavuz (2009) suggests that burnout occurs at a higher rate in male teachers, and therefore there is conflicting research in regards to gender and burnout rates. This may partially be explained by research being completed within different countries. Yavuz (2009) also suggests that burnout occurs more in elementary teachers rather than secondary teachers. Single teachers also reported experiencing higher levels of burnout than married teachers, possibly due to having less social support, and younger teachers tend to experience higher levels of burnout due to having less confidence as a teacher (Caglar, 2011). A review by Chang found that teachers who are considered to be the most dedicated are experiencing higher rates of burnout because they work harder to reach their goals, and become burned out in the process (2009). This is very disconcerting, and it also helps us understand why research in this field is important.

In regards to what causes teacher burnout, there is a wide array of research. Some of the research describes a strong correlation between self-efficacy and burnout, meaning teachers with a stronger belief in their capabilities are less likely to experience burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). This relates to my planned research, as I wondered if the correlation would apply to

training teachers, who are generally experiencing low levels of self-efficacy during their practical work. Another important finding in the literature is the idea that values and ideals held by teachers before they entered the field were challenged once they started teaching (Flores & Day, 2006), and that this challenge can lead to a reality shock that sometimes causes new teachers to leave the profession (Veenman, 1984). Related, teachers can become disillusioned when they are not able to meet their personal goals and expectations (Friedman & Farber, 1992). For example, many teachers are entering the field due to an altruistic desire to help society (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006), so if they do not experience gratification from this altruism in practice, they may be more inclined to encounter burnout. According to Friedman, professional satisfaction has the highest negative correlation with burnout, and teachers who feel they are making a difference are less likely to experience the phenomenon (1992). In addition to this, Fives et al. suggest that there is a negative correlation between efficacy and burnout (2007). I anticipated some of these ideas would be raised by participants.

Research has been conducted on the differences between teachers who stay in the profession and teachers who leave the profession. It was found that teachers who leave have less feelings of self-efficacy (Hong, 2012). In addition to this, Hong (2012) found that both the leavers and stayers experience emotional burnout, however, the stayers are better able to work through the struggles through means such as maintaining healthy boundaries and not bringing their work stress to the home environment. Interestingly, however, is how both leavers and stayers have an intrinsic interest in teaching (Hong, 2012). This suggests that many of the teachers who are leaving the profession are not doing it due to a lack of interest in the field. According to research by McEnany (2010), teachers who hold long teaching careers without burning out display some common characteristics. First of all, teachers who do not burnout

acknowledge the importance of school administration, peers, and family support (McEnany, 2010). These teachers were also actively involved in their professional as well as personal lives, make attempts to remain current in the field, display an internal locus of control by taking responsibility for their good and bad days, are rewarded by helping their students succeed, have empathic qualities, set large goals for themselves, approached teaching in a manner that acknowledged the differences in their experiences, and lastly these teachers reported having a role model (McEnany, 2010). This research leads me to question which of these areas may be lacking or missing in teachers experiencing burnout, and whether these traits and actions are present in pre-service teachers. If these qualities are not commonly found in pre-service teachers, what does this mean for the longevity and success of their careers?

Finally, what can we do about burnout in teachers? It is important to consider how to address burnout, not only to alleviate the symptoms for teachers, but also because there is a significant positive correlation between teacher burnout and intention to quit (Hoigaard et al, 2012). To start with, Chang suggests that beginning teachers should be prepared to experience a wide range of positive and negative emotions, rather than enter the field with idealistic views of the profession (2009). Other research has found that resilience in teachers can be preventative of burnout, and is displayed in feelings of control and reduced rumination on the negative (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Currently, reports suggest that common stress coping mechanisms in teachers include working harder and seeking support from others (Lewis, 1999). According to Hoigaard et al. (2012), teacher stress appears to be a long term problem and early intervention is important.

The information discussed in this section is important because teacher burnout and attrition are problems in the field of education that have led to the ideas of the proposed research.

Student Teaching and Teacher Preparation Research

Student teaching experiences are key in teacher preparation programs, and therefore it is important to specifically consider the research on student teaching. According to Hultell (2013), student teaching is a critical and decisive period in the lives of pre-service teachers.

Student teachers typically experience anxiety and a wide range of emotions during their practical work (Capel, 2009; Chan, 2003; Gavish, 2010; Hobson, 2008; Malderez, 2007; Morton, 1997). This is important to consider because there is a great deal of research suggesting that student teaching experiences do in fact affect the career outlook of training teachers, in both positive and negative ways (Daniels, 2006; Daniels, 2011; Hobson, 2008; Hong, 2011; Oh, 2005; Richardson-Koehler, 1988). In contrast to this, a study done by Flores et al. has participants report that their training had not had a large impact on them (2006). Therefore, the literature presents two different findings, but the finding that student teaching does have an impact on prospective teachers was more prevalent in the literature. The emotions that student teachers experience can be both positive and negative, and therefore student teaching could potentially increase or decrease commitment to the profession.

Continuing with the theme of emotions, it is important to consider what the literature reports about student teacher emotions and concerns. A theme found in the research is that student teachers experience feelings of disappointment, stress, a lack of perceived competence and anxiety over external evaluation (Chan, 2003; Gavish, 2010; Morton, 1997). Also common in the literature is the idea of taking on the new identity of “teacher” during student teaching placements (Goldstein, 2000; Hobson, 2008; Jarvis-Selinger, 2010, Maldarez, 2007). This forming of a new identity takes place in the process of transitioning from student to teacher, which can be a stressful experience for training educators (Daniels, 2006; Fives, 2007). While it

is common to find literature on the negative experiences of student teachers, it is important to balance that with the positive. Student teachers can also experience feelings of commitment to the profession, enjoyment of fostering learning, and hope (Goldstein, 2000; Jarvis-Selinger, 2010; Maldarez, 2007). The negative is likely more prevalent and easily found because of the high interest in studying burnout.

Another theme in the literature is that the student teaching experience, as well as the first years of a teacher's career, are times in which training teachers can experience a "reality shock" because of a disconnect between idealistic pre-existing beliefs about teaching, and the realities of the field (Chambers, 2010; Chan, 2003; Goldstein, 2000; Hobson, 2008; Veenman, 1984). This reality shock can lead novice teachers to lose sight of the reasons why they entered the field.

The literature in this area also has a theme regarding the common belief in training teachers that classroom experience is much more important than theory (Clifton, 1994; Flores, 2006; Malderez, 2007; Richardson-Koehler, 1988). In addition to believing that classroom experience is more important than the theories learned in training, according to a case study by Sinner (2010), pre-service teachers can experience a sense that they are being trained in one way, and then the told to practice another way in the field. I can see this being a theme in the responses of participants, as the gap between practice and theory can contribute to reality shock.

A final common finding in the literature is that student teacher relationships with their mentor, or cooperating teacher, can impact their feelings about the experience for the better or for the worse (Fives, 2007; Hobson, 2009; Jefferson, 2009; Koc, 2012; Richardson-Koehler, 1988). Participants may bring up the theme of mentor teachers in the data collection.

The literature demonstrates how impactful training experiences are, and why we should be concerned with the effect they have on prospective teachers.

Self Determination Theory

Self-determination theory embraces notions of a human tendency toward growth and development into a continually more unified sense of self, while also acknowledging the impact that social contexts and environments can have on an individual (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In other words, according to Deci and Ryan (2002), while all individuals have a desire for growth, growth is not an automatic experience because the environment can nurture, but it can also disrupt or impede growth.

Self-determination theory emerged out of the study of intrinsic motivation: motivation to complete activities in the absence of external consequences, and how psychological need satisfaction helps to understand the origin of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In other words, the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy facilitates intrinsic motivation. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), Self-determination theory is useful for understanding human motivation because the universal, innate psychological needs outlined by the theory are considered influential in what goals people choose to pursue, and why. By innate, Deci & Ryan (2000) mean that these needs are not learned. In addition to this, these three needs are deemed to be universal, meaning they apply across cultures and developmental periods (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Self-determination theory does not view people as passive, but rather as being inclined to act on their inner and outer environments, to engage in activities of interest to them, and to strive towards personal and interpersonal cohesion (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The theory posits that there are three fundamental psychological needs that assist in categorizing environments as nurturing of human functioning or antagonistic of it: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2002). According to Deci & Ryan (2000), a need is an

innate, organismic necessity that is essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and wellbeing. When these three psychological needs are met by an environment, healthy functioning is supported; therefore when the three are not met, functioning is impeded (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In addition to this, all three needs are necessary for optimal functioning and when one need is unmet, nonoptimal psychological functioning occurs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When psychological needs are unmet, people may: focus more efforts on meeting those needs, become controlled by the need (defiance or compliance), or become amotivated (being out of control or acting helpless) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci & Ryan (2002) suggest that the healthy human psyche will continually strive for these three factors, and will seek out environments and situations in which these needs are satiated.

Competence refers to a felt sense of confidence and effectiveness in one's capacities as the individual interacts with their environment (Deci & Ryan, 2002). It can also be thought of as an individual experiencing challenges and growth to their current abilities and knowledge (Baard, 2002). In the work place, individuals will have a desire to have growth and new experiences in a reasonable time frame, rather than needing it on a daily basis (Baard, 2002).

Relatedness references the individual's need to connect, be accepted by others, be caring and be cared for, and to have a sense of belongingness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Feelings of mutual reliance, respect, connectedness, and sharing mutual goals is important when relatedness is applied to the work environment (Baard, 2002).

Finally, Deci & Ryan (2002) explain that autonomy refers to a belief that we are the origin of our own behaviours and our behaviours are an expression of the self. However autonomy also applies to behaviour influenced by others when the individual at hand agrees with

the external source (Deci & Ryan, 2002). According to Baard (2002), when autonomy is applied to the work force, it is a feeling of control and choice about the work an individual is doing.

Self-Determination Theory and the Workplace

In relation to pre-service teachers, self-determination theory can be useful in understanding whether or not their psychological needs are being met. In other words, are they experiencing competence, relatedness and autonomy, or are these three needs being impeded by the environment.

According to Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte & Lens (2008), the exploration of job burnout is well complemented by an exploration of work engagement. In other words, research on engagement and motivation in the work place is an important factor when looking at burnout, and self-determination is one theory which may be used to understand work place motivations.

Employees who are in job positions with more task autonomy, skill utilization and positive feedback have more feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which leads to less work related exhaustion (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). On the other hand, employees who have a work environment characterized by extensive workloads, emotional demands, physical demands and work-home interference are less likely to meet the three basic psychological needs and more likely to experience exhaustion (Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

Research from Evelein, Korthagen, & Brekelmans (2008) found that student teachers, on average, reported a moderate level of basic need fulfillment while experienced teachers reported significantly higher levels of need fulfillment (Evelein et al., 2008). In addition to this, the research found a trend of increasing levels of autonomy and competence fulfillment over the

course of a student teaching practicum (Evelein et al., 2008). Meaning, student teachers were better able to meet their needs as they gained more experience during their practicums. Therefore according to Evelein et al. (2008), teaching experience is a large factor in need fulfillment. Finally, need fulfillment of student teachers was influenced by environmental factors such as lessons and classroom characteristics (Evelein et al., 2008).

Fernet, Austin, Trepanier & Dussault (2013) suggest a connection between the three components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment and the three basic psychological needs in self-determination theory. Their research found that an employee's perceptions of relatedness fulfillment predicted depersonalization and reduced accomplishment, perceptions of competence fulfillment predicted personal accomplishment, and perception of autonomy fulfillment predicted emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Fernet et al., 2013). Fernet (2012) found that teacher reported levels of burnout could change across the course of a school year due to relational factors such as student behavior and principal leadership behavior, as well as their perceptions of their autonomy and self-efficacy.

Holmberg & Sheridan (2013) also completed research which supported the use of self-determination theory as a predictor of burnout. Their study looked at burnout in college athletes. Bartholomew (2014) found a strong correlation between instances where the three basic needs were undermined and burnout in physical education teachers. In addition to this, the study found that the thwarting of the need for autonomy was the strongest predictor of burnout, which is consistent with some of the research that suggests job burnout relates to a lack of control (Bartholomew, 2014).

Emerging Adulthood

Both participants in this study can be discussed as being in the emerging adulthood developmental period. In 2000, Jeffery Jensen Arnett published an article outlining a new developmental period: emerging adulthood. According to Arnett (2000), emerging adulthood can be considered the time from the late teens through the twenties, with particular focus on ages 18-25. It is important to note, emerging adulthood is only being applied to cultures where youth are allowed a prolonged period of self-exploration. Shulman & Nurmi (2010) state that emerging adulthood is a developmental period characterized by instability and fluctuations. Factors such as deciding on a career, transitioning from school to the workplace and starting a family can contribute to this instability and constant change (Shulman & Nurmi, 2010).

Shulman & Nurmi (2010) state that due to the instability of emerging adulthood, it is a developmental period marked by setting goals, pursuing goals, and altering goals. It is a period where individuals explore options, and where little about their future has been solidified (Arnett, 2000). But by the end of emerging adulthood in the late 20s, individuals have made choices and pursued goals that will have a long term impact on their lives, for example choosing a career (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is characterized by exploration and identity formation in the areas of love, work, and worldviews, and how these areas are initially explored before making enduring decisions about them (Arnett, 2000). Arnett (2000) states that the exploration around work relates back to identity exploration, since emerging adults reflect on things such as what careers would be satisfying for them and what careers would suit them. According to Arnett (2007), individuals in emerging adulthood enjoy the freedom to explore, they take satisfaction in developing to be more self-sufficient, and they benefit from developing a stronger understanding of themselves than they had as an adolescent.

Emerging Adulthood and the Work Place

In relation to emerging adulthood and careers, Arnett (2007) suggests that emerging adults with four year degrees aspire for jobs that pay well in addition to being enjoyable and being congruent with their sense of self. However, this can be difficult to achieve in reality, and compromises are thus made to an emerging adult's hopes and dreams in order to successfully adapt (Arnett, 2007). In addition to this, when an emerging adult does not view themselves as an adult, feelings of instability can lead to lowered work engagement and higher levels of job burnout (Luyckx, De Witte, & Goossens, 2011).

Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, & Platt (2010) found that relational support was particularly helpful in making the transition from university to the workplace; however, an appropriate amount of space to grow was also important because of the desire for autonomy and competence. This study also found that emerging adults may place energy into interests outside of work with the potential for these interests to lead to new professional opportunities, which relates to the notion that emerging adults leave their options open in the hopes of finding a fulfilling and intrinsically motivating career (Murphy et al., 2010). This study also found an association between emerging adulthood and striving towards financial and geographical autonomy (Murphy et al., 2010).

A Review of Case Studies on Pre-Service Teacher Experiences

Currently, there is a lack of case study research on the experiences of pre-service teachers, and how pre-service teachers have already encountered factors relating to teacher burnout and attrition. However, case study research has been done with pre-service teachers in

other areas of study, such as their experiences teaching particular subjects and their teaching identity formation. The following are some case studies which relate to the present study.

Emotions and “Getting by”

In a case study from Bloomfield (2010), one pre-service teacher was interviewed about her student-teaching experiences. The participant in this case study, “Lou”, communicated feelings of isolation and alienation in her student teaching experience, and of being misunderstood by her mentor teacher (Bloomfield, 2010). She further explained that her mentor teacher was not providing her with strong mentorship and did not understand her needs as a student teacher (Bloomfield, 2010). According to Bloomfield (2010), Lou also discussed how she wanted to have more autonomy in the classroom. Lou also expressed the importance of forming relationships with students and providing them with good educational experiences (Bloomfield, 2010). Overall, Lou felt that she did not learn very much during her student teaching, and felt that she didn’t fail nor succeed but rather “got by” (Bloomfield, 2010). Overall, Lou described a wide range of strong emotions from her experience such as vulnerability, resentment, inadequacy, and more (Bloomfield, 2010).

Giving up Teaching

Mulholland and Wallace (2012) completed a case study on an elementary teacher’s decision to leave the teaching profession. While this study case study about “Jean” is not looking at pre-service teachers, it is a case study which gives a glimpse at the attrition experience. Jean explained that her motivation for entering the teaching field was her love of working with children and the importance of teachers (Mulholland & Wallace, 2012). In addition to this, Jean expressed how good it felt to complete the teaching degree, and be in a job where she was able to

apply all the things she had learned (Mulholland & Wallace, 2012). Jean generally enjoyed her early teaching years, but became frustrated when she was not given a permanent teaching contract or her own class to teach, as she wanted to have more control over her work. (Mulholland & Wallace, 2012). Mulholland and Wallace (2012) also explained how later in her career, Jean became challenged by her work with special needs children, and became tired and negative. This case study also acknowledges the influence of politics in education, as Jean discussed how teachers often do not get control of their teaching environments and have to deal with a micro-political system (Mulholland & Wallace, 2012).

The “In-Betweenness of Becoming a Teacher”

Sinner (2010) wrote an Alberta based case study about “Ann” and her experiences in teacher preparation. While this case study involved a focus on the arts (including a visual journal as a way of collecting data), geography, and Ann being First Nations, there are still some topics of relevance to the present study that came up in the interviews. For example, Ann discussed how she views the art classroom as a place where students can learn not only the curriculum, but learn about themselves and find their place in the world (Sinner, 2010). In addition to this, Ann considered herself to have strong views of the world, and how she wants to help address inequalities and injustice, even if that meant losing her job (Sinner, 2010). Ann described the relationship with her mentor teacher as limited and superficial, and also discussed how student teaching could be draining but also rewarding (Sinner, 2010). According to Sinner (2010), Ann also discussed how she will keep pursuing the teaching field regardless of the struggles she encountered, and how she will try to remain true to herself by being willing to speak her mind and create change. Sinner (2010) also states that Ann resisted internalization of the school (institution) structure, and instead went through the motions of completing what was required of

her, which she referred to as “hoop jumping”. Finally, Ann discussed a desire for more freedom and space in the classroom, and how it was hard to meet the performance standards of her mentor teacher (Sinner, 2010).

Case Studies in Teacher Isolation and Alienation

This case study research looked at the experiences of first year special education teachers. One participant in this case study research, “Ann” was a first year teacher who identified that she needed more support from a mentor who truly cared to be of help (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). Another participant, “Sinda”, reported that the amount of students was overwhelming, and having good relationships with other staff members and administration would help her feel less overwhelmed (Schlichte et al., 2005). Sinda also explained that the relationships with the students is a factor that helps her push through the challenged (Schlichte et al., 2005). A third participant, “Jenna” also expressed the importance of the relationships between her and her students, and how relationships with other staff and administration was lacking (Schlichte et al., 2005). “Cathy” also felt that she was not being supported as a first year teacher, which led to feelings of being overlooked and not being important (Schlichte et al., 2005). Schlichte et al. (2005) state that participants in this study experienced a range of emotions which included: loneliness, inadequacy, being overwhelmed, and discouragement.

Chapter 3

Part One: Methodology- Qualitative Case Studies with an Interpretive Emphasis Informed by Hermeneutics

Paradigm

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), paradigms are used within qualitative research because they “define for inquirers what it is they are about, and what falls within and outside of the limits of legitimate inquiry” (p.108)”. In other words, paradigms are basic beliefs or worldviews that guide the researcher in method as well as ontology and epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The ontological question addresses the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The epistemological question addresses the relationship between the inquirer and what can actually be known about the object or subject of study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The methodological question addresses how the inquirer can go about finding what they believe can be known through their research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The way a researcher answers these three questions will determine the paradigm that will inform and guide their inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The Constructivist Paradigm

This interpretive inquiry will be guided and informed by the constructivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that constructivism is relativist, meaning that this paradigm views each person as having their own “reality” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In other words, the constructivist paradigm does not support the existence of a tangible reality, but rather that realities are developed by individuals through their experiences and environments, and these realities hold true only to the individual (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, Guba & Lincoln

suggest that elements of each person's constructions are often shared across cultures and individuals. They describe constructions as "not more or less true, in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated" (p. 111) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Meaning, no one person's construction of reality is true in an objective sense, but rather some constructions are communicated in more informed and sophisticated manners.

In regards to the epistemological question, constructivism is transactional and subjectivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This means that during an inquiry, meaning is constructed in the interaction between the researcher and participants. As for the methodological question, the constructivist paradigm is hermeneutical and dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), this means that the constructions of participants can only be elicited and refined in the interaction between the participant and inquirer, and hermeneutic techniques are used in the analysis and interpretation of data.

What is the aim of a constructivist inquiry?

Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that the final aim of a constructivist inquiry is "to distill a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions" (p. 111). In other words, constructivist research is a process of working, and reworking the data until a sophisticated construction that participant and researcher have co-created is developed.

Nature of Knowledge

Knowledge accumulates through developing more informed and sophisticated constructions through the hermeneutical process of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This means knowledge is developed when we attempt to work towards a deeper understanding of

constructions. It is also important to note that multiple “knowledges” of constructions can exist, and equally competent researchers may have different interpretations of the same data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructions will be continuously revised and changed due to dialectical comparisons of them, and therefore knowledge accumulates through developing increasingly sophisticated and informed constructions through this process of juxtaposition (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Criteria Appropriate for Judging the Goodness or Quality of an Inquiry

The first criterion for judging the goodness of an inquiry is trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The trustworthiness criteria of: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are an attempt to control the quality of constructivist research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They parallel the quantitative criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity respectively (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The second criterion is authenticity, which includes fairness (the extent to which competing constructions have been considered), ontological authenticity (extent to which constructions have become more informed and sophisticated), educative authenticity (extent to which people have become more understanding of the constructions of others), catalytic authenticity (extent to which the construction stimulates action by creating awareness, ameliorating problems, etc.), and tactical authenticity (extent to which the account empowers people to action) (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), quality control in constructivist research still requires growth.

Role of Value in Inquiry

Guba and Lincoln (1994) state:

Values have pride of place; they are seen as ineluctable in shaping (in the case of constructivism creating) inquiry outcomes. Furthermore, even if it were possible, excluding values would not be countenanced. To do so would be inimical to the interests of the powerless and of at-risk audiences, whose original constructions deserve equal consideration with those of other, more powerful audiences and of the inquirer. (p.114).

This quote demonstrates how values are integral in constructivist research, and how they are used to provide an equal voice to participants. In constructivist research, removing values and being objective is not believed to be possible.

The Place of Ethics in Inquiry

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) ethics are an integral part of constructivism, because of the inclusion of values. Revealing the intent of the inquiry is imperative for uncovering and creating more informed and sophisticated constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is also important to keep in mind that the close interactions between an inquirer and participant in this type of research can lead to problems with confidentiality, anonymity, and interpersonal difficulties (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

What Voice is Mirrored in the Inquirer's Activities?

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), the inquirer's voice in constructivist inquiry is of a "passionate participant"; meaning, they are developing a multi-voiced construction that combines the constructions of the inquirer and participant. In other words, the inquirer is active in the process, and can facilitate change for the better through reconstructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Interpretive Inquiry

Interpretive Inquiry is the methodology through which the research will proceed. It will inform how data is collected and analyzed. Interpretive inquiry is qualitative research in which the researcher, or inquirer, is a key figure in the data collection and interpretation. It is a process of learning about the thoughts and experiences behind people's actions, which helps in understanding their actions as reasonable and coherent (Ellis, 2009). One feature that sets interpretive inquiry apart from other forms of research is how strongly it asserts that research cannot be value free (Smith, 1992). Due to this, no interpretations are considered correct or incorrect, and multiple interpretations may be made with the same data (Smith, 1992). According to Smith: "inquirers are interpreters of the interpretations people give to their own actions and to the actions of others" (p. 102). In other words, interpretive inquiry is research undertaken to understand the meaning and reasons for an action or expression when those meanings and reasons are unclear (Smith, 1992).

Three Key Differences Between Interpretive Inquiry and Other Qualitative Research

According to Smith (1992), interpretive inquiry can be differentiated from other forms of qualitative research in three key ways. First of all, interpretivists believe that self-reflection and understanding of their own values and motivations is important (Smith, 1992). Secondly, the exact methods used by interpretivists will vary across individuals and settings, as there is no exact method to follow in interpretive inquiry (Smith, 1992). However, Smith (1992) states that because of this, interpretivists need to be able to explain what they did and did not do in their research process. Finally, the procedure followed in interpretive inquiry is not constrained by a desire to be objective, but rather procedural decisions are guided by a morality and ethics (Smith, 1992). For example member checking would not be completed in an interpretive inquiry due to a

desire to create a more objective study, but may be done if the inquirer determines that it would be the morally correct action to take in those circumstances (Smith, 1992).

Hermeneutics: How will the inquiry be guided?

Interpretive inquiries are guided by philosophical hermeneutics. While paradigms are used to guide the research process overall, hermeneutics is used to inform methodology and interpretation. While hermeneutics is noted as being difficult to define, Gallagher (1992) summarizes definitions found in some of the literature:

The majority of them identify understanding or interpretation, especially as related to language and text, as the subject matter of hermeneutics. If we characterize hermeneutics as a study or theory of interpretation, we should also note that the paradigm of textual interpretation dominates hermeneutical studies. (p. 4)

Therefore, we can begin to understand hermeneutics as the study of interpretation.

Philosophical hermeneutics holds the position that knowledge is the product of human activity, and meaning is created rather than found (Ellis, 2006). In addition to this, hermeneutics seeks to understand individuals, and how an individual experiences and constructs the world (Patterson and Williams, 2002). Jardine (1992) adds to this by stating that “hermeneutic inquiry has as its goal to educe understanding, to bring forth the presuppositions in which we already live” (p. 116). These quotes all express how working to understand the experience of individuals is central in hermeneutically guided research.

It is important to differentiate qualitative research informed by hermeneutics from quantitative research because according to Smith (1993):

...a sharp distinction between must exist between the natural sciences, which sought to explain its subject matter, and the cultural sciences, which sought to understand its subject matter. Since the facts and phenomena of the natural world are impersonal, that is, they have no inner experiences, it is possible to explain those facts in terms of ahistorical and universal principles. The facts and phenomena of social life, on the contrary, because they involve the inner experiences or inner life of human beings, cannot be treated in an impersonal ahistorical manner. (p. 14)

In other words, the goal of hermeneutic research is to understand the individual experiences of others, because the inner experiences of people cannot be explained or generalized. The following information outlines the key ideas of hermeneutics important for interpretive inquiry research.

