

University of Alberta

A Journey towards Professional Integration
– Experiences of Immigrant Ph. D. Students
in Breaking down Barriers to Enter Canadian Academia

by

Wenying Shi

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education

©Wenying Shi
Fall 2010
Edmonton, Alberta

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Libraries to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only. Where the thesis is converted to, or otherwise made available in digital form, the University of Alberta will advise potential users of the thesis of these terms.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis and, except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

Examining Committee

Dr. Olenka Bilash, Department of Secondary Education

Dr. Bill Dunn, Department of Secondary Education

Dr. Joe Wu, Department of Elementary Education

Dr. Paula A. Brook, Department of Educational Policy Studies

Dr. Lucille Mandin, Faculty of Education, Campus Saint-Jean

Dr. Douglas Fleming, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Dedication

*To my husband, Glen Featherstone,
who has helped me retain faith, courage, determination, and dignity
throughout this arduous journey.*

- With love and admiration, Cathy

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the internal and external barriers and successes in career preparation of a small group of immigrant doctoral students. Through three cycles of a four-year action research investigation that integrates interviews, surveys, participant reflections and autoethnography, the data was interpreted through the lenses of critical pedagogy, socio-cultural theory, ecological theory and dialectic theory. The study reveals some of the intercultural transformations that take place in order to reconstruct professional autonomy and perceptions of empowerment during the process of breaking down internal and external barriers. In order for immigrant doctoral students to achieve professional integration the study presents recommendations to university leaders, graduate supervisors and graduate students themselves. The primary goals are to deepen the understanding of various barriers experienced by professional immigrant Ph.D. students and to identify the changes that occurred in reconstructing their professional autonomy and in their perception of empowerment during the process of breaking down various external and internal barriers towards professional integration. This study should provide new understandings of what Canadian doctoral education means to professional immigrants, where gaps exist in universities' programs of studies and their implementation, and between students' career preparation needs and the services provided through university career support. In light of Canada's aggressive immigration policy, the findings point to the need to build an integrated career support system for immigrant doctoral students' academic career transition success and encourage Canadian

universities to reflect upon the humanistic and democratic values and approaches embedded in the internationalization of education. In addition, immigrant doctoral students may feel empowered by the stories being told and inspired by the insights and strategies revealed.

Acknowledgement

This thesis cannot be completed without the guidance and inspiration of my supervisor, Dr. Olenka Bilash. She values my research topic and respects my learning style, which has enabled me to think, act, and write freely. She has been extremely patient with my learning by endlessly reviewing my thesis. She has always been generous with acknowledgement and encouragement for any minor progress I made. Moreover, she treats me as an individual with needs of recognition and friendship, and she has never hesitated to give all.

I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervising and examining committee members whose support has gone beyond to my professional and personal development. Dr. Bill Dunn has taught me social consciousness and responsibilities even without his awareness. Dr. Joe Wu has taught me street smartness which has helped me succeed to a greater extent in the real world. Their easygoing personality and positive attitude have helped me relax and remain resilient. Dr. Paula Brook, as a close friend, has always been there whenever I was in crisis or in celebrations. She has generously helped me in every aspect of my life. Dr. Lucille Mandin provided support during my candidacy and final oral exams with her admirable empathy and insight.

I am indebted to all the research participants. Without your support, this research will not become possible. Thank you for having accompanied me through a transformative journey of exploration and discovery with your trust, company, and insights. I would like to express my special thanks to Nick. You let

me see that I was not alone in the struggle to flourish. Thanks for your continuous support.

Four colleagues deserve special thanks. Greg Ogilvie has inspired me not to give up when facing overwhelming barriers and has tirelessly helped me recognize my success and potential in my worst times. Betty and Anna, whole heartedly, assured me of my value in their learning. Your acknowledgement has brought much needed warmth and comfort. Linyuan Guo, with her incredible successes, has played an essential role model in my academia career preparation.

I also thank the faculty, staff, and fellow students for your consistent support throughout my program of studies.

My deepest gratitude goes to my husband, Glen Featherstone, for his unconditional love and support. Your proposal for marriage occurred when I had no ability to make money and little time to do chores at home. You had faith in me when I was pushed down and beaten hard. You reminded me of my dream whenever I was tired of trying and wanted to give up. You offered to follow me if I can only establish my dream career in a foreign country, at the cost of leaving your own country, family, friends, and career.

Last but not least; my heartfelt thanks go to my mother, Guixiang Zhao. You have taught me to be simple and easy. Although you often wonder how you, an illiterate widow, can have a child with a Canadian doctoral degree, you have the great wisdom I fail to apply. You taught me to appreciate what I have obtained, but not what I have missed. You taught me what matters is not the result but the process. You also taught me to let it go if it does not belong to me. Your weekend

phone calls have relieved many of the pains while I am learning to live well in a place where you dislike me to be.

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Chapter 1 Personal Narrative of Academic Career Persistence	3
Who I was in China.....	5
Early Values Established through Education.....	5
Seeing Values of Education.....	5
Longing for Attaining Education.....	7
Enjoying Benefits of Educational Attainment.....	10
Outgrowing Opportunities in China.....	12
Whom I Became in Canada.....	14
Feeling Devalued as a Person.....	14
Feeling Devalued as a Social Member.....	17
Feeling Devalued as a Student.....	21
Feeling Devalued as a Professional.....	23
Summary.....	30
Chapter 2 Overview of the Study and Methodology	31
Overview of the Study.....	31
Problem Statement.....	31
Potential Contributions.....	32
Definition of the Terms.....	34
Thesis Structure.....	41
Methodology.....	43
Action Research as Framework.....	43

Overview.....	43
Validity and Generlizability.....	48
Auto-ethnography.....	50
Research Design – Three Cycles of Action Research.....	56
Study Limitations.....	58
Chapter 3 Cycle One: “I Am Not Alone.” - Starting the Journey of Career Exploration.....	60
Contradictions.....	60
Professional Immigrants’ Employment Situation.....	61
Challenges of Doctoral Education.....	65
Experiences of Immigrant Students.....	69
Understanding the Contradictions through the Lens of Critical Pedagogy.....	70
Summary.....	76
Chapter 4 Cycle Two: Exploring Career Preparation Gaps with Others.....	79
Setting.....	79
Research Questions.....	79
Participants.....	80
Data Collection and Analysis.....	82
Findings and Discussion.....	85
Gaps.....	85
English Language Proficiency.....	85
Professional Skills and Experiences.....	90
Strategies to Fill in the Gaps.....	93
Early Career Preparation.....	93

Adapting to Host Country’s Belief System and Practice.....	95
Faculty Support.....	96
Peer Support.....	98
Themes.....	101
Barriers Perceived Vary according to Individual Experience and Attitude.....	101
Functioning on Campus is a Necessary Step.....	102
Understanding the Gaps through the Lens of Social Constructivism.....	104
Summary.....	107
Chapter 5 Cycle Three: Experiencing Barriers and Successes in Career Preparation with Others.....	111
Setting.....	111
Phase One Preparing for Change.....	111
Phase Two Tension in Implementing the Action Plan.....	113
Research Question and Participants.....	119
Data Collection and Analysis.....	120
Findings and Discussion.....	122
External Barriers and Successes in Academic Career Preparation.....	123
Adapting to Doctoral Programs of Studies.....	123
Bridging Gaps in Professional Knowledge and Skills.....	126
Socialization to Academic Profession.....	135
Utilizing the University’s Career Support Services.....	140
Career Club.....	144
Internal Barriers and Successes in Maintaining Career Aspiration.....	148

Career Immaturity.....	149
Conflicting Values and Norms in Academic Culture.....	152
Stress of Acculturation.....	158
Understanding the Barriers through the Lens of Social Ecological Theory.....	165
Summary.....	171
Chapter 6 Reflective Interpretation on Breaking down Barriers.....	175
Challenging Negative Social Modeling.....	176
Challenging the Myth of Racial Equality in Academia.....	178
Building Support Network.....	186
Faculty Support.....	187
Peer Support.....	191
Student Support.....	194
Canadian Spouse Support.....	197
Understanding Barrier Transformative Potential through the Lens of Dialectical Theory.....	203
Hard Skills and Soft Skills.....	206
Outsider Knowledge and Insider Knowledge.....	211
External Barriers and Internal Barriers.....	213
Barriers and Success.....	217
Integrating Theoretical Framework.....	218
Critical Pedagogy.....	219
Social Constructivism.....	221
Social Ecological Theory.....	223
Dialectical Theory.....	226

An Integrated Framework.....	228
Chapter 7 Implications and Recommendations.....	233
Implications.....	233
Immigration policy makers and practitioners.....	233
Public Media.....	234
Universities.....	235
Professional Immigrant service communities.....	237
Professional immigrant doctoral students.....	238
Recommendation.....	239
Closing.....	243
Chapter 8 Epilogue.....	246
Endnotes.....	250
References.....	251
Appendices.....	283
A. Survey on Immigrant Ph.D. Students' Career Preparation.....	283
B. Immigrant Ph.D. Students' Professional Development Plan.....	295
C. Information Letter.....	301
D. International Graduate Students Career Club Monthly Self-assessment.	304
E. Sample Email Communication to Participants.....	305
F. Term-end Reflection on Professional Development.....	307
G. Post-research Interview Questionnaire.....	308

Preface

This dissertation investigates the internal and external barriers and successes in career preparation of a small group of immigrant doctoral students. With an aggressive immigration policy, the Canadian government has attracted highly educated professionals from all over the world to assist in making the transition towards a knowledge-based economy. However, due to systemic obstacles in recognizing foreign credentials and experiences, some of these immigrants turn to Canadian doctoral degrees in the hopes of continuing with the professional careers they had in their host country.

Through three cycles of a four-year action research investigation that integrates interviews, surveys, participant reflections and autoethnography, the data from this study is interpreted through the lenses of critical pedagogy, socio-cultural theory, ecological theory and dialectic theory. The study reveals some of the intercultural transformations that take place in order to reconstruct professional autonomy and perceptions of empowerment during the process of breaking down internal and external barriers. In order for immigrant doctoral students to achieve professional integration the study seeks recommendations for stakeholders involved in providing support to doctoral students throughout their studies as well as during the career preparation process. In order to deepen the understanding of various barriers experienced by professional immigrant Ph.D. students the three action research chapters each conclude with a summary chart of barriers identified therein.

The findings are expected to engage Canadian universities to reflect upon the humanistic and democratic values and approaches embedded in the internationalization of education. In addition, immigrant doctoral students may feel empowered by the stories told and inspired by the insights and strategies revealed.

Chapter One: Personal Narrative of Academic Career Persistence

*The one bird who did not, could not,
 Fit in
 My mother and brothers laughed
 At me
 I feel like I do not belong in here
 In this place
 I am a small black pea
 In a sea of white grains
 No time or place
 Cast Out
 Ostracized
 Isolated
 Different
 From my family
 Until I learned
 I am not an ugly duckling
 Not a deformed bird
 But a
 Beautiful
 Gorgeous
 Stunning
 Swan
 (Oldberg, 2008)*

Many people were curious about how I came to write about immigrant doctoral students' pursuit of academic careers rather than a narrow more linguistic focus on English as a second language (ESL) education, a field in which I had been exclusively engaged in the past twenty-five years. I had not expected this research focus either, in the year of 2000 when I decided to obtain my last degree in Canada and use it as a stepping stone for a higher stage of my career development.

Through experiences described throughout this study – in courses, in teaching assistantships, in encounters with credentializing institutions and in employment hunting I slowly began a journey of professional integration which

was like what Hans Christian Andersen's Ugly Duckling had experienced in its transformation.

Thus, this thesis presents findings from a qualitative research study on the barriers and successes of a professional integration process experienced by immigrant Ph.D. students. The action research begins autobiographically with the presentation of several critical incidents (¹CIT, Flanagan, 1954), and highlights excerpts from lengthy and detailed life history assignments designed to help me "explore whether and how [my] own experiences ... impact... how [I] perceive, experience and relate to [my] work" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 22). While the complexity and richness of stories benefit all, they are of particular influence to marginalized groups, such as immigrant graduates students, in that they offer them an opportunity to participate in knowledge construction in the academy (Canagarajah, 1996).

Simultaneously, critical incident narratives also reveal my reflexivity, my values, and understandings, as is required and expected in all qualitative research studies. Reflexivity enables the researcher "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research" (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999, p. 228) and reveals 'biases' to the reader. In this chapter, I describe key incidents that bear upon this study about the academic professional career integration process - who I was before I came to Canada reveals the attitudes, beliefs and values that I developed in China, mostly at an unconscious level and whom I became shortly after arriving in Canada. This early stage integrating process exposes the impact of both being stripped of those

values and of feeling unvalued in society. The thesis continues by following my five year journey through the perturbations of immigration and professional un- or under-employment and the search for hope in a new land.

Who I Was in China

Early values established through education

Seeing values of education

I grew up in a single parent family of three children, in a working-class community of People's Republic of China during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). My birth was a thrilling surprise to my parents who already had two boys, according to my mother's later account. My father was killed by electrocution at work when I was one month old. Having declined the factory's offer of a life-long pension, my illiterate mother started her first job as a textile factory worker at the age of thirty-two. In the meanwhile, she became the only bread earner for her three young dependents.

Most of my elementary and junior high school years were spent working in community factories and nearby farms to receive re-education from workers and peasants advocated by Chairman Mao Zedong. I accepted this form of education as "normal", for this was how I started and had continued my schooling for seven years. I was excited about these "field trips" (a term I learned thirty years later in Canada), for this was the only way for me, a city schoolgirl, to see what an outside world looked like. I was always amazed at seeing textile workers making cotton into cloth, or farmers using products from their own land to cook corn porridge. The value of production thus rooted itself deeply in my belief about

education: it should produce something fundamental for the learners' lives in the form of whatever they needed most: food, clothing...

Although we had time in class, the focus was not on subject content learning. Instead, we students were required to criticize teachers' and principals' "wrong political positions", and to post the criticisms on the walls of school buildings. Since I was very young, my thinking and writing abilities were too low to compose criticism against those teachers whom I hardly knew or understood. I recall that meetings for political education were frequent, and the atmosphere was serious and tense. Another memory of my school days is its reputation for a talented football team and gang fights. Some members were even imprisoned and many were punished by the school for their violations of school regulations.