How is Interpretation a creative Activity?

The purpose of this kind of research is to learn the thinking and feeling behind a person's actions in order to understand their thoughts and behaviors as rational (Ellis, 2006). In order to accomplish this, a researcher may use everything they know to inform the interpretation (Ellis, 2006). Using everything one knows means that the researcher is working holistically rather than reducing participant's experiences to predetermined variables (Ellis, 2006). Ellis (2006) states that "to be committed to learning what the participant means by his or her expression is to be committed to learning about the wholeness and complexity of his or her experience" (p.115). This requires a creative approach, because simply picking out similar words and placing them in categories will not suffice. According to Smith (2002):

...the work of interpretation is profoundly creative, that it attempts to suggest possible meaning and interpretations creatively and show relations between things in new ways rather than simply document or record them or play off against each other in a kind of epistemological power play. (p. 186)

In other words, interpretation is a creative activity because it requires understanding and representing things in new ways. To add to this, Mayers (2001) states:

It is not about reproducing the world so that there is a finite, obdurate, static truth that can be measured against some other truth, but rather it is about engaging in a dialectic and multilayered conversation that is continually in flux, changing, evolving, and shifting. (p.3)

Therefore, interpretation can be considered a creative activity because it is not about finding a resolute answer to a question, but rather interpretative work acknowledges that understanding is continually changing and evolving.

What is the Part/Whole Relationship?

In order to understand a participant within the context of an inquiry, it is important to acknowledge the whole as well as the parts of their experience (Ellis, 2006). Understanding who a participant is, and what their life experiences are will help the inquirer make sense of the parts and relationships they are interested in investigating. For example, in order to understand how a child experiences their classroom, you need to also understand their life at home and in other contexts; you need to understand their motivations, values, etc. in order to view their actions and thoughts as logical. The back and forth between the part and whole is the hermeneutic circle at work (Ellis, 2006). Interpretive inquiry involves making sense of the piece you are researching

through the process of also understanding who the participant is in a larger sense. Smith (1993) explains:

Hermeneuticists of all manner and variety agree that any interpretation of meaning must take place within a context. In the paradigmatic case of the interpretation of texts, this means that to understand an individual part of a text requires that one understand the whole text; yet it is equally clear that to understand the whole text requires that one understand the individual parts. When applied to the interpretation of intentional and meaningful human expressions, historical expressions included, this means that interpretation can only be pursued with a constant movement back and forth between the expression and the web of meanings within which that expression is lodged. (P. 16)

Therefore, the part-whole relationship is a critical component of hermeneutics and all interpretations.

What is Meant by the Key Role of Language and History in Hermeneutics?

In a broad sense, language is what enables us to engage in research, and therefore it is a key to the process. Mayers (2001) emphasizes the importance of language by stating: “Accompanied by the importance of questions and conversation, of hermeneutic circles and understandings, language undergirds all that we can bring to the interpretive engagement” (p. 15). According to Gallagher (1993), language is key in hermeneutics because language plays a central role in understanding the world. Finally, Ellis (2006) states “language both enables and limits interpretation” (p. 116). Therefore while it is the concepts and words we think with that enable interpretation, it also poses challenges to the process because participants and researchers have limitations in their use and understanding of language (J. Ellis, personal communication, April 2014).

Language is the key to interviews and constructions, so it is important for an inquirer to pay attention to the language they use, as well as the language used by participants (Ellis, 2006). It is also important not to introduce language to the participant that is inconsistent with their environment and experiences, which is why open ended questions using simple and broad key words are used in an interpretive inquiry (Ellis, 2006). In other words, open ended questions are less likely to influence the language of participants. According to Ellis (2006), an inquirer must also consider that words and language have different meaning to different people, and therefore the inquirer should not assume the meaning something has to a participant. This attention to language must also be extended to the inquirer's writing (Ellis, 2006). Therefore language is not only a tool that is necessary for conducting qualitative research, but it is also a factor that needs careful consideration through-out the research process from the development of the interview, to the final written product.

Key Ideas and Metaphors in Hermeneutics

Pre-Understandings and Forestructure

Forestructure and pre-understandings are hermeneutic terms for previous experiences and expectations that participants and inquirers enter into the research process with; they have a key role in the hermeneutic circle (Ellis, 1998). According to Ellis (1998):

The fore-structure or pre-understandings of the researcher who has entered the circle with humility and inquisitiveness will include a kind and caring concern that accommodates a perspective or way of reading which might otherwise be impossible to achieve. (p. 29)

This can be taken to mean that researchers working in interpretive inquiry need to be aware of the pre-understandings, beliefs, etc. that they bring into the research process, and also

be aware of how their own experiences can influence their interpretations. Being aware of your own influence as a researcher will allow you to engage in the process in a more careful and considerate manner. Smith (1993) explains how forestructure and pre-understanding are unavoidable, and how it cannot be argued that a researcher's interests and values can be completely removed from the research. Therefore in hermeneutic research, Smith (1993) states that pre-understanding can be viewed as “a nonproblem in that the dialogical encounter of subjectivities is simply the ontological basis for all understanding” (p. 17).

Concerned engagement brings direction and guidance to the interpretations an inquirer makes, and it separates interpretive inquiry from other forms of research which only attempt to describe or understand human phenomenon (Ellis, 1998). Pre-understandings are an important component to data analysis; therefore, it is important to enter into research with concerned engagement in order to reduce the negative impact pre-understandings could have on the research and interpretation process.

Hermeneutic Circle

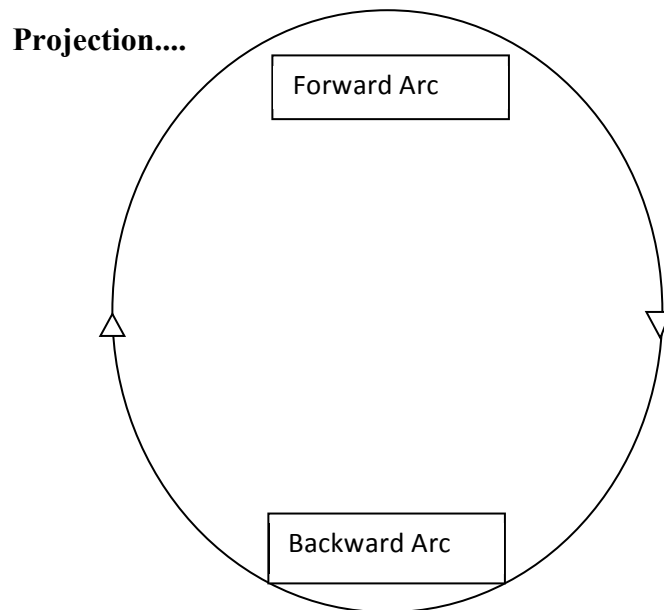
The circle and spiral are metaphors within hermeneutics. In the words of Mayers (2001): “the hermeneutic circle is interpretive inquiry’s way of letting meaning and understanding unfold through the constant renewal of questions and conversation” (p.12). Mayers (2001) also explains,

And so this process of questioning and understanding, reflecting and questioning again, reveals the unending reciprocity between thinking, feeling, experiencing, and interpretation. The hermeneutic circle, therefore, implies a temporality, a contextual referent or chronological stream of turnings and twisting which contiguously evolve in relation to a topic. (p. 12)

This quote emphasizes the evolving nature of hermeneutic research, and how the hermeneutic circle provides a visual representation of how interpretive inquiry research is circular in nature, rather than linear. The interpretive inquiry can be seen as a spiral, with each loop in the spiral forming a circle with a forward and backward arc.

Forward and Backward Arc

Figure 1: The Hermeneutic Circle



Evaluation...

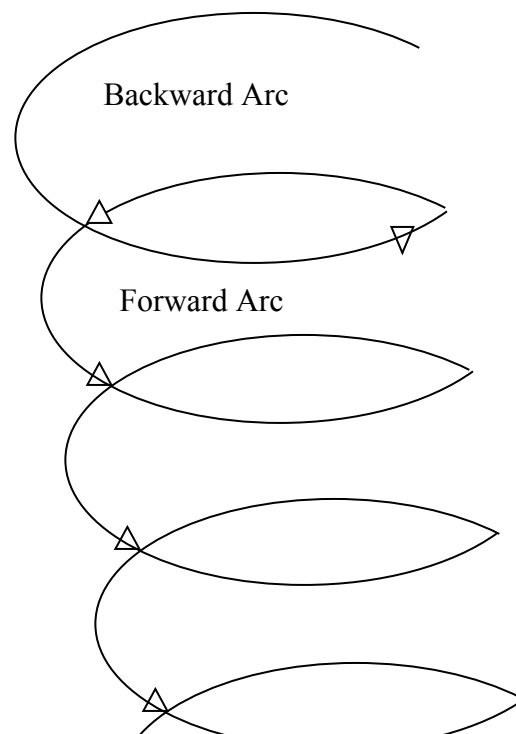
The hermeneutic circle represents the movement between the parts and the whole (Mayers, 2001). The forward arc involves interpreting and making sense of the data by using forestructure, which encompasses the inquirers autobiography-beliefs, values, interests, philosophies, etc., and the relationship the inquirer has to the inquiry (Ellis, 1998). Forestructure determines an inquirer's initial interpretations, and therefore forestructure is essential to data analysis. According to Mayers (2001),

Gleaning interpretive inquiry's emphasis on questioning and openness, and accepting one's fore-understanding (ie., recognizing that one speaks out of a tradition and that one's inquiry is bound up in the tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar), we get a little closer to what understanding might be and how understanding comprises both conversation and interpretation. (p. 10)

The backward arc is a re-examining of the data for contradictions, gaps, omissions, etc. in an attempt to discover what went unseen in previous interpretation (Ellis, 1998). According to Ellis (1998), the process is not about finding the correct interpretation but rather it is about finding the one that is the most adequate for the moment, and one that is coherent, comprehensive and comprehensible. Unexpected findings in the interpretation process are called “uncoverings” in hermeneutical terms; if nothing becomes uncovered in the researcher's initial data collection, the researcher has not yet seen what can be uncovered or has not yet approached the situation in a manner that honors the way the data can show itself (Ellis, 1998).

The Spiral

Figure 2: Interpretive Inquiry as an Unfolding Spiral



The hermeneutic spiral is used to metaphorically represent the progress and development of an interpretive inquiry (Ellis, 1998). To understand this metaphor, picture a spiral in which each loop represents a separate activity such as points of data collection or interpretation; a loop may also represent a re-examination of the data with a different question in mind (Ellis, 1998). Each loop is an attempt to pursue a current question in the inquiry, and what is learned from each loop is used to reframe or redirect the next loop by offering the next question to be asked (Ellis, 1998). Therefore, interpretive inquiries involve multiple points of data collection and interpretation, with the previous points of data collection or interpretation being used to guide how the next set of data will be collected or analyzed, or the next question that will be used to focus the analysis of the same data (J. Ellis, personal communication, April 2014).

Fusion of Horizons

Conducting research hermeneutically means having an awareness that each person has their own perspectives, forestructures, prejudices etc.; these can be called “horizons” (Ellis, 1998). A “fusion” of horizons occurs when individuals can bring their own understanding to the table and dialogically produce a feeling of understanding of one another (Smith, 2002). This can occur in hermeneutic research when a researcher attempts to better see how the participant sees things (J. Ellis, personal communication, April 2014).

How is the role of the researcher key in an interpretive inquiry?

Researcher as Bricoleur

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), a bricoleur is a jack of all trades who “uses the tools of his or her methodological trade, deploying whatever strategies, methods or empirical materials as are at hand” (p. 2). Using multiple methods, perspectives and observers adds rigor,

breadth and depth to a qualitative inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The bricoleur must be strong in using a large number of diverse methods of data collection such as interviewing or observation, be knowledgeable about interpretive paradigms, understand that research is affected by the researcher's personal history, biography, etc., knows that there is no value-free research, and knows that researchers tell stories about what they have researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). For example, in regards to interviewing Patterson and Williams (2002) state that:

Just as traditional survey instruments are field tested, there are certain skills associated with hermeneutic interviewing that can only be developed and refined through application. Examples include learning when to ask, when to listen, and how minor responses from the interviewer may influence the course of the interview. (p. 44)

This all demonstrates how the researcher is an integral component to the research process.

Role of the researcher in the hermeneutic circle

The researcher has a key role in the interpretation process. The inquirer will be using their preconceptions and pre-understandings to make sense of the data, and will be using their own judgment to evaluate and improve upon interpretations (Ellis, 1998). In addition to this, the researcher has a key role in the interview process.

What are the Implications for Analysis and Interpretation?

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the product of a bricoleur is "a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis" (p. 3), illustrating that the researcher is key to the research process. Also, as stated in Ellis (1998)

“knowledge is the product of human activity. We create rather than find meaning or knowledge” (p.7-8). Instead of seeking the “truth” in hermeneutic analysis and interpretation, a deeper understanding of a human experience is being created through the researcher and their interactions with the participant.

Case Studies as Qualitative Research

Characteristics

Case studies are used to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and its’ meaning (Merriam, 1998), and use as few as three participants to allow for depth in data collection and analysis (Ellis, 2009). Merriam (1998) claims that the most defining feature of a case study is the ability to delimit the case, meaning the case must be a single entity which has boundaries around it. Merriam (1998) states that “if there is no end, actually or theoretically, to the number of people who could be interviewed or to observations that could be conducted, then the phenomenon is not bounded enough to qualify as a case study” (p. 28). Therefore, case studies require the ability to narrow down the sample of participants. While the results of case studies cannot be generalized to a population as a whole, they do illuminate general issues or relevance and interest (Chadderton & Torrence, 2011).

Case studies are characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 1998). They are particularistic because they focus in on a particular object of study, they are descriptive because the end product of a case study is full and detailed, and they are heuristic because they allow for the reader to understand the phenomenon that was studied at a deeper level (Merriam, 1998).

Purposes

Case studies are used when a researcher is interested in insight, discovery and interpretation (Merriam, 1998). They are particularly advantageous when looking at “how” or “why” questions, and when a researcher is aiming to have a holistic focus (Merriam, 1998). Case studies are also useful when attempting to understand a process-such as an event, program or project, as well as when researching unique or atypical cases (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998), the choice of whether or not to use a case study comes down to what the researcher wants to know.

Emphases or kinds

Educational researchers often integrate the theoretical orientations and techniques of multiple disciplines into case study research (Merriam, 1998). Fields such as anthropology, history, sociology and psychology can be drawn upon in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1998). Disciplinary orientations integrated into the research depend on what the researcher is seeking to understand; for example, if the study relates to culture, anthropology is a discipline that could be integrated (Merriam, 1998).

Case studies can also be thought of in terms of their overall intent (Merriam, 1998). A descriptive case study is one which provides a detail oriented account of the phenomenon studied, and they are useful when researching areas where little research has previously been conducted (Merriam, 1998). Interpretive case studies are descriptive as well, but the data is also analyzed and interpreted in order to suggest relationships among variables or theorize about the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998). Finally, evaluative case studies may be used when evaluating something such as a program, and they involve description, explanation, and judgment in regards to the information collected (Merriam, 1998).

Strengths

A case study design allows for investigating complex phenomena that are made up of multiple variables that cannot be separated apart; it provides a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon, and they offer the reader insight (Merriam, 1998).

Weaknesses

There are multiple limitations to case studies, such as the cost and time involved in conducting this type of research, the length and detail being a deterrent to readers such as policy makers, and the potential for individuals to generalize the results of the study to a population as a whole, rather than taking a case study for what it is- a representation of the part of the population who participated in the research (Merriam, 1998).

The process of conducting Interviews

What happens in Interviews?

According to Weber (1986) “in asking someone to participate in an interview, we are thus in a sense extending an invitation to conversation” (p. 65). The interviewer should be genuinely present, committed and open to the participant (Weber, 1986). Weber (1986) also states:

Through dialogue, the interview becomes a joint reflection on a phenomenon, a deepening of experience for both interviewer and participant. It becomes a conversational relation between two people, one in which they come to learn as much about each other as they learn about whatever is the topic of conversation (p. 66).

In other words, interviews are not just a process of question and answer; they are a process of conversation and exploration between researcher and participant.

How do they Work?

Pre-interview activities- a list of activities such as drawings or diagrams that relate to the research or to getting to know the participant, from which the participant chooses one to complete- are used as a way to facilitate recollection and reflection in participant before the interview commences (Ellis, Janjic-Watrich, Macris, & Marynowski, 2011). Following this, interviews should start with a few “grand tour” questions-general questions that allow for broad responses; then the topics, ideas and stories brought forward from the participant in response to these grand tour questions can be followed up with using additional questions (Ellis, 2006). Open ended questions and PIAs are used in order to elicit stories from the participants (J. Ellis, personal communication, April 2014). The researcher is looking to bring out memories, reflections and stories from the participant (Ellis, 2006) because experiences can only be communicated through story (Ellis, 2009). It is also important for the researcher to remember to focus on how the participant’s stories make sense, rather than just what was said (Weber, 1986).

According to Mishler (1986), it is important to share “power” with the participant in an interview, in order to empower them and work as collaborators. It is more likely that they will provide the researcher with honest and thoughtful information when they do not feel threatened by the power of the researcher during the interview.

Risks and Challenges of Interviews

One of the biggest risks with interviewing is a preoccupation with the research topic, which is a failure to respect the difference between the research question and a question that

guides the data collection (Ellis, 2006). In other words, a researcher should not go into interviewing and ask the participant to respond to their research questions; researchers should have a separate question for data collection, one that will allow for the exploration of the part-whole, and that will encourage participants to tell stories. Another risk of interviewing is a loss of openness, by quickly forming opinions and conclusions about what the participant has said (Carson, 1986). This could reduce the concerned engagement of the researcher, and could lead to them being less open and caring during the interview process.

How can PIAs and open-ended questions help with these challenges?

Pre-interview activities and “get to know you” open ended questions allow the researcher to develop a sense of participants as a whole “in order to interpret the significance of what the (participant) says or shows regarding the research topic itself” (p. 118). According to Ellis et al. (2011) “pre-interview activities and open-ended questions were intended to support participants in recalling and sharing stories related to the research topic or their lives more generally” (p.13). Open ended questions are critical to allowing meaning to emerge through language, and therefore they help prevent cutting off the dialogue by forming hasty conclusions (Carson, 1986).

Interpreting Results in Case Studies

Any and all methods of data collection and analysis can be used in case study research (Merriam, 1998). The case study can be thought of as a holistic description and explanation (Merriam, 1998). This relates to the notion of qualitative researchers as bricoleur.

It is important to pay attention to the part-whole relationship during interpretation in order to develop an understanding of the meaning the dialogue has to the participant (Ellis, 2009). Narrative analysis can be used to develop a storied understanding of the individual participant's experiences; the multiple narratives are then analyzed together in an analysis of narratives (Ellis, 2009).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Narrative analysis is one approach to data analysis, and will be used in the present study.

Narratives as the unit of analysis

Narrative inquiry refers to qualitative research in which stories are used to describe human experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995). The term narrative is used to refer to texts that are thematically organized according to plots (Polkinghorne, 1995). Ellis, (2006) paraphrases Mishler (1986) as saying:

In interviews, participants will offer responses in the form of narratives if allowed the space and then in analyses of interview transcripts, narratives should be the unit of analysis rather than key phrases of ideas of interest in coding. (p.112).

Essentially, this means that when provided with open ended questions and the space to provide stories, stories are the natural way in which participants will engage in the conversation. Therefore, stories will be the unit of analysis. As stated in Polkinghorne (1995) "narrative is the linguistic form uniquely suited for displaying human existence as situated action" (p. 5). This quote suggests that stories provide the researcher with a meaning and context that cannot be derived otherwise. Polkinghorne (1995) also states:

“Stories express a kind of knowledge that uniquely describes human experience in which actions and happenings contribute positively and negatively to attaining goals and fulfilling purposes” (p. 8). Narratives or stories are considered to be a form of knowledge, as it is the knowledge of the participant’s experience being communicated (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narrative Analysis

After conducting interviews, the transcripts from each participant can be analyzed. According to Polkinghorne (1995) “narrative analysis is the procedure through which the researcher organizes the data elements into a coherent developmental account. The process of narrative analysis is actually a synthesizing of the data rather than a separation” (p.15). In other words, narrative analysis is when the researcher goes through the transcripts from one participant, to find the topics and put the pieces together into one narrative about that participant. The result of a narrative analysis can be a case study (Polkinghorne, 1995). According to Polkinghorne (1995):

The analytic task requires the researcher to develop or discover a plot that displays the linkage among the data elements as parts of an unfolding temporal development culminating in the denouement. (p. 15)

Analysis of the Narratives

Polkinghorne (1995) states that:

The paradigmatic analysis of narrative seeks to locate common themes or conceptual manifestations among the stories collected as data. Most often the approach requires a database consisting of several stories (rather than a single story). The researcher inspects the different stories to discover which notions appear across them (p.13).

Analysis of the narratives is the point in which the researcher gathers the narratives from multiple participants, and looks across them for themes and patterns.

Boostrom's stages of working with analysis and interpretation of data

Boostrom (1994) outlines some of the difficulties that qualitative researchers can encounter during the research process. First of all the researcher may have a difficult time identifying what is noteworthy or memorable, which can lead to being short on reflection and detail (Boostrom, 1994). Additional challenges include judging or evaluating the participant and what they have said which makes it harder to understand the participant and see how what they do or say makes sense, and looking for justification or legitimation of a participant's actions or ideas rather than paying attention to what something means to them (Boostrom, 1994). What is important in analysis and interpretation of data is understanding the participant by moving inside their experience rather than being a passive observer, as it is only when you move inside of the participants experience that you can see what is meaningful to them (Boostrom, 1994). It is also important to be open to understanding that each instance of analysis is different, and the researcher can only learn what is important within the research process (Boostrom, 1994).

Evaluating the study

In regards to conducting research with postmodern sensibilities-research from new generation qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) states “these researchers seek alternative methods for evaluating their work, including verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced texts, and dialogues with subjects” (p. 5). Essentially, this means that evaluating qualitative research involves focusing on the individual rather than the global, and painting a clear picture of the participant and the research process so that the reader can feel close to the process.

Evaluating the Interpretive Account

According to Packer and Addison (1989) “a good interpretation, one that gives an account we can call true, is one that answers the concern that motivated our inquiry in the first place” (p. 291). In addition to this, a true interpretive account will help the people that are studied, create awareness, and further support concerns; therefore interpretive accounts stem from concerned engagement (Packer & Addison, 1989). Packer and Addison (1989) acknowledge that no interpretive account will be universally accepted, nor is there a set procedure for evaluating interpretations. Therefore evaluation techniques that seek the establishment of universality do not apply to interpretive accounts, but four approaches to the evaluation of these accounts (Packer & Addison, 1989). Packer and Addison (1989) outline four approaches to evaluating an interpretive account. To begin with, an interpretive account should have internal character, or coherence, which means that it is plausible and intelligible (Packer & Addison, 1989). According to Packer and Addison (1989), coherence is not an automatic quality of an interpretive account, and it needs to be checked by looking at the data that doesn't make

sense. A second evaluative tool is the participant's interpretation of their action, which involves asking participants what their actions mean to them (Packer & Addison, 1989). Consensus is a third form of evaluation and means that an interpretive account is communicable to others in a way that allows them to interpret new material in the light of their new understanding (Packer & Addison, 1989). Finally, Packer and Addison explain practical implications as the fourth approach, which means that the relationship between an interpretive account and future events is examined. In other words, the interpretive account should have implications for practice and have practical implications (Packer & Addison, 1989).

In Ellis's summary of Packer and Addison, validity is not the issue; rather it is whether or not an interpretive account can be made more comprehensive, comprehensible, and clarified (Ellis, 1998). In addition, Ellis (1998) states that "the concerned engagement researchers bring to the question and the human solidarity they seek through the inquiry give direction and guidance to their interpretations" (p. 29).

Part Two: Methods

Site

Since pre-service teachers participated in this research, the site of research was the Western Canada University the researcher and participants attended. Private rooms in the education building were booked for the interviews.

Participants

Participants were pre-service teachers completing their Bachelors of Education degree. They must have been in their last year of study or have graduated in the last term (four months),

and have completed at least one student teaching placement. Participants must not have a full time teaching position. Students in their last year of study are likely able to provide more reflection and stories about their training, and have likely reflected upon the imminent future, more than students closer to the beginning of their program. Participants were selected purposefully, meaning, only participants that met the criteria were selected. Participants were recruited in the Faculty of Education at a Western Canadian University through electronic notification. This electronic notification allowed additional recruitment through social connections and snowballing. To ensure that participants were from a useful sample, they needed to have completed at least one student teaching practicum. To maintain the level of depth needed for case study work, I required two to four participants.

Interviews

At least two sets of interviews were conducted in order to stay true to the hermeneutic circle. The first round of interviews were led by the entry question: How do graduating teachers experience their training/program? This entry question was the first loop in the hermeneutic spiral. Interviews were scheduled in two hour blocks.

PIAs and questions

Pre-Interview activities were supplied to participants approximately one week before the first interview. The pre-interview activities were a mix of general “get to know you” activities, as well as activities that were specific to the question of how graduating teachers are experiencing their program. For example, the first pre-interview activity was “make a diagram depicting the support systems in your life”, and the sixth PIA was “Make two pictures of yourself (include speech bubbles or thought bubbles) to show your thoughts before and after entering the education program.”

The open-ended questions that were prepared for the first set of interviews also followed this format of general questions first, followed by questions about the topic. For example, question one was “What is the best thing about being your age? What is the hardest thing?” and question ten was “Since you started your training, have you changed any of the ways you go about things or the way you think about things?” The purpose for starting with general questions and then moving into questions specific to the topic is so attention is paid to the hermeneutic concept of the part-whole. In order to make meaning out of what participants said in regards to the topic, I needed to first understand what was meaningful and important to the individual.