Surprisingly, the initial negative image of teachers imposed by the political movement, and by witnessing humiliations from their students and colleagues, did not damage my profound cultural reverence for teachers and their sacred mission. As for our school's mixed image of invincible football teams and gang fights, it aroused a mixed feeling of pride and fear among us young school girls. Their controversial functioning in the community would, many years later, shed some light in understanding my role in my host country.

The Cultural Revolution ended in my second year of junior high school. Immediately, knowledge education became the center of school education. I was assigned by a teacher to be a peer mentor and sit beside a classmate who was one of the football players and gangsters. He was actually a neighbor; our two families lived in the same apartment building. I was surprised that, such a "violent and

dangerous bad student” (in both teachers’ and students’ minds) was so shy and timid that he always turned his eyes away and lowered his head when I was tutoring him. Moreover, he always followed my disciplining words and kept quiet in class even when somebody tried to initiate a conflict. Gradually, he started learning something and getting involved in some class activities although still falling far behind the majority. He dropped out of school a few months later without informing me in advance. My family later moved to a nearby block, but I sometimes saw him walking a huge dog in our neighborhood. I had never approached him, nor did I know how dangerous he had become. Several years later, I learned that he had been imprisoned, then married, and then died of cancer in his early 30s. He was the first person who helped me, although involuntarily, to start developing essential characteristics of compassion and passion, to understand the value of knowledge and skills, to demonstrate my worth, and to see amazing changes in another— a fourteen-year old outcast. He became one of the fondest memories in my school years.

Longing for attaining education

A remarkable indicator of the dramatic change of Chinese education at that time was the reintegration of its national college entrance exam in 1977. For the first time in my school years, schools were ranked based on quality of education. Our school was ranked Class Three, the lowest. Our very hard-working, but not quite competent, teachers began inspiring and helping us prepare for entering better senior high schools. But it was too late for most of us to catch up. Together with the majority of my classmates, I failed in entering a better school and

remained in my community school. The catching-up effort from both the students and the teachers in the following two senior high school years did not help me or others pass the national college entrance exam upon graduation.

Although all the graduates failed to enter university in 1980, there was good news: two repeating students from the previous year had passed and were accepted by universities. However, not many students were impressed by their success. As I see it now, the national college entrance exam had just resumed after having been abolished for ten years (1966-1976 during Cultural Revolution), those admitted were still studying in universities, it was hard for people to imagine how the lives of these 天之骄子 (tian zhi jiao zi: God's favored ones) would be profoundly changed. Nearly all my grade-mates of about 400 students became workers in our community textile factory by replacing their parents' posts. My mother also expected me to replace her work post. It was a natural and desirable choice to secure a 铁饭碗 (tie fan wan: an iron rice bowl, a permanent job), which would guarantee the holder security, sufficiency, stability, and satisfaction. She saved her new work uniform and told me she was ready to hand it over to me.

To my own surprise, I disobeyed my mother – a symbol of authority, righteousness, and wisdom. I told my mother that I wanted to study one more year to prepare for the college entrance exam the following year. With reluctance, she agreed. For the first time in my life, I became a rebel against the generally held belief of family, community and society, and I succeeded in gaining the power of

creating my own future. My world was suddenly left in my hands: I was free to create my future; the cost was to take full responsibility. In retrospect, I see that I became an adult the moment my mother told me to proceed. That year I was seventeen.

The following year was like going through purgatory for remodeling. I worked very hard, for I believed, as a repeating student, there was no excuse for me not to get full marks. Everyday before school started, I studied three hours at home; after school I studied another six hours. In order to be focused, I asked my mother to put away our family's newly purchased and the very first TV set. The only luxury I had was writing a diary everyday, but the content was a harsh reflection and self-blaming for not getting full marks. Twenty-two years later when my fifteen-year old daughter came across the diary while helping me pack for immigration to Canada, she read a few pages and asked me what it was. I told her: "It is my diary from high school." She was astonished and asked with great disbelief: "Is this true? How come you only wrote about studying? Wasn't that boring?" I was speechless. It was too hard to explain why I chose to study rather than to work, and why I studied terribly hard instead of enjoying the fun of adolescent life. My daughter's generation was often addressed by the older generations as 小皇帝 (xiao huang di: little emperor and empress), a term referring to the only child [one-child policy] generation in China who was spoiled by six adults of the family (parents and grandparents from both sides), provided with everything they wanted for learning or living, and boundless opportunities and options in society. Back to my school time, passing the national exam to enter

university was the only way of breaking the vicious cycle my schoolmates and I were destined to follow.

As expected, a year later, my competitive marks allowed me to enter the department of foreign language and literature of our provincial Normal University. I was one of the two students who were admitted to a university in my school in the year I graduated. The success did not just belong to me; it was big news for our community, as well. My family instantly became famous. The excitement was equally shared by my school. Our principal was so proud that he held my acceptance letter and shouted my name while walking from the school to look for my home.

However, I became very ill that summer. For two months, I could hardly stand up and threw up even after drinking only water. Since all the medical examinations indicated normal, my mother later surmised that it must have been the result of a brutal abuse of my body by stress, overwork, lack of sleep, and malnutrition.

The decision to repeat the last year of high school was only seen as a life-changing decision later when my life boat had changed its course to a strange promising land I had never known existed.

Enjoying benefits of educational attainment

Unleashed, I had glided smoothly and gracefully along a bright and glorious path in the English education field ever since entering University. The accomplishments had far exceeded my imagination. At 21 I had become an assistant professor, teaching in-service English school teachers, at the university.

By 22 I had been elected as a model student advisor. At 25 I earned my Master Diploma of Education. At 29 I established the then best-known English language school in our provincial capital city with a partner. At 32 I earned a Master Degree of Education. At 33 I established a second school – an early childhood bilingual school with a partner. At the peak of my career, besides two schools with about eight hundred students and seventy staff, I also owned ten affiliated projects. I became a well-known public figure in my home town, for I had also been engaging in long-term intensive provisions of free English education. I had also hosted weekly English radio programs on three radio stations for five years. At the same time, I had hosted free English salons in public places such as libraries, parks, and big shopping malls. The participants at these events once reached to seven hundred at a time. Our schools also sponsored several columns in local newspapers for promoting children’s English education. For advocating bilingual and international citizenship education among colleagues, I developed and organized many professional development events and activities in the forms of conferences, seminars, teacher/principal training programs, open schools, English talent shows and competitions, and world cultural events and festivals.

Although the great sense of accomplishment mainly came from my entrepreneurial career, my other career as a university assistant professor brought me equal satisfaction. In both academic and non-academic environments, the graduate, undergraduate, and professional students I had taught came from all walks of life: doctors and scientists, teachers and principals, CEOs and business persons, journalists and editors, government officials and military officers,

hospitality managers and staff, priests and fathers. By working with such diverse and talented people of status, my self-esteem was greatly enhanced and my understanding of their contributions as professionals grew. I took great pride in being part of their personal and professional growth. I encouraged and assisted many of them with English preparation for upgrading their education or immigrating to English speaking countries.

English education was the only field in which I had ever been involved, and I had never become interested in other career options. Since I was twenty-one and for nineteen years, I had enjoyed many essential benefits through a very exciting and rewarding professional career in English education.

Outgrowing opportunities in china

“Ugly Duckling” is the name of the Chinese –English bilingual kindergarten I established with a partner. The inspiration was ignited by the castle-like school building. At its first sight in late 1995 over a prestigious residential high wall on the street, I knew immediately that this would be the place to make my dream. Its breathtaking beauty and fairyland-like look captured my full attention and heart. Three months later, from the complex developer, together with a business partner, we defeated all competitors and purchased as a tenant and owner of an academic preschool business, this luxurious 1,700 square meter and 3-story white square structured building with high rising red tips pointed to a blue sky. The gain yielded grey hair; for the first time in my life, I was in debt.

“Ugly Duckling” suggested its innovative bilingual education concept and promising future. The story of “The Ugly Duckling” was illustrated throughout

the walls of every floor of the building. I also named our babies' class "Ugly Duckling", toddlers' class "Yellow Duckling", preschoolers' "White Duckling", and Kindergartners' "Little Swan", to demonstrate my wishful thinking that our children would gradually, steadily, and surely, turn out healthy, happy, intellectual, and ambitious school students. Very soon, our business reached one of its highest peaks, and for the following ten years, we were leaders in the field of Chinese-English bilingual education for children.

Not content with what had been achieved, I began envisioning a bigger picture, this time, with the world as its frame. As my educational focus later turned to children's international citizenship awareness, I realized my Chinese-only education and experiences had limited my ability to develop teacher training curricula and children's programs from a more global perspective, and I also needed to make personal international contacts to directly connect our programs and projects with real people and events in the world. To reach these goals, I would benefit from receiving doctoral studies in a developed English speaking country. Canada became a natural choice as Canada was well-known in China for its welcoming immigration policy. With immigrant status, not only could I bring my daughter with me, but also would I be able to pay much lower tuition fees, all the while being free to also explore other possibilities.

When the visa eventually arrived three and half years after I completed the immigration application, I began doubting the logic of leaving all behind at the age of 41 for an unknown world and an unpredictable future. After six months of drastic inner struggles and under strong objections from every single family

member, my curiosity for exploring and discovering the unknown and the long-cherished dream of transforming Ugly Duckling into Little Swan broke through all barriers. On October 4, 2004, I landed in Canada as an internationally trained professional immigrant.

Whom I Became in Canada

Feeling devalued as a person

I chose to land in a city where a Canadian friend lived. This friend happened to have lived in my hometown when we first met in China. He had offered me great help with my family's settlement in Canada, so I held great respect and gratitude toward him.

He cared about what was happening in China and was very interested in discussing political issues which Westerners generally frowned upon and was curious about what a Chinese thought about them. With increasing interest in discussing these political issues, he bought me a book, *Red China Blues: My Long March from Mao to Now* (Wong, 1997), an autobiography written by a Canadian Chinese journalist talking about her experience from pre-Cultural Revolution to the 1989 Students' Movement in Tiananmen Square. The book recorded how she had changed from a fanatical communist believer into a stern dissenter influenced by the political movements which occurred in her life while living in China. My friend called me almost every day to ask which part of the book I was reading and what I thought about it.

Although I was more than ten years younger than the author, I understood exactly what she was talking about because my eldest brother was of her age, had

been an enthusiastic Red Guard who had burned my father's collection of classic opera books, and participated in some political persecution activities with his schoolmates. At the age of sixteen, regardless of our family's objection, he answered Chairman Mao's call, left an urban lifestyle behind and went to one of the poorest mountain villages in our province to receive re-education from the peasants. His rebellion is attributed to the cause of our grandmother's death, as he was her favorite and she wanted to keep him close. During the Students Movement in the spring of 1989, my position was on the students' side and I would have been on the street or in Beijing joining the protest for political reform if I had not happened to be on the verge of delivery of my daughter. Four years later, I became a member of the Democratic Progressive Party.

Although fifteen years had passed, I had never stopped reflecting on what this tragedy meant to the protesting students themselves, to the Chinese people, to the communist party, and to today's China. When my friend started discussing this issue, I was excited and thought a foreigner's perspective would help me develop a better understanding of its causes and impacts. Unexpectedly, our friendly discussions soon turned into hostile arguments. I felt more and more uncomfortable with his accusing attitude and tone of voice. When hearing me trying to explain what I knew and how I felt as a Chinese, he hastily concluded something like: Your mindset was imposed by the government. You accepted whatever was told to you, and you were speaking the government's voice.

This became "the straw that broke the camel's back". The complete denial of my knowledge and belief, the disdain of my expressions as a Chinese about

China's internal affairs, the disbelief in my ability to think and judge drove a dear personal friendship into an argument caused by two contradicting ideologies, and eventually to a painful breakup. The hurt was profound, for my pride of being a Chinese was severely challenged. I felt so confused; for the first time, the image of nice Canadians became hypocritical. While searching for a better understanding of these disturbing political issues, I accidentally came across the concepts of racism and discrimination discussed by two Chinese Canadian writers: Li Zong (1999, 2001) and Peter Li (1988). This encounter woke me up from a long-time held naïve and idealized assumption of Canada as a paradise, a belief shared by many in China. This awareness, however, made me feel even weaker and more helpless, for I was now fighting against the whole of western ideology. Soon I came to a realization: what was the point of fighting? I did not come to Canada to fight. In fact, I had several Canadian people around who had very kindly and generously helped me in whatever way they could. How could they become enemies?

Over time, having failed in resolving all these tough questions, with bewilderment, resentment, and other ugly feelings, I fled to China to seek recognition, acceptance and comfort. In the midst of my own people, after a suppressed burst of confession of this painful struggle for understanding in my home country, a friend described me as "a totally strange, completely defeated, and lost figure". He asked: "Whom do you think you are?" "I am a Chinese", I was puzzled by his question. He then said: "I think you take yourself as a representative of the Chinese, and you are fighting against Canada on behalf of

China. You put too much on your shoulders.” “But how can I separate myself from being Chinese and China?” I later asked myself. A voice answered: “You are an immigrant now and you are living in Canada.” My inner voice refuted: “But it is only the change of social status, the inside is still me, the old me.” I sighed.

A positive impact of the break-up with a Canadian friend was that, for the first time in my life, a blind worship of anything Western was brought into question, my “black or white” perspective was challenged. My rigid and closed mindset started loosening and opening up. At the same time, I realized how profoundly and closely I was connected to my home country and culture.

The longing for a sense of identification and belonging was relieved to a great extent by this extended visit to my homeland although a thorough reconstruction of self-identity and recovery of autonomy would take a much longer time and be a more challenging process.

Feeling devalued as a social member

Before leaving China, all my friends expressed optimism for my upcoming life in Canada. They anticipated that with a very strong English academic and professional background, a fearless spirit, and strong learning abilities, I was destined for continued success in Canada.

But what lay ahead, rather than the success and applause I had taken for granted in China, was a sudden and thorough loss of sight, sense, judgment, capability and hope. After the first heavy blow of a confused identity, came the second one - an awareness of my disqualification for many jobs.

One day in the third month after having received all the accessible support in settlement and training in job searching from immigrant service organizations and after another exhaustive but fruitless search for teaching positions, I visited a career advisor, whose organization helped internationally trained professionals look for professional jobs. She directed me to a different service center aimed at helping non-professional immigrants, for she thought that I might have a better chance of finding a manual job through its help. There, a career advisor asked me what kind of manual work I could do. I said I could cook and clean. She then told me to go to look for a job as a waitress.

Although I felt ashamed of having come down so low (no offence to waitresses, my value system was still a pure Chinese one at that time), at least I could serve others, which would show a contribution to society. Money was not an issue, for my savings would allow my daughter and me to live a modest but free-of-work life for quite a long time. Having just left a steering role position as a captain who had full control of a speedy business ship, all I needed was to prove to myself that I could be accepted by this society as a contributing member. When some new immigrants around me went from one to another bridging program which did not interest them in the least, but provided them funding to learn and to live, I held fast to my dreams – I came to Canada for thriving, not surviving. I had no time to waste in participating in unrelated and uninterested programs. I protected hard my not-much-left dignity.

A Chinese woman, who had just graduated from a Canadian university with a master degree, and I, decided to accept the reality and the advice to start

from the bottom – to become a waitress in a restaurant (We thought that being a waitress must be the lowest work position available, so it should be easy to obtain). We agreed to meet the following day to go door to door to some restaurants to ask if any waitresses were needed. Before bedtime, I received a phone call from her to cancel it, for she had to return to China as soon as possible to divorce and needed time to prepare for it. By the end of the phone call, instead of encouraging me, she said I would not have much chance of success in finding a waitress job because I did not understand the food, the service, and the hospitality business in Canada. Her understanding sounded reasonable, so I did not go to test out my market value in the food serving industry. However, such anticipation was discouraging enough to drop my hope to the freezing point. For the first time in my twenty years of professional life, I felt uselessness as a member of society.

My self-identity was under crisis. I became lost in this strange country. I did not know if there would be a place for me; if there was, then where was it, what was it like, and how would I get there? The support center for new professional immigrants I used to visit later became a source of depression for me because there I sat with complaining and hopeless foreign professionals, some of whom had been there for several months or years. Their faces were clearly marked with ‘despair’. The staff there was caring, but not very helpful. Being among similar people, I felt bewildered, isolated, and hopeless.

I began losing sleep more and more frequently. One day I noticed an emergency phone number for helping out those suffering with severe psychological problems. The image on a board of a downtown street was that of a

middle-aged woman with messy hair staring into the darkness of night with a frightened and desperate look. The awareness of this noticing startled me: Why did I search for this board every day? Why did I try to remember the telephone number? I was even involuntarily practicing how to make the call in English, and worried if my English was good enough for them to understand me. It was a secret psychological struggle. I felt ashamed that I might need this kind of help. I tried to keep my deeply disturbed and chaotic mind in control.

Fortunately, my first job search ended before I broke down. By the end of the third month of my immigration, a Chinese professor very kindly helped me obtain a part-time baby-sitting job. I was offered \$20 after having traveled for three hours and working for two hours. Out of dignity and politeness, I rejected the payment the first time, but after being paid, my heart was filled with wild excitement. I could not help imagining on my way home what groceries I would now be able to buy with it. But for a long time, I did not want to see or touch the bill. My heart felt bitter. I wanted to save it as a souvenir of my first wage in Canada, but then I forgot where I had put it. Maybe subconsciously I chose to forget this embarrassing and humbling experience.

This baby-sitting job seemed to manifest my entry into Canadian society and to suggest my worth in a country which I chose to make home. Maybe subconsciously I denied this implication. Two months later, I purchased a big house with cash. But this financial capability did not bring me much assurance or confidence because this accomplishment belonged to my work in the past in my home country. I still did not know my worth in this very strange new one.

Feeling devalued as a student

Admission to the doctoral program of studies became the anchor of my hope for being accepted into the Canadian teaching profession and society.

Sitting in the Canadian classroom I had dreamed of for so long, I soon found that I could not understand what was going on. I spent days, evenings, and weekends reading the assigned books and materials but could not figure out what they were about. The majority of the concepts were strange and complicated. I could not relate them to my past or future. Before and after each class, I discussed the learning materials and assignments with some international classmates in order to make sense of them. Unfortunately, this type of buddy support did not help much with the subject learning because we were all experiencing similar disconnection and confusion.

I had great difficulties in understanding the professors' and the mainstream classmates' speech. Even if I understood it literally, I did not understand why they talked about those topics. I was puzzled when seeing my mainstream classmates participate in and enjoy these discussions. Some active students even frequently took over the class and talked for a very long time. These simultaneous talks easily led me to confusion and loss. I felt like an idiot sitting there dumbfounded. When I gradually comprehended and finally found a moment when I could contribute to the discussion, I was always too slow and missed the chance to contribute meaningfully. Many mainstream classmates talked at the rate of machine guns without pause. Even if I grasped the opportunity to talk, I realized all I could talk about was an experience and information about my past and China,

which often shocked the class, and in turn made me feel even worse, for I realized what a huge gap existed between my world and theirs, and how difficult it was to make a connection, especially in making my past meaningful to the subject learning of our classes.

Half way through the first term, two assignment papers were returned and asked to be rewritten because I had not followed the prescribed format. One paper had not been finished on time because of my confusion about the “format”. The course professor said he would give me a two-week extension to complete changes, but my grade would be lowered. By the end of the first year, my scholarship of \$6,000 was lost because my GPA had not met the required criteria, although I sent that problematic final paper twice to the course professor to review. While I did not question this professor’s professional assessment of the quality of my paper, I did not understand why the comment of “quite good” was actually equivalent to the grade of B.

All these unexpected happenings confused me, for I entered the program with an entrance scholarship earned by an outstanding GPA in my master’s program of study, and an amazingly high TOEFL score (according to a professor). I felt like I had been suddenly thrown into darkness. The magnificent campus, gorgeous buildings, excellent facilities, fascinating activities, dynamic crowds, exciting talks, jokes and laughter surrounding me seemed remote and unreal. I felt like I was living on a deserted island amidst the vast ocean of prosperity of the world. “Who am I? What am I doing here? Why am I here?” I could not find the answer. Although I was physically in Canada doing what graduate students were

supposed to do, my mind struggled to make sense of this very strange academic environment; my heart and soul were even slower in catching up with a much disturbed mind. Thus a body of dual selves of disconnection and contradiction emerged. The configuration of my multiple social identities was undergoing significant change (Cervone, 2005). A culturally insensitive outsider might not be able to detect the intense inner struggle negotiating the clashes between differing social identities in this new immigrant student's mind, no matter how stable this person might appear in public.

Feeling devalued as a professional

"... because you were a businessperson."

Four months before my doctoral studies had begun, I felt very fortunate to have obtained a teaching position for an overseas professional development program with a group of Asian visiting teachers who came to study Western pedagogy and culture. My confidence and enthusiasm were totally restored by the job offer. The myth of impossibility of finding a professional job had been broken. Whole-heartedly, I started with commitment to this program. Unfortunately, this luck turned into a nightmare which would take three years to resolve.

I had encountered what I considered to be one of the worst student-program relationships in my previous twenty year teaching career: there was a mismatch between the provided program and the Asian visiting teachers' expectations. Conflicts accumulated constantly to breaking points; students were resentful and humiliated teachers openly; and teachers felt frustrated and paralyzed.

Every day I lived in a dilemma in which I could not separate me, *the self*, from my teaching, *the thing*. I lived in teaching and teaching lived inside me. My identity and integrity as a person, my subject area, and my students, wove a complex web of connections in which I wished that both my students and I could reach a harmonious “wholeness”. The process of mapping and locating my inquiry was an overwhelmingly complicated and exhausting mental journey, which often yielded chaos.

Being an Asian person myself, I thought that I had won the Asian teachers’ trust without effort; they told me what they thought and how they wanted the program to be adapted to their needs. In facing their strong dissatisfaction, I tried to act as a cultural translator, a mediator, and a change agent. The entrepreneurial spirit I developed from the very competitive Chinese business world enabled me to identify problems instantly and want to fix them quickly and thoroughly. I sincerely believed that only I understood these teachers’ needs, and only I could bridge the gaps in understanding and practice.

The reactions from the administrators of the college were very hard for me to understand at that time. The program directors and the business agent ignored pressing and fundamental issues even though I kept bringing the issues to their attention. Gradually I received warnings that “no one was allowed to make trouble”. Before I could fully sense the danger and react accordingly, I became trapped. On one normal teaching day, just before entering the classroom, I was stopped by a director and brought to an empty room where he told me that I had to resign immediately and gave me three reasons: for speaking Chinese in class;

because the students did not like me; and because they perceived that I was intending to move the business to another institution because I had been a businessperson.

My astonishment was beyond description. How suddenly had black become white, false become truth, and sincerity and generosity become conspiracy and selfishness. I told the director to bring all the accusing people over and let them face me and give explanations for all these claims. I was told that their identities must be protected. Thus, I, under the guise of a business threat, saw myself as the scapegoat for the conflicts within the program.

About three months later, I heard that the business agent for the program was in town. I strongly requested a meeting and urged him to give me an explanation for my dismissal; I desperately wanted to know how this could have happened, for he had once talked very excitedly about having me as his partner to do education business with him. He avoided direct responses, just repeatedly assuring me of my ability and contribution. But then, after some silence, he told me that it was the students who had asked the administration to fire me.

His explanation was very hard to be taken as a truth, for I believed that I was the closest staff member to the students; they told me their frustrations with the program and other staff, their inner-group conflicts, and their personal adjustment difficulties, which they claimed to feel uncomfortable to tell others. My doubt about the students' responsibility in forcing my resignation was clarified to a great extent when I visited about half of the group for a research project in the following year. I had been with them for ten days. Though my mind

had been troubled with fear and hope, I did not ask any related questions, for I felt it would be unethical. But I received unexpected warm hospitality. Some initiated a discussion about the topic and sincerely comforted me with assurance and appreciation that I had made some positive contribution to their experience. I had a wonderful time with each of them. It was a much needed, comforting and healing visit.

However, this sudden brutal ending to my first teaching job in Canada tortured me profoundly. For the following three years, I lived in shame, confusion, resentment, and depression. This was something I had never imagined could be so powerful and destructive to my self-esteem. Worst of all, I had no language to define these ugly feelings when they happened. I did not know what had gone wrong, whether or not my teaching career had ended, and if there was a way for me to gain entry into the academic community through obtaining a doctoral degree.

“... because you made grammatical errors.”

While preparing to enter the Ph.D. program in the first few months of immigration, I also applied for a provincial teaching certification with the hope of teaching Mandarin, my native language, as a back-up strategy in case I could not find a university teaching job. Surprisingly, this application was blocked in almost every direction.

In September, 2005, nine months after beginning the application process, I was informed by the provincial Teacher Certification and Development that I had failed my interview - the last step of the application process - due to some

grammatical mistakes in my speech. I was told that there were two options available to me to challenge their evaluation: to take TOEFL or to take an ESL class. Since grammar was the only reason for the application failure, I decided to take an ESL course, but the tuition was very expensive. Later I found that I was entitled to a grant for new immigrants, which would cover both the tuition and my living expenses. This discovery was very ironic to me. I did not understand why I was offered funding so as to become qualified to get into a language program for entering an undergraduate program when I had already started a PhD program of studies.

In order to continue with a teaching career, I followed the licensing officers' instructions. I was told, first of all that I should be assessed by Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) in order to become eligible to enter an ESL program. I did so and the result was to everybody's surprise: I got full marks in all the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I was also told by the assessor that there was no relevant program for me to enter since my grades had already reached the highest level of the nationally designed and approved outcomes.

I immediately went to the licensing evaluator with the testing results, where I was told that the CLBA testing criteria were lower than theirs. If this was the case, then why was I sent there to be assessed? I strongly requested another interview and I was granted it. However, in January, 2007, I received another rejection letter. This is part of the contents:

Although our interview on January 19, 2007 demonstrates you are able to communicate in English, it does not demonstrate an ability to consistently use correct grammar and sentence constructs. Some examples from our interview are: “I began to enter my PhD”, “How teacher can invite the student”, “all my application was accepted”. I understand that both the University of XXX Faculty of XXX and XXX College offer courses in pronunciation and clear speaking that may be of assistance to you. I would recommend that you contact either of the institutions to enroll in a course or courses that will help you in the above areas.

My shock was beyond words. I could not help questioning the logic of the provincial teachers’ licensing system. Were these three sentences with grammatical mistakes serious enough to be used as evidence of my lacking competence in pronunciation and clear speaking, and as a result, to reject my application? What was their argument in claiming that these three sentences were grammatically wrong and incomprehensible? Do native speakers always speak in complete sentences? Is it possible for non-native speaking teachers not to make any grammatical mistakes? What is the point of addressing grammar alone? Do they need teachers or not? If so, then why did they make the application insensibly complicated and difficult? Isn’t it a huge waste of tax payers’ money to sponsor me to take a free ESL course aimed at entering an undergraduate program when I was already in a doctoral program? The evaluation system was so difficult to understand.

I began questioning if the evaluation process complied with multilingual and multicultural beliefs. The province had been well known for its reputation as a pioneer, the only province in Canada to establish a formal language education policy that acknowledged the role that languages played in fulfilling a wide variety of social, cultural, economic, and educational purposes. As vehicles of communication for many local residents, the linguistic pluralism of the province was seen as a valuable resource that enriches local cultural and intellectual lives, and has direct application in international contexts. And yet, some practitioners contradicted those belief systems and policies by communicating to immigrant teachers that their native language was worth less and that their impure English was not legitimate language for entering the teaching profession. These policies and professional practitioners defended the purity of their imagined standard of English by irresponsibly excluding immigrant professionals who could not speak with authentic accents and perfect English. Should other much more crucial professional knowledge and skills be sacrificed for the sake of language purity? The evaluators of my application might not have intended this, but they communicated to me (and perhaps other immigrant teachers as well) the unmistakable message that they are not welcome to get involved in the Canadian educational system.

This two-year process of applying for a Canadian teaching certificate ended in vain. The only career option left seemed to be teaching at a university or college, a career requiring a doctoral degree. Thus I ceased preparing for other

career options and maintained the goal of an academic career in a Canadian postsecondary institution.