Procedure

The Spiral of Hermeneutic Research: Multiple loops informing and changing the research

Once data was collected in the interviews for the first loop, it was analyzed with consideration to the forward and backward arcs of the hermeneutic circle. The first round of data analysis led to uncoverings; these new insights subsequently guided the second round of interviews. The question guiding the second round of data collection was refined in order to reflect what was meaningful to participants in the first set of interviews. This meant that the second round of interviews was focused on answering the question: How does the participant pursue fulfillment in life and work? A third set of interviews could have been conducted if additional information was needed. This process of working and reworking the data continued until a sophisticated construction about the experience of graduating pre-service teachers was developed.

Analysis

Narrative analysis and Analysis of narratives

Analysis began with a narrative analysis of each participant's transcripts. In other words, I went through the transcripts from each participant to find the topics and stories in what they said, and then put all the pieces together into a case study on how graduating teachers have experienced, responded to, and thought about the kinds of phenomena that result in teacher burnout and attrition. The case studies begin with a narrative portrait which covers the participant's experiences in general, and then went into topics specific to the research. The case studies have an interpretive purpose, as I analyzed and interpreted the text. Once the case studies were developed for each participant, an analysis of the narratives was done. This is when I looked across the case studies to find the themes common across the participants. These themes were presented with quotes from the case studies which served to substantiate the claims I make.

Ethical Considerations

Consent must be obtained from participants, and Bhattacharya (2007) explains that consent should be a fluid guideline because of a need for flexibility in the emergent design of qualitative research. Questions may change throughout the inquiry, and it is important to evaluate if the researcher's understandings of the participant's experiences have advanced, and to consider if there is enough information presented in order for a reader to form their own interpretations from the data (Bhattacharya, 2007). Some participants may experience negative memories or emotions during the interview. This is a concern because the well-being of participants is of great importance. To try to prevent this as much as possible, participants were never pushed to provide information they were uncomfortable with providing. The use of open

ended questions aided in providing participants with equal power in the interview. The participants were able to discuss what they were comfortable with discussing, and could omit things they were uncomfortable with making public. Overall, entering the research process with concerned engagement assisted in ethical research, since a large concern for me as a researcher was respecting the autonomy and well-being of the participants. In order to protect the identities of the participants, pseudonyms were used in place of their real names. The pseudonyms of “John” and “Bill” were used.

Chapter Four: Case Studies

Analysis Process

In order for others to understand my thought process and how I developed my case studies, themes, and conclusions I have laid out a brief explanation of my how I completed my analysis. To begin with, I completed my first set of interviews with the participants and a professional transcriber completed the transcripts. Once I received the transcripts, I verified them twice. This verification also helped to better familiarize myself with the data. After the transcripts were verified, I went through both transcripts and highlighted key ideas and phrases. This allowed me to begin understanding what the meaningful topics were for the participants. These topics included life fulfillment, uncertainty, the student teaching practicum, and the politics in education. Following this analysis of the initial interviews, I developed a second set of questions that targeted the meaningful topics more in depth. After the second set of interviews, I had the same transcriber complete the transcripts. Once again, I verified the transcripts twice. After these two interviews, I felt that I had strong data and could begin a more in depth analysis of the interviews.

To begin my in depth analysis, I created a chart for each participant. In this chart, I organized all the quotes into “topics”, “stories and comments”, “ideas, concerns, preoccupations, and motivations”, and “themes”. After these charts were complete, I was able to develop my case studies by grouping the broad topics and sub-topics and substantiating the topics with the appropriate quotes. I began by including all quotes in the case studies because I wanted to ensure that I did not miss important topics or quotes by prematurely removing them. I worked through my case studies multiple times, allowing time for a break between each time to encourage a

fresher perspective when re-working through the data. While re-interpreting the case studies, I rearranged some topics, sub-topics, and quotes. Once I was no longer making changes to the case studies while reading through them, I decided that it was appropriate to move to themes.

I started my approach to identifying themes by looking over my initial charts and what I had preliminarily identified as “ideas, concerns, preoccupations, and motivations”. This allowed me to look past the topics that were being discussed by the participants, and instead think about the importance and meaning in what the participants were saying. I developed a preliminary list of themes and then found quotes from each participant to substantiate each theme. Once this was done, I read through the themes and removed the ones that were not applicable. I continued to read through the themes and made changes to how they were organized, substantiated, and how they were titled. I also read through the themes with different questions in mind. For example, I read through the case studies thinking about why the workload in teaching was a significant topic, and developed a new understanding that for both participants the underlying importance of the hard work was a desire to be a good teacher. As with the case studies, once I was reading through and no longer making changes to the themes, I determined that they were complete. At this point, I worked through the case studies a few more times to remove some of the topics and quotes which were not strongly related to the study, some of the quotes that were based on opinion, and some of the quotes that were in response to weak questions on my part. I also removed filler words such as “um” or “like”, in addition to removing redundancies.

Once the themes were identified and substantiated, I worked on the discussion component by attempting to connect the themes with existing research and theories. While I had entered into this research project anticipating hope and hopelessness to be salient topics, this was not the case. Therefore I went back to the literature to determine what research would better

align with the themes and topics that the participants discussed. This is how I came across self-determination theory, and I determined that this theory was much more relevant to the results of my analysis than hope theories. I also determined at this point that it would be important to connect my analysis with research on emerging adulthood, considering both the participants are in this developmental period. Research on emerging adulthood was able to illuminate further understanding of the participants and what they had to say.

This whole process was true to the hermeneutic circle. I worked through the data, and re-worked through it multiple times. My pre-understandings influenced early interpretations, but then I re-worked through data with new questions in mind. This is when my analysis led to new learnings and uncoverings. For example, since I had anticipated that hope would be the dominant theme in the interviews, hope and theories on hope were on my mind during initial data analysis. However, I consciously took a step back from the research, and this led me to new understanding of the data. While it would not be incorrect to interpret the data in regards to hope research, during my later stages of data analysis I felt that was not the most informed and sophisticated interpretation. Instead, the data became richer and more informed when it was analyzed with the framework of self-determination theory. While it was time consuming, the hermeneutic process led to feeling more confident with my work than I would have been if I had only gone through the analysis process once or twice.

John

John was in the last term of his education degree at the time of interviewing. He was in the secondary education program after degree, having previously completed a degree in arts (political science). At the time of the interviews, he had completed his Introductory Professional

Term (IPT), but not his advanced professional term (APT). The IPT is a five week student teaching practicum, and the APT is a nine week student teaching practicum.

During interviewing, John was a very warm individual and was open to answering the questions presented to him. He enjoyed talking about his program and the ups and downs of his experiences. John was reflective, and explained that he often gives thought and consideration to the topics that we discussed. The interview room was quiet and private, with lots of space. However the lighting was bright and fluorescent, which created a more clinical feel and less of a comfortable and relaxed environment. This case study about John will begin by exploring who John is overall; in other words, who John is as a person. The case study then specifically explores John's experiences with the topic of interest.

From the pre-interview activities provided to John, he completed "make two pictures or diagrams showing what you like about field teaching and what you would like to change about field teaching". John's PIA is attached in the appendix. Of his pre-interview activity John stated:

So what I did for the pre-interview activity, was... Um, so what I like about field teaching, is I – I have a – a really simple elementary drawing of um, a teacher or myself, I guess – interacting with the students that you teach in your practicum. And I think for me that's been the one part I really enjoy, is I really enjoyed the social interaction of that, and being able to talk to them to the point until they actually get the concept.

So what I would change about the field teaching is, I have a drawing of just, you know, the older teacher a student, and one thing they tell us in the practicum is that we're not allowed to be too attached. We're not supposed to be buddy, buddy, as I quote them, with

the students. You can't like help them resolve any social issues they have at, in home or family problems that may distract them from their studies, or anything that – cause there's a lot of factors that teachers that may interfere with what they learned in school and how they do. And sometimes I, I believe that, you know, we should kind of, as teachers, it's almost like we're a second – second parent, we're trying to like help them out and get them to whatever level. And that can involve, you know, helping them resolve whatever issues are at home, or other things that bother them. So that's one thing I would change.

The ideas raised by John in his pre-interview activity were important topics throughout the interview. The major topics taken from his discussion on the pre-interview activity are how he enjoys the interaction he gets to have with students, and how he would change the restrictions placed on his role and relationship with students. They will be covered more in depth with additional quotes further into the case study, but for now represent how the pre-interview activity began the reflective process John engaged in during interviewing. Of his experience completing the pre-interview activity, John stated:

It reminded me of my own experience, obviously when I did my practicum... both these examples here are situations I drew from in the past, when I did my practicum.. it reminds you of the good and the bad, and – it was – I enjoy doing it, I don't mind going down memory lane. So it was something I didn't – I didn't mind doing, and it made me reflect a lot of what I went through.

Overall, the pre-interview activity was a good way to begin the interview, because it helped begin the reflective process for John, and it provided a comfortable starting point for the

interview. John was open to the pre-interview activity, and expressed how it was a positive experience for him to complete it.

About “John”

Throughout the interviews, a sense of John’s whole lived experience came through. What I mean by this is that instead of focusing only on John’s experience with my topic of study, I also asked questions that would help me understand John’s beliefs, motivations, experiences, etc. as an individual in order to provide a context for his experience as a pre-service teacher. Through these questions and his responses to topic specific questions as well, I observed a few recurring and important topics for John. These topics include: faith in God, passions in life, having a meaningful life, and relationships.

Faith in God

A crucial component to understanding John is to know about his belief in God. First of all, he explained how his faith in God influences all aspects of his life:

My faith is the most important. It defines me, so...How I live my life, my relationships with different- my friends, my family. It just, everything, even my education, everything I do is revolved around that, so... Yeah how I live my life...I know that sounds vague, but it just kind of defines... like every answer I really need in life is kind of there and it just helps me get through it a lot, actually all of it. Not even a lot.

An example of how John’s faith guides his life is how he came to be in the education program. He discussed how when he was younger his career choices were guided by the “wrong” motivations, and how his Christian beliefs led him to a more fulfilling life path:

From junior high till even my fall semester, of my fourth year university... I was so intent on going to law school and doing law school...I wanted to do it because, the status was there, financially it was, definitely a really well paying job and it was just something I thought, you know I could actually do, cause I love debating and I love just, you know, arguing and all that kind of stuff. I'm thinking, I could do this, right. However, um, I think for me like, what ended up happening in my fourth year... I'm a Christian and my beliefs, I felt that God saw me hey you know what, like maybe you're doing things for the wrong motivation here. Let's take a step back...what are you doing in law school for right... are you really doing it to help people as I kind of just told people on the side. But are, or are you really just doing it to, you know, make yourself feel good and get all this stuff. So that kind of made me really change a few things. And as a result of that... I kind of just found education for that, and realized hey you know what, this is – I feel a lot more fulfilled doing this as opposed to something for alternate reasons.

Therefore it appears that a large motivation in life for John is his faith, and that he is striving to be fulfilled in work that will help others, as this is in line with his Christian life.

Passions in Life

John also described his passions in life, and in particular his passion for social justice issues. He also explains how his passions have influenced the goals he has for his life, and how he wants to use his training in education to help others. John also explains the importance of faith in his life once again, as well as some of the other things that he enjoys. Not only are his passions important to him, but John states that his passions define who he is.

My passions I guess. Cause I think my passions are what defines who I am, a lot. Maybe not all of who I am, but I'd say a good 90 percent of who I am. My passions being like, you know social justice, or my passions being like music, or sports, or you know, photography. These are kind of things I just really associate myself and I...yeah I think these are things I would really – and my faith, of course.

Of particular importance to John is his passion for social justice, which became a recurring topic in both interviews and is clearly a component of his identity he strongly associates with. He explained how he wants to incorporate his passion for social justice into his future career, and how his training in education could be used as a venue to work in the area of social justice:

I always wanted to sign on to a non – like an NGO, a non government organization that focuses on social justice matters, that's why I wanted to do teaching and use it as a venue. But, if somehow, by God's grace... I'm able to teach and get my hours, and still do that, all in one go in one year, like that'd be fantastic. That would be, that would make my year (follow up questions about what type of work he is interested in) ...Human trafficking...anything to help. Whether it be just teaching kids some skills, like English, or whatever, or just simply on a social work kind of basis, where you're just helping them, and, in any way.

Another quote further emphasizes John's passion, while it also emphasizes that overall John just wants to work in a field that he is "happy" and "content" with. In this quote, John also expresses that seminary school may be an option for his future, as this would allow him to use education in the service of others. In addition to this, John also expresses that in an ideal world/situation, he would be able to go out into the world and work in his areas of passion. However, he is

expressing that it is logical to be more practical, and ensure that he completes his education and works towards receiving his permanent teaching certificate before he takes that step. Therefore a preoccupation for John is that he wants to work in an area he is passionate about, but he is also trying to balance that with being practical:

I think right now what it's looking at... there's the ideal way of it, or the realistic way of it. Ideally I would just love to like quit school right now and just – well I mean I'm so close to finishing, but you know what I mean...like literally just right at this moment go out and just...using education as form, just teaching or working with the kids, one-on-one and just like teaching them. And I could like do that for the rest of my life, it would be, I don't care how much money I make, like be ten dollars, - oh I shouldn't say that, that's really little... But you know what I mean, right? Like just... it's real and it's tangible, and it's like, it's in your face. It's actually like there, right, but realistically speaking I know for me, and just talking to my – you know, mentors and my parents, and everyone, is just – it's – it's smart to get the two years certificate, that the Alberta government mandates...official teaching certificate. Which you know, logically it makes sense, so that's my first option, and the first step in doing that, and that may be in Alberta, or that may be international in an Alberta international school. I don't know how that looks after this year. And after that whenever I – whenever the hours are up and I finally got it, that's when I think for me I'm like, I want to go into this, and I want to finally do some human traffic kind of stuff. And down the road, maybe even um, seminary school, like being a pastor even, and using education as a way of doing that kind of stuff, cause that's, this is where my passion lies and I want to do something that I'm just happy with, and I am content with.

In regards to the field of education being a passion, John explained how education is a platform that he can use to accomplish work in his areas of passion, and how teaching has the potential to become a passion for him, but he has yet to experience it enough to know if it is:

I don't think I fully experienced education yet to say it is but I'm certainly open for it to becoming a passion. If anything right now, I see education as a venue for my passions, using education to do social justice stuff, or other things. Right, so it's just a venue for me right now. Yeah, down the road I can see it becoming one.

Personal Freedom

Freedom was a topic frequently discussed by John. It was discussed in the context of having freedom to explore and learn at his current age:

Okay so the best thing about being my age outside of work would be the freedom, at the moment. For me at least, I, it may be different from other people, but for me it's the freedom to explore different things and continuously learn...which can I guess be applied to when your older, but I guess now is just, cause I don't know – there's just so much to know and I love learning. So it just allows me to learn a lot more, and I really like that.

Having a Meaningful Life

A topic that was frequently discussed by John was how he wants to live a meaningful life. For him, this involves making a difference in the lives of others. For John, making meaning in life is a very personal endeavor, as he believes each person needs to determine what is important for them. John's discussion about living a meaningful life also brings up some of his uncertainties about the future and how he will make his impact.

In particular, it appears that John finds meaning in life by making a difference in the world, and by following the path god sets for him:

Knowing that my life is going to make a difference in this world. As cheesy and cliché as that sounds, but I do mean that. Like, you know, making – actually making an impact as opposed to like just simply having like a regular, you know, 9-5, 8-4 job and just sitting in a cubicle all day long, kind of thing, not really doing anything, right. So yeah... Yeah I would say, it – like I said, going back to like my faith and that drive, cause it combines in a sense together. Cause my drive derives from my faith.

John also appears to be communicating that each person should find what will fulfill them in their life, in order to feel that their life has served a purpose. He stated this in response to being asked what things he thought were important to most people:

And knowing that their life is not pointless, it is not just some mundane, you go around for 80 years, 90 years of your life just doing some random job, for 40 years, and you retire and that's it, right. Is that all there is to life? And I think that's the biggest – biggest thing. And obviously like that is, life fulfillment can be subjective to different people.

Like what I think is, you know, fulfilling for me may be different than another person.

While John wants to live a meaningful life, he explained that there is some uncertainty in this idea. John states that since he is at the beginning of his career, he has yet to establish that he has made a “mark” in the world, and therefore there is some nervousness in his current position as a beginning professional, because he very much wants to make a difference with his life:

And in terms of the thing that has maybe not the best, I would say it's the unknown...

Cause everyone wants to make their mark, you want to go into this world, and you know,

when you leave this world you want to leave this - leave a mark, leave a legacy of some sort. Say hey you know, this is what I did, I'm proud of it, and well I'm literally in the beginning of that. So yeah, I guess it's kind of – in a sense, in a way it's almost kind of scary you could say.

In addition to this, the following quote nicely summarizes what John wants from his life

I think for me to know that my life, my entire life from the day I was born till whenever I pass away, my life was a life where I was – it was not meaningless, you know. I actually, you know, did stuff that were – that was not necessarily like about myself, like I wasn't you know, self-centered, like I was before, and just so focused on um, getting a certain lifestyle. Or even, even now like, one of my biggest fears of chasing that fear, ironically enough is... in chasing a dream of not having a non fulfilling life, I don't want to do it just because of that reason, vs. oh I'm doing this to feel good, so I can feel fulfilled. No I want to do it, like literally because I want to help people and I want to actually do stuff, not to feel good. Not the, like the altruistic kind of ...that's the word I was thinking of... Altruistic kind of mindset, you know.

Relationships

In addition to this, John views his loved ones and social relationships as important. John expressed how he really enjoyed the social community he was a part of with his fellow education students. Then in his practicum, away from the larger community of education students, John felt like there was less of a community, and that the focus was largely on the job. Therefore he lacked that social interaction and support that is important for many people.

I loved the community. I loved the social aspect of it, and it was fun, it was great... to have...specific people that can relate to you as a education student, that was definitely something that I was missing. And I really enjoyed being able to have that in practicum classes...when I was doing my – my actual student teaching... I tried to be as nice and you know, I'm trying to meet all the student... the other teachers, they're really nice but I think everyone is just, so focused on their job, and I – to some degree I don't blame them, because it is a job, and you have to be professional about it. But, maybe because, you know, my practicum was shorter, that I wasn't able to... get to know them all as well. But yeah I would say compared to the actual practicum classes to the actual student teaching school, the community wasn't there as much.

John also discussed his care and concern for his family. In regards to what he would choose not to worry about anymore, he stated:

If I didn't have to care, like if – not like if I was assured and had that security in knowing, you know, for the rest of my life these guys that I really care about will not be harmed in any way: physically; mentally; whatever. I think I'd go do anything.

Through “getting to know you” questions and pre-interview activities, several things of importance for John were raised. In particular it is clear that John's faith is of great importance to him, and even defines him and guides his life. It is also clear that John has many passions in life, and in particular he is passionate about social justice issues, and wants to be able to make a difference in the lives of others. John also discussed how at his current age he is learning to balance exploration and freedom with being an emerging professional. In line with being an

emerging professional, John expressed that he wants to make a difference with his life, and live meaningfully. He also discussed the importance of relationships in his life.

Psychological needs that were met during pre-service teacher preparation

It is important to acknowledge the positive and rewarding experiences of pre-service teachers, even when looking at burnout and attrition. This section will cover how John's psychological needs were met during his training and includes: social interaction, helping others, doing a job, gaining valuable experience, completing a degree, and the "good days".

Social Interaction

A topic that was frequently brought up by John was social interaction. He discussed this topic in relation to interaction with students, and how interacting with his students can help students learn and understand new concepts:

And I think for me that's been the one part I really enjoy, is I really enjoyed the social interaction of that, and being able to talk to them to the point until they actually get the concept. Cause, occasionally – actually not occasionally, quite often actually, there, the students who do not understand some concepts that you're trying to teach, and to be able to – interact with them and get to their level and talk about it, is something I really enjoy.

He also stated that he enjoys being able to connect with students on more than school work, and how he has a passion for working with kids:

I just love like connecting with kids and working with them. And I think for me like, you know I never had – like I had good teachers, for sure, but I've also had teachers that

weren't the greatest in my – in my past. So um, I think to be able to um, really connect with them – not just on a teacher point of view.

Not only does John enjoy his interactions with students, he also feels proud about how he was able to interact with students during his IPT, and felt that these interactions were satisfying and rewarding:

I think my interaction with the students... I was very happy about. Yeah just because, I remember..at the end they kind of, you know, writing notes and all that stuff, it's always very I think satisfying and rewarding to hear... students comment on I guess how you teach. And, on, you know, how relational I was in terms of just working with them and all that. So, that's something I'm very – I'm very proud about in my student teaching.

The enjoyment John receives from working with youth connects to the next topic- helping others.

Helping Others

Another way John's needs were met by teaching is that it gives him the opportunity to help others. This was a really salient topic in the interviews with John, demonstrating that John is interested in dedicating much of his life to the service of others. John discussed his desire to help students with issues and struggles they are facing, and how he wants to help students develop as individuals. Here, John is expressing how he sees that students struggle with multiple issues, and how he wants to help them and form healthy relationships with them:

When I talked about you know, being closer to the students in a healthy manner that allows you to kind of help them. For me like, cause in your practicum you kind of,

there's just so many students in the schools, and you come across so many different classes, that you're going to eventually run into students that have these type of problems...students I taught that were – well it was very obvious just by their attitudes and their actions that something was going on at home, and it reminded me a little bit of that. And that may have come [sic] through when I was drawing this.

In addition to this, John seems to measure his personal success by how much/how well he is able to help others. He also explained that he is interested in helping the people who struggle, and how he would be fulfilled by helping others achieve their dreams. He expressed that his definition of personal success involves helping others:

The clichéd answer would be successful, but I think successful, not necessarily based on what people think, but on what I consider, define and consider as successful. Meaning, you know if I helped...in a teaching sense... that one student and they were able to fulfill whatever dream they had. Like you know, I would be extremely happy with that, to see that, as opposed to somewhere they might think, oh you know you got to have a class average of you know, 4.0 or you know 95%, 100% or whatever, right. No like I'm – I'm all about the individual, and helping those that struggle... as opposed to like, I guess using that slang, you know, helping the rich get richer. Like I'm not about that, I'm just let's help those who actually need the help.

Not only does John want to help students learn, he wants to help students develop as individuals with their own opinions and thoughts. It appears that he sees his job as a teacher as extending past the curriculum, and to helping in the overall lives of students. John also explains how it is very rewarding to see kids engage in the curriculum:

There's a lot. I mean I think just even seeing the kids understand, or even better, to critique what you teach in a sense, because they developed a way of thinking where they can formulate their own opinions. I think for me like, I used to be like...it's got to be like this and that... cause that's what the curriculum program of studies says, but to have kids actually... "this is my opinion of what I feel and this is what I feel like". Okay awesome, right, like you're thinking and you have your own opinion, cause I don't want you to go out of the classroom and have your – like my opinion of what I feel is what is taught in World War II, right... you know, have your own opinion, right, back it up, but have your own opinion and that – I love it when kids do that. Like when they are able to do that, it just blows my mind. Or even seeing – this is another good one... Is seeing kids who are from maybe more troubled backgrounds, socioeconomically or like physically cutting, or whatever, all this kind of stuff, with drugs or whatever. And then have them really attach to a particular project or assignment, or even a way of thinking and just run with it, and become so intrigued by it, when they previously didn't like the subject. That blows my mind to see them do that. And so it makes a whole year... Just worth it.

Doing a Job

While the transition from student to professional was challenging, it was also rewarding for John because he was learning hands-on teaching skills and felt that he was achieving his goal of becoming a teacher:

What I enjoyed as the differences, was that between being a student teacher and a student, was that I loved being able to... it felt like I was actually doing a job. Like I was doing my – my goal, as opposed to just you know, studying and reading all these theories

and all that, but I'm actually like, I'm practicing these theories and experimenting on what I like and what I don't.

Student Teaching is Challenging, but you Gain Valuable Experience

While there were difficulties in John's student teaching, he also acknowledged how he learned from the experience. In particular, John feels that he has a better understanding of what teaching entails, and he is better prepared for the future. This quote also brings up the topic of the initial shock that student teachers can experience in their first practicum. This is a student teacher's first exposure to the actual job, and therefore it can be difficult due to the large amount of learning that takes place:

Yeah I think after my – after starting my training I'm – I kind of have a taste, especially with my practicum, my first practicum, I have a taste of what it was like. And I'm a little better prepared as to what I need to do, and prepare for in the worst case scenario. So, which gives me a lot more security, and like hey you know what, I got this, I'm in control and yeah...I just have my previous experience to draw on. And I think before my – my first practicum I was, kind of, I just, I'd had like maybe one class – like one semester of education classes, and then I dove right into the IPT.... now, like I kind of had like, you know, quite a few semesters and spring classes, summer classes, whatever– of education classes. So I kind of have, you know, more ideas of what to expect and even my friends, who took the APT and all that stuff, they, when they tell me like what to expect, it kind of prepares me for what is to come... I think that would probably like to be way, way more – way more prepared.

Completing his Degree

John discussed how he is proud to be where he is, and to almost have his education degree. John specifically explains how he is proud to be receiving a degree that can be used in different ways, which relates back to John's desires to work in social justice:

...getting to the point where I'm almost done, I just have my APT... I finally, I'm at a point where I have a job where that, where it can actually be used in a variety of different ways. So I'm – I'm really – I'm really, I'm pretty proud of that.

In addition to being proud to complete a degree, John also discussed how it is an exciting time because when he finishes, he will have a profession. John also suggests that it is a profession he can “do something with”, which relates back to his desire to help others and make a difference with his life:

I think having, being able to complete it, and being able to say that... I actually have a profession now, as opposed to simply being an undergrad, or high school, or whatever...It's actually a job that can – I can do something with.

The Good Days

Overall, when having a good day as a teacher, John finds great pleasure in it. He expressed that while there are both good and bad days, he finds that the job can be exciting and provide good learning opportunities. John stated:

I mean on the good days it's exciting. You're just like man like, this is why I'm doing this, right, and I know why I'm doing this now. Really like God you have me – you got me here for a reason, I understand now why. I'm learning so much and I'm enjoying this.

In line with the previous quote, John explained that while there are negatives to teaching, he believes the positive aspects of teaching will stand out more. John shows that he is able to maintain a positive attitude by believing that when he looks back on his career, the positive things will be more salient:

One day's good, one day's bad, and all that. Um, but looking back, if I was to look back... 20 years from now... Yeah I think it would be the positive stuff that stands out more – I would like to hope and think that, you know, the positive things of teaching stood out more solid than negative stuff. Um, unless the negative was just really, really negative, like life changing negative.

Unmet Psychological Needs During Pre-Service Teacher preparation

While teaching meets some of John's needs, it also left some needs lacking. John discussed unmet needs in the areas of freedom for personal expression, restrictions in relationships, the politics, relationship with mentor teacher, the transition from student to teacher, the workload, and challenges with students. To introduce the topic of the difficulties in teaching, John expressed how the bad days in teaching can lead to feelings of insecurity and self-doubt:

But on the bad days where you're just like discouraged, and you're criticized and there's – nobody talking about the strengths and positives of your lesson or whatever... that's when you kind of question yourself and you have a little self-doubt. So I guess in a sense it is that insecurity, cause you're like, yeah I guess I am a little bit insecure as a teacher in that sense, right. As a teacher just, you know, not knowing, still trying to figure out, you know, who you are and your identity and all that.

Freedom for Personal Expression as a Teacher

Here, John is exploring how having a career as a teacher impacts not only his role in the classroom, but also how the conduct in his personal life will be impacted knowing that teachers are expected to behave in certain ways. John explains how it is difficult for him to feel restricted by the education system because he enjoys living freely:

You have to do things – well depending on the school. Once again you have to do things with – like a certain way... I guess it's funny that I'm saying in certain schools... I'm kind of finding myself right now, I have to be really political with how I say things. Because I don't know, it's just... yeah being political with your words. Um... Just this no freedom in – in the way – the way I dress, the way I talk. Even my social life, right like um, Facebook, Twitter, all that kind of stuff, could be, you have one picture that may be – you know – could be interpreted by one person to be non-teacher behaviour, there goes your career. Um, and that's the craziness of our day now...yeah I like my freedom and when my freedom gets taken away to some degree, um, I don't like that.

Restrictions in Relationships with Students

John discussed how he enjoys interacting and building relationships with students; however, there is another side to this because he also discussed how there are barriers and challenges in building relationships with students. For example, John discussed how kids deal with many difficult issues, but how his role as a teacher limits how much he can help:

Just the things you see in these schools with what kids deal with, like cutting and drugs, and sex and all these other, alcohol, and all this kind of stuff. Um, and not – professionally not being allowed to do something like that, or to have too much – I

should say too much influence on them. That – that annoys me a little bit... That's something I, I still want to somehow, you know, at least be there and bring up these issues, saying you know... there's someone there. Like even a psychologist or something, cause this is – I don't know, it just doesn't seem right, to me. I mean kids have life tough enough with like school and... puberty and everything, and trying to figure out all that.

John discussed that there is a boundary not only in the relationships he can form with students, but also in what topics he is allowed to discuss with students, and in what areas he is able to help students. Again, while he acknowledges healthy boundaries, he is expressing how the politics around teaching limits the kind of help he wants to provide to youth. In particular he discussed how he would not always have the freedom to discuss his beliefs and experiences with students. This desire to help students with their personal struggles relates back to how John wants to work in social justice, and wants to make a difference in the lives of others:

It's not really recommended that you... talk to them about life issues... once again that's where it gets kind of political, in the sense that um, and to some degree I do agree... where you can't share your own beliefs or values. Because I do want kids to formulate and become strong, and have a strong foundation, their own beliefs and all that stuff. Um, but you know, if a kid was to ask me like, you know, what do you believe in? Like what do you stand for, what do you sort of take on this event... to always be neutral... Like, I would like to have the freedom to express what I feel and all that kind of stuff. I would like to share these kinds of things and just like, you know, this is why I believe in what I believe, cause I went through this and that. Um, and then when it comes to issues where we talked about before, about like you know what kids go through – bullying or you know, drugs or cutting, or alcohol, or sex, or whatever. Um. I think to

be able to talk to some of that stuff with them, like would be, it's healthy. I mean not, you don't want to do anything like an unhealthy... where they get emotionally attached kind of thing, but in a way where it's like you can guide them towards getting um, like helping themselves, or getting help in the situation... to be able to push them to a direction where they can actually help themselves without – like getting in trouble for doing that, you know.

The Politics around Teaching

A recurrent topic of discussion with John was his concern about the politics surrounding the field of education. The following quote helps to understand how John is apprehensive about the education system, and how it will limit his freedom of choice because of the necessity in following the procedures outlined in the education system. It also expresses his acknowledgement that each teacher is different, and will have different perceptions and beliefs. However, John has concern that the education system does not always allow for teachers to express their individuality:

I don't like politics, um, I'm very straight up, black and white, person who just, you know, I want to – well not always black and white, there's some grays...but yeah politics scare me, right. I just want to get straight to it, I don't want to jump through loopholes just to be able to do some things. I don't want to be someone's dog for a while and have to – I have to live by these policies, I have to live by these things, because whoever is designing it, their perception of um, teaching, is that and that's what they feel is correct. But that might not necessarily be correct for me, because my perception of teaching is

totally different than theirs... So there's so many different little, like politics and philosophical like, understandings of how things are supposed to be, but I don't know.

In addition to this, John discussed how completing a student teaching practicum changed his perception of teaching. John discussed how he had to re-evaluate his future in teaching upon entering his practicum, because it made him realize that there are many "hoops" to jump through, and that the politics surrounding education may sometimes interfere with doing "the right thing". Therefore this quote not only acknowledges John's concerns, but it also begins to explore how the challenges in teaching have led John to re-evaluate his future in education.

I don't like politics. The politics of...any workplace or of education even... going into it, like I was kind of, you know, pretty happy, I was excited because I was like yeah, no school, no studying for whatever. And then going like out of it, I was just like man, like re-evaluating, like is this really, like do I really want to put up with a lot of this. Like, jumping through...hoops, just to like please...The person who's in charge... just to please them. And even though to be honest, I saw – I saw some of it, like I won't say who, but some of the UF, or some of the teachers even breaking the rules themselves and it seemed kind of like...you are coming down on me so hard on some of this stuff, but look, I see this and that. So it was, I don't know, I don't like politics. I just, I just think you should just do the right thing, just do it, who cares about the legacy or the name of whatever organization, just do whatever the right thing is, and just do it.

In this quote, John gives specific examples of what he does not like about the politics of education. In particular, he discussed how he does not enjoy the formality of the profession:

To go in a professional setting and you have to be like, alright class, alright ladies and gentlemen, or whatever, it's really different. It felt weird when I was doing that, I was like oh weird. And then the other thing was...the students like calling you by your last name, and um, that's really kind of weird for me.

Getting the teaching certificate

A recurring topic brought up by John was how becoming a teacher is a challenging process, not just in regards to the actual work, but also in the practical components to becoming a certified teacher with a permanent position. John discussed how it takes at least two years to receive the permanent teaching certificate, and how this time he would have to dedicate to receiving the certificate would delay him getting to do the work he really wants to do in human trafficking. John also expresses some career uncertainty due to the time requirements of obtaining the teaching certificate:

Um. I think, well, there's several things. From a political point of view, you have to get that certificate right off the bat. You don't get it once you graduate, you have to get it after two years. Which can be, hindering me from really going after what I really want to do. Like I told you before, human trafficking and all that... The unfortunate part is that, two years, it means like two years of actual fulltime teaching. So it might not actually be, I might not be teaching just for two years, because I might not have the certain hours that fall under the category, 2 [years] fulltime. ... I might have to do like three, four years of part time to equivalent to two years fulltime... I mean, it could be three, four – two, three, four years from now, and I really don't know... I mean, I could be married in a couple of years, I don't even know. Like I could, there's so many different factors that come into

play. Ideally I would, you know, I want to do that, I want to do this in some capacity. Like you know it might be teaching in that capacity. It might not just be goodbye to teaching, just maybe taking teaching in another form. Or I guess, we have a way of putting it in Christian terms, it's wherever god wants me to go.

Difficult to find a teaching job in Alberta

John discussed his concern about the difficulty in finding a teaching job in Alberta. This quote demonstrates how there is great uncertainty in whether or not there are job openings in teaching, and whether he will be able to find a position in a saturated job pool:

There's probably thousands, ten thousands of teachers out there looking for a job, how are you going to get a job if there's no jobs available, and there's ten thousand waiting. Right, it's kind of...yeah, all that training for what? Right? Sending us... overseas, or so I don't know.

John takes it further by discussing how there is somewhat of a lack of control in finding a job in Alberta's current job market. He stated:

Well in the current state of our province, there's not a lot of Alberta Education jobs, so that's kind of something that's completely out of my own control and I can get every reference, and every like, you know, mark and whatever I got to do. But, I know at the end of the day it's not going to make a difference.

Where he will teach

Another practical concern about the future that John is facing is where he will find a teaching job; for example, will it be in Alberta or overseas? This quote also ties into John's concern about

receiving his teaching certificate, demonstrating how a lot of the uncertainties about working as a teacher are intertwined. John said:

Where, location, yeah. I think that's the big one right now. And I'm already thinking about it to be honest with you, like you know... Alberta, Edmonton, Calgary, or am I going to be overseas...I don't know. I mean I just want to get my certificate and be able to do whatever I want, but that's probably... the other thing I'll be pretty worried about. Is getting those hours, cause I feel like it's just, it's delaying what I really want to do.

Relationship with Mentor Teacher

Mentor teachers are an important component to field teaching placements, and can greatly influence the experience for their students. John discussed how there were challenges in the relationship with his IPT mentor teacher due to tensions and a lack of freedom for him to explore and learn his own teaching style. This quote also demonstrates how John is self-aware as he acknowledges that he is a learner and welcomes constructive comments from others. However, John also felt that the relationship was not always conducted in a helpful and supportive manner, and particularly hoped for more opportunity for personal expression. He stated:

I think my relationship with my mentor teacher was at times – how do I say it... it seemed like there were tension at times, to be honest with you. I feel like they were trying to... I feel like they were maybe trying to teach me something, like how to teach and all the politics of everything. But, I – I definitely felt very, there was just no freedom in, you know, teaching the way I would like to teach. And I understand, you know, I'm a student teacher and I have my weaknesses and I'm here to learn, absolutely. I'm down for that, but I would like to have, at least a little bit of creative freedom to teach... So I like – I

like to take risks here and there, but it was not stressed, or it was not wished upon... I could ask them this...and they'll give me an answer, but it just never really answered my question... Cause I like to clarify just to make sure I'm doing it exactly the way but, it just felt almost dangerous and scary to ask them again, because of, you know, the facial reaction of how they may respond to it. Or they'll just give me a very vague answer, and I just wouldn't know what I would be doing. It almost seems like we're wasting everyone's time... I'm okay with constructive criticism, like I think it's a great way to learn and we teachers do it all the time. But, I think when it's – like I felt some times, near the end of it at least, it was getting almost kind of personal with some of the comments being made toward me. So I think that was one of the times where I really felt like it was really coming down on me. And just giving me the impression and hints, that you know what, maybe don't go into teaching, go into something else, right. For me I thought that was extremely disrespectful...I wouldn't tell you to not do that, and that's my own – like this is my own life. I respect your opinion, but you do not have to tell me to do something like that. So, you know...the practicum with my – my mentor teacher, was definitely a learning moment. Persevering moment... very persevering moment.

The following is a quote that summarizes how John felt during his student teaching experience. This quote really illustrates the discouragement that John felt in the relationship with his mentor teacher, and how the relationship impacted him on an emotional level. He uses visual imagery, which helps others to clearly understand his experiences:

I felt like I was thrown to the wolves. And even when I was trying to do it their way, I... felt I didn't have the freedom to ask questions, without getting a closed door. Like um, why didn't you do this, why did you do this, why did you do this in the last stuff vs.

like... it was the most depressing thing ever because I felt like crap and you're like, am I not doing anything right? And there were points even where, you know, why are you even in the teaching business, maybe teaching's not for you, maybe try something else... you want to connect with kids, go to social work, right. Which is really like discouraging. It's like you're down and then getting kicked in the nuts, even more when you're down, and then getting kicked in the head again, when you're down. And you can't even get up.

Transition from Student to Professional

A part of entering into a student teaching practicum is making a switch from student, to beginning teacher and professional. John explained how this transition is hard because you have to shift from only taking care of yourself, to having to lead a class full of students:

I mean I've been a student for a long time, and you're going from student to a teacher, really quick...it was kind of like, well what am I doing? It, it's – it's really hard to – it was really hard to just suddenly like put yourself in the shoes of like a professor, or a teacher, where you're actually, you know what, these 30 kids, there's 25-30 kids, you know they're mine for like an hour and a half, or something like that. And you got to lead them and do everything, as opposed to just being one of the students and you know what, I do my thing, I'll take my notes, I'll highlight whatever, and just do my thing. So, that was a – a big difference from student teaching to being a student at U of A.

John further discussed what it is like to be at the end of his university training, and on the cusp of becoming a professional. He describes the transition as exciting but also “sad”, because he has invested a lot of time into being a student. In this quote, John also expresses this transition is scary because he needs to take on being in charge of other people's learning, rather than just his

own, and how this can be difficult because there may be times when he doesn't know the answers. This quote also expresses how there is much more responsibility when you are a professional versus a student because you are accountable for the learning of others:

I know I'm, I'm done, I'll be done with U of A, forever after this. Which is kind of sad, I mean I've been here for a while and I do like it... I mean I've been a student, all my life... it's sad, but exciting at the same time. Like I love learning, but now I have to teach what I learn and it's scary doing that... Do I know enough?... like I said before, I guess kids, in some subjects kids may know more than you, right. Like in science, you get a question wrong, cause you're either right or you're wrong. And if you get it wrong it's like oh man, crap, right. Like that... that's embarrassing, something like that, right. Cause you're, as a student you're thinking like study, study, I got to get this mark... Teacher, you're more like, okay, I got to teach this... it's not about me anymore. Like a student you're so independent... just taking notes and doing all this. But as a teacher, you're leading – you're a leader now and you're leading, and you're guiding, and you're – at the end of the year, or end of semester, you know, the kids are supposed to know this amount of material. Um, that's up to you as a professional teacher.

John took this further by explaining that he needs to mediate how much he relates and connects to the youth he is working with, with also taking on the professional role of a teacher. He expressed that he experiences some internal conflict because he wants to bond with students, but also needs to abide by teaching standards:

Just being able to, I think, mediate the conflicting perspectives internally. Cause... one perspective you're kind of like yeah, I'm still young I can relate, like I can get what you

know, person A is going through. I understand that. But the same time, there's the other side...I'm professional now... I can't change it, this is what it is, I got to do it. Right, so it's really, for me it's really conflicting.

Workload in Student Teaching

Another topic discussed by John was the workload present in student teaching, and in particular how the work load was large and stressful. He also expressed that while it was stressful, it was a good learning experience. John stated:

But when I was doing my student teaching, my workload was substantially huge. In terms of all the assignments, I had to create and lesson plans...my mentor teacher was very specific about what they wanted. So I had to be very specific in – I mean it was good learning for me, but at the same time it was very stressful, and very tiresome to continually do that day after day.

John gave further details of the workload in student teaching, describing it as a busy and tiring experience. For John, the busyness and exhaustion were exacerbated by receiving little positive feedback from his mentor teacher:

Oh man, the busyness of it. Oh my goodness. There are nights, well I think for a good couple weeks, I just – I slept at like three, four a.m. doing lesson plans and woke up at 7. Just to get to school on time and all that. And running on coffee every day, and it's hell, right. Long story short, you feel like crap and then you know – you know it, your mentor teacher... and they don't get you, and they tell you, you got to do this and that. And okay I'm going to try that, but it's still not working, and they don't understand how you feel... Whereas this is how it is and you just go to do it, just do it, but the reality is that

sometimes it's not that simple... I'm sure other people, my friends have had different experiences and it's awesome for them. But, for me it was just – yeah, it wasn't the greatest, and a lot, be aware of the politics in what you say. Cause there are a lot of people who can get you a job, or make sure you never get a job in Alberta.

John also went into some detail about some of the specific challenges in the work of a teacher/student teacher. He explained how there is an extensive amount of material to cover in a limited amount of time, and a large number of students to teach the material to. In addition to this, there is added pressure in student teaching because you are being observed and evaluated:

It's the idea that you always have to like... there is material in the curriculum, and the program of studies. And you have to teach all that. And I think the biggest thing... Is that, the biggest concern that they have is that, there's so much material and you have to teach it all by a limited time. And you have to make sure every single student...has to know all this stuff. And the reality is that our classrooms are increasing from, you know, I don't know, when I was at school it was like 20, and now it's increasing to 40. I'm hearing 50, maybe even 60. To make sure every single little kid, every single student knows every single material before they go into a PAT [Provincial Achievement Test] or a diploma or whatever, IB exams, whatever. That's a lot of material, and that's a lot of kids, and that's a lot of stuff you have to cover and make sure that they all have been um, properly assessed, or whatever. So that's um, one of the stresses I think. And the other one for a student teacher is, this, or even as a new teacher, is like I said before, the people watching. Are you doing, I mean you have – you have your own way of doing things, but sometimes your way of doing things isn't one um, the people above you want you to do it that way. So that can be stressful. That could lead to a lot of burnout, I can see.

Relating to the curriculum, John discussed the demands of the constantly evolving program of studies. Here John is stating that there is the chance that a teacher could become comfortable in the known and established techniques they have been using, but it is important to keep up to date with advances in the field in order to push your teaching further, and to maintain effectiveness:

I guess I could say continue to keep up-to-date with the new theories and new stuff that comes out. Cause I do agree with a lot of the philosophy and theories that do come. So I think keeping up-to-date with that would be good, or reading over...old – old papers, old notes I've had to read in class, and just to maintain it. Um, cause you're right, there's that danger of um, treading over to the dark side of education, and just simply teaching straight from the textbook or lecturing or whatever.

Another specific example of how teaching is challenging comes in the following quote, where John is expressing that a teacher's job extends beyond the walls of the school. Their work does not end when the students go home, and they consistently have to work on things such as planning and marking at home, which may affect the time they have to spend with friends and family. However, John also has some optimism in regards to this, because he explains how being prepared and planning ahead can help to achieve a work/life balance:

And the other thing being like, you know being a teacher is not just a 9-5 job. Um, there is a lot of planning outside of it. Um. Sometimes you lose sleep. Sometimes you're – you bring, well not sometimes, a lot of the times you bring your – your work home, and you do stuff there when you want to – you know, hang out with your friends or whatever, or watch the game, or..if you become a family man and you want to, you know, hang out with your kids or your spouse, or whatever. And but you have this you got to do, so it's

trying to figure out that balance, I think, but yeah, I mean if everything goes well and you can plan it all ahead, then I guess, all it really is, is just marking. Which isn't really too bad usually.

John also discussed how he feels that he, himself, experienced teacher burnout during his practicum due to the workload and pressure, saying:

My practicum, yeah. Um. I mean... I have to think about it. Yeah like myself, even some of my friends who are student teaching, um, you know, just the workload and the amount of pressure you're getting from – from admin, or your mentor teachers. It's, it really burns you out. And on top of that, um, you have your, also – and I know they tell us don't but... having voluntary experiences, or other things you're involved in, whether it be – like I didn't have a job then, but other people that had a job, cause they can't pay for it financially, like that. Like I think if I had to pay – I mean if I was worrying about that stuff a little more, I would be destroyed.

The Challenges of Working with Students

John explained how there was pressure in student teaching because it can be scary for him to try new things that are out of his comfort zone. In addition to this, John is learning to accept that he will not always be in control of everything as a teacher:

It's not necessarily the hardest, but it's certainly the scariest I think. Um, is just being willing to try I think, new things that you have not tried before and being comfortable with that. Especially for me, when I'm kind of sometimes a control freak, and I need to know what's going on, and I need to know, plan it out and all that stuff. And to try and have something that goes way out of the loop, it can be – sometimes frightening, cause

you're like – oh my goodness I'm not in control and I don't know how to respond to that, what do I do? Um, something like that can be, I guess one of the harder things to really deal with, but it's also – I know something we as teachers should probably embrace... because it's good, it's good to have that – it's just uncomfortable, but it's good.

This relates to working with students, because students bring many factors into the classroom.

This means teachers will not always be in control.

Another topic raised in regards to the challenges that are faced in teaching, is that sometimes students can be difficult to work with. While John acknowledges that he may be challenged by some students, he also believes that he can learn from these difficult experiences. This quote demonstrates John's humanistic approach to teaching because he expresses the importance in understanding individuals and their perspectives:

Not necessarily roadblocks but, things that could be, that could give me trouble... but also could be good learning experiences, I think could be some kids that may be harder to deal with, cause we always have you know, the nightmares, or like the – the difficult ones um that are a little harder to deal with. I don't want to categorize them as that, but let's be honest... you know there are only so – so much you can take... but those could be good learning experiences as well I think to just learn how to deal, and – and relate or understand their perspective and all that kind of stuff. Right, cause, like I said before... every person has their own perspective and experiences. So it's something to learn from.

John's Future

John discussed his future in relation to his upcoming student teaching practicum, further developing his teaching identity, and how teaching will be a part of his life regardless of whether or not he works as a certified teacher.

Upcoming Student Teaching Practicum

At the time of the interviews, John was preparing to embark on his second, and final, student teaching practicum. Seeing as how John discussed some of the negative experiences that he had in his first practicum, he relayed some apprehension in regards to his second practicum. He explained that he was worried about his second practicum because it is the final stage in completing his degree, and he wants to be successful. He also expressed how he is fearful that he will be limited by a traditional teaching model again, rather than being free to try the things he has learned in school. This relates back to John's desire to have a feeling of freedom to teach in ways congruent to his beliefs:

I'm doing my practicum soon. And unfortunately my first one didn't go as well. So to go into my second one right now, I am definitely a little more worried than most about what my outcome is, cause this is the last thing that's standing between me and my degree.

And um, I – well, to put it bluntly I don't want to fail, right. Because 1) like I just, no one – no one goes into anything and want to fail, right. And 2) like it's waste of money, it's a waste of everyone's time, and then all that. And at the same time if you're just learning all these theories and – and curriculum and everything has been great, and I love it so much, right. But my biggest fear is that I go into a school and I'm not able to actually implement these techniques, because um, some schools may be more traditional than

others...Which is just extremely conflicting and confusing, and hard, cause I learned all this stuff...and now I want to practice it, so what do I do? Right. It's one of my, I'm left with uncertainty in that sense, right.

John further explained his feelings and wishes to have the freedom to explore his teaching more in his upcoming practicum. John also explains how he has hope that his upcoming practicum will be enjoyable since he will be in a new school with new students, but there is still apprehension and concern that his experience will be similar to his first student teaching practicum:

If I had to use a word, I would say it's going to be, bitter sweet, in that sense... in a hopeful sense... I don't want it to be kind of like what it was before. But, you know, it's a new -new thing, new school, new teaching and everything, and kids. It's going to be really fun, so, yeah. I'm, I'll be honest, that's probably my biggest worry is that my APT will be like my IPT, where it was just – no freedom. And not a lot of – not a lot of – yeah not a lot of freedom to make mistakes, and learn from them.

Further developing teaching identity

John also discussed how developing his personal style in teaching may not be an easy process, but he feels that he can develop his own teaching style if he is allowed the time and space to learn:

There will be roadblocks, absolutely. Can I adapt to it, yeah I think I can adapt to it, I just need – for me personally I think I need – I need time. Just knowing myself I like to learn a little slowly than most, and I like – I like to have my time and my hours, the hard work to put into it, and also the freedom to make mistakes if I – and not be worried I'd get like ran over or fired, or whatever, just because I made one little mistake. Right. Just

the freedom to – to learn and improve myself over time as opposed to here go, do what you're expected, you have this standard... No, let's continually raise the bar as we get more experienced, right.

Regardless of What Job John has in the Future, Education/Teaching will be a Component

This quote illustrates John's uncertainty about what the future holds for him, because he acknowledges how he does not know whether or not he will work as a professionally certified teacher. However, he is certain that he will be a lifelong teacher, regardless of whether or not he is certified teacher working in an Alberta classroom. This desire relates to how John discussed how he wants to be altruistic and live for a greater purpose:

I mean I might not be professionally a teacher, I'm going to get a little deep and philosophical here. I feel like if I was to do, even like pasturing or...working in an orphanage or anything like that. You know, there is still, you know, we call like pedagogical moments or teaching moments, where we can just you know highlight, let's take advantage of that, the kids are learning, let's sit down and talk about it, right. Even now, I'm not a licensed teacher but, and when I'm not even, when I'm not at practicum or anything, I'm just... at church or whatever, working with kids. There are moments where you can just, hey let's talk about this and teach them about this, and so in that sense yeah, I will be a lifelong teacher, right, but maybe not in a professional sense. I don't know if that's necessarily what I'm going to do, but I don't know yet.

While John discussed that his passion lies in social justice work, he also acknowledges that his education degree will be useful no matter what job he has, because he can use the skills and

knowledge he has developed in any work he decides to do. In this quote, John is acknowledging that not only could he incorporate education into social justice work, but he could incorporate social justice work into a career in education. Whether he is a teacher in a classroom, or using education as a medium, John appears to have an overall focus to educate youth to be global citizens. John said:

Um, the first one like I said before was, it opened so many more doors, internationally. It's a great venue or medium to do social justice kind of stuff, and it just – it's awesome. And even now, I'm learning about how like, you know, you can use education even in your own classes...in Alberta, to talk about like social justice, and these issues and how to teach kids to actually be active in the community and being a citizen. Which is really exciting for me, to see, to raise a new generation up to do that.