Summary

The first part of this chapter focuses on what had been achieved in my professional career in China and what drove me to immigrate while at the peak of a successful business and educational career. At 17, I discovered the value of education. At 21, I started professing my educational value. At 32, I extended my value in education from the university I served to a much broader society through business. When the journey to increase my value reached its peak in the Chinese context, I chose to come to make connections to this more advanced and globalized country in the field of children's international citizenship education. The second part centers on several critical incidents about the losses of my personal and professional identities and autonomy before and at the beginning of my doctoral program of studies.

At that time, my passion for sharing past accomplishments, my curiosity in finding solutions, and my ambition to co-construct new programs and projects, were not warmly received. In fact, I immediately became an immigrant who seemed to be of no interest. The decades of previous acknowledgement that I had received almost daily disappeared. Although I was offered many varieties of support, most of them were not what I wanted or needed because I did not come here to survive, but to thrive. I felt that professional immigrants were regarded as paralyzed receivers, rather than suppliers of boundless knowledge, skills, resources, and opportunities to contribute to their new communities.

Chapter Two: Overview of the Study and Methodology

Overview of the Study

Problem statement

My quest to understand how I could move from being a highly successful professional in China to feeling socially devalued in Canada led to the topic of my doctoral research. After meeting several other immigrant doctoral students and reading some related literature (Basran & Zong, 1998; Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000; Li, 2001; Krahn, Derwing, Mulder, & Wilkinson, 2000; Reitz, 2001), I learned that I was not alone in this puzzle and sought to discover what others were doing to overcome their barriers. Due to the multidimensional nature of this problem and the many unanswered questions I had, especially of a cultural-societal nature, I turned to action research to structure this inquiry. In order to enable the reader to accompany me on this chronological journey, I have integrated the literature review throughout each action research cycle.

The focus of this thesis is the academic career exploration of professional immigrants. Its objectives are threefold: first of all, to provide general insights into academic career preparation experiences of immigrant Ph.D. students in Canada, with a particular focus on barriers they confront and strategies they use to overcome them during the career preparation process; secondly, to gain new insights or deepen understandings of the relationship between hard and soft skills, insider and outsider knowledge, external and internal barriers, barriers and success, and related to theoretical issues in this field; and finally, to make

practical recommendations for universities, their programs of studies and their career support services, and immigrant Ph.D. students themselves.

The general research question centred on: What barriers do immigrant Ph.D. students experience in their academic career preparation?

Specific research questions were:

1. What are some major external barriers that immigrant Ph.D. students experience in integrating into Canadian academic and professional communities?
2. What are some major internal barriers that immigrant Ph.D. students experience in integrating into Canadian academic and professional communities?
3. What coping attitudes and strategies (i.e. their consciousness) do they use to break down and overcome the barriers experienced?

Potential contributions

The significance of the research lies in addressing three important but rarely explored areas. First, it addresses an often ignored issue in the university by identifying barriers experienced by immigrant doctoral students who struggle to break them down on a daily basis. Although the number of this population of students has been steadily rising as a result of internationalization in higher education (Katz, 2006), in universities' student employment reports, immigrant and international graduate students are often taken as part of the total student body rather than separated so that their significantly different situation can be revealed. Moreover, their voices are often underrepresented in developing programs of

studies, curricula, or activities of researching, teaching, and community service (eg. Milewski & Gillie, 2002; Soto, 1999). Thus, documenting both the special learning needs of these students and the additional systemic obstacles they face in establishing new professional careers may lead to a deeper understanding and provision of supports for these groups.

Second, the success of professional immigrant students not only benefits the students themselves, but also universities and Canadian society. Their acceptance as Canadian permanent residents was due to the government-declared labor shortage crisis of a knowledge based Canadian economy. As Friend (2008) reports, “Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has warned that labor shortages are one of the ‘most daunting economic challenges’ Canada will face in coming years. ... he said Ottawa needs to find ways to help Canada ... draw talented immigrants to the country to help avert an economic nightmare”. Yet it seems that although these immigrants are expected to meet societal needs, Canadian hiring and accrediting bodies have not kept pace; they either undervalue or disregard the international education, work experience, and credentials of foreign trained professionals. This becomes the first formidable obstacle in the professional job search and maintenance of these immigrants. Unable to continue with the professional career in which they were successfully involved in their home countries, some refuse to give up and reinvest their hope in Canadian doctoral education. By determining the barriers these students experience, universities can gain insights into how to share their responsibilities and obligations in socializing these professional immigrants into productive professional and community members.

Last but not least, although this study is about identifying barriers in immigrant doctoral students' academic career preparation, it is also aimed at identifying strategies of success – to understand positive attitudes, effective coping strategies, alternative interpretation lenses, and successful stories. The hope is to find ways to inspire and to enable immigrant students in their pursuit of an academic career in Canada.

The strengths of the study lie in the longitudinal (four years), broad (participants are from various cultural and discipline backgrounds), and in-depth (many deep reflections from both the researcher and the participants) action research process. The limitations may be attributed to the small size and the nature of the subjective research methods even though the intention of the research is not to generalize any findings. The study limitations will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Definition of the terms

Academic Career

The term “academic career” in this study refers to a career of working as university or college professors.

Professors are qualified experts of various levels who may do the following work: conduct lectures and seminars in their field of study, perform advanced research in their fields, provide community services, train new academics such as graduate students, and carry out administrative duties.

The traditional academic career pattern consists of a start as a Ph. D student, a transformation to the position of assistant professor, then a promotion to a position of associate professor, and finally towards the position of full professors.

Doctoral study traditionally is regarded as a preparatory step and a prerequisite to start an academic career. “The PhD has virtually become a necessary entry-ticket to an academic career” (Elias et al., 1997).

Academic careers are conceptualized as including early, mid-career, and senior faculty periods (Finkelstein & LaCelle-Peterson, 1993; Menges, 1996; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Some authors incorporate the graduate school period, including the teaching assistant experience, as part of the early career period (Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Golde & Dore, 2000, 2001).

In terms of academic careers, the trend is towards diversification, fractionalisation, specialisation, and differentiation of academic functions which posed new challenges for career paths (Høstaker, 2000).

With the aggressive immigration promotion policy of Canadian government to attract locally educated international graduate students, their dramatic increase in number has become a significant educational, economic, and social phenomenon.

Career Preparation

The concept of “career preparation” in this study was enlightened by the “agentic” approach notion of Zikic, Novicevic, Harvey and Breland (2006), whose career exploration research revealed the need of the individual to change their understanding from that of arranged organizational transfer to individual motivation to explore and manage one’s career options. Zikic et.al’s (2006)

proactive career exploration is divided into three different stages: “building knowledge and information about oneself and the environment (Blustein, 1997; Jordan, 1963; Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983); the intent of choosing an alternative career path/occupation (Schein, 1978); and/or the determination to further one’s career (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001) (p. 635).

The term “career preparation” in this study is adapted from Zikic et.al’s (2006) above notion. Their three-stage career *exploration* process is developed into a new three-stage career *preparation* process which includes career exploration, career planning, and career preparation. Career preparation, in this study, is an enactment of the above objectives and development of needed skills. This practice stage usually involves self-directed learning that fills the gaps between what the immigrant doctoral student knows and realizes and what she/he needs to learn (e.g. career exploration and planning, licensing, knowledge, skills, attitude, and networking).

Career Exploration

Career exploration is the first stage of career preparation during which immigrant doctoral students re-examine their career aspiration, a changed definition of a career, a changed career expectation, and a changed job market, based on a new understanding of these factors in their host countries. A career goal is established as a result.

Career Planning

Career planning is the process that takes place after immigrant doctoral students establish their goals, identify their marketable skills, strengths, and

weaknesses in the Canadian context. Career planning is followed by developing a realistic timeline which shows what, when and how to develop essential career-required attitudes, knowledge, skills, and experiences.

Career Barriers

A career barrier is any obstacle that stands in the way of achieving a career goal (Crites, 1969). This study identifies some of the barriers common to professional immigrants and professional immigrant doctoral students in their academic career preparation. Crites (1969) described barriers as either internal conflicts or external frustrations that might impede career development. Although dated, this definition continues to be used.

External career barriers often include obstacles in having foreign credentials and work experience recognized (e.g. Basran & Zong, 1998; Henry, et al., 2000; Krahn et al., 2000; Li, 2001; Reitz, 2001); difficulties in translating educational achievements into occupational advantage (e.g. Grindstaff, 1986; Trovato & Grindstaff, 1986); racial discrimination; employers' lack of knowledge of foreign credential practice (Alboim, Finnie, & Meng, 2005).

Internal career barriers may include stress, less job satisfaction, and career immaturity (Leong & Chou, 1994) and low self-esteem, depression, extreme work ethic, and self-rejection (Diller, 1999).

In this study, external barriers refer to the obstacles, firstly, confronted by immigrant doctoral students in their academic adaptation to Canadian universities, and then in their professional integration into Canadian academia during their academic career preparation stage. Internal barriers are viewed as either internal to

the person, such as a lack of confidence or low self-esteem, or external to the person, such as a lack of access to insider resources and opportunities, or both such as negative perception of, and passive reaction to external and internal barriers.

Critical Consciousness

The term “consciousness” is also referred to as “conscientization” in critical theory. Consciousness is a popular education and social concept developed by Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire (1972). Critical consciousness focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world, allowing for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions. Critical consciousness also includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding (Mustakova-Possardt, 2003).

Critical consciousness is a very important concept in this research. A course study on critical pedagogy triggered this research – brought about critical consciousness from the researcher's “iconic representations that have a powerful emotional impact in the daily lives of learners.” (Freire, 1976). The awareness of the danger of accepting negative social implications without question inspired the researcher to challenge the imposed negative image of professional immigrants. Liberating learners from powerful and intended social persuasion is a major goal of critical consciousness, a fundamental aspect of Freire's concept of popular education.

Liberatory education does not stop at raising consciousness. The process of consciousness proceeds to encourage the “oppressed” to desire changing their

undesired reality. In the case of this study, critical consciousness inspired the researcher and her two groups of research participants to form their own support community, and each of which had engaged in identifying contradictions in experience through reflection and dialogue, and becoming proactive in changing themselves and their reality. In short, the concept of critical consciousness is essential in understanding the context, the trigger, the process, and the significance of the study.

Othering and the “Other”

The concept of “othering” originated in the interaction between colonizer and colonial and is prominent in the literature on post-colonialism (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 2003). Jordanova (2008) describes the process of othering as “the distancing of what is peripheral, marginal and incidental from a cultural norm...” (in Pickering, 2001). An othering process, according to Henry (2004), “presents a barrier to change” and “mythologizes ... [the other] as culturally, intellectually and morally inferior and so robs millions of people of their identities and their very personhood. Thus, one of the most critical components of modern or new racism is that it is based on an ideological construction of difference and othering” (p. 5).

The term the “Other” is often used to refer to a visible minority or the non-dominant group or individual since part of the privilege of the dominant group stems from its position of not normally being viewed as the “other”. However, either could be the “other” depending on one’s perspective. In this study, the “Other” mainly refers to the white dominant racial group as opposed to a visible

minority since the “other” provides for the labor market disadvantage of the "visible minority" as opposed to the labor market advantage of the privileged majority.

Professional Immigrants

The term “professional immigrants” is used often interchangeably with “skilled workers” in the Canadian context. Canada Federal Professional (Skilled Worker) immigration applications are assessed on six factors. These selection factors are designed to indicate which applicants are likely to become economically established upon immigration to Canada. Each Canada immigration selection factor is allotted a maximum number of points, and applicants must attain at least 67 points in order to qualify for a Canada Immigration (Permanent Resident) Visa. The selection factors are summarized as follows:

- Education: Applicants are awarded up to 25 points.
- Language Skills: Applicants are awarded up to 24 points.
- Experience: Applicants are awarded up to 21 points.
- Age: Applicants are awarded up to 10 points.
- Arranged Employment: Applicants are awarded up to 10 points.
- Adaptability: Applicants are awarded up to 10 points. (Canada Immigration – Federal Skilled Worker Program. n.d.)

Professional Immigrant Ph.D. Students

The term Professional immigrant Ph.D. or doctoral students in this study, is self-defined as referring to those students who: 1) received their professional training and have held professional posts in their home countries, entered Canada

as professional immigrants or became professional immigrants during their doctoral studies in a Canadian university, and who held permanent resident status in Canada at the time of the study; or 2) entered Canada as international students with the intention of becoming a permanent resident later. The term “Ph.D. students” is used interchangeably with “doctoral students” in this study.

Thesis structure

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter One is a personal narration of professional experiences (critical incidents) before and in the early stages of immigration, which reveals how these historically, culturally, and contextually situated variables have gradually shaped and led to an inquiry for the targeted issues.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the thesis and action research methodology. Firstly, it introduces the triggers which directly resulted in the development of the general research question; secondly, it describes the more precise research questions, significance and contributions. Definitions of key terms are explained, and the thesis structure is described. The second part of the chapter introduces the action research methodology that was employed in conducting the three-cycle study. Auto-ethnographical method is used in the first cycles but within the framework of action research methodology.

Chapter Three presents the first cycle of the study which researches a personal exploration of a cross-cultural academic career preparation process. The exploration reveals a contradictory message between a university publication and the literature review, and also between the university publication and the

experiences of immigrant students. The revealed contradictions are interpreted through the lens of critical pedagogy.

Chapter Four presents the second cycle of the study which identifies career preparation gaps experienced by four Asian immigrant doctoral students. The identified gaps are understood and interpreted through the lens of social constructivism.

Chapter Five presents Cycle Three which investigates barriers experienced by nine immigrant doctoral students from more varied cultural and disciplinary backgrounds in their academic career preparation on campus, and how universities attend to immigrant doctoral students' special needs. This cycle includes two phases: preparing for change and tension in implementing the action plan developed at the end of Cycle Two.

The setting, research question, participants, data collection and analysis are described respectively in each cycle of the study. The extensive literature drawn upon in this study has been integrated throughout each chapter.

Chapter Six presents a reflective interpretation and further discussion on key findings on barriers and successes as well as theoretical issues.

Chapter Seven begins by describing the study limitations, and then presents implications for policy makers, universities, immigrant support communities, and professional immigrant doctoral students. Recommendations for further study are made as well.

Chapter Eight, an epilogue, gives the reader a closure by reflecting upon a few major issues of my future career possibilities.

As an international immigrant graduate student I learned as I proceeded through the daily events of life in and outside the university, through planned and happenstance encounters with fellow immigrants, professors, employers, and support services. Since the structure of action research permits the telling of a process in chronological order, and since part of this thesis is autobiographical, the early cycles reveal more of my own naivete. By revealing mostly what actually happened (with some layers of edited reflective metanarrating), including the understandings and insights gained from new readings I encountered when I discovered them, I hope to provide a careful reading of the pains and joys experienced by immigrant graduate students in their process of academic and professional acculturation/assimilation/neutralization.

Methodology

Action research as framework.

Overview

Action research is a deliberate and solution-oriented investigation which is group or individually- owned and conducted. It is characterized by spiraling cycles of planning (problem identification), acting and observing (systematic data collection), reflection (analysis) and, finally, more planning (problem redefinition).

See Diagram 2-1.

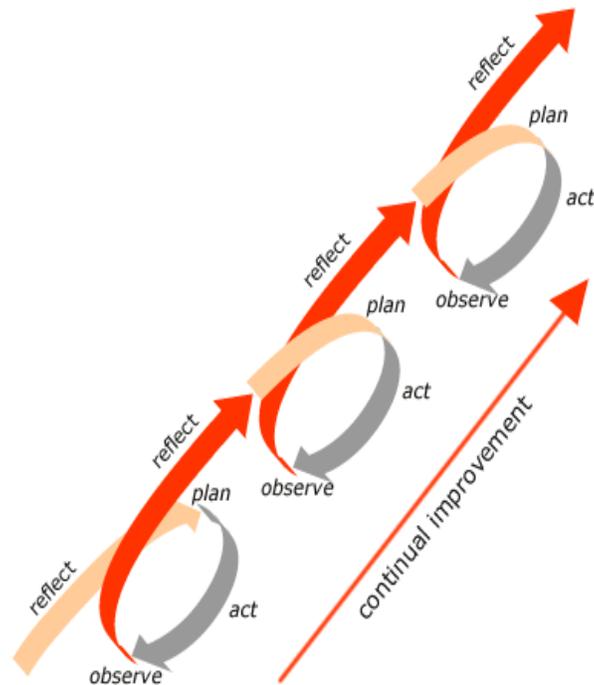


Diagram 2-1: Action research cycle (adapted from Kemmis & McTaggart, 1990)

The linking of the terms “action” and “research” highlights the essential features of this method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about and/or improving curriculum, teaching, and learning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

The concept of action research can be traced back to Stephen Corey who introduced the term action research to the educational community in 1949. Corey (1953) defined action research as the process through which practitioners study their own practice to solve personal practical problems. The exploration and identification of barriers to immigrant graduate students’ career development is an example of such a practice.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) defined a later developed emancipatory action research as: “a self-reflective, self-critical and critical enquiry undertaken by professionals to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the wider context of their practice” (p. 122). In the emancipatory action research adaptation, emphasis is placed on the individual professionals located in their wider social and political context, with critique at the personal or wider system level.

There are two goals for the researcher using this approach; one is to increase the closeness between the actual problems encountered by practitioners in a specific setting and the theory used to explain and resolve the problem. The second goal is to assist practitioners in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising collective consciousness (Holter & Schwartz - Barcott, 1993).

As an emancipatory approach, Kemmis emphasized action research as research done *by* practitioners, and not research done *to* them. In other words, the practitioners are responsible for their practices, not outsiders. An enlightenment view suggests that rational argument can help us understand and change oppressive social forces by more just social relationships. Critical theory, in turn, highlights how an unequal distribution of power in social relations can distort communication. Kemmis (2001) further explained the meaning of “emancipatory” and “critical” in action research:

This form of action research aims at not only improving outcomes, and improving the self-understanding of practitioners, but also at assisting

practitioners to arrive at a critique of their social or educational work and work settings... It recognizes that we may want to improve our achievements in relation to our functional goals, but also that our goals as defined by particular individuals, or as defined by particular organization may be limited or inappropriate given a wider view of the situation in which we live or work. It recognizes that we may want to improve our self-understandings, but also that our self-understandings may be shaped by collective misunderstandings about the nature and consequences about what we do. So emancipatory action research aims towards helping practitioners develop a critical and self-critical understanding of their situation – which is to say, an understanding of the way of both particular people and particular settings are shaped and reshaped discursively, culturally, socially, and historically. It aims to connect the personal and the political in collaborative research and action aimed at transforming situations to overcome felt dissatisfactions, alienation, ideological distortion, and the injustices of oppression and domination. (p. 92)

Emancipatory action research is action oriented and aimed at change. For immigrant Ph.D. students, identifying and breaking down barriers in their academic career preparation is an exhausting, frustrating, and painful exploration process, which can only be realized or overcome through taking action. It is essential but not sufficient for them to recognize the need to develop and acquire additional professional proficiency including a wide repertoire of skills and a broad cultural knowledge base to interpret and understand world views,

communication styles, and unique ways of thinking, being and doing with *Others*. More importantly, they need to use and apply the new knowledge, skills, and abilities to accurately assess their needs and select the best strategies and techniques to manage the dynamics of differences within their changed organizations. To this end, emancipatory action research participants use communities as laboratories. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2007) explains:

Research, like schooling, once the tool for colonization and oppression, is very gradually coming to be seen as a potential means to reclaim languages, histories, and knowledge, to find solutions to the negative impacts of colonialism and to give voice to an alternative way of knowing and of being (p. 10).

Action research is a dynamic, flexible process and no blueprint exists for any study. However, Creswell (2005) identifies several steps in the process: Step 1: Determine if action research is the best design to use. Step 2: Identify a problem to study. Step 3: Locate resources to help address the problem. Step 4: Identify information you will need. Step 5: Implement the data collection. Step 6: Analyze the data. Step 7: Develop a plan for action. Step 8: Implement the plan and reflect. Further, within each cycle different quantitative or qualitative approaches can be used. For example, one cycle could be individual, another involve a group, a third entail a literature or statistical review.

In terms of the unique roles an action researcher plays, Johnsen and Normann (2004) clearly explained:

The Role of the action researcher is multifaceted. And the action researcher is usually expected to handle and master several different roles, some of which are as follows. The role of the facilitator, the researcher shall organize conditions for joint learning. The role of the observer, the researcher shall collect, systematize and reflect upon empirical data, so others and those involved can learn from the project. The role of the supplier, the researcher shall be able to provide data and relevant contextual knowledge into the processes when needed. The role of the participant, the researcher shall be more than a distant observer; the researcher shall be involved and committed to the development of the project. The role of the bridge builder, the action researcher shall bring her/his experiences from practice to academia and from academia to practice. The role of the service provider, the researcher shall be useful; s/he shall contribute substantially to processes and be regarded as an asset to the project. This list implies that the action researcher is to be both an insider and an outsider to the practice field. (p. 227)

Validity and generalizability

A central issue in qualitative research is validity, which is also known as credibility or reliability. To enhance validity, the quality of evidence can be increased by the use of multiple sources of evidence. Differences between data sources, when used effectively, can lead the researchers and the participants towards a deeper and more accurate understanding. Typically it is helpful to have at least three different data sources, a method referred to in the literature as

triangulation (Smith, 1979). Triangulation is defined to be “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Triangulation enables the inquirer to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being perceived (Stake, 1994). Literature, for example, can be an alternative data source. Prolonged engagement is another means of increasing validity.

Action research, as a qualitative research method, is criticized for its lack of generalizability. The word ‘generalizability’ is defined as the degree to which the findings can be generalized from the study sample to the entire population (Polit & Hungler, 1991). However, qualitative studies are not generalizable in the traditional sense of the word, nor do they claim to be. According to Adelman, Jenkins, and Kemmis (1980), the knowledge generated by qualitative research is significant in its own right. In many situations, especially in fields such as education and social work, a small sample size may be more useful in examining a situation in depth from various perspectives (Stake, 1980). He further suggests that such methods may more effectively arouse readers’ resonance and sympathy through resembling experiences of ordinary personal involvement, and thus be a natural basis for generalization (Stake, 1980). In brief, a major strength of the qualitative approach is the in-depth explorations and rich details that enable readers to make personal connections.

In my case, due to its flexibility and responsiveness to the research situation, action research seemed to be able to help me find answers to the many

questions I had. In fact, along with auto-ethnography (to be described later in greater detail), it enabled me to learn more about career planning, Canadian society, the university's infrastructure, and my self. To help the reader understand the details of the action research process and accompany me on this explicitly described journey of an immigrant graduate student, the thesis has clung closely to the chronology of what really happened throughout my quest. The three cycles presented will collectively offer a picture of the complexity facing professional immigrant graduate students and raise questions about the responsibilities of various stakeholders in facilitating change.

Auto-ethnography

In pursuit of a form of discourse that allowed social scientists to deal with the complexity of their selves as they crossed cultural borders, and told stories of others, especially marginalized others, in truthful ways, social science researchers began to question the so-called scientific methods and its representative status and authoritative position. The revelation that this is merely an objective illusion is described by Gaitán (2000) in his summary of why auto-ethnographical discourses emerged:

Anthropological work used to involve approaching some foreign (i.e. non-Western) social group in order to describe their practices, relationships with the environment and their cultural production. Traditional ethnography tried to record these facts objectively. These were attempts to look outward, at *others*, in order to understand them. Through the depiction of rich detail, these accounts made familiar the unfamiliar. The

ethnographer invariably came back home and wrote according to the accepted scientific conventions. Later, sociologists began carrying out ethnographic work on specific groups within their own societies (normally, some marginalized group such as drug addicts), but although they did not travel far (geographically), and looked inwards, they found an *other* to observe and represent. A critical analysis revealed the troublesome network of assumptions and power relationships. Such attempts to approach an *other* using the theories and methodologies of scientific disciplines fixed that *other* in particular positions and in texts over which they had no say. Researchers' authoritative voices dominated those texts as interpretations of those *others'* fragmented statements. The objective description was an illusion. They represented the self in as much as they represented the *other*, but most of the time representations of the *other* served to construct an identity for the Self. As a result of such fierce critique researchers began experimenting with various forms of writing. Literary genres were examined and found of great inspirational value: drama, poetry, fiction, journalism and of course, autobiography. (p. 1)

Auto-ethnography is sometimes interchangeably used with autobiography.

A widely quoted description of auto-ethnography is provided by Ellis and Bochner (2000). According to them, auto-ethnography is:

an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth auto-ethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle

lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first-person voice, auto-ethnography, auto-ethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought and language. (p. 739)

Chang (2007) recently offers a more concise definition: “Autoethnography should be ethnographic in its methodological orientation, cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation” (p. 48).

The methodology intends at “working the spaces between subjectivity and objectivity, passion and intellect and autobiography and culture” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 761), and therefore at offering a more holistic, engaging, integrative and authentic picture of human existence.

The benefits of autoethnography includes helping researcher make sense of his or her individual experience, helping researchers see their connection to the

culture where they come from, helping them understand their relationship to others, allowing authors to connect with readers easily. In addition, autoethnography engages their readers in important political issues and often ask us to consider or do things differently. As an insider through experience and an outsider through research, I strive through this study to increase academic awareness of cultural and systemic gaps which challenge immigrant graduate students. I integrate autoethnography into several action research cycles.

The use of auto-ethnography is not unproblematic. Validity is an often challenged area. It is regarded as an ‘ego-centric predicament’ – the appropriation of the first person voice (Hufford, 1995). However, the question on the validity of auto-ethnography can be judged by “whether it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is authentic and lifelike, believable and possible” (Ellis, 1998, p. 129). If the reader finds a hint of recognition in the themes and patterns and is empowered to make a difference in similar situations, then the study has certain validity. Researching lived experience has the power of depth and understanding because “my own life experiences are immediately accessible to me in a way that no one else’s are” (van Manen, 1990, p. 54). And these experiences are valuable because of the possibility that “one’s own experiences are also the possible experiences of others” (van Manen, 1990, p. 54), which may lead others to action. Boys (1982), on the other hand, argued its intelligibility when autobiographical researchers “invite us to enter into the mystery of another’s struggle to make meaning” (p. 99).

Despite this kind of ongoing and unresolved debate on the validity and credibility of using auto-ethnography as a trustworthy research method (during cycles of this action research investigation), there is no shortage of its application and enthusiasm. Neumann and Peterson (1997) are among the many who defended their rationale and commitment to breaking the silences of women's voices and ways of knowing within academia through autobiography:

Autobiography helps us see and understand the hurtful aspects of institutional existence in academia through the eyes of those who may have suffered in silence through subtle and overt discrimination or neglect. It also helps us see, appreciate and support the informal structures that help people heal from and resist the hurtful features of organizational existence ... Autobiography can help us see how long established processes of knowledge formation in the field of education ... support or thwart the development and legitimating of women's epistemology in research and teaching. (p. 7)

One reason that auto-ethnography is chosen as a method to analyze my personal data within a larger action research method framework can be illustrated through the analogy of training psychotherapists who are generally demanded to undergo therapy themselves by exploring every angle of their own minds in order to support their clients in exploring theirs. Likewise, self-awareness and attention to one's own feelings, thoughts, and experiences can contribute to the therapeutic use of self for effective provision of teaching and facilitation of ESL international and immigrant students (with whom my academic career is going to be involved).

This purposeful use of self, inherent in the role of the ESL instructor, may also be seen as synchronous to the role of the qualitative researcher who seeks to uncover the meaning of others' experiences.

The other reason relates to the unique characteristic of auto-ethnography. By allowing the researcher to write herself into her own work as a major character, it challenges accepted views about silent authorship, where the researcher's voice, is not included in the presentation of findings. This development may liberate some researchers from the constraints of the dominant ideological representations of empirical ethnography because how researchers write influences what they can write about (e.g., Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997). However, since my work also explores the voices of my peers (am I alone in my pain, confusion and frustration), autoethnography is used in conjunction with survey data, interviews and the journal responses of others to explore the barriers and successes of doctoral students.