This final quote captures and summarizes how John views his journey towards becoming a teacher, and how he acknowledges that there have been many “downs”, but there is still hope that you will go “back up”. In addition to this, he explored how the downs may not always be necessarily negative. An important piece of this quote is how John explains that on the rollercoaster, he is “waiting to go back up again”. This shows hope, because while John talks about his struggles and “down” moments, he looks forward to things getting better:

Well immediately – like in terms of what I had gone through – rollercoaster. Um, although like, I'm trying to determine whether or not...going down is necessarily going down. Cause sometimes when you're on a rollercoaster going down is fun, right. Um. But yeah like I would say like you know, I would say rollercoaster where it's had a lot of ups and downs. And, I guess it's one of those more extreme rollercoaster's where you're just

going more down, and you're going down, and you're going down, and you're going down. But, you're waiting to go back up again, all that stuff. But, um, you know what, that's what this new practicum could be about.

Bill

Bill had just completed his degree in elementary education at the time of the first interview. Therefore, he had completed all coursework and both his student teaching practicums. Bill was a student in the arts faculty before entering the education program. During interviewing, Bill was open to answering questions and was forthcoming with information about himself. Bill appeared to be a very reflective individual, who has given good thought to topics such as the ones raised in the interview.

Similar to the interviews with John, the rooms the interviews were completed in were quiet, comfortable, and large. However, a clinical feeling was present due to bright and fluorescent lights. This may have created a more formal feeling to the interviews, especially since we were doing the interviews in rooms that are normally used for clinical purposes. While there may have been some formality to it, Bill remained open and spoke quite freely. Again, this case study will begin with an introduction to who Bill is as a person. The case study will then explore Bill's experiences with the topic of interest.

From the pre-interview activities provided to Bill, he completed all of them. The PIAs are attached in the appendix. Of his pre-interview activities Bill picked the one that he felt was the most important and discussed it:

If I had to pick one, the one that I would have picked was...number five. And that's just the two diagrams showing what I like and what I don't like. What I like is that, in terms

of a career it's a fulfilling career and it's dynamic, and to me it's kind of like satisfying, cause you can know that you know, you're kind of putting your work towards something good, right. You're putting your efforts towards like a kind of a worthwhile field... is pretty important to society and things like that. So and I've always enjoyed working with kids, it's something that, you know, I take joy in and something that yeah that I think is fun or whatever... Things that I don't like is – obviously it's hard to find a job, just you know, there's, and also there's like a lot of hoops you have to kind of jump through, right. Like you have to, you know, do certifications for – for like three different things and whatever. And actually I like the – the pay isn't quite as good as you know, personally I'd like for the amount of work you do, but yeah. So basically things I don't like is just kind of like the bureaucracy of finding a job and kind of advancing.

Some of the ideas that came up as important in Bill's PIA and throughout the interview include the fulfillment Bill gets from teaching, the dynamic nature of teaching, and the importance the career has to the community. In addition to this, Bill enjoys working with kids. However, Bill also explains what he perceives to be downsides of the career. The downsides for Bill include how it is difficult to find a teaching job, there are a lot of "hoops" to jump through in order to establish yourself in the career, and how the pay is only average for the amount of work teaching involves. Bill's experiences and thoughts about these topics will be further expanded upon with additional quotes throughout the case study. Of Bill's experience completing the PIAs Bill stated that the PIAs can help people express their values: "Well I think it – it goes to like, uh, I mean well looking – well cause I did a bunch of them. Like it kind of shows like, you know, what you value or what you put value on, right."

Overall, the pre-interview activity was a good way to begin the interview, because it helped begin the reflective process, and it provided a comfortable starting point for the interview.

About “Bill”

As was the case with John, the interviews not only revealed information about the research topic, but also about the kind of person Bill is. Through the questions directed at understanding Bill as a whole, as well as through Bill’s responses to some of the other questions a few recurring and important topics came up. The sub-topics that were found include: Bill’s journey to the education program, having freedom to explore in his youth as well as uncertainty, having a personal sense of integrity, feeling secure in life, and becoming more reflective since becoming a teacher.

Journey to the Education Program

On his path to the education program, Bill said that he decided to enter education because he was concerned that an arts degree wouldn’t provide him with many opportunities. Bill also commented on how he considered entering business, but decided that it may not have been the right time to go into the business program because he enjoys working with kids and other people, and also felt that education would be able to provide him with a career. Bill also expressed how teaching is an important, but undervalued job:

I was in arts and I was like oh man like, if I graduate with like – I mean I don’t mean to offend anyone, with like arts degrees and stuff, right. But I was like I don’t know... what I’d go into like even as like a major and stuff, I was like I don’t know what I would graduate from. And there’s not a lot of job prospects...I was just kind of taking a bunch of classes. I was always planning to go into business or something anyways right, but then um, I really thought about it and I was like well maybe business isn’t right for right

now. So I – I chose education just cause I did a lot of like work with kids and like volunteering and stuff. So that was always kind of an interest of mine, and – and I thought...you know if you make a career out of it, then you know, it sounds like a pretty good fit... I wanted a career where, you know, you are kind of working with people and education is – I think it's kind of an underappreciated career, just cause you know, the work that you're doing is, it's fairly important. I mean you're teaching kids...educating youth and stuff. Right so I thought that it just had a lot of good things about it.

He also discussed how he was initially resistant to entering education and becoming a teacher, but once he entered the education program he realized he could be happy in the teaching profession. However, Bill also explained that he thought going through the education program would help affirm a desire to be a teacher for his whole working life, but while he likes teaching, he learned that he does not see himself in the job for the long term:

Interestingly enough...actually I was pretty resistant to being a teacher, but I got into education first. It wasn't until I started...going through the program that I was like oh yeah, like I'd be happy to do this. So I know it's, it sounds kind of weird, but...it wasn't really solidified for me until throughout the program. Like as I was doing the program, so that being said...I thought about it too, right, like I was oh maybe like the practicums and stuff, and volunteering in schools, and working with...other kids doing other things... would help me affirm like, oh I'll be a teacher, you know, for life or whatever. But then I was like no, it's – it's, again I like it...but it's not something I can see myself doing for my whole life, kind of thing".

Having Youth Means Freedom to Explore, but also Experiencing Uncertainty

As a young man, Bill considers his current life to be characterized by freedom. Bill feels this way because he is primarily only responsible for himself, and he is able to explore different opportunities as well as his independence:

I think the best thing about being my age is that, you know you have...relative freedom, right. Like I'm 22, so I'm pretty young and the thing is...for me at least, like I'm not really like tied down to anything in particular. So...there's a lot of freedom for seeking out opportunities and you know, just exploring different things and pursuing... like a variety of things. And I think there's a lot of freedom for that...Right like, in terms of...if you have to move somewhere to work, right. Like, you have freedom to just move...it's not like I'm uprooting a family or whatever, I'm just, I'm moving myself right. So there's, there is that, and there's also freedom to, you know, just kind of explore other things, like explore your independence and whatever.

However, being young is also associated with difficulties and challenges. Bill explained that with youth comes inexperience and uncertainty. Bill expressed that nothing feels “set” in his life yet, and there is uncertainty because he does not know when he will find a job. Bill explains that this uncertainty about the job market is difficult, because the waiting period feels as though you're not “going anywhere”:

The hardest thing about being my age I guess would be...kind of like inexperience. And there's, there's a lot of uncertainty – I mean obviously, it goes hand in hand with like being free to do things, right, there's a lot of uncertainty. It doesn't feel like

anything's...set. So and then with inexperience...you're still like learning how to kind of get your life... I just found that – like after you graduate university, especially with the way...the job market is for education, right. Like there's going to be a time where it doesn't feel like you're doing anything, because you're just graduating and you're just, you know, you've just applied or whatever, but you're just waiting right. And then for that, I think it's a challenge cause, it doesn't feel like you're going anywhere, and there doesn't seem to be any...set direction and stuff.

Having a Personal Sense of Integrity

According to Bill, it is important for individuals to maintain a sense of integrity in their lives. For Bill, integrity means being true to who you are. He explains that in a career this means doing something you enjoy in order to be fulfilled, rather than focusing on external factors such as the pay, etc. This topic relates to both Bill as a person, as well as his experience with the topic of study. He stated:

And I also think that, for me also like, having integrity...is important too. Like you got to be true to yourself and true to your values. I think those are important things. But like in terms of like a career or whatever, like I personally feel that, you know, for me I would take a career that maybe...pays a little less, or whatever...but, it's something that you know, I enjoy doing and something that...you can go to work happy to do, and you...feel like those skills suit you and stuff...so that's kind of what I mean, like you got to kind of do what...fulfills you. Even if you have to take some sacrifices in other places.

Bill further clarified what he means by life fulfillment by saying that it means being able to look back on your life with contentment and satisfaction. He also explains how life fulfillment is different for everyone:

I think life fulfillment means just like you can kind a like look back on your life, and just be like happy, or not happy, but like being a contentment with what you have...like, I don't think...it's got like a standard measurement, life fulfillment...I think for everyone it's different, right, but I think if they could look back, or even like reflect on what they have now and...their content with it and they feel satisfied by it, then I think that's – that's fulfilled enough.

Bill stated that he hopes to achieve life fulfillment by working hard and pursuing the things that he enjoys whether or not they are valued by society and others:

How I hope to achieve fulfillment, is this, you know just working hard...or like doing the best you can in the situation that you're in. And you know just, um, you know pursuing things that – that you want to pursue...things that you feel like you want, like they might not be the most like gratifying or society might not think it's like the greatest use of your time. But if you're happy doing it and – and you get enjoyment from that, then I think you might as well do it right?

Feeling Secure in Life

Bill expressed how security in life is important, because he believes people want to feel assured that everything is going well:

Well to most people is probably...it's probably like security. Like they want to make sure they're okay and that...you know, their family's okay. Like those kind of things. Like they just want to know that everything is going well.

Bill has Become More Reflective since Entering the Teaching Profession

Bill also discussed how he has become more “thoughtful” since entering the profession of teaching. He explained how teaching requires planning things ahead and reflecting on what you are doing, and how this has transferred to his personal life because he has started to think a lot about things such as salary and how that will impact things such as buying a house and having a family. This quote relates to understanding Bill as a person, because it serves as an example of Bill's thought process in regards to his future and topics of importance such as family:

Yeah. I think – I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing, but it just made me more...thoughtful in some ways, right...When you're teaching, when you're preparing for teaching there's a lot of things you need to prepare ahead of time, right. You need to think of like you know, how is it going to fit into the curriculum, like how will the kids... like it and will they understand it. And you know, what's the best way to go about it...there's...all these – sorry - considerations that you need to take when you're teaching a lesson or preparing a day or whatever, right. Now how that translates...see this is where it kind of gets good and bad...it started making me think of these things too, like in my individual life. But, I think as a bad thing...I tend to over think things now. Like, for example...you're looking for a job, right, and let's say like a teaching job pays you...\$50-60,000 a year, right. And let's say...you want to move out eventually right, so then you're like oh you need to save money for like a house...average down payment of a

house would be like, like an average priced house would be like \$80-90,000. So you're like... how much money do I need to save to do that, right.

Through the questions designed to understand who Bill is, his desire to live with integrity and lead a happy life came to the surface. This is an important motivation to understand, as this desire likely guides Bill in much that he does. In addition to this, Bill's desire for security will help to understand some of his responses to topic specific questions. Bill also shared his journey to the education program, and how he has become a more reflective person since entering the teaching profession. To summarize Bill and his current position in life, this quote serves useful because it explains how Bill views this point in his life as one where he has just completed one stage, and he is preparing himself for the next stage:

If we always look at life as if it's like a journey, right, like you're going on like an adventure or whatever. And where I am now is like let's say like, you know, been going on like a – a big adventure and you get through...one tough area. Let's say it's like a desert or something, you're about to get into a different one but, I'm kind of in like the preparation stage...in between stages... You're kind of, you just kind of finished something, so you – you learned a lot and you gained experiences, but you're just preparing for another one so you're kind of not quite like embarking on that journey yet. But you're just getting ready and I think that's where I am right now.

Psychological needs that were met during pre-service teacher preparation

As a training teacher, Bill has learned and experienced many of the positives and negatives associated with the profession. He discussed several of the components to teaching that he found met his psychological needs such as how it benefits other people, developing as a professional,

the policy of inclusion, the rewarding nature of teaching, and the practical benefits of the career, having a good mentor teacher, freedom as a teacher, and graduation. These topics all relate back to Bill as a person, because he wants a career that is true to who he is, and is rewarding for him.

A career that Benefits Others

To begin with, Bill discussed how the teaching profession serves others, which is an enjoyable aspect of the field. When Bill was discussing his PIA activity, he explained how teaching is fulfilling, dynamic and enjoyable because he gets to work with kids:

What I like is that, in terms of a career it's a fulfilling career and it's dynamic, and to me it's kind of like satisfying, cause you can know that...you're kind of putting your work towards something good, right. You're putting your efforts towards like a kind of a worthwhile field, as opposed to...I mean I don't – I don't mean to disparage other careers, right but, seems like educating kids and stuff is – is pretty important to society and things like that. So and I've always enjoyed working with kids, it's something that, you know, I take joy in and something that...I think is fun.

Beyond the notion of helping others, Bill is also raising the point that he is in a position to serve as a role model for students. Specifically, Bill discussed how he would be “happy” to have a positive influence in the lives of students, and that this serves as a motivating factor for him as a teacher. However, he also acknowledges that this quality of the profession also comes with an element of “seriousness”. Seemingly because being a role model is not an easy task:

But you also want to...for me like I wanted to be in a career that...you can kind of benefit people...You can help people, and I think...teaching is a good opportunity for me to do that, right. Just because, I mean you hear all the stories of how like kids turned out

like poorly, because they don't have strong role models, or they don't have good teachers. Or, I want to be careful how I say that...like negligent parents and stuff... I'm not saying teachers should substitute for parents...And understanding your role is very important, but at the same time that, the potential for being a strong role model to these kids...is huge. Right. And like that's something that sticks with them for a long time...if you have the opportunity to – to positively influence some kids, like I think it's...it is a huge thing and it's something that you know, I'd be happy to do. But it's also something that helps me – kind of motivates me to work hard...it's like, you don't want to be the teacher or whoever, who – whose a negative influence on someone, right. It kind of keeps you on your toes, and keeps you, yeah motivated to work hard...so it's kind of a good thing, but it also comes with a bit of a bad thing, cause there is a seriousness to it.

In regards to helping students, Bill also stated that beyond teaching students the curriculum, teachers also have the opportunity to help students mature in many aspects of their lives. He appears to enjoy being able to help children in general, and beyond the educational scope:

Obviously...I mean you're guiding them, like you're teaching them right. Like I think that – that one's obvious, but...if you can help them...mature and grow, and stuff. And if you can guide them through that maturation, like I think that's – that helps them too. Cause when they're going through a school year, like I mean they're not just doing school...they do other things in life and – and as a teacher you're in a position where you can kind of help them do that too.

Developing as a professional

As pre-service teachers progress through their training, they gain more experience and develop as professionals. Important to note in the subsequent quote is how Bill acknowledges that there is a steep learning curve in the first student teaching practicum. In addition to this, Bill explained that it is an experience in which he learned a lot, and in which he was motivated to do well and improve. He also expressed that he felt he made these improvements, and he gained valuable experience. Therefore, although the experience can be challenging, it can be rewarding:

I don't know if this is like a most difficult thing in my life, but it was pretty hard. It was like your first practicum...I didn't have that much experience like teaching...in a classroom and stuff. It was very different. Like I have had experience doing other things...but not the teaching. So I found it – like there was a steep learning curve, just cause you know, there's a lot of different things to think about and you had to, you know, attend to different things mentally...Like you needed to focus on different things. But anyways, I found it hard at first, but you know, I felt like – and I was pretty motivated. You know, I wanted to do well and stuff so. It's something that, you know, I worked hard on improving and like yeah it was difficult, but you know I take pride in...I think I have improved and things like that, so. It was pretty tough...the first week like it was – it was pretty tough, right. But by the fifth week...you could tell by the end of it that you've come like a long way, in like a short time. So I don't know when the, when that like moment hit...probably in the second week or something when it really, you know, when push comes to shove and things like that, you could definitely feel you know, that you've gained a lot of experience and you've made some improvements.

Here, Bill expresses how there has been a substantial growth in his teaching skills and knowledge over the course of his training. This can relate to feeling a sense of accomplishment, because he learned many new things and developed new and important skills. In addition to this, the growth that he achieved allowed him to develop confidence. Since he developed new skills and knowledge, he became more confident in himself as a teacher:

I think the thing that I was most pleased about, again this might sound kind of weird...that I take, I guess most pride in, is that I can see in my own kind of bodywork, that there's like improvement. That I can see from...my first year of education compared to my last year...my marks and stuff were higher just because you start to be more interested in your – in what you're doing. And you feel like...going into my first day of my IPT [Introductory Professional Term] to my last day of my APT [Advanced Professional Term], like it's totally different people...totally different – so I just think that like yeah, I'm just really – pleased with – with seeing that...I was able to take in a lot of new skills and I mean there was tough times too...but I felt like I learned a lot, and I gained a lot, and grew a lot too. So I'm pretty happy with that...Oh it's like worlds apart...it's so different. Like just the fact that, for my IPT...I didn't really know what to expect, I was just going in and just going to do whatever they told me to do. But when you have your APT...you also have more confidence in knowing that...you are skilled to do this stuff. Like you've been trained to do this stuff...And I think that's the biggest thing, is having confidence...in the skills that you learned throughout.

In regards to his development, Bill also expressed how he feels that he has developed enough skills to be a beginning teacher. He explained how he has some of the basic skills needed to teach. However, he also states that he still has a lot of growing and developing to do as a teacher.

In addition to this, Bill wants to enter the teaching field with an open mind and to be open to continuing his learning and improving:

Yeah I'm going to say I do feel ready...not in a arrogant way or a cocky way, but I think that you know, I've – I've got, not tons of experience, but I got enough that...I think I could be a starting teacher. That being said, I need to go in with the mindset that, you know, I'm not that good...I have to learn and really improve, and things like that...I think, I'd say I'm ready. I think that's part of it too...when you know that...you could do it, but...it's going to require a lot of hard work and dedication I think, then you know you're ready.

Bill also discussed his future career. A part of his future career is transitioning from a student to professional. Bill expresses how his experience as a university student was similar to his current position as a beginning professional in the sense that in both roles he is/was “working towards something”. However, being in these roles is also different because he was in a learning role as a student, and now as a beginning professional he is applying his knowledge:

I guess, it still feels like you're learning a lot, but uh, it's just kind of nice to know that at least you're working towards something now...so I guess that's similar to university, you're kind of working towards getting a job with your degree...And now you're kind of working - you're putting like the, your knowledge into use and trying to build up that foundation to get that job...Or to get a more permanent job.

Inclusion

Bill also discussed how he enjoyed helping students with disabilities. In this detailed discussion about working with students that have special needs, Bill raised the idea that as a teacher he

needs to provide the best experience possible for his students and help those students to the best of his abilities, regardless of what their learning needs are. In other words according to Bill, teaching gives him the opportunity to help all students succeed.

For my APT...I got to teach in a grade five classroom and a grade three classroom.

And...I was lucky...again I want to be careful how I say this...in the grade five there was a student, he had...ADHD, and it was like kind of undiagnosed...So working with him was, you know it was tough at times but it was a good experience, because...it sounds bad but like on a professional level you see which accommodations work for a student like that, right. But on a personal for me, like once you kind of get to know the student and you build a rapport with them, then you kind of – it kind of puts it in a different light, because you – you want to do things...to help him, right. Or him or her...You want to – you want to help the students succeed, because you look at their marks, right, and their marks...suffer, because their dealing with their you know ADHD, and stuff right.

In the grade three classroom there was a student...he had Down's Syndrome. Now...he was a really good kid...like he was pretty happy guy and it was a really good experience because...we bonded, me and this – this little boy. And it kind of helped, because it just kind of affirmed to me...the importance of having...someone who actually cares about the kids...Because, I was talking to his teacher, and she was saying that with this particular student, like he's often...overlooked, and whatever. Because people are just like oh...he's kind of there just for the sake of inclusion, right, like they don't really do anything with him. But he just kind of sits there and stuff, and you know, it really – it brought to my attention the fact that if I have students who do have like significant special needs and stuff. You don't want to marginalize them in a classroom right, and just

have them sit there and kind of be like a novelty...you kind of want them to still gain an enriched, kind of experience, like an educational experience...and like I thought about that, and...Basically what it taught me was that...you do need to kind of do your best and make sure that your students get like a pretty good experience out of it, right. And for me that experience really hit home just because it's something that...I kind of knew but I kind of took for granted, I think. So when you actually see it in practice, it kind of changes the way you look at things, right. So that's something that...I aspired to be better in those areas, to make sure that you're – you're able to be inclusive of all the students.

The Rewarding Nature of Teaching

The following quote serves to summarize the multiple aspects that Bill enjoys about the job, which includes how the job is fun, it provides for unique experiences, and how he gets to help children when teaching. Overall, Bill views teaching as a rewarding career:

I think the best parts of teaching is...I might sound crazy, but it's kind of like a fun job...you get to do a lot of things and have a lot of unique experiences, right. Like you could be doing the same task...if you had like four groups of kids or something and each group is going to experience that task or activity differently. And I think that's kind of a nice experience to, to observe or to be a part of. And also the fact that when you're helping children or students understand certain things and you can kind of see them getting it, and see them applying it. And like it's a very rewarding experience. Yeah I think that's the absolute best thing...it's just kind of an enjoyable job, like you're kind of working with a team and stuff.

Bill feels confident that he can be happy working as a teacher, because he believes in the importance and the purpose of the job:

It's a job that I enjoy, so it's something that you know, I feel pretty happy doing, even if it's not teaching, like even if it becomes administration or some other...education type thing. It's something that I'll enjoy just cause I believe in...the cause, right. I believe in like its purpose.

Practical Benefits of Being a Teacher for Bill's Personal Life

Bill explained how teaching may have a lower pay scale than what he was hoping for, but at the same time it provides other benefits that are important to consider. For example, he appreciates the security that comes with having a union job (such as benefits, pension, and job security). In addition to this, Bill explains that teaching would support the family lifestyle he hopes to have in the future, because he would be able to spend time with his family after the teaching day ends, and he would also have time off during the summer. Bill provides strong context for his thoughts on this matter with stories.

I want to clarify too, it's not just enjoyment like oh...this day is so fun...Like you get like fulfillment doing your job, right. And also it comes with other things too. Like, again, I probably over think it...I mean the benefits are good, right. So your health benefits, whatever, your pension's good. So you're going to be taken care of. And I mean it's a union and stuff, so... You're not going to get fired...easily or whatever. And also...the teacher I was talking about who rejected other jobs to be a teacher...one thing and it was, to me it stuck to me...he turned down something like an administrative...being a principal...the pay would have been a lot better, and things like that, but then he said

that...he likes being a teacher just... because like it helps him – it gives him time to spend time with like his kids and stuff, right. Cause he's not working till like 5 or 6...so he gets to take them to their lessons, and you know, he gets to watch their practices and do these things. So...for him personally...he felt like the sacrifice was worth it, because you know, he actually gets to be home with his kids, right...it stuck out to me just because...my family like is pretty good...And they spent time with us when my brothers and I, when we were kids, but then...I've had friends who...their parents are like working till like 8 or 9, at night, right. And like they hardly see them...I mean, most parents I don't think do that willingly...I'm sure like 90% of the parents would rather be with their kids than at the office, or something. But you know, you do what you have to do, right. And but that being said...I don't want that kind of thing for my family. So I think that, yeah being a teacher...I mean you get summers off and stuff too, right. So you get to be with them...and I think that those things you know, outweigh like the lower pay...I think those things are way more important.

Good Mentor Teacher

During student teaching practicums, a training teacher has support systems built in to the process with their mentor teacher and university facilitator. While these relationships can be supportive in the experience of some, they can be unsupportive in the experience of others. Luckily Bill expressed that he generally had good experiences with his mentor teachers and university facilitators. Bill went into detail about the relationship he had with his mentor teachers. He explained that the more strict and formal style of his first mentor teacher served him well during his first student teaching experience because he needed more direction, but then a less strict style was welcome during his second practicum because he was able to explore his own teaching style

since he had already developed some basic skills. Overall, Bill appreciates that he had positive experiences with his mentor teachers, as not all student teachers will have positive experiences:

Pretty good experiences, both of them were – were really nice...and they were also really encouraging and supportive...I couldn't have asked for better mentor teachers it was really good. Cause my first mentor teacher...she was a little bit more strict and a little bit more formal, and stuff. But that worked at the time, because I needed that structure to be...put on me, because I didn't have like that experience...I couldn't do it myself right, so I needed her to be...a little bit more strict on me rather, and not – not demanding but she knew to set a high standard for me, right...it was– it's really good and I'm really thankful that I had a mentor teacher like that...for my second practicum...I taught in two grades...I had like one main mentor teacher, but I had another cooperating teacher...And both of them, like it was good. They weren't as strict and they didn't require as much structure, and they gave me more freedom to do what I wanted to do. And I think that was good too, because it helped me...learn how to come to my own and establish...how I wanted to run the classroom, or how I wanted to...teach a unit, or teach a class... But that being said, they were still supportive...they still like kind of worked with me...But, just the two attitudes were very different, so I would say that they were the – those were the two things that I needed at the time. And it was – it was good.

Freedom as a Teacher

Bill explored how teachers should be able to teach in a manner that fits with them and their experiences. Bill is explained how student teaching can be a challenging experience if a mentor

teacher does not allow for teaching freedom. To Bill, teaching freedom means finding a teaching style that is conducive to the individual:

I mean everyone teaches differently, right. So it's just that, I mean everyone has heard stories of mentor teachers who kind of force their student teacher to do things a certain way. And that kind of rubs them the wrong way, right. But then you know they have to do it the way their mentor teacher wants, because...they want a good evaluation...I think that freedom, what it means to me is that you can kind of be your own teacher, and...teach in a style that is fitting for you, and where your mentor teacher isn't like suffocating you and stuff...I was blessed with two very good like mentor teachers. Like they were both...really accommodating and they were both really...helpful and stuff in that way. But...I've heard like stories where...it was a little overbearing, so I think that the freedoms, is you know...have(ing) your own style of teaching.

In regards to his student teaching practicums, Bill discussed having freedom to develop his own teaching style. In addition to explaining how he appreciated having teaching freedom in his APT, Bill expressed that he would want to return the favor if he had a student teacher.