The autoethnographical cycles are also narrative in nature. In terms of the social significance of narrative inquiry, according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the answer lies in the process of transitioning from field texts to research texts. Whereas the field text contains the stories, a research text involves analysis and interpretation, and a researcher must consider the way narrative inquiries "are always strongly autobiographical. Our research interests come out of our own narratives of experience and shape our narrative inquiry plotlines" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 121). As a result, "narrative inquiry illuminates the social and theoretical contexts in which position our inquires" (p. 124). The methodology

permits the generalization of a personal and firsthand enquiry into the lived experience to a larger group; therefore, it contributes to social scientific knowledge, which makes it academic research.

Research design – Three cycles’ of action research

Action research acknowledges the need for a long-term exploration of issues. It is a process of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning a new cycle. This study reports and builds on three emancipatory participatory action research cycles over a four year period and follows the experiences of nine immigrant Ph. D. students as they identify and break down barriers in their academic career preparation and discover success in a Canadian university.

Each of the three action research cycles in this study works through three phases and adopts similar methods although Cycle One did not include focus group activities. See Diagram 2-2.

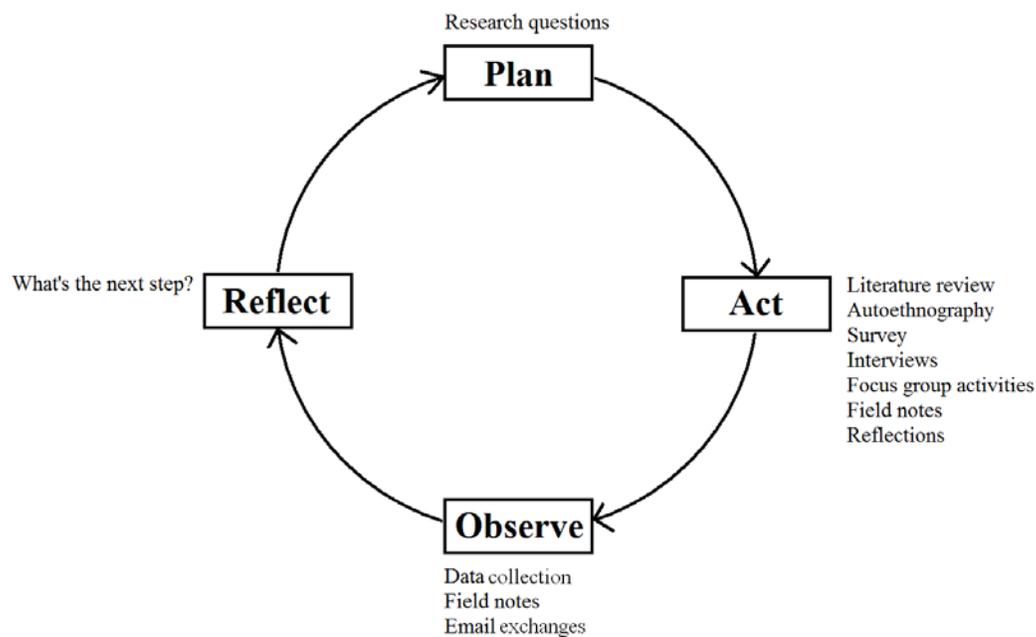


Diagram 2-2

The timeline and research focus for each cycle are summarized as the following:

Cycle 1 (Sep. 2005 - 2006): Conceptualizing the Cross-cultural Academic Career Preparation Process. Entitled “I Am Not Alone.”, in this autobiographical cycle I was introduced to career exploration and encountered contradictory messages between university publications, research literature and immigrant students whom I met. Having been introduced to critical pedagogy in coursework at this time, I use it to examine and interpret my experiences.

Cycle 2 (Jan.- Apr. 2007): Exploring Barriers in the Academic Career Preparation Process. While taking a graduate level course focused on action research, I was able to carry out a study with three other Asian immigrant graduate students. Working with them and learning about social constructivism helped me and the participants to see gaps between university practices and student needs and experiences.

Cycle 3 (Sep. 2007 - Jun. 2008): Identifying Barriers Experienced in the Academic Career Preparation on Campus. This cycle saw me initiating contact with university units that had responsibility for providing career related services to all graduate students and develop deeper understanding of structural and systemic limitations with eight graduate students from a variety of faculties and cultures.

These three cycles of action research revealed barriers experienced by professional immigrant Ph.D. students in academic career preparation from the first year to the fourth year of my doctoral program of studies. This action

research method serves as the framework of the longitudinal study. Within this structure, the second method, auto-ethnography, was employed in the first cycle. Incorporating the strengths of both approaches provides a more comprehensive view of the phenomena being studied.

The following three chapters present details of each cycle, including a description of the research question, the research method, the setting, the participants, and data collection and analysis, within each of these three cycles. The literature review is also integrated into each.

Study Limitations

As a researcher, it is important to critically evaluate and reflect upon both the results of a study as well as its design. This study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering its implications.

One major limitation lies in its subjectivity. This study focuses on a complex social phenomenon that is extensive and complex - the barriers experienced by immigrant doctoral students in their academic career preparation. Although data from eight other participants are presented in this dissertation, including the case of Nick who participated actively through two of the three cycles, my case dominates the study from its first to last cycles. The limitation comes from this rather narrow empirical and subjective lens of observing and perceiving the academic career preparation process, although, on the other hand, by understanding these two particular cases in depth, we may learn something more about the general phenomena. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined this

transferability as whether or not the research demonstrated by the use of thick and rich description is useful in another situation.

Another limitation of this study relates to the use of the survey questionnaire - "The Survey Questionnaire on Immigrant Ph.D. Students' Career Preparation". American in origin, it is used twice in the study: in Cycle Two and Cycle Three. This survey questionnaire became the most useful tool in generating significant themes, especially in Cycle Three. One major weakness of using an adapted survey questionnaire is related to the fact that the prescribed questions may affect the thinking; therefore, the responses of the participants. Another weakness of the survey is that the questionnaire form was completed away from the researcher. This means that the respondents did not have the chance to ask the researcher about anything that was unclear. In addition, the researcher had no control over how the questionnaire was answered: the respondent might have answered questions incompletely or have missed out questions. Finally, the questionnaire format made it difficult to examine complex issues and opinions although open-ended questions and other means of data collection were also used. The depth of answers in Cycle Three was very limited except for those from Nick.

However, some of these limitations can be seen as fruitful avenues for future research under the same theme.

Chapter Three

Cycle One: "I am Not Alone."

- Starting the Journey of Career Exploration

The shocking incidents of the forced resignation of my first teaching job and the failures in applying for a teaching certificate described in Chapter One made me wonder if it was just me who had confronted these kinds of formidable obstacles. In wondering if those kinds of barriers would continue to affect me even after earning a doctoral degree, I started to shift my focus of attention from self-blame and shame to examining similar experiences of other immigrant doctoral students. This was when I began to become aware of external barriers. In this chapter, a journey of academic career preparation is launched through exploring contradictory messages of university publications and a literature review about immigrant employment situations, challenges of doctoral programs, and experiences of other immigrant students.

Contradictions

Like many other immigrant and non-immigrant graduate students, I studied as much and as hard as I could. Besides taking a full load of graduate courses, I actively participated in various academic and professional activities including teaching and researching, conference presentations and publications, and community service. I believed that as long as I completed my study and earned a Ph. D. degree, I would be able to find a teaching job in a university or college.

In my second year of study, this wishful thinking met serious challenges. One day, I noticed a report on graduate student employment released by the university's career service center. It revealed the results of an Employment Survey of 2000. The report stated that "since graduating in 2000, the majority of respondents have enjoyed steady employment and rising salaries. The vast majority of respondents indicated that their university studies were critical both in securing employment and performing effectively in the workplace" (Kennedy & Snicer, 2006, p. 2).

Did this study include immigrant and international students? If so, then why did the results contradict my own experiences and those of immigrants around me? Which findings should I believe, the university's report or the immigrants' stories? I was confused and would not accept the university's results. I was desperate for truth, which directed me to read eagerly about the employment situation of professional immigrants.

Professional immigrants' employment situation

A number of studies have shown that many highly educated professional immigrants experience formidable barriers to having their foreign credentials and work experience recognized after they arrive in Canada (e.g. Basran & Zong, 1998; Henry et al., 2000; Krahn et al., 2000; Li, 2001; Reitz, 2001).

Several other studies use census data to demonstrate the difficulties in translating educational achievements into professional advantage faced especially by visible minority immigrants (Grindstaff, 1986; Trovato & Grindstaff, 1986).

In a study of 404 Indo- and Chinese-Canadian immigrant professionals in Vancouver, Basran and Zong (1998) reported that only 18.8 per cent of their respondents worked as professionals (doctors, engineers, school/university teachers, and other professionals) after immigrating to Canada.

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003c), a comprehensive survey conducted by Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, aimed to study the process by which new immigrants adapt to Canadian society. Findings from the first wave of interviews with 12,000 immigrants aged 15 and over who arrived in Canada between October 2000 and September 2001 revealed that finding employment was the area with most reported difficulties. Among those who were employed at the time of the survey, 60 per cent did not work in the same field of occupation as they did before arriving in the country. Many immigrant professionals experience major shifts from prior occupations in natural and applied sciences and management (for men) and business, finance and administration (for women) to occupations in sales, services, processing and manufacturing.

Their future situation did not look promising, either. Canadian journalist Greenaway (2007) made a pessimistic prediction on professional immigrants' future:

Income remains stubbornly low for new immigrants even though they are better educated and more skilled than ever, says a Statistics Canada report. Until the problem is solved, immigration lawyer Richard Kurland said, skilled immigrants are going to continue to suffer. They are going to bleed

their savings and it's a cascading horrible train ride to economic devastation. (A5. Edmonton Journal, Jan. 31, 2007)

Among these illuminating researchers, Li Zong (2004) influenced me profoundly about understanding Chinese professional immigrants' career development. Focused on occupational attainment and social mobility of professional Chinese immigrants in Canada, his report on a survey on Chinese professional immigrants found that among the 79 % of the respondents who had been working as professionals in China before immigration, only 31% worked as professionals in Canada. Moreover, 41.1% had low social status by doing non-professional jobs and 22.4% had never worked in Canada (Zong, 2004). Zong (2004) recognized that professional immigrants are generally challenged by individual and structural barriers on occupational attainment.

Instead of gaining social sympathy, Zong (2004) pointed out that "failure to locate individual barriers in social conditions and structural arrangements tends to assign blame to immigrant professionals themselves for failing to acquire professional jobs in Canada" (p. 2). Zong's words indicate overwhelmingly powerful external barriers lying along immigrants' pathway towards professional integration.

Zong's interpretation was extremely disappointing. This failure-blaming attitude was totally beyond my understanding; further, I was afraid this could also happen to me upon graduation. I simply could not allow myself to fall into this reality. I was a renowned overachiever in my field before immigration; how could

I descend to the bottom of society even after receiving the highest local education and credential but still be blamed for this degeneration?

There must be some immigrants who succeeded. I began to search for immigrants' success stories. However the majority of the related literature conveyed immigrants' and refugees' undesired situations. Gowricharn (2001) reported the same findings: "The dominant focus on ethnic minorities has been in terms of underclass with low educational levels, unemployment, poverty, and so forth as outstanding features." This situation suggested a need to find ways to change. Could immigrants make all the necessary changes by themselves? According to Gowricharn, the root of the problem was caused by the host countries' opportunity structure - the external barriers rather than internal ones: "the opportunity structure in the host country is essential for a proper understanding of the mobility process" (p. 157).

If the host country provides some opportunities or the minorities create some opportunities for themselves with great effort, could the problem be resolved? Likely not according to Gowricharn's understanding: "their descent may be part of an integration problem. Skin color, for example, is a specific issue in this regard, although it can be neutralized to a certain extent by education, social background and behavior" (p. 160).

Are immigrants willing to get "neutralized"? Zhou and Kim (2001) describe Chinese new business elite groups in the United States as having "a strong desire to assimilate and be included in mainstream polite. They view themselves as agents of change, but in economic terms" (p. 242).

Maybe the immigrant professionals in Zong's study had difficulty in job attainment because they sought professional employment without having Canadian formal education. Perhaps those who chose to invest time and money in receiving Canadian graduate education so as to continue with their professional career would have better employment opportunities?

Peykov (2004) made the same assumption:

Foreign students represent a group that has undeniable advantages over other immigrant groups. Foreign students at Canadian universities and colleges have generally high proficiency in English and as a result are in more of a competitive position in finding employment in Canada. ... They are immersed in Canadian history, culture and values, which prepares them for the social and cultural challenges that may arise in the workforce or in the community. (p. 4)

Although Peykov's (2004) understanding sounded very encouraging, and his observation seemed to have confirmed the university's survey results, I was still not convinced and wondered if the outcomes would be similarly positive if immigrant students had been evaluated separately. Hence, I began to pay attention to examining problems in doctoral programs of studies and evaluating with a critical mind how effectively they assisted graduate students with their career preparation success.

Challenges of doctoral education

Gaff and Pruitt-Logan (1998)'s claim shockingly confirmed my assumption about career-related problems in graduate programs:

Let's face it. We have never really prepared graduate students to become college professors. Traditional doctoral study is designed to give graduate students the capacity to conduct original research. This is a necessary but insufficient condition for faculty success. After all, most faculty members manage a wide range of roles. Most teach and advise undergraduates, and many also teach graduate students. Many graduate students, however, acquire no experience in the complex tasks of teaching: determining proper goals for student learning, designing courses, selecting learning materials, making assignments, and assessing the achievement of those goals; understanding and working effectively with diverse students; giving academic and career advice; and constructing and assessing curricula in the department. Too many of those who do serve as teaching assistants are given only minor assignments and receive little or no orientation and mentoring to master these tasks.

(p. 77)

Golde and Dore (2001) made the same claim: "The training doctoral students receive is not what they want, nor does it prepare them for the jobs they take" (p. 5). Nagle, Suldo, Christenson, and Hansen (2004) emphasized that "Job stress was the number one concern of graduate students considering entry into academia" (p. 321).

Even though I was aware of the issue, since getting oneself "neutralized" through local education to obtain accepted "behavior" was implied as a better

strategy, my choice of receiving Canadian doctoral education should be the correct road to pursue. My confidence in a promising career future through my doctoral program of studies was reassured.