I was really fortunate in my APT with my mentor teacher, you know she let me have...a fair amount of freedom. And I think that if I was a mentor teacher, like I'd want to return that, you know, favour to my student teachers and stuff.

In line with teaching freedom, Bill discussed his teaching preferences. Bill also explained how he wants for him and his students to have fun in the classroom because it is congruent with what he thinks is important in life. However he realizes that class time will not always be exciting, but he can do his best to ensure that it is still engaging:

Well I think like uh, you know as long as like, and some of it might sound kind of weird, but as long as I'm having fun with it...and I'm helping the students...enjoy their learning. I think that would stay true to who I am and what I feel is important in life and stuff. And if they're learning then that goes with my teaching philosophy...I don't feel they should just have like fun all the time at school...sometimes it is gonna be boring... But, as long as it's not just...lecturing to kids, like they don't get that...you do some hands on activities, but those hands on activities the – the main goal is – is to learn, like it's not to have fun. So yeah it might sound like contradictory but, my main priority is to get them to learn...as long as they're learning and understanding.

Bill feels that the school system would allow him to teach according to his preferred teaching style. An important point that Bill made here is that most educators are doing what is best for their students. He explains that it is necessary for there to be limits to what educators can do, but ultimately there is a fair degree of freedom for classroom teachers:

I think you know, you might have to – like you have to be realistic with – with your activities, right. Like they still need to align with the safety precautions and whatever, of the school board or your school. But I think that they give you enough freedom that you can do stuff. I mean most educators...they do want...what's best for the students, right. If you – if you have a – a defensible argument as to why you should be doing a certain activity, and as to why it would be helpful to – in their learning, then I think most people will be willing to listen, at least. So I think, I don't feel like they just shut down every opportunity...they want you to try different things and whatever.

Graduation

Bill spent some time discussing his experience graduating from university. Here, Bill is expressing how it is important to acknowledge his accomplishment, and how he has accomplished something important by completing an education degree. In addition to this, he is reflecting upon how he came to be in the education field, and how he is happy that he chose to pursue (and complete) something that he enjoys:

So for me...with just graduating...I've still been thinking about like, you know, my education and stuff right...Whether or not I liked it or not is kind of beside the point, it's still important right. Like I mean...I'm proud that I was able to finish the program and...to be honest, sounds kind of bad, but it kind of wasn't in doubt. Like I knew I was going to graduate on that stuff, but...it's just nice because, you know, before I got to education I was in Arts, right, first and second year. And I was in the program of arts, and like it was, it was very general I didn't really know what I wanted to do. So you know, looking back it's nice that – that you know I got into education and...it's something that I did enjoy, and something that...my experiences throughout...my program at least, like has been affirming that it is a good program for me and stuff.

Unmet psychological needs during pre-service teacher preparation

While Bill enjoys many aspects of being a teacher, he also discussed several things that he finds challenging in teaching. He explored the gap between school and teaching, his student teaching experience, a constant need to be “mentally on” all the time, classroom management, the workload, politics surrounding the field, challenges in forming relationships with students, difficulties in the practicalities of becoming a teacher, and performance concerns.

The Gap Between Student Teaching Experience and University Coursework

The teaching program is composed of both theoretical coursework, as well as off campus practical experiences. These can be two very different experiences for students. An important topic that Bill explores is that he learned much more during his student teaching practicums rather than during his coursework. In fact, he expressed that some of the coursework will never be used. In addition to this, he explained how student teaching allows for prospective teachers to actually get a sense of what the teaching profession entails:

Well it's way different because through university...it is very theoretical...where the student teaching is obviously very practical right. So doing your practicums I found that...you use some stuff that you learned in class, obviously right. But a lot of the things that you learn as you're doing it, and that being said, there's some things in my coursework or whatever, that you don't use...quite frankly like it's kind of useless right...I get kind of on a theoretical level why we should learn it, but...you don't use it, like you'll never use right...I just think that in terms of like the difference...you learn way more during your practicum, cause you're actually like in an authentic setting.

Where in class...I don't think, everything's useful. But the difference that I liked...you're working in that, you know like an actual real world environment and whatever. So you kind of actually see what the profession would be like I think.

In addition to finding the practical experience more useful, Bill expressed how the practical experience also changed the way he thought about students and the classroom. In particular, he shared how gaining teaching experience helped him to realize that he would have to adapt his teaching to the situation, because each student is different and therefore needs different things:

You start to see how am I going to apply these things, where before that...it's just another class, right. But, you know being able to kind of get that real world experience, helps you think about it in a different way and helps you try to apply what you learn, as opposed to just, you know, regurgitate information...to do well in school. So I think the practicum's a little bit more important...Because I think that I know that once I did my first practicum, it changed how I looked at my classes...when you transfer that into like a real classroom, you know with real people's kids...it's different just because they're different. Like they're individual people, they got their own personalities, their own you know, back stories or whatever. And that all... affects how they react to certain things, right...everyone's different, like you're going to have to adapt the way you teach.

Student Teaching

The Introductory Professional term is often a pre-service teacher's first experience at the front of a classroom. Therefore, the beginning of the IPT practicum can be a very challenging experience for training teachers. Bill acknowledged that his first experience teaching was difficult, and that it made him realize that he would have to put in a lot of hard work in order to do well. In addition to this, he explained that his mentor teacher was fairly strict; however, he states that there are other student teachers who have more challenging experiences with their mentor teachers than he did:

The one thing that was probably the hardest time...the first week of my IPT. It was just like a really rough lesson...I was like teaching for most of the day, it was really rough...now when I say this...I mean I'm sure there was definitely like worse times. But like, for me like it was just – it was just hard cause...you kind of realize...it's going to be

like a hard thing, you're going to have to put some – a lot of work into it. Like my mentor teacher she was really nice, but she was pretty strict. So she was like...hey man, there's – there's some things you need to do and she wasn't like scolding me or anything, but she was just kind of telling me...you know there's some things you got to work on, right...it was difficult just because...you realize there's things that you need to do and things that you had to work hard to accomplish. But...in comparison to other people, like I actually had it pretty good, so I'm pretty – I'm like grateful for that.

During student teaching, pre-service teachers need to take on a more professional role. Becoming a professional can be a challenging experience for some. Here, Bill is expressing how being a professional means that he needs to take on responsibility for doing a job well, and ensuring that his students are learning. Therefore it is more than having fun with kids and being liked by them, as a professional you also need to meet professional standards:

Adjusting to being a professional is...you just kind of have to like look at things in a different mindset...I think if you work with kids as a childcare worker...you just want to relate to the kids. And you don't necessarily have to be like the most well liked, but I mean yeah, you have to be like relatable and things like that. But being a professional adds like another layer to that...being likeable and stuff is among your lower concerns...you're trying to get a job done and get that job done to a high standard, and make sure...the students understand you and understand the concepts and stuff. So I think that when you become a professional, yeah the priorities shift a little bit...the things that you're trying to do are a little bit different.

Need to be “Mentally on” all the Time

Something that Bill finds challenging in the teaching profession is that there is constantly a large mental demand while on the job. According to this quote, Bill finds teaching a challenging job because there aren't many opportunities where you can step back and take a break; this is because a teacher is constantly preparing for what is coming up next and there is little downtime while on the job. Bill stated:

What I found difficult about it, especially was that you needed to kind of – like mentally be on, the entire day...I mean if you're doing something like work or whatever...you might be busy for a couple hours a day and then you can kind of rest and you know, reflect or recharge or whatever. But when you're teaching, I found that...you're just always...thinking about stuff, even during your breaks...you have to think about what you're doing next, or... that kind of thing. So I found...it hard, because it was hard just to...take a step back and really think about what you're doing. Like you have to always be doing something.

The following quote helps to further understand how teaching requires being “mentally on”, because with teaching you constantly need to adapt to the environment and circumstances:

You have to adapt...your subject matter, adapt your techniques, you got to adapt everything...like every day, right... Like...let's say you plan a activity, you know, you get to school and like let's say...like something went on and they're all excited about something....that changes like the energy in the room right. So you're going to have to kind of, you don't want them to just be sitting and reading, because...they're not going to focus because they're too excited about whatever so you got to kind of change it up a

little bit. So...you want to kind of temper their energy, like you want to use it too. So use it where you could kind of turn to enthusiasm, as opposed to trying to like telling them to dial it down all the time, and then making them kind of restless and stuff. So it's things like that...just not that you want to cater to all their behaviours, but you take them into account, right.

Preparation can be considered a component of this mental demand for teaching. This can be considered a part of the need to be mentally “on” when teaching, because there is a continuous need for planning and preparation, which means that teachers are often thinking about what will happen next, rather than completing a task and then being able to take a break. Also, with this quote Bill is expressing hopefulness that this task of teaching will get easier as he learns and develops as a professional:

I think the thing that's hard about the actual teaching, is just like the preparation and stuff. You know...there's a lot of things you need to like get in order, right. Like you want to – you have to plan the lesson but you also have to get...materials for lesson, and whatever. So you want to make sure that your lessons, I mean I don't think your lesson should just be like all...flashy kind of things. Like I mean they could be...pretty simple things, but as long as they're engaging or whatever, like I think it's okay. So I think that...it was difficult trying to plan activity like that. It's definitely a skill that you...it's something that you can practice and work on, right.

Classroom Management

Another area of teaching that Bill expressed challenge in was classroom management. Here, Bill is expressing how classroom management could be challenging for him at times, but he is also

expressing optimism that classroom management will get easier as he progresses in his career and gains more experience. He explained:

A difficult experience, would also be the student with ADHD. It was really hard to get him to concentrate sometimes. Now with him, there was some other students...they would get each other like amped up and whatever. So it was really hard to kind of get them to settle. And get them to do their stuff, like it was – luckily though, like now when I say it was difficult...it's all relative... it's just that it was a new experience for me...he just couldn't concentrate, right like, so he was just – just easily distracted and things like that. So it was kind of difficult at first, but one you kind of get to know him, and whatever, then like I mean it doesn't make it...a lot easier, but you know how to deal with it better. And you know that, you know, he's not doing it to spite you or anything, so it kind of helps you reframe it...In terms of classroom management like, yeah there's some difficult times that come out of it, but again that's to do with experience too. The more things you go through the better at it you get, right.

The Workload

The amount of work involved in the teaching profession was another area explored by Bill. Bill discussed how the workload of teaching relates to the need for being “mentally on” at all times, and how the job never ends:

I think the hardest parts, I think there's two. Like the first one is...it's a lot of work, right. Like you have to go in and I mean you have to...mentally kind of be on like all the time. You know whenever you're with the kids you need to be always thinking about stuff and always kind of working, right. But like I've had office jobs before...you could kind of –

kind of shut it down and...just kind of mentally check out and stuff, and just kind of putter around or whatever. But like for a teacher you can't do that, and it is tiring. Like the days go by really fast and they're really busy...and it's a lot of like prep work too. Like you're kind of doing stuff at home...or if you're not doing something you're thinking about it, stuff like that. And so that's the first one, it's a lot of hard work.

Bill states that due to the many demands and tasks that a teacher must meet, there is opportunity for becoming overwhelmed:

There's just too much stuff to do, right. Like they have to, they have to teach the lesson...and they have to – like they have to be working from you know, 8 to 3, or 8 to 4, whatever, if they stay later. Like Monday to Friday, they'll have to work later than that if they have like a lot of marking, or a lot of planning to do...They'll have, probably have to do some like extracurricular stuff around the school...I just think there's just so many things to do and...people get overwhelmed, right.

Relating to the previous quote, Bill expresses how teaching is tiring due to the high workload; however, Bill also finds that the workload can be properly managed so that it does not become an unrealistic amount of work. In addition to this, Bill explains that since he enjoys teaching, the demand of the work does not feel as overbearing:

It's tiring. Like it's – it's, there's a lot of work and...it feels like, yeah there's a lot of things to do in a day, but it's – I think the good definitely outweighs the bad. Like I think if you – if you prepare ahead of time, it's not too bad...it is a lot of work, but it's like a manageable amount, it's not unrealistic.

The Politics in Teaching

Bill also explored the challenges in the politics surrounding the field of education, and how this is the large factor that makes him hesitant to make a career in teaching. Factors such as the policies around teaching jobs are viewed as undesirable by Bill:

Um, the only thing that makes me hesitant, I think, well the biggest thing is just that there's a lot of – um, like hoops you have to jump through, and there's a lot of different processes and stuff. And there's a lot of...politics and bureaucracies, like with those kind of jobs, right. So...I don't really like that. I understand like why it's there and why it's needed but, you know that's just the one thing I kind of don't like about it.

Bill further expanded on this idea by exploring how there are many stakeholders in education. It seems that what Bill is expressing in the following quote is that a teacher is under pressure to meet the expectations of those who hold a stake in the education of students (mainly administration and parents). This relates to the politics of education, because Bill also explained how teachers can be challenged due to the need to please many different people:

And I think what I don't – another thing that I don't like about it is just like, like there's so many...there's a lot of like stakeholders and interest groups in something like teaching, right. Like they all want to – they all have their thing to say and whatever, and everyone – I mean even parents and stuff...I mean everyone's got an opinion and whatever, and...I think often times you get trapped in trying to please certain people...Whether you're trying to please your coworkers or your principal, and the parents or whatever.

In addition to this, another component to politics in education that Bill finds challenging is funding. Bill expresses that for teachers, there are some feelings of lack of control because there are other people and political factors that impact the way a teacher completes their job. For example the career path of a new teacher is dependent on funding, because if there isn't enough money in the budget new teachers can be laid off. In addition to this, Bill is expressing how much of what teachers do is dictated by others. He stated:

You know, in terms of like funding, like it's really out of your control...because it's with the, you know, provincial government. They got so many things that they got to take care of...sometimes I feel education gets kind of put on a – on a backburner like it kind of takes a second seat to certain things. And then in terms of that...I mean it makes it hard for you to do your job, right. It makes it hard for you to get a job, or you know, there's like layoffs and stuff too. So I mean even if you get a job, just cause you're young and new...you're kind of at the bottom of the barrel, right. Like so, I think there's just a lot of things out of your control and I get there's things like that in life, but this just seems like – there's just so many things...everything is dependent on other people. Yeah you basically just like do what people tell you. They're like oh you're teaching this grade and then you just go and teach it, right, but...you don't feel like you're...in control of it.

The following quote also expresses how there is a feeling of reduced control in the teaching profession due to political factors, and also explores how Bill is experiencing some nerves about how the education budget could affect him. However, he also expresses that since these factors are out of his control, it is important not to worry too much:

I mean, with the recent news of like you know, the government...budgets and stuff, like I mean you don't want to get laid off...just because often times you know they...from my understanding...it's easy to layoff like beginning teachers, right, just cause they're just starting. So...they'd be the first to go and stuff. So I mean I guess, I'm nervous about that, but I mean at the end of the day, like I can't control those things, right, so. So you try not to think about it too much...I – I can't tell the government how to spend their money and I can't tell the principals or whoever...to keep me and stuff. Like I mean, if they ask me like of course I'd want to be kept...but ultimately it's out of my hands.

Challenges in Forming Relationships with Students

Another topic of discussion with Bill was how there are challenges in developing relationships with students. Here, Bill expresses how he enjoys working with kids and having an impact on their lives beyond the curriculum, but how this is also a challenge for him because it is important for teachers to not become too emotionally involved in the lives of their students. In addition to this, he is explaining how the ethics of teaching require a separation of the professional and personal lives of teachers, but how this can be difficult because teachers will often have empathy for students, especially those students who have difficult circumstances. However, Bill appreciates the importance of this boundary because becoming too emotionally invested can affect his wellbeing and the wellbeing of students. He explained:

The second part is...kind of having boundaries with your students, because you want to be in a place where you can help them and – and help them grow as like individuals too, not just like academically. But that being said...you don't want them to depend on you and you don't want to start depending on like their states...But it's like natural to feel

bad, but I can't...be that emotionally invested where it like starts to affect me...so you want to be able to help them, but...you can't be too close, right, and then that's - that's kind of hard cause...naturally you want to help people or at least empathize with them, and you got to kind of have to put the blinders on and things...in our class like at university and stuff, and with like the ethics policies, like they kind of - you can tell like that's what they want...like your personal life, professional life, need to be like - you know, pretty separate. And I think that value is put into us...it's rightfully put into us.

In regards to whether the positive parts of teaching or the challenges of teaching are more prominent for Bill, he expressed that both are weighted equally for him. To Bill, the positives of the profession are unique to the field, but he also sees the challenges as being unique to the field. Therefore Bill has thought about the unique components of being a teacher, and has determined that some are enjoyable and some are challenging:

For me honestly...they both equally stand out. Like I think they're - they're both significant parts of the job, it's not like you can just kind of overlook one, right. Cause I think that the rewarding parts, the good parts...they are outstanding because not many careers kind of provide the same things. And have the same benefits or the same rewards...But then the hard parts are kind of like the same...not many careers have like, you don't have to do all those things for - for like every career...like, my brother's a lawyer. Like if I was a lawyer, I don't need to get...certain - certification on top of like certification. Like I had to like apply for all these other ones and just like, ones for my salary, ones for my - like for this and that. Like there's so many certifications...so like they, they're both kind of equal like, they - one doesn't like outweigh the other, I think.

The Difficulties in the Practical Elements of Becoming a Teacher

Becoming a teacher is a challenging process with many steps that must be followed in order to reach the end goal. Along the path, many individuals will encounter difficulties due to practicalities such as finding a job, where the location of the job will be, pay, organization skills, and performance on the job.

Hard to find a job

One of the first things discussed by Bill was how it is currently difficult to find teaching jobs in Alberta. He also explained how there are many steps involved in becoming certified before a prospective teacher can even look for a job. Therefore, when individuals graduate from the education faculty, they have to meet additional criteria before they become a permanently certified teacher. And to many, this can feel like “jumping through hoops”:

Things that I don't like is – obviously it's hard to find a job...and also there's like a lot of hoops you have to kind of jump through, right. Like you have to, you know, do certifications for – for like three different things and whatever.

He also described his current experience in the job hunt as being characterized by uncertainty. He explains that a large uncertainty for him is the amount of time he has to wait to find out if he has received a job, as well as how he does not know when he will be hired into a position. In addition to this, he explains how this uncertainty is elevated due to the large amounts of people applying to teaching positions, meaning there is heavy competition:

Just getting on...into the school board, like that's - I think a significant roadblock, just cause honestly, like I feel like there's a window of opportunity and if you don't get in that

window then you should start thinking about doing something else...because there's so many graduates like every year, right, and there's so many people in education, like not even just from this university...or even teachers who are coming from other provinces...so I think there's just so many people applying for the same stuff, like if you get overlooked then you're never going to get chosen...And then once you're a sub...the significant roadblock would be getting that like permanent contract, right. Like getting a contract with a school...Yeah I think that's uncertainty...you don't know when you're going to get a job, right. It's not like you apply and you're like oh well you know, the – the manager of whatever, like human resource person will see it and they'll call you soon...you basically just hand it in, and you don't know...and the wait period is like several months...the uncertainty just kind of comes from a few angles.

Bill also explained what it would mean to him to find a job. An important consideration in this subsequent quote is how finding a job carries meaning to Bill, in that it would be comforting to have a job because it would mean that he is accomplishing something, and that he is working towards a career. It also appears that Bill would prefer to meet his goal of finding a job quickly, because otherwise he may not feel that he is accomplishing what he has set forth to accomplish:

One thing that I wouldn't have to worry about is, yeah probably finding a job...it would just, you know, be comforting to know that...you have something to do and you're doing something.

He also stated:

Like I'd like to be able to you know, again it always goes back to getting a job and stuff.

But like, I'd like to be able, you know, you're kind of set...in your first career, like I

understand that you know, most people switch careers. But, in the next year or two years...I'd like for myself to be working towards something...financially...also professionally too. Cause you can't just sit at home for like another year right, and wait for stuff. So that's kind of where I'd like to be.

Bill further explains the importance of starting a career and beginning a new chapter in his life:

I'm just looking forward just to starting...Just to you know, getting into it and you know, starting your career. Like that's something I'm looking forward to for sure. Is that, it's a new chapter of life and it'd just be good to get into it...But, just starting a job would be good, starting your career, that'll be a good feeling, I think.

Location of work

A part of the job search, is considering the locations that a prospective job may be located in. This quote shows how Bill experiences uncertainty in his life, and in particular how he feels uncertain about where a teaching career may lead him:

Like I think a lot of things...there's still uncertainty there. Like where you're going to live is still uncertain, cause um, I mean you kind of go where your job is, or you go where – wherever. But, um, there's that and I just think that, that's probably the big one.

Bill has considered that perhaps he will not find a job in Edmonton. He also expressed that this is a concern for him currently, because he would prefer to stay in Edmonton; however, he is not opposed to moving if need be:

I don't know if it's going to be in Edmonton, just with the way things are going and stuff. So if I didn't have to worry about you know, having to move...that would be nice too, but, I think for right now as of this moment, like I'd probably prefer to stay, but I'm not against moving...if that's what happens, then I'm okay – I'm open to it, but you know if I had a choice, I'd probably like to stay.

Pay

In addition to the logistics of finding a teaching position, Bill expressed some concern about teacher compensation. Here, Bill is exploring why pay is important, by stating that it would be difficult to support a family on a teacher's income. This shows that it is beyond the issue of money for Bill, and rather that he is considering how the pay will support his life in the future:

And actually...the pay isn't quite as good as you know, personally I'd like for the amount of work you do...So basically things I don't like is just kind of the bureaucracy of finding a job and kind of advancing.

In addition to this, Bill stated:

The pay is not low, like it's still above the standards...right the average. It's not low, but I mean, it's not particularly high, right...it's not all about the money for me and stuff. But...I'll just say if you went and like have to support a family and do all these things. It'd be tough right. Like you need to be in like a two income house.

Organization

Bill is considering the organizational challenge of starting as a new teacher. He explains how there isn't only concern about finding a job, but how there is also some nervousness about how

to approach a new teaching position when he finds one. New teachers need to think about things such as organizing their classrooms, completing report cards, getting to know students, and more. All of these components to teaching become more routine with experience, but for a new teacher it can be quite overwhelming to think about :

Nervous things, now this might sound weird but...filling up your classroom with stuff. Like finding books and posters, and all these things...I just think that'll be tough. And also...you know, your first day of school, like trying to meet all the kids and you really get it started. I think that'll be hard, you know, doing your first report cards, like that'll be hard. Just cause it's a lot of work, and also the first time a parent calls you out for something, like I think that be hard too.

Performance Concerns

Another topic discussed by Bill was performance pressure. Bill ties the pressure from being observed as a teacher with the pressure to ensure that students learn, because they both relate to how well he performs as a teacher. In addition to this, he explains that there is pressure in ensuring that work is completed, and that students are getting a good experience out of the lessons you have put together for them:

Well first of all I mean you want your students to succeed right, you don't want them just to – to fail all the time. So you – you have to make sure they understand and that they're learning, and they remember, and things like that. So that's – I think that's like the biggest source of pressure. And second of all, I mean especially when you first start you're...getting evaluated all the time. Like people come in and watch you and your principal will watch you, and things like that. So that's pressure too, pressure to perform

and things like that...And also like, it feels like there's...so many things to do, right. So I think there's pressure just to get everything done, and to make sure that students...enjoy it, right. Like you don't want them to feel like they're going to work every day.

When asked about the pressure he places on himself, Bill explained how he cares about the performance he gives as a teacher, and how he wants to be the best teacher he can. This quote shows how this is not always an easy thing, because it can mean that he sometimes places pressure on himself. However, Bill acknowledges that the pressure is not extensive:

For me personally...not that I put like tons of pressure on myself, but you don't want to go...be the worst teacher there. Right. Like you want to be a good teacher and you want kids to...not in an arrogant way, but you want kids... to be able to look back and...they remember you because you were a good teacher...I want to be the best teacher that I could be and stuff. So I think, yeah I put pressure on myself, because you know, you don't want to go into a job and just...willingly fail. Right. Like you want to do well and make sure...people are doing well because of you and stuff.

The future for Bill

As a young adult graduating from a professional program, a topic frequently raised by Bill was his future, and plans for the future. In general Bill hopes:

I don't ask much, just...happy, healthy family. Everything is good. Like I mean we don't need to be rich or anything, but as long as you know you're comfortable...you want to live like a life that you can look back and be proud of right, and be happy with. So, so yeah that's pretty much it, just a happy future.

While overall Bill is hoping for a happy and healthy future, he also discussed some topics of importance in regards to the future. He brought up uncertainty and his future career.

Uncertainty

In regards to his future, Bill discussed how he is currently experiencing some uncertainty. This quote is revealing about Bill's current experience for several reasons. He is explaining how he currently feels uncertain about what will happen in the future, for example in regards to where he could find a teaching job, and even whether or not he will work as a teacher. In addition to this, he is expressing how he hopes this sense of uncertainty will change, and that he will feel more settled and "stable" if the uncertainty does subside:

So I guess on a personal level...right now there's like a lot of uncertainty for me...I don't know where I'm going to work, I don't know if I'm going to work, and or rather not if I'm going to work. I don't know where I'm going to work, or if I'm going to be...a teacher and stuff, right. So the things that I hope changes...be like things can kind of just like settle down, and just you know, be more stable, whatever.

Presumably, this uncertainty is unsettling for Bill. He also expressed that the challenges in finding a teaching job not only impacts his career, but also the start of his life because he is "waiting" on his career to begin. Bill's personal life cannot be separated from his professional life: "How it hinders it is, in the beginning, like there's a lot of instability so it's kind of hard to like start up your life, just because it seems like you're always waiting on other things."