I had noticed that there were many visible minority students in our university. I wanted to know if our president had ever noticed their existence, and how she regarded their involvement, since our president herself was a visible minority. I found one of her writings from the university's website.

I find it inspiring that we have graduate students from over 120 countries from around the world. As you well know, when graduate students and faculty members from different cultures, nations, and academic disciplines come together, the result can be truly innovative and remarkable.

Through your work, the University of XXX is truly enriched by creativity and difference of perspective...

Your potential as a graduate student has no boundaries and I encourage you to embrace and take advantage of our international environment. Never before has your work and research been so important and essential to the balance of our world and the burgeoning sectors of our economy including science, health, technology and the arts. Each of you engages in inspirational work and I hope you continue your research excellence in 2007.

(Samarasekera, 2006)

The president's message was welcoming, inclusive, engaging, and inspiring. For quite a long time, I repeatedly read this message to absorb energy

and strength to keep my hope alive. Since the president's speech indicated that the institution appreciated international students' involvement and placed high expectations on their achievements, did the institution's staff follow in practice? How far were the doctoral programs willing to go to make the vision become a reality? Fischer and Zigmond (1998) made a suggestion on how faculty members orient their teaching based on students' needs:

Part of our responsibility toward graduate students is to provide them with a strong background in their field and to teach them how to design and carry out experiments. If however, we are to ensure their success in graduate school and beyond, this is not enough. Students must also acquire many other "survival skills" – skills such as how to communicate their ideas and results, obtain jobs and funding, and attract students and staff (Bloom, 1992; Bird, 1994). (p. 29)

It was very encouraging to hear the concerned voices from administrators and graduate professors, but where were the immigrant students' voices? The findings of my literature review revealed a lack of their voices:

Yes, higher education has made some progress. It has moved away from the old attitude of exclusion. What it has not done is move far enough away from the institutionalized behaviors of exclusion... Students of color continue to suffer from the neglect, disinterest, misguidance, and passive hostilities of educators and educational systems that just don't understand, don't care about, or don't see

the too often negative consequences of being a person of color in this country. (Soto, 1999, p. 1)

The literature I had reviewed to date showed consistent results. There was little offering of constructive suggestions, coping strategies and success stories from immigrant students' themselves on what needs to be done to improve their situations, how to adapt themselves to the established systems, and how to make changes in the unjust aspects of the systems.

Experiences of immigrant students

Up to this point in time, the contradiction between the message revealed by the university publication and the literature review became self-evident. But I still needed more evidence from those around me to become convinced. Although at only an informal level, I turned to explore the employment situation of those immigrants who had obtained a Ph. D. degree in the Faculty of Education where I was studying. I wanted to learn where they were and what they were doing as a career in order to relate their present to my future. The result of this investigation was quite worrisome. One newly graduated woman was told to take two years of undergraduate courses in order to become an elementary teacher after having studied for ten years in Canada and having received two degrees – a Master of Education and Ph. D. in Education. She hesitated whether to go back to take undergraduate courses or to accept whatever jobs that came her way. The second person was a friend's husband who was teaching at a university in Asia because he did not want to give up on a professional career. But the cost was that he had to live apart from his wife and child who remained behind in Canada. After having

immigrated to Canada nine years earlier and having graduated three years before, he had never stopped applying for academic positions in Canadian universities, but had never succeeded in even obtaining an interview. Probably partially influenced by the dismay in his job search, his wife, also a Ph.D. student, applied for a two-year leave from her studies and became a fulltime self-employed businessperson. These three people were all teaching professionals in their home countries and all had planned to continue with a teaching career in a Canadian university through Canadian doctoral studies.

Understanding the Contradictions through the Lens of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is an educational approach based on Freire's critical theory (1972). Critical pedagogy points out social inequities in education and society and puts students' interest at the centre of education. Critical pedagogy posits that students have been historically and continuously deprived of rights through traditional schooling. Critical pedagogy strongly advocates for students to think critically about their situation so that they "can" recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are situated. Realizing the power of one's consciousness is the first step of gaining the knowledge and the power to take action against oppression. Freire is best known for the attack on what he called the "banking" concept of education, in which the student is viewed, rather than as an individual person, as an empty container to be filled by the teacher.

Before this moment of conscious understanding of critical pedagogy, I had always drawn logical conclusions based on what I was told since immigration.

Then the forced resignation from my first teaching job (see Chapter One) happened, which completely changed my outlook enlightened by critical pedagogy.

This traumatic incident triggered the beginning of my transformative process. Like many Chinese probably would do, I chose to forget this shameful experience. But like a ghost haunting, it refused to retreat. There was no way to escape; therefore, I was forced to confront the “ghost” face to face.

For the first time of my life, I felt deeply humiliated and terribly wronged. I was so painful, indignant, and resentful, but I did not know how to get rid of these negative feelings. Very fortunately, two months later, I came across critical pedagogy in two courses on curriculum studies. Any words would be too weak to express my astonishment at our first encounter. Like a drowning person struggling amid the vast unknown sea and longing for a helping hand, critical pedagogy saved me by teaching me how to interpret this “ghost” and how to drive it out of my much disturbed mind.

The most effective tool to reconstruct my confused and lost identity was the concept of conscientization. It made me aware of the existence of the “ghost” I had taken for granted by reinterpreting the so-called rationale of my previous experiences - “Do this because it is good for you!” I could finally see oppression, injustice, banking education, the priority of technical rationality, and poisonous pedagogy. I came to an understanding that they disguised themselves under the cover of authority, expert, knowledge, which had been highly respected and trusted by Chinese tradition and culture.

Conscientization ruthlessly disclosed its hypocrisy. It enabled me to face the “ghost” bravely, to constantly recall and recount it, to reflect on it, to analyze it, and to challenge it with a critical mind. The process of conscientization helped me acquire an understanding of its origins, conditions, and circumstances. This awareness was so crucial that it enabled me to connect it with a specific circumstance. Otherwise the generalized memory would be powerful enough to destroy my confidence for self-identity reconstruction.

At this moment, I understood why my Canadian friend challenged me (as mentioned in the first chapter) about China; he was pointing out “banking education”. Furthermore, I began to wonder if a university graduate program for international and immigrant students should be identical to that of mainstream students.

For the first time, I learned that one important conceptualization for doctoral students’ academic career preparation relates to the notion of four scholarships in academic work: discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Boyer, 1990). This approach offers value in its conception of academic practice and addresses the responsibility of the individual and his/her supervisor for conserving disciplinary scholarship in its various forms (Golde & Walker, 2006). It considers the balance between the different types of academic work doctoral students are expected to engage in, such as how their understanding of themselves is developed, and whether they are understood in a scholarly way. More fundamentally, it questions whether doctoral education is effectively supporting the development of new disciplinary scholars.

My understanding began with an undifferentiated acceptance based on an assumption that both mainstream and immigrant students should follow the same career preparation process in order to be equally prepared to meet the same selection criteria of future employers. I thought that the notion of the four scholarships in academic work was essential in examining immigrant Ph. D. students' academic career preparation and the quality of their preparation. However, I also wondered if the presence and needs of foreign students were at all considered when the four scholarships were being conceptualized.

Having experienced a different education system, and having worked in different academic-cultural environments, immigrant students must learn the great differences between the academic and professional systems of their home countries' and those of their new host country, and often find that their previous academic and professional skills and experiences are inapplicable in the latter. They need to *unlearn* certain knowledge, competencies, and values, and then *relearn* the new conceptualizations (Hofstede, 1991). Boyer's (1990) scholarships identified academic gaps for mainstream students who already understand basic premises of living, thinking, and functioning in Western society; whereas immigrant students are expected to "adapt" to a new society *and* learn a new way of academic functioning. This scholarly knowledge and skill development expectation by graduate programs of studies might be considered a barrier for immigrant students to overcome.

Although the notion of the four scholarships in academic work could serve as guidance for all doctoral students, including immigrant doctoral students, to

adopt and integrate into their career preparation, these scholarships do not consider professional immigrant students' previous knowledge and skills, the paradigm of which may contain additional psychological barriers. This is confirmed by what Hofstede (1991) calls 'deep culture':

Every person carries within him or herself patterns of thinking; feeling; and potential acting which were learned throughout their lifetime. Much of it has been acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating. As soon as certain patterns of thinking; feeling and acting have established themselves within a person's mind; (s)he must unlearn these before being able to learn something different; and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time. (p. 4)

In other words, their different ways of knowing are unaddressed. I was beginning to be aware of the contradiction between the university survey results and the literature report evidenced by the experiences of those immigrant graduates around me, which led me to believe that it was not my problem alone - there was something wrong with/in the system, and my personal problem could only be resolved through the resolving of the systemic problems. This consciousness of deficiency in graduate programs of studies rang a bell of warning for me of an unpromising future and made me question the applicability of my doctoral program of studies and fear a permanent loss of my professional teaching career in Canada. However, my career aspiration and resilience remained intact. I refused to accept this reality. But was I capable of finding out the major

gaps in my academic career preparation so that I could work out coping strategies and solutions? Seeking a collective effort seemed to be the only way to empower me for this daunting task.

McAlpine and Norton (2006)'s critique of graduate programs also shed light on my understanding of the deficit of Western education in an internationalized campus. They question the appropriateness of both the content and the process within doctoral programs. McAlpine and Amundsen (2007) suggest doctoral students experience tensions and challenges in integrating into academia. They perceive that research, teaching, and service work in universities is situated in different contexts, which overlap and interact, and propose a more general and integrative framework of contexts to guide both research and action. Although this conceptualization addresses the complex, interdependent and dynamic nature of university work, operationalizing this concept remains a challenging task.

The task of implementing the four scholarships in academic work has been challenged by some researchers who examined more practical aspects of doctoral education such as peer learning (Boud & Lee, 2005) and writing (Aitchison & Lee, 2006). One strength of this approach is that it addresses practical issues relating to provisions which support doctoral students' learning. However, the pedagogical perspective offers less attention to student experience.

A linear student development approach has shown a clear and logical procedure of academic career preparation; a weakness is perhaps that this perspective lacks an integrative quality, centering on different forms of

scholarship rather than on students' holistic experience, as noted by Colbeck and Wharton (2006). Their concern indicates that the notion of scholarships approach does not identify or address the uniqueness of immigrant students' experiences, which are in shifted and shifting landscapes of professional inquiry. Therefore, the notion of scholarships in academic work leaves room for other approaches such as critical pedagogy which focus more on personal, especially disadvantageous, individual's experience.

In brief, exploring the contradictions between career ambition and disappointing realities, between university publications and immigrant students' experiences, was accompanied by an evolving learning and thinking process beginning with an undifferentiated perception of an academic career preparation process and ending with a critical understanding of doctoral programs enlightened by critical pedagogy.

Summary

This chapter describes the start of my personal journey of career exploration which marks the first of a three-cycle action research investigation. It records a literature review of immigrant doctoral graduates' accounts of their attempts to establish an academic career, triggered by results of a thought-provoking survey issued by the university on its graduates' employment situations. The contradictions between the university's report and those of the literature reviewed and of the immigrant students' own stories confirmed my assumption that it was not just me feeling lost in this 'new' situation; many had experienced the same feelings before me. This chapter indicates my transition from the

personal perception of self-blame and shame, caused by a loss of my first job and a failure to obtain a provincial teaching certificate, towards being able to critically examine systemic barriers experienced by professional immigrants in gaining entry into academia through the lens of critical pedagogy.

The external and internal barriers and successful strategies identified in this chapter are summarized in the following chart:

Issue	External Barrier	Internal Barrier	Success
University System. Inattention to the differences between immigrant and non-immigrant or international graduate students (their employment record and performance in the workplace was not mentioned or documented in the university's report; their needs were not identified in the new conceptualization of universities in the 1990s.)	X		
Related Credentializing Bodies. Lack of coherence between the university and credentializing bodies means that highly educated professional immigrants have great difficulty in having their foreign credentials, work experiences, and education recognized. Most did not work as professionals or even in related occupational fields which leads to underutilization of their skills and potential contribution.	X		
Vision or Rhetoric. University publications suggest an appreciation of what international students can bring to the university community and the high expectations they have of them.	X		
Career-related Problems in Graduate Programs. The training and education they receive does not prepare them for academic positions nor for the jobs they take. Some drop out due to loss of hope.	X	X	

<p>Racism. Research suggests that racism plays a part in immigrant graduate student/professional immigrant underemployment.</p>	X		
<p>Psychological Imbalance. Low salaries and underemployment render them feeling resentful of the system that approved their visas and landed immigrant status and confused. They blame themselves for their inability to understand what is happening. Further, Instead of feeling social sympathy, immigrants feel that they are blamed for failing to acquire professional jobs and seek ways to understand why. This leads to enormous amounts of stress, especially in the final semester(s) of their programs.</p>		X	
<p>Investing in Education. Immigrant graduate students believe that higher degrees in their host country will better prepare them for employment; slowly they learn that this will mean learning new ways and unlearning former ways in order to understand the social and cultural challenges in the workplace.</p>		X	
<p>Learning Soft Skills. The research literature suggests that immigrant students acquire survival skills over time.</p>		X	X

Chapter Four

Cycle Two: Exploring Career Preparation Gaps with Others

Setting

In Cycle One, I encountered Freire's critical pedagogy which led me to understand (think, hope, believe) that one major source of a solution to the immigrant doctoral students' career ill-preparedness should and could only exist within universities. Although I still had hope to make my way through the career preparation process by utilizing the university's available resources, I began to see (feel, think) that I could not reach this goal on my own. I thought that by working with other Asian students who shared similar difficulties, cultural background and coping approaches, I would feel more comfortable to work on overcoming various overwhelming issues. This personal need to work with others for the preparation of an academic career correlated with an assignment in a course. The course, Action Research in Practice, guided me through a complete process of this cycle of research including deciding on research questions, applying for ethics review, recruiting participants, collecting data, analyzing data, reporting, presenting and publishing, as well as conceptualizing the previous cycle of the study.

Research Questions

The major research questions remained the same: to explore barriers as well as successes that immigrant Ph.D. students have identified or anticipated to encounter in their academic career preparation process.