Future Work/Career

Bill further discussed his future career, and reflected on what he thinks he might pursue in the future. An importance of this discussion is that it was the first time during the interview process in which Bill expressed that he has thought about other careers. It is important to acknowledge that Bill does enjoy the field of education, however, due to the difficulty of the job hunt, and deciding that he would prefer to not be in a teaching position for his entire career, he has thought about other career options such as going back to school for an MBA. This is an important piece of information for understanding Bill's motivation and goals for his future:

This might kind of sound kind of strange, considering what I've been talking about before. But...I'm open to – to having a career that's not in teaching...I would love for it to be like education related, just because you know, I feel strongly about education...it doesn't necessarily have to be teaching...I mean being a teacher would be great and stuff, right. But, that being said, I don't know if I could do that forever...I don't see myself doing that for the next like 30, 40 years, right. For a full career, like if I'm a teacher...I'm going to do it for a bit and move into other...administration or something else...I've talked to some teachers...and all they want to do is like be a teacher...one teacher at the school that I was doing my APT at, like he turned down like other jobs, because he wanted – he preferred to be a teacher, right. I don't know if I'm quite like that, and I don't think...you need to be like that to be a teacher...I feel that like, you know, passion is important to be a teacher, and I think...I am passionate about it, but...I can't see myself doing that forever, right. So that being said...considering the job hunt is, is hard, if something doesn't come up and let's say I get like a nonteaching job... That you know I'm happy with, you're making enough money, you enjoy it, and I mean I might, I would

be happy staying there if, you know, if there's opportunities to advance within that career, too, right.

Bill expanded on the idea that he would have difficulty staying in the same position for a long period of time. Here, Bill is explaining that for him personally, constantly doing the same work can become “draining” and he can experience a loss of enthusiasm and passion. He also expresses how this is a particularly undesirable experience in teaching, because he believes that teachers should be passionate and enthusiastic about their job. Bill also placed a number on the amount of years he could see himself working as a teacher, stating that he could probably only teach for 5 to 10 years. This piece of information helps in further understanding what Bill envisions as his future:

Yeah I think the thing is for me...I got to do other stuff, right. Like I can't just do one thing for a long time...and like you know when you first start teaching, you might get different grades or different classes and that changes. Well that being said...every year you get a new group of kids, even if you're teaching the same grade. But, I just think that...if you do one thing for too long...it gets kind of draining, right and then...you can't be as passionate about it or as enthusiastic about it. And, you know, my personal belief is...if you're a teacher, like you should be passionate about your job and enthusiastic, right. And I know...I could probably only do that for like maybe five to ten years...that's not like a 30 year thing. But, so that being said...I'd probably want to do something... maybe administration or – or yeah, something like that...just something a little bit different, maybe not necessarily a classroom teacher, but something...education related.

Bill further clarified this topic, by explaining what he had decided in regards to his future plans. An important piece of information in this discussion is that Bill states “if I want to be a teacher, I don’t know if that is worth waiting for”, which helps to understand that while Bill has explained that he enjoys teaching and sees many benefits in the career, he is still flexible in regards to what field he will end up working in because he does not want to have to “wait” a long time for a teaching career to start. In addition to this, Bill believes that if he does not get a teaching job soon, he will “get passed right over”, meaning he is concerned that he would continue to have difficulties in the job hunt for a long period of time. It is important to emphasize that this revelation does not detract from Bill’s previous discussions on teaching and becoming a teacher. He has, and is trying to pursue that career path. However, due to some of the challenges in becoming a teacher, Bill has allowed himself to be open to alternative fields. This is important information, because it shows Bill’s determination to start a career, as well as how he is currently at a point in his life where he can be open to new possibilities. From the first interview in June, to the second interview in October, Bill’s future plans had further developed. He went from explaining that he has considered other programs such as an MBA or law school, to making a solid plan that if he does not get a teaching or subbing position within a year, he would start a business degree:

Uh yeah I thought more about that...I’ve kind of narrowed it down though. Like um, in other fields...I’ve basically decided if that doesn’t work out, I think I’m going to do business...marketing or something. Like I think that’ll be something that aligns with my interests and is something that...my skills should be able to go into, and things like that...or if something education related if it comes up, but if it’s, in terms of education or like another field, it would probably be business. Well the thing is...I have applied (to)

school boards and stuff, so I – I’ve put the applications in already, like you’re just waiting for interviews...So the thing is...I would like to be a teacher, but um, I basically said...if I’m not...going to get a teaching job, like that includes something like subbing’s fine right now. But...if it doesn’t kind of happen in like a year, then it’s going to be going back to school. So it’s kind of, it’s got a deadline.

In addition to this, this quote acknowledges how Bill’s future is somewhat dependent on the politics of the education system, because the system impacts whether or not he will find a job. This quote also expresses how Bill has created a “back-up” plan of sorts, because of the uncertainty surrounding the availability of teaching jobs.

Critical Summaries

John

John was a very enthusiastic, open, and friendly participant. Everything that John said can be related back to his faith in God. John expressed how his path in life will be in God’s hands, and he wants his life to be in the service of others. For John, his passion for helping others ran through everything he said and his ultimate goal is to work in social justice or possibly pastoring. However, he acknowledges that formal teaching may also be a possibility for the future. Regardless of the job title John holds, he believes teaching will always be a part of the work he does. Relating to this, relationships were key for John. He had a strong desire to build relationships with students, and to help them with their development and struggles. Elements of humanism also ran through everything John had to say. He was passionate about having autonomy in the classroom, as well as being able to pursue his passions in life outside the classroom. He also placed value on being able to be true to himself.

John's experiences differed from Bill's in that he discussed his student teaching as being more challenging. In particular, John did not have a good experience with his mentor teacher. However, it is important to acknowledge that John had only completed one student teaching practicum, while Bill had completed both. It is possible that John's second student teaching experience was more enjoyable, and that he would have communicated different experiences if interviewed after his second practicum.

Bill

Bill was a thoughtful, forthcoming and friendly participant. While he did not discuss his religion as extensively as John, it is important to mention that he too expressed that his faith in God was important to him. Bill also wanted to help people, but his drive appeared to come more strongly from his desire to start a career. While John expressed that his ultimate goal was to work in social justice, Bill expressed that he would be happy to work in the education field so long as he can find a job. However, Bill stated that he does not feel he could work as a teacher for his entire career, and would like to move into areas such as administration to avoid feeling bored or burntout. The major concern for Bill was how difficult it is to find a teaching job, and how he doesn't want to wait too long to start his career. This is why he may end up working in another field, such as marketing. Ultimately, John's goal is to establish a career that is congruent with his identity and will be fulfilling. He also values stability in a career, because he expressed that he wants a career that will allow him to support and spend time with a future family.

Bill explained that he had good experiences in both of his student teaching practicums, and that he felt he had made quite a bit of progress. He also felt that he had been given the freedom to develop his own teaching style.

Chapter 5: Themes

While there were differences in the experiences of John and Bill, there were some strong similarities across their experiences as well.

Desire to be the “best” teacher they can be

Ultimately, both John and Bill are motivated to be good teachers. This desire to do well can lead to a lot of growth as a teacher, and a sense of accomplishment. However, while this is a source of intrinsic motivation to do the job, it is also a source of challenge because the desire to do well can mean placing pressure on the self and working long and hard hours. There can also be feelings of insecurity if your strengths as a teacher are not acknowledged by others such as mentor teachers, principals, etc.

John:

I think my interaction with the students... I was very happy about. Yeah just because, I remember...at the end they kind of, you know, writing notes and all that stuff, it's always very I think satisfying and rewarding to hear... students comment on I guess how you teach. And, on, you know, how relational I was in terms of just working with them and all that. So, that's something I'm very – I'm very proud about in my student teaching.

John:

I just love like connecting with kids and working with them. And I think for me like, you know I never had – like I had good teachers, for sure, but I've also had teachers that weren't the greatest in my – in my past. So um, I think to be able to um, really connect with them – not just on a teacher point of view.

John:

I guess I could say continue to keep up-to-date with the new theories and new stuff that comes out. Cause I do agree with a lot of the philosophy and theories that do come. So I think keeping up-to-date with that would be good, or reading over...old – old papers, old notes I've had to read in class, and just to maintain it. Um, cause you're right, there's that danger of um, treading over to the dark side of education, and just simply teaching straight from the textbook or lecturing or whatever.

John:

Some kids that may be harder to deal with, cause we always have you know, the nightmares, or like the – the difficult ones um that are a little harder to deal with. I don't want to categorize them as that, but let's be honest... you know there are only so – so much you can take... but those could be good learning experiences as well I think to just learn how to deal, and – and relate or understand their perspective and all that kind of stuff. Right, cause, like I said before...every person has their own perspective and experiences. So it's something to learn from.

Bill:

And like that's something that sticks with them for a long time...if you have the opportunity to – to positively influence some kids, like I think it's...it is a huge thing and it's something that you know, I'd be happy to do. But it's also something that helps me – kind of motivates me to work hard...it's like, you don't want to be the teacher or whoever, who – whose a negative influence on someone, right. It kind of keeps you on

your toes, and keeps you, yeah motivated to work hard...so it's kind of a good thing, but it also comes with a bit of a bad thing, cause there is a seriousness to it.

Bill:

I found it hard at first, but you know, I felt like – and I was pretty motivated. You know, I wanted to do well and stuff so. It's something that, you know, I worked hard on improving and like yeah it was difficult, but you know I take pride in...I think I have improved and things like that, so.

Bill:

I think the thing that I was most pleased about, again this might sound kind of weird...that I take, I guess most pride in, is that I can see in my own kind of bodywork, that there's like improvement. That I can see from...my first year of education compared to my last year...my marks and stuff were higher just because you start to be more interested in your – in what you're doing. And you feel like...going into my first day of my IPT to my last day of my APT, like it's totally different people...totally different – so I just think that like yeah, I'm just really – pleased with – with seeing that...I was able to take in a lot of new skills and I mean there was tough times too...but I felt like I learned a lot, and I gained a lot, and grew a lot too.

Doing Well as a Teacher is Challenging

John: “I mean it was good learning for me, but at the same time it was very stressful, and very tiresome to continually do that day after day.”

John:

It's the idea that you always have to like... there is material in the curriculum, and the program of studies. And you have to teach all that. And I think the biggest thing... Is that, the biggest concern that they have is that, there's so much material and you have to teach it all by a limited time. And you have to make sure every single student...has to know all this stuff. And the reality is that our classrooms are increasing from, you know, I don't know, when I was at school it was like 20, and now it's increasing to 40. I'm hearing 50, maybe even 60. To make sure every single little kid, every single student knows every single material before they go into a PAT or a diploma or whatever, IB [International Baccalaureate] exams, whatever. That's a lot of material, and that's a lot of kids, and that's a lot of stuff you have to cover and make sure that they all have been um, properly assessed, or whatever. So that's um, one of the stresses I think.

John:

But on the bad days where you're just like discouraged, and you're criticized and there's – nobody talking about the strengths and positives of your lesson or whatever... that's when you kind of question yourself and you have a little self-doubt. So I guess in a sense it is that insecurity, cause you're like, yeah I guess I am a little bit insecure as a teacher in that sense, right. As a teacher just, you know, not knowing, still trying to figure out, you know, who you are and your identity and all that.

John:

I mean I've been a student for a long time, and you're going from student to a teacher, really quick...it was kind of like, well what am I doing? It, it's – it's really hard to – it

was really hard to just suddenly like put yourself in the shoes of like a professor, or a teacher, where you're actually, you know what, these 30 kids, there's 25-30 kids, you know they're mine for like an hour and a half, or something like that. And you got to lead them and do everything, as opposed to just being one of the students and you know what, I do my thing, I'll take my notes, I'll highlight whatever, and just do my thing. So, that was a – a big difference

John:

My practicum, yeah. Um. I mean... I have to think about it. Yeah like myself, even some of my friends who are student teaching, um, you know, just the workload and the amount of pressure you're getting from – from admin, or your mentor teachers. It's, it really burns you out.

Bill:

But when you're teaching, I found that...you're just always...thinking about stuff, even during your breaks...you have to think about what you're doing next, or... that kind of thing. So I found...it hard, because it was hard just to...take a step back and really think about what you're doing. Like you have to always be doing something.

Bill:

Well first of all I mean you want your students to succeed right, you don't want them just to – to fail all the time. So you – you have to make sure they understand and that they're learning, and they remember, and things like that. So that's – I think that's like the biggest source of pressure.

Bill:

For me personally...not that I put like tons of pressure on myself, but you don't want to go...be the worst teacher there. Right. Like you want to be a good teacher and you want kids to...not in an arrogant way, but you want kids... to be able to look back and...they remember you because you were a good teacher...I want to be the best teacher that I could be and stuff. So

Discussion

The desire that Bill and John have to do well at their job can be connected to self-determination theory. Generally, it is related to the desire for growth outlined in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It particularly connects to the need for competence. This innate psychological need for competence is about feeling a sense of confidence and effectiveness in relation to your actions (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In the workplace, individuals desire growth and new experiences (Baard, 2002). Therefore this desire for growth and doing well is an innate psychological need that is commonly experienced. However, meeting the need of competency is not necessarily going to be easy as a new professional. A theme found in the research is that student teachers experience feelings of disappointment, stress, a lack of perceived competence and anxiety over external evaluation (Chan, 2003; Gavish, 2010; Morton, 1997). As Bill and John recall, the transition from a student to a teacher was challenging because the two roles require two very different skill sets. Research suggests a trend of increasing levels of autonomy and competence fulfillment over the course of a student teaching practicum (Evelein et al., 2008). Therefore a student teacher's fulfillment of competence will increase with more

experience. While it is challenging to meet the need for competency while learning a new skill, when John and Bill did experience competency those were memorable moments for them.

Another challenge to the need for competency is the nature of the work required to succeed as a teacher. As Bill and John discussed, there is a high volume of work that needs to be done to ensure that students are succeeding. Therefore it may not be easy to meet the need for competency when there are factors such as these making the job more difficult. This desire to do well as a teacher can also be associated with the need for relatedness, since both participants wanted to care for their students by doing the best job they could (Deci & Ryan, 2002). For John and Bill, it goes beyond doing a good job for the sake of personal accomplishment. They want to be good at what they do so that others (ie. the students) can benefit. While John did experience successes in the classroom, he described how his strengths and successes were not acknowledged by his mentor teacher. This led to feelings of self-doubt, and therefore his need for competency was not always fulfilled during his practicum. Bill also described some of his success in regards to competency, and it appears that Bill was generally able to meet the need for competency because he had positive experiences with his mentor teachers.

This need for competency and the hard work that accompanies it can be related to research on burnout. First of all, burnout is essentially the experience of stress while working in a profession that requires serving the needs of others (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Research from Chang suggests that teachers who are considered to be the most dedicated are experiencing higher rates of burnout because they work harder to reach their goals, and become burned out in the process (2009). In addition to this, teachers with a stronger belief in their capabilities are less likely to experience burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Related, teachers can become disillusioned when they are not able to meet their personal goals and expectations (Friedman &

Farber, 1992). Finally, it has been found that teachers who leave the profession have less feelings of self-efficacy (Hong, 2012). Therefore the drive for competency can be linked to burnout and attrition.

Professional Guidelines Hinder the Helping Relationship

Bill and John both discussed how they enjoy working with children/youth, and how helping others is a rewarding part of the teaching profession. However, both participants also spoke of the difficulties they encounter when it comes to relationships with students. John spoke of how he is frustrated by the limitations placed on the teacher-student relationship, because he would rather be able to have an authentic bond with youth in which he is able to help them work through issues beyond the curriculum. John also discussed his desire to help others globally in his passion for human trafficking work. His desire to help relates closely to living a meaningful life for John because he believes he needs to help others in order to be fulfilled and follow God's plan for him. Bill spoke of how he has empathy and desire to help students in difficult situations, but how he needs to maintain professional boundaries. He explained how this can be challenging at times. For both John and Bill, they appear to view students holistically. Meaning, they both recognize that the struggles of students can go far beyond the curriculum, and they both want to help students with their overall development.

John:

Just the things you see in these schools with what kids deal with, like cutting and drugs, and sex and all these other, alcohol, and all this kind of stuff. Um, and not – professionally not being allowed to do something like that, or to have too much – I should say too much influence on them. That – that annoys me a little bit... That's

something I, I still want to somehow, you know, at least be there and bring up these issues, saying you know... there's someone there. Like even a psychologist or something, cause this is – I don't know, it just doesn't seem right, to me. I mean kids have life tough enough with like school and... puberty and everything, and trying to figure out all that.

John:

So what I would change about the field teaching is, I have a drawing of just, you know, the older teacher a student, and one thing they tell us in the practicum is that we're not allowed to be too attached. We're not supposed to be buddy, buddy, as I quote them, with the students. You can't like help them resolve any social issues they have at, in home or family problems that may distract them from their studies, or anything that – cause there's a lot of factors that teachers that may interfere with what they learned in school and how they do. And sometimes I, I believe that, you know, we should kind of, as teachers, it's almost like we're a second – second parent, we're trying to like help them out and get them to whatever level. And that can involve, you know, helping them resolve whatever issues are at home, or other things that bother them. So that's one thing I would change.

Bill:

But you also want to...for me like I wanted to be in a career that...you can kind of benefit people... You can help people, and I think...teaching is a good opportunity for me to do that, right.

Bill:

And if you can guide them through that maturation, like I think that's – that helps them too. Cause when they're going through a school year, like I mean they're not just doing school...they do other things in life and – and as a teacher you're in a position where you can kind of help them do that too.

Bill:

The second part is...kind of having boundaries with your students, because you want to be in a place where you can help them and – and help them grow as like individuals too, not just like academically. But that being said...you don't want them to depend on you and you don't want to start depending on like their states...But it's like natural to feel bad, but I can't...be that emotionally invested where it like starts to affect me...so you want to be able to help them, but...you can't be too close, right, and then that's - that's kind of hard cause...naturally you want to help people or at least empathize with them, and you got to kind of have to put the blinders on and things

Discussion

This theme relates to self-determination theory's needs for relatedness and autonomy. Firstly, both participants expressed the importance of having relationships with students, and how these relationships can be rewarding. According to self-determination theory, people have a need to connect with and care for others (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Of note however, is that the participants expressed how the teaching environment has limited their interactions with students. This is problematic, because self-determination theory states that psychological functioning is impeded when a psychological need is unmet (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Fernet et al. (2013) suggest

that the three needs from self-determination theory align with the three components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Their research found that unmet needs for relatedness are associated with depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Fernet et al., 2013). Depersonalization refers to a detached approach to the job, and reduced accomplishment refers to having feelings of incompetence and inability to meet goals (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Both John and Bill expressed how they have a desire to help students in matters beyond the curriculum, but this desire is not supported by the professional boundaries established for teachers. Therefore there was an expressed inability to meet a goal, or desire, to help students beyond the curriculum. In addition to this, burnout is essentially the experience of stress while working in a profession that requires serving the needs of others (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

The infringement on the participant's desires to help students also relates to the need for autonomy, because the individual desires and needs of the participants are being restricted by the school system. Perception of autonomy fulfillment predicted emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Fernet et al., 2013). It was also common across the case studies in the literature for participants to discuss the importance of relationships with students (Bloomfield, 2010; Mulholland & Wallace, 2012; Sinner, 2010; Schlichte et al., 2005). Finally, strong relationships can be preventative of burnout. Teachers who do not burnout acknowledge the importance of school administration, peers, and family support (McEnany, 2010).

I could see how this desire to support students could be a large source of frustration for John in particular, because the school system will always place restrictions on the relationships teachers can have with their students. And for Bill, it appears that the source of frustration is

figuring out how to balance his empathy and desire to help, with what he knows are his professional limitations.

Autonomy is Important as a Teacher

Freedom and independence as a teacher was expressed to be important by both John and Bill. In addition to discussing freedom as a teacher, both participants also expressed how their current lives are marked by a freedom to explore because they are still young men. This demonstrates how freedom is not only a valuable thing to them in their classroom, but also throughout their current lives. In addition, this relates back to the theme on living an authentic life (presented later) because having freedom ultimately means that you are able to make your own choices and live/work authentically. Both participants spoke of not only the desire for freedom, but also how frustrating a lack of freedom (or lack of control, as Bill described) can be.

John:

Okay so the best thing about being my age outside of work would be the freedom, at the moment. For me at least, I, it may be different from other people, but for me it's the freedom to explore different things and continuously learn...which can I guess be applied to when your older, but I guess now is just, cause I don't know – there's just so much to know and I love learning.

John:

But, I – I definitely felt very, there was just no freedom in, you know, teaching the way I would like to teach. And I understand, you know, I'm a student teacher and I have my weaknesses and I'm here to learn, absolutely. I'm down for that, but I would like to have,

at least a little bit of creative freedom to teach... So I like – I like to take risks here and there, but it was not stressed, or it was not wished upon

John: “Yeah I like my freedom and when my freedom gets taken away to some degree, um, I don’t like that.”

John:

I just need – for me personally I think I need – I need time. Just knowing myself I like to learn a little slowly than most, and I like – I like to have my time and my hours, the hard work to put into it, and also the freedom to make mistakes if I – and not be worried I’d get like ran over or fired, or whatever, just because I made one little mistake. Right. Just the freedom to – to learn and improve myself over time as opposed to here go, do what you’re expected, you have this standard

Bill:

I think the best thing about being my age is that, you know you have...relative freedom, right. Like I’m 22, so I’m pretty young and the thing is...for me at least, like I’m not really like tied down to anything in particular. So...there’s a lot of freedom for seeking out opportunities and you know, just exploring different things and pursuing... like a variety of things.

Bill:

So it’s just that, I mean everyone has heard stories of mentor teachers who kind of force their student teacher to do things a certain way. And that kind of rubs them the wrong way, right. But then you know they have to do it the way their mentor teacher wants,

because...they want a good evaluation...I think that freedom, what it means to me is that you can kind of be your own teacher, and...teach in a style that is fitting for you, and where your mentor teacher isn't like suffocating you and stuff

Bill:

They weren't as strict and they didn't require as much structure, and they gave me more freedom to do what I wanted to do. And I think that was good too, because it helped me...learn how to come to my own and establish...how I wanted to run the classroom, or how I wanted to...teach a unit, or teach a class...

Bill:

I think there's just a lot of things out of your control and I get there's things like that in life, but this just seems like – there's just so many things...everything is dependent on other people. Yeah you basically just like do what people tell you. They're like oh you're teaching this grade and then you just go and teach it, right, but...you don't feel like you're...in control of it.

The Expectations of Stakeholders

While teaching autonomy is valued by both participants, it became evident that teacher independence is not always easy to achieve due to external demands and expectations. This struggle for autonomy in a system which sometimes constricts freedom could be a potentially large source of stress for teachers.

John:

I don't want to be someone's dog for a while and have to – I have to live by these policies, I have to live by these things, because whoever is designing it, their perception of um, teaching, is that and that's what they feel is correct. But that might not necessarily be correct for me, because my perception of teaching is totally different than theirs...

John:

I mean you have – you have your own way of doing things, but sometimes your way of doing things isn't one um, the people above you want you to do it that way. So that can be stressful. That could lead to a lot of burnout, I can see.

John:

But on the bad days where you're just like discouraged, and you're criticized and there's – nobody talking about the strengths and positives of your lesson or whatever... that's when you kind of question yourself and you have a little self-doubt. So I guess in a sense it is that insecurity, cause you're like, yeah I guess I am a little bit insecure as a teacher in that sense, right. As a teacher just, you know, not knowing, still trying to figure out, you know, who you are and your identity and all that.

John:

I'm kind of finding myself right now, I have to be really political with how I say things. Because I don't know, it's just... yeah being political with your words. Um... Just this no freedom in – in the way – the way I dress, the way I talk. Even my social life.

John:

Oh man, the busyness of it. Oh my goodness. There are nights, well I think for a good couple weeks, I just – I slept at like three, four a.m. doing lesson plans and woke up at 7. Just to get to school on time and all that. And running on coffee every day, and it's hell, right. Long story short, you feel like crap and then you know – you know it, your mentor teacher... and they don't get you, and they tell you, you got to do this and that. And okay I'm going to try that, but it's still not working, and they don't understand how you feel...

Bill:

And I think what I don't – another thing that I don't like about it is just like, like there's so many...there's a lot of like stakeholders and interest groups in something like teaching, right. Like they all want to – they all have their thing to say and whatever, and everyone – I mean even parents and stuff...I mean everyone's got an opinion and whatever, and...I think often times you get trapped in trying to please certain people...Whether you're trying to please your coworkers or your principal, and the parents or whatever.

Bill: “And second of all, I mean especially when you first start you're...getting evaluated all the time. Like people come in and watch you and your principal will watch you, and things like that. So that's pressure too, pressure to perform.”

Discussion

This theme directly relates to the psychological need for autonomy in self-determination theory. Deci & Ryan (2002) explain that autonomy refers to a belief that we are the origin of our

own behaviours and our behaviours are an expression of the self. According to Baard (2002), when autonomy is applied to the work force, it is a feeling of control and choice about the work an individual is doing. Both John and Bill express a desire to have autonomy in their teaching, although the two had different experiences with it. John felt that he was not given very much opportunity for autonomy, while Bill expressed that he was given a fair amount of autonomy. Therefore John's need for autonomy was generally not met during his student teaching experience, while Bill's was. The thwarting of psychological needs has been connected to job related burnout, and Bartholomew (2014) found that the strongest predictor of burnout was the unmet need for autonomy. In another study, an individual's perception of autonomy fulfillment predicted if they would experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Fernet et al., 2013).

In regards to the emerging adult developmental period, emerging adults desire support in their endeavors, but require space due to a need for autonomy (Murphy et al., 2010). The case study from Bloomfield (2010) identified that the participant would have liked more autonomy in the classroom, and the case study from Mulholland and Wallace (2012) found that the participant felt there was a lack of control over her work due to the political system of schools. In addition to this, Sinner's (2010) case study also identified the participant's desire for more autonomy in the classroom, and the participant's statement that they would have to actively work at remaining true to themselves in the education system. Finally, research suggests that resilience in teachers can be preventative of burnout, and resilience can be found in feelings of having control (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

Leading an authentic life will be “fulfilling”

In a bigger scheme, what came out to be of great importance to the participants was leading a fulfilling and meaningful life. While John and Bill used the terms “fulfillment” and “meaning”, Bill also used the term “integrity” to describe how he wants to live an authentic and happy life. What came out of interview as important went far beyond the day to day struggles and triumphs of a teacher and how the daily grind contributes to burnout. For John and Bill, everything they do has a greater purpose, because their ultimate goal is to be fulfilled by the lives they lead. In addition to this, both participants spoke about how they want their career to be fulfilling regardless of factors such as pay or the perceptions of society. Considering all this, both Bill and John appeared to be expressing how if they live a life that is true to who they are/who they want to be, that will be fulfilling enough. For these participants, there isn’t a desire to chase a certain lifestyle. Rather, they both want to be authentic to their values and passions, rather than chase the dreams society has deemed worthy.