Specific research questions were also the same as introduced in Chapter Two:

1. What are some major external barriers that immigrant Ph.D. students experience in integrating into Canadian academic and professional communities?
2. What are some major internal barriers that immigrant Ph.D. students experience in integrating into Canadian academic and professional communities?
3. What coping attitudes and strategies (i.e. their consciousness) do they use to break down and overcome the barriers experienced?

Participants

The participants in this cycle of study were immigrant Ph.D. students enrolled in various departments within the University. Students were introduced to the four-month action research through the E-newsletter of the Graduate Student Association in the beginning of the winter term, 2007. Three Asian immigrant doctoral students volunteered to join the action research group after seeing a participant recruitment advertisement on the university's graduate students' website. Each participant except me has been given a pseudonym in this text. They are Nick, Yun, and Ju-an.

Recognizing how a career planning survey (Graduate Student Survey, Academic Year 2003 - 2004, of University of Colorado-Boulder) had assisted me to understand the importance of early career planning in the previous semester, I reshaped the survey into an introductory questionnaire and asked participants to complete it on the first day of our meeting. (See Appendix A.) In requesting for self- assessment of the effectiveness of career-related professional training

received, participants are asked to respond on a Likert-like (5-point agree to disagree) scale to questions such as: “How useful have you found your training in basic teaching skills? (e.g. curriculum development, lecturing, leading discussions, writing examinations, creating and/or grading assignments)”. The five answer options include A. Excellent, B. Very good, C. Good, D. Fair, and E. Poor.

This survey enabled me to create a profile of some of the understandings of the participants. The survey questionnaire was intended to learn about their teaching, researching, publication, and job searching experiences as a part of career preparation, which I later realized was directly linked to Boyer (1990)’s four scholarships in academic work: discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

The survey results revealed that we were all Asian immigrant PhD students from four different faculties. Nick was from Japan, and was in his mid-30s. He had been a researcher for a local government before coming to Canada. Yun and Ju-an were both from China and were also in their mid-30s. Both had been university assistant professors in China. At the time of the study, all the participants were taking graduate courses. As for other information, I am withholding in order to protect their identities.

The survey results also revealed that none of them were teaching or had taught as a primary course instructor in Canada. They reported having received little or no training in basic teaching skills, curriculum development, lecturing, leading discussions, creating and/or grading assignments, or writing examinations. Most of them had received no faculty guidance in formulating a research topic, or

conducting research in collaboration with faculty members. Most had not received research funding from a faculty grant. None had assisted in writing a grant proposal. None had published as a sole author or co-author. Most had received advice about employment opportunities inside and outside academia, looking for a job, and writing their C.V. from the university career service centre, friends, a department seminar, professors, a professional consultant, or government agencies. Most concluded, after the realization of what a graduate program might offer, that their career preparation in the graduate program to date ranked as poor. I wondered if these results would be similar to those of Canadian graduate students or if the University report concerned itself with such questions. I was beginning to see and feel a divide between Western born/graduated students and those of us who came as adults from elsewhere.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this cycle of the action research project, three colleagues and I engaged in “self- reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice . . . in which. . . practices are carried out” (Carr & Kemmis, 1983, p. 5). My task, along with that of my participants “is to develop theories of practice which are rooted in the concrete experiences and situations of [participants] and then attempt to confront and resolve the problems to which these experiences give rise” (Carr & Kemmis, 1983, p. 118). The project built on research in three areas of career exploration: 1) building knowledge and information about oneself and the environment (Blustein, 1997; Jordan, 1963; Stumpf et al., 1983); 2) the intent of choosing an alternative career

path/occupation (Schein, 1978); and 3) the determination to further one's career (Kanfer et al., 2001). We followed the same 3-stage career preparation processes as a way to bridge the gaps in our experience. Through descriptions and explanations of our cross-cultural learning and initial professional experiences, the research unveiled a reconstruction of professional identity and expertise. The reflection enabled us to better understand our practices and knowledge.

In January, 2007, the ethics review application was approved and the participants were recruited. Between February and April, data were collected from several sources in addition to the initial survey questionnaire.

Other sources of data included: detailed field notes which were completed after every related activity of the four-month research project; summary notes of each meeting which were circulated for member checks; and reflections that were written and submitted by each participant on the events that constituted the study. The reflections provided an opportunity for deep reflection on their/our taken for granted beliefs and practices. All data sources including the survey described earlier in the chapter, offered opportunities for triangulation.

The organization of the data began by inputting every datum and by making sure that all was complete. Since this was my first time analyzing primary data (unlike the literature review which I completed in Cycle One) I was feeling quite 'lost'. I felt that my supervisor seemed to be determined to put me through a hard way of learning without giving any hint on possible themes, although she asked someone to help guide me just in case.

The biggest challenge is finding themes as there were so many data. I had spent a huge amount of time in making sense of the data, piece by piece, and then put them together to look for more comprehensive themes. When some themes emerged, they seemed vague and ambiguous. I had to go back again and again to my research questions in order to stick to the point.

After I felt confident with the categorization of the themes, I was able to share my findings with the participants during our last meeting. As we went through the themes one by one, I read each paragraph and then explained it. The participants often interrupted me for clarification or correction, or raised new questions. A scheduled 60 -90 minutes' meeting turned to one which lasted three and half hours. The lesson I learned is that the selection and interpretation of data can be very subjective although there are unquestioned agreement supported by more objective data.

The result of this collective effort was still not satisfactory. The themes seemed to be reporting answers to the research questions in addition to summarizing discussions. My supervisor told me to read all the data files critically as many times and as long as needed. After I became very familiar with the data, I was eventually able to see recurring themes and was able to construct a category system that allowed all of the data to be categorized systematically. The challenge was to ensure that the categories were internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous, which required that everything in one category must hold together in a meaningful way and that the differences between categories needed to be bold and clear (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Naming the thematic categories was another

challenge, which had taken a couple of years of re-reading, re-interpreting, re-categorizing, and re-naming. Later I learned to be able to ‘code’ qualitative data more quickly.

Findings and Discussion

In addition to the survey data, the action research team met to discuss many aspects of their experience as graduate students, especially the barriers they perceived they were facing. After meeting summaries and email reflections had been exchanged for member checks, and all of the written artifacts recorded and interpreted, five themes emerged: (1) Gaps were identified in English language proficiency and (2) in professional skills and experiences; (3) Some strategies to fill in the gaps were identified; (4) Perceptions of barriers varied individually; and (5) Functioning on campus is a necessary step for successful integration into mainstream society.

Gaps

English language proficiency

“The root of my problem exists somewhere else.” (Nick)

All participants had been living in Canada for at least three years and had passed TOEFL. However, they frequently identified their English as poor, and constantly took this weakness as an obstacle in their career aspirations. Although they perceived their proficiency in English to be inadequate, I suspected that there were deeper or other reasons associated with this perceived barrier. The participants’ responses to this probing lead to four sub-themes: their lack of

confidence, their type of personality, a feeling of social intolerance, and a lack of courage to change.

Lack of Confidence

Ju-an said proficiency was not the most important thing “because you could always try to make yourself understood even if your English was poor.” Her understanding was that her lacking confidence might be the real reason for her ineffective communication.

Yun shared the same opinion:

I am not young and I am a female. Furthermore, my English is not good enough. Through this project, I realize that the underlying reason is that I am not confident enough. Lack of confidence weakened my determination to fulfill the dream.

Yun felt a need to keep improving her English because good English skills would give her a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate. However, she was also afraid that she might experience prejudice from her peers or supervisors if her English was not good enough.

“They may not tolerate my English”, Nick said, “I feel nervous, too. I have to think in advance before talking to my supervisor. In Japan, there is a hierarchy [that I must respect and accommodate].” Ju-an said: “It’s the same in China.” All participants needed to overcome a lack of confidence.

What is feared by Yun and Nick seems to suggest that what worried and intimidated them from integration to the mainstream society was not their linguistic competence, but their culturally distinctive language traits such as foreign accents and different ways of expressions. Their feeling of social marginalization may have been rooted in race. As Peter Li (2003) puts it, “The

concept of 'race' is socially entrenched in the normative order of Canada" (p. 6). Although many immigrants such as Yun and Nick were willing to integrate into Canadian mainstream society, and the political discourse preaches tolerance and acceptance towards immigrants and other visible minorities, the problem is that "[b]ecoming similar to Canadians is integration and maintaining cultural difference is opposite to integration" (p. 1) as Li (2003) claims in a different article.

Personality Factor

Yun said she was so busy with her studies that she had no time to socialize. Ju-an challenged her perspective: "If you like to socialize, you can always find time. I just don't like social life." Ju-an believed personality was a decisive factor.

Nick shared the same thinking. He thought that to perform better in teaching Canadian students, improving English language proficiency needed to be addressed. The language barrier could be overcome if one had a positive and active personality and if this person could function well in society.

Personality theory assumes that individuals are characterized by a unique and basically unchanging pattern of traits. Personality studies in relation to second language learning suggest that extroverted students learn foreign languages better because of their willingness to interact with others and because of their reduced inhibitions (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). Some other researchers (e.g. Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004) found personality has been related to intercultural adjustment. According to their findings, those who were outgoing, open-minded, positive, and

hopeful were less anxious, less negative in their outlook, less likely to ignore or withdraw from unpleasant events in the foreign culture. Thus, those with such personality traits may experience a less difficult inter-cultural adjusting process.

Again our in-depth discussion on the obstacles causing ineffective communication revealed a variety of reasons and the beliefs underlying. However, all of the participants realized and agreed that even if one had acquired excellent language proficiency, there were still other factors that influenced effective functioning in their graduate programs and then later in their work world beyond campus.

Poor Social Functioning

Do my problems come only from the lack of confidence in speaking and listening [to] English? I am sensing that the root of my problem exists somewhere else. Although it is tentative, I came to a conclusion that I am not sure whether I can FUNCTION as a member of an institution if I get a faculty position in this country. (Nick)

According to Bandura (1994), a perceived lack of confidence in effective functioning as a member of a social group is due to poor self-efficacy: a lack of mastery experiences or performance accomplishments. Performing a task successfully strengthens one's sense of self-efficacy. On the other hand, failing to adequately deal with a task or challenge can undermine and weaken self-efficacy. Therefore, "the most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences" (Bandura, 1994, p. 1).

The 'functions' to master, for university students, include activities such as participating in class discussions, chatting with classmates and course professors, talking about progress and expectations with supervisors and when doing

community service work, making speeches at meetings, instructing, and socializing. To function effectively, one has to use English, and by using it on a daily basis, one's English should improve accordingly. However, the participants reported that there were not sufficient opportunities for them to practise, use and improve their English.

Nick revealed that he sometimes could not understand Canadian jokes. "I think that I was a lively person when I was in Japan, but while staying here, I became a quiet person. I need confidence in speaking English and behaving without any hesitation."

How could there be no opportunity to use and improve English when they lived in an English language and cultural environment? I knew from observations that many new immigrant or international students functioned comfortably in their own language and cultural communities and understood many reasons why their circles were detached from the mainstream language and culture. But I was also wondering if they were conscious of how little contact they had in the mainstream community and were willing to integrate; and if so, then what had inhibited their interactions with *others*?

This confusion about whether or not immigrant students need opportunities or others, is clarified to some extent by Zimmermann (1995) whose observation echoed the participants' opinion that international students often lack the opportunities to communicate with local students, academicians, or even other international students from different countries and cultures due to poor language

skills, little time spent on social activities, and the great distance between the original and host cultures.

Once again, we discussed this topic in order to determine what lay beneath “lacking opportunity”.

After more discussion and deep reflection, the participants identified other reasons why they wanted to improve English: from lacking confidence to poor ability to function, personality, or a fear of prejudice. This suggests that learning to *function* in English is as important as a high TOEFL score for communication proficiency. Although each participant identified language as a barrier, all agreed that the key point was not only in the language itself: there were other internal and external factors that affected their language performance.

In terms of language barriers experienced by immigrant or international students, Matsumoto, LeRoux, Bernard and Gray (2004) identified adjustment related factors including emotional regulation, openness, flexibility, and critical thinking. Although some barriers come from inside such as introverted personality traits, a lack of effective support is an equally important construct (Hechonova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002). As a result, “the hosts and new arrivals may end up with great frustrations, miscommunications, and identity misalignments. Intercultural adaptation is a collaborative learning journey” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 244).

Professional skills and experiences

“... history, culture and all other background. I think this is what I am lacking.” (Ju-an)

By observations, experience, sharing from peer participants, talking to professors, attending job-search seminars, listening to guest speakers, or talking to professional consultants, the participants gradually came to an understanding of the requirements of becoming a professor in Canada and alongside they became aware of their own shortcomings. Evidence for the three sub-themes of lacking knowledge, behaving inappropriately, and needing intercultural competence are presented below.

Lack of Knowledge about Professors' Tasks and Obligations

Nick and Ju-an experienced a big surprise when they learned from their observations and the guest speakers that Canadian professors' professional scope went beyond technical skills.

Professors will be under big pressure, such as a high expectation of academic achievement including the number of publications, good teaching performance, and so forth. What struck me most was that 'being a professor' means 'making a community' in the university. Networking skills and good communication skills are important to keep the institution going. Another important thing is teaching experience. (Nick)

The other aspect that the professor focused on was trying to understand the culture of this society. Except for the language itself, we should know the history, culture and all other background [of the country]. I think this is what I am lacking. (Ju-an)

Nick and Ju-an's surprise was exactly the same as what I had experienced when I first encountered the notion of four scholarships in academic work (Boyer, 1990) as mentioned earlier. Boyer's conceptualization of scholarships could be very new for professional immigrant students whose previous academic work in their home countries might expect different or partial responsibilities required in North American academia. The surprise of these participants indicates a gap in

graduate programs of studies which should address such a learning need and others. Without even being aware of such a learning gap, immigrant doctoral students probably will not be able to balance between the different types of academic work North American doctoral students are expected to engage in.

Behaving Inappropriately

There are specific knowledge and skills to be learned in order to function effectively in a North American academic culture. As newcomers, Asian students may feel intimidated by the differences in ways of thinking and doing things and fear their behaviors are inappropriate.

I am still not sure how to behave in this (English) environment. What I believe is appropriate may seem awkward to Canadians. These two things make me shy. (Nick)

The process of being able to appropriately function in a different cultural milieu