John:

I think for me to know that my life, my entire life from the day I was born till whenever I pass away, my life was a life where I was – it was not meaningless, you know. I actually, you know, did stuff that were – that was not necessarily like about myself, like I wasn’t you know, self-centered, like I was before, and just so focused on um, getting a certain lifestyle. Or even, even now like, one of my biggest fears of chasing that fear, ironically enough is... in chasing a dream of not having a non fulfilling life, I don’t want to do it just because of that reason, vs. oh I’m doing this to feel good, so I can feel fulfilled. No I want to do it, like literally because I want to help people and I want to actually do stuff,

not to feel good. Not the, like the altruistic kind of ...that's the word I was thinking of...
Altruistic kind of mindset, you know.

John:

And knowing that their life is not pointless, it is not just some mundane, you go around for 80 years, 90 years of your life just doing some random job, for 40 years, and you retire and that's it, right. Is that all there is to life? And I think that's the biggest – biggest thing. And obviously like that is, life fulfillment can be subjective to different people. Like what I think is, you know, fulfilling for me maybe different than another person.

John:

I'm a Christian and my beliefs, I felt that God saw me hey you know what, like maybe you're doing things for the wrong motivation here. Let's take a step back...what are you doing in law school for right... are you really doing it to help people as I kind of just told people on the side. But are, or are you really just doing it to, you know, make yourself feel good and get all this stuff. So that kind of made me really change a few things. And as a result of that... I kind of just found education for that, and realized hey you know what, this is – I feel a lot more fulfilled doing this as opposed to something for alternate reasons.

John:

Like my passion's always been like human trafficking and like really like – using education as form, just teaching or working with the kids, one-on-one and just like

teaching them. And I could like do that for the rest of my life, it would be, I don't care how much money I make, like be ten dollars, - oh I shouldn't say that, that's really little...

Bill:

And I also think that, for me also like, having integrity...is important too. Like you got to be true to yourself and true to your values. I think those are important things. But like in terms of like a career or whatever, like I personally feel that, you know, for me I would take a career that maybe...pays a little less, or whatever...but, it's something that you know, I enjoy doing and something that...you can go to work happy to do, and you...feel like those skills suit you and stuff...so that's kind of what I mean, like you got to kind of do what...fulfills you. Even if you have to take some sacrifices in other places.

Bill:

I think life fulfillment means just like you can kind a like look back on your life, and just be like happy, or not happy, but like being a contentment with what you have...like, I don't think...it's got like a standard measurement, life fulfillment...I think for everyone it's different, right, but I think if they could look back, or even like reflect on what they have now and...their content with it and they feel satisfied by it, then I think that's - that's fulfilled enough.

Bill:

And you know just, um, you know pursuing things that - that you want to pursue...things that you feel like you want, like they might not be the most like gratifying or society

might not think it's like the greatest use of your time. But if you're happy doing it and – and you get enjoyment from that, then I think you might as well do it right?

Discussion

John and Bill's desire to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives can be connected to self-determination theory. In particular, it aligns with the underlying premise of self-determination theory that humans have an innate drive for growth and development into a more unified self (Deci & Ryan, 2002). This theme also relates to the need for autonomy because they are expressing a desire to live a life that they find fulfilling, regardless of what others in society say is acceptable (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Fulfillment can also be related to research on emerging adulthood, since emerging adulthood is a period marked by the exploration of self-identity and finding a career that will suit the individual and be satisfying (Arnett, 2000). Arnett (2007) also states that emerging adults with a four year degree tend to look for jobs that are congruent to their sense of self. Finally, Murphy et al. (2010) states that emerging adults leave their work options open in the hopes that they will find a fulfilling and intrinsically motivating job.

Having a profession

Both participants are focused on having a career which will be fulfilling and rewarding for them, and which is authentic to their values. As well for both, this career may not necessarily be in teaching. In addition to this, both John and Bill expressed value in having a profession. For John and Bill, they are at a point in their lives where they want to start a career and feel as if they are accomplishing something. However, starting a career may not be an easy task. Both

participants expressed that there are many hoops they have to jump through in order to start a career.

John: “What I enjoyed as the differences, was that between being a student teacher and a student, was that I loved being able to, you know, just – it felt like I was actually doing a job. Like I was doing my – my goal.”

John:

I think having, being able to complete it, and being able to say that... I actually have a profession now, as opposed to simply being an undergrad, or high school, or whatever...It's actually a job that can – I can do something with.

Bill:

I'm just looking forward just to starting...Just to you know, getting into it and you know, starting your career. Like that's something I'm looking forward to for sure. Is that, it's a new chapter of life and it'd just be good to get into it...But, just starting a job would be good, starting your career, that'll be a good feeling, I think.

Bill:

Like there's going to be a time where it doesn't feel like you're doing anything, because you're just graduating and you're just, you know, you've just applied or whatever, but you're just waiting right. And then for that, I think it's a challenge cause, it doesn't feel like you're going anywhere, and there doesn't seem to be any...set direction and stuff.

Bill: “if I want to be a teacher, I don't know if that is worth waiting for”

Jumping through the hoops

Both John and Bill discussed their concerns about the political nature of the education system. In particular, they discussed the “hoops” to go through in order to get a job, and the state of job openings. This appears to be a source of challenge for both John and Bill, since these “hoops” will make it more difficult for them to start their career.

John:

I don't like politics. The politics of...any workplace or of education even... going into it, like I was kind of, you know, pretty happy, I was excited because I was like yeah, no school, no studying for whatever. And then going like out of it, I was just like man, like re-evaluating, like is this really, like do I really want to put up with a lot of this. Like, jumping through...hoops, just to like please... The person who's in charge...

Bill:

Things that I don't like is – obviously it's hard to find a job...and also there's like a lot of hoops you have to kind of jump through, right. Like you have to, you know, do certifications for – for like three different things and whatever.

Bill:

Um, the only thing that makes me hesitant, I think, well the biggest thing is just that there's a lot of – um, like hoops you have to jump through, and there's a lot of different processes and stuff. And there's a lot of...politics and bureaucracies, like with those kind of jobs, right. So...I don't really like that. I understand like why it's there and why it's needed but, you know that's just the one thing I kind of don't like about it.

Discussion

Both participants have a goal of starting a career, and this goal serves as a motivating factor for them (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is in line with self-determination theory, because in the theory individuals are seen as active beings that strive for personal cohesion (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The goal of starting a career can be related to the needs for competence and autonomy. Since the need for competence is a need for confidence and effectiveness (Deci & Ryan, 2002), it follows that starting a career would initiate stronger feelings of competency. Autonomy, which can be about having control and choice in the workplace (Baard, 2002), relates to starting a career because once an individual becomes more established in the workforce, they will be able to develop more autonomy. The problem, however, is that this goal of starting a career is being thwarted by political factors and “hoops” to jump through. Therefore the needs for competence and autonomy may be left lacking, which can be related back to burnout.

As individuals in the emerging adulthood period of development, it makes sense for John and Bill to have a focus on starting a career. Emerging adulthood is characterized by setting, pursuing and altering goals about things such as career (Shulman & Nurmi, 2010). However, it can be difficult for emerging adults to meet their career goals in reality, and compromises are thus made in order to successfully adapt (Arnett, 2007). For John and Bill, their goal is to establish a career. However, due to some of the barriers, their goal may need to be altered and compromises might be made in order to adapt and eventually succeed at starting a career.

Some of the topics found in the case studies reviewed relate to this discussion. In the case study from Mulholland and Wallace (2012), the participant expressed frustration at the difficulty

of getting a permanent teaching position, and in Sinner's (2010) case study the participant discussed the "hoop jumping" in education.

The Future as a Teacher is Uncertain

Going along with the freedom that John and Bill currently experience as young men comes some uncertainty about what the future holds for them. To begin with, both John and Bill expressed that they did not know if they would work as teachers or not. This uncertainty is exacerbated by their concerns about the current job market in education. They expressed concern about the availability of jobs, where they might end up finding a teaching job, as well as when they would receive a position. With this unsureness about their prospects in Alberta education, both Bill and John have considered options in other areas of work. In addition to this, John expressed how his passion is in social justice work. This preoccupation with the uncertainty of the job market also relates back to the theme of wanting to have a profession, because it appears that the uncertainty about their futures is disconcerting for them due to their desire to establish a career.

John:

There's probably thousands, ten thousands of teachers out there looking for a job, how are you going to get a job if there's no jobs available, and there's ten thousand waiting. Right, it's kind of...yeah, all that training for what? Right? Sending us... overseas, or so I don't know.

John:

Well in the current state of our province, there's not a lot of Alberta Education jobs, so that's kind of something that's completely out of my own control and I can get every reference, and every like, you know, mark and whatever I got to do. But, I know at the end of the day it's not going to make a difference.

John:

Where, location, yeah. I think that's the big one right now. And I'm already thinking about it to be honest with you, like you know... Alberta, Edmonton, Calgary, or am I going to be overseas...I don't know.

John:

I mean, it could be three, four – two, three, four years from now, and I really don't know... I mean, I could be married in a couple of years, I don't even know. Like I could, there's so many different factors that come into play. Ideally I would, you know, I want to do that, I want to do this in some capacity. Like you know it might be teaching in that capacity. It might not just be goodbye to teaching, just maybe taking teaching in another form. Or I guess, we have a way of putting it in Christian terms, it's wherever god wants me to go.

John:

It's smart to get the two years certificate, that the Alberta government mandates...official teaching certificate. Which you know, logically it makes sense, so that's my first option, and the first step in doing that, and that may be in Alberta, or that may be international in

an Alberta international school. I don't know how that looks after this year. And after that whenever I – whenever the hours are up and I finally got it, that's when I think for me I'm like, I want to go into this, and I want to finally do some human traffic kind of stuff. And down the road, maybe even um, seminary school

John: “I will be a lifelong teacher, right, but maybe not in a professional sense. I don't know if that's necessarily what I'm going to do, but I don't know yet.”

John:

Cause everyone wants to make their mark, you want to go into this world, and you know, when you leave this world you want to leave this - leave a mark, leave a legacy of some sort. Say hey you know, this is what I did, I'm proud of it, and well I'm literally in the beginning of that. So yeah, I guess it's kind of – in a sense, in a way it's almost kind of scary you could say.

Bill:

The hardest thing about being my age I guess would be...kind of like inexperience. And there's, there's a lot of uncertainty – I mean obviously, it goes hand in hand with like being free to do things, right, there's a lot of uncertainty. It doesn't feel like anything's...set. So and then with inexperience...you're still like learning how to kind of get your life...

Bill:

The significant roadblock would be getting that like permanent contract, right. Like getting a contract with a school...Yeah I think that's uncertainty...you don't know when

you're going to get a job, right. It's not like you apply and you're like oh well you know, the – the manager of whatever, like human resource person will see it and they'll call you soon...you basically just hand it in, and you don't know...and the wait period is like several months...the uncertainty just kind of comes from a few angles.

Bill:

So I guess on a personal level...right now there's like a lot of uncertainty for me...I don't know where I'm going to work, I don't know if I'm going to work, and or rather not if I'm going to work. I don't know where I'm going to work, or if I'm going to be...a teacher and stuff, right. So the things that I hope changes...be like things can kind of just like settle down, and just you know, be more stable, whatever.

Bill:

This might kind of sound kind of strange, considering what I've been talking about before. But...I'm open to – to having a career that's not in teaching...I would love for it to be like education related, just because you know, I feel strongly about education...it doesn't necessarily have to be teaching...I mean being a teacher would be great and stuff, right. But, that being said, I don't know if I could do that forever...I don't see myself doing that for the next like 30, 40 years, right. For a full career, like if I'm a teacher...I'm going to do it for a bit and move into other...administration or something else

Discussion

Both participants want to feel established and start a career, rather than wait for a teaching career to begin. As previously discussed, this relates to the fulfillment of competence

and autonomy. Feeling uncertain about the future is likely to thwart the ability to fulfill competence and autonomy needs, especially given the importance both participants placed on starting a career. For example, the competence need relates to feelings of effectiveness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Effectiveness may not be felt if an individual is uncertain about what they will do in the future, and are uncertain about whether they will be able to find a job. Autonomy relates to having feelings of control (Baard, 2002), which is likely not an experienced feeling when there is uncertainty about your future career.

Uncertainty is a theme strongly related to the topic of emerging adulthood. Shulman & Nurmi (2010) state that emerging adulthood is a developmental period characterized by instability and fluctuations. It is a period where individuals explore options, and where little about the future has been solidified (Arnett, 2000). Research also suggests that emerging adults may place energy into interests outside of work with the potential for these interests to lead to new professional opportunities, in the hopes of finding a fulfilling and intrinsically motivating career (Murphy et al., 2010). Therefore while the uncertainty that John and Bill are experiencing is unsettling, it is not an uncommon experience for individual their age.

Considering how both these participants may not end up having long careers as teachers, it is important to acknowledge the impact of teacher preparation in the futures of pre-service teachers. According to Hultell (2013), student teaching is a critical and decisive period. Klassen and Chiu (2011) found that those pre-service teachers who have more stressful pre-service teaching assignments exhibit lower levels of occupational commitment, and those with higher levels of occupational commitment are less likely to quit teaching. Both those who leave the profession and those who stay have an intrinsic interest in teaching (Hong, 2012). Therefore an intrinsic motivation to be a teacher does not sufficiently account for whether people leave the

profession or not. While John reported more negative experiences, both he and Bill expressed that they may not end up teaching. This could be due to things that they learned in their training experiences, which a person cannot fully understand until they enter the field. For example: the workload, lack of control, or the politics surrounding the field.

Summary of Common Themes

These themes were identified by examining the recurring topics in the case studies, and then looking at the stories, preoccupations, etc. to determine what was meaningful about those topics. Thus the themes of: desire to be the “best” teacher possible, professional guidelines hinder the helping relationship, autonomy is important as a teacher, leading an authentic life will be fulfilling, having a profession, and the future as a teacher is uncertain were identified. Discussions were included after each theme to show how these interpretations can be related to the existing literature. This helps further substantiate the claims I made by demonstrating how the experiences of these participants can be related to the experiences of others.

Chapter 6: Closing Remarks

Conclusions

The research question guiding the present study was: How have graduating pre-service teachers already experienced, responded to, and thought about the kinds of phenomena that result in teacher burnout and attrition? A stable finding in research on teacher burnout and attrition is that attrition is the highest in new teachers (Chang, 2009; Gavish, 2010; Guarino, 2006; Hoigaard, Giske, & Sundsli, 2012). The present study may shed some light on potential reasons why a new teacher would leave the profession early on, or experience symptoms of burnout. For Bill and John, the challenges of receiving a permanent contract may not be worth it, and both participants explained that they could be fulfilled working in careers other than teaching. In addition to this, individuals completing the degree during emerging adulthood may be more likely to keep their options open, and are willing to pursue different careers in order to find the job that will be the best fit for them.

The responses of the participants matched up well with self-determination theory. By using self-determination to understand the experiences of pre-service teachers, we can understand how their basic psychological needs were met or unmet during their training. Factors relating to the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy could be found in each theme identified in the analysis. Unmet needs can be related to the three components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). The participants both discussed how some of these unmet needs were a source of frustration. Therefore having these three basic needs unmet could lead to feelings of burnout or a desire to leave the profession.

Limitations

Being qualitative research, the present study cannot be applied universally to all pre-service teachers. The experiences of these participants may share some elements with the experiences of other pre-service teachers, but this cannot be automatically expected. The case studies and themes in this study are unique to John and Bill. In addition to this, the relation between the experiences of the participants, self-determination theory, and burnout and attrition is based on interpretation.

I would have preferred three to four participants. In fact three participants were recruited, but one withdrew. Having at least three participants is recommended in case study research (Ellis, 2009). This would have provided more data for an analysis of the narratives. However, since I did receive rich data with strong themes from the two participants I had, I did not continue to search for a third participant.

Another limitation of the research is that the interviews were not conducted during the student teaching experiences of the participants. Interviewing participants multiple times while they go through the experience of study can be helpful, because the participants are better able to recall stories.

Finally, as a beginning researcher there were some factors that could have been affected by my lack of experience. To begin with, my questions were not as strong as they could have been. I believe that had I developed stronger questions, I would have been able to elicit more stories in the interviews. Secondly, I could have organized my questions into topics that I wanted to inquire about. For example: the participant as an individual, the participant as an education

student, the participant as a student teacher, and the participant as a developing professional. This may have helped organize my data analysis.

Future Directions and Implications

Seeing as how the results of this study cannot be generalized, future quantitative research could be done in order to determine how common these experiences are across pre-service teachers. In particular, how prevalent are the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy, and how often do pre-service teachers report that these needs are thwarted or met during their training. In addition to this, future research on the differences between pre-service teachers who are emerging adults, and those who are not, could help understand if the exploratory nature of emerging adulthood contributes to higher levels of attrition in the first years of teaching.

Now that there is some understanding of how pre-service teachers have encountered and thought about factors relating to burnout and attrition, the experiences of future pre-service teachers can be improved. For example understanding the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy, teacher preparation programs can attempt to better meet these needs in order to provide positive experiences to students. The importance of these needs can also be applied to practicing teachers, and more can be done to help teachers meet these needs. For example, competence could be improved with further training experiences, relatedness could be improved with providing strong mentorship to new teachers, and autonomy could be improved by encouraging pre-service teachers to form their own teaching identity.

Final Reflections

As I sit here writing the final paragraph of my thesis I am experiencing mixed emotions. This has been my first encounter with research, and I cannot process all the learning I have done,

and progress I have made. I have been challenged at every step of this process, and at times felt that this was an insurmountable task. However my dedication to communicating and honoring the experiences of John and Bill pushed me through, much like my dedication to my students pushed me through my pre-service teaching. I have developed a new found respect, and dare I say love, for the research process. Learning about the lives of others, and celebrating the importance of each person's experience is a gift, and I hope that I have returned the favor by providing new insights into how we can understand and help pre-service teachers.

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Appendix A: PIAs and open ended questions for first round of data collection

Questions:

- 1) What is the best thing about being your age? What is the hardest thing?
- 2) If you could pick one thing that you wouldn't have to worry about anymore, what would it be? What would the next thing be?
- 3) What would you like to be really good at doing?
- 4) What would you really like to accomplish in the next year or so?
- 5) How was student teaching different from being a student at the university? What were some differences you liked? What were some things you missed about being a student?
- 6) When you think about starting your career as a teacher, what are some things you look forward to? What are some things you are nervous about?
- 7) What experience in your training has really stood out as a good one? What is a difficult experience you have had in your training?
- 8) What is something you have done in your training that you have been pleased about?...Things that went well or thing that at first seemed difficult or challenging?
- 9) What has been the most satisfying thing about your training? What have you been dissatisfied with in your training?
- 10) Since you started your training, have you changed any of the ways you go about things or the way you think about things?

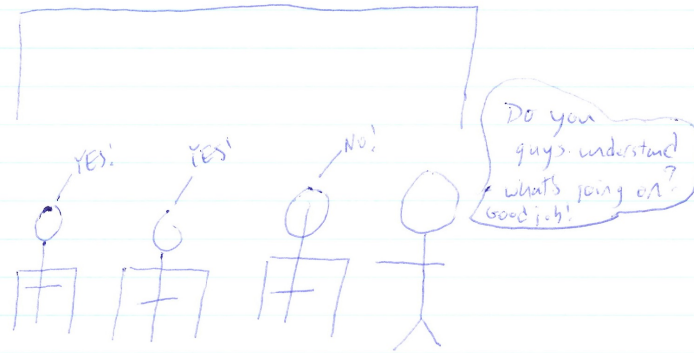
- 11) In what ways do you hope things will change as you work in the field of education? What do you hope will stay the same?

Pre-Interview Activities

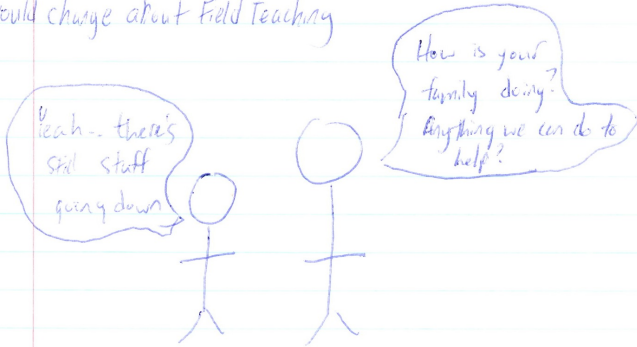
- 1) Make a diagram depicting the support systems in your life.
- 2) Make a drawing about something you have accomplished that you were especially proud of. Use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
- 3) Draw a picture of a place that is important to you. Label the parts or use key words to indicate what happens in each part.
- 4) Pick a topic or activity that is important to you and make a timeline showing significant events that changed the way you have experienced that aspect of your life.
- 5) Make two pictures or diagrams showing what you like about the field of teaching, and what you would like to change about the field of teaching.
- 6) Make two pictures of yourself (include speech bubbles or thought bubbles) to show your thoughts before and after entering the education program.

Appendix B- Participant PIAs

John



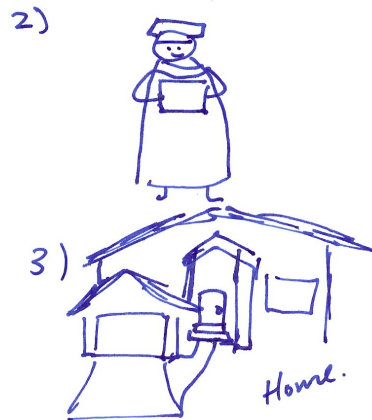
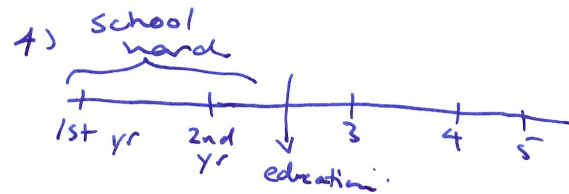
What I would change about Field Teaching



Bill

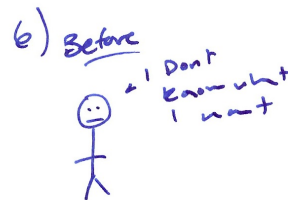
Pre-Interview Activities

- 1) Make a diagram depicting the support systems in your life.
- 2) Make a drawing about something you have accomplished that you were especially proud of. Use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
- 3) Draw a picture of a place that is important to you. Label the parts or use key words to indicate what happens in each part.
- 4) Pick a topic or activity that is important to you and make a timeline showing significant events that changed the way you have experienced that aspect of your life.
- 5) Make two pictures or diagrams showing what you like about the field of teaching, and what you would like to change about the field of teaching.
- 6) Make two pictures of yourself (include speech bubbles or thought bubbles) to show your thoughts before and after entering the education program.



- 5) Like
- fulfilling
 - Dynamic
 - satisfying
 - like working w/ kids

- Don't like
- hard to find jobs
 - have to jump through a lot of hoops
 - pay is average for amount of work



Appendix C-Figures

Figure 1: Interpretive Inquiry as an Unfolding Spiral

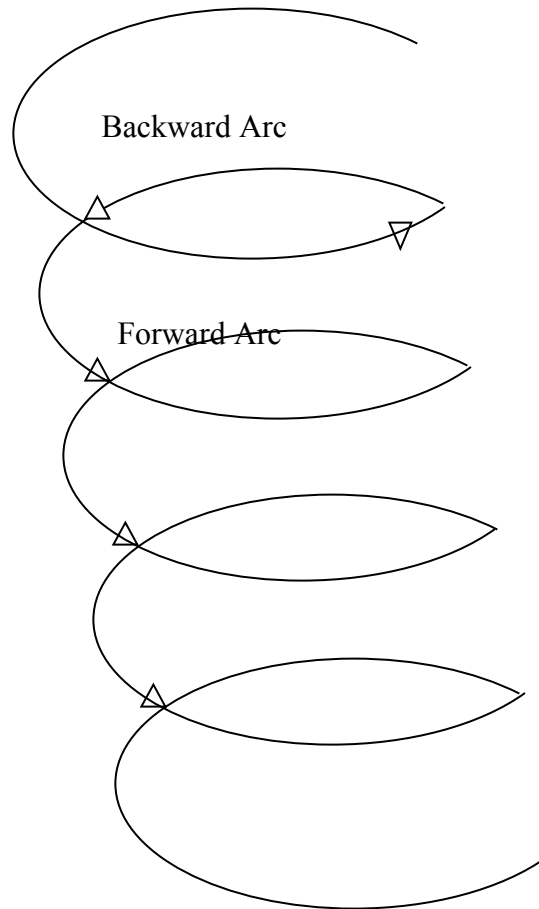
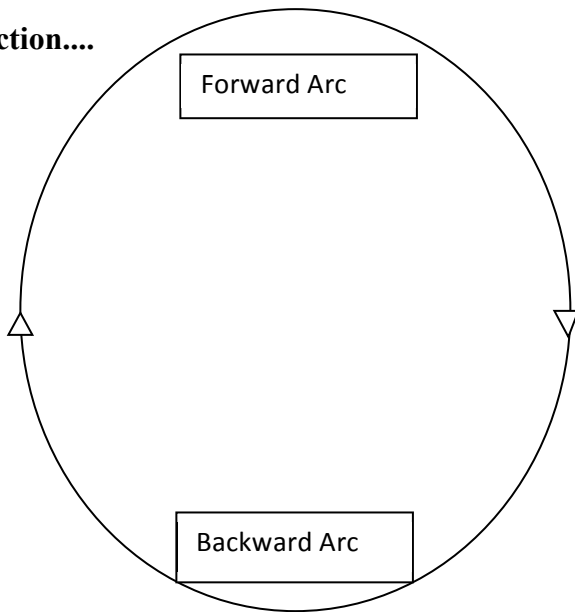


Figure 2: The Hermeneutic Circle

Projection....



Evaluation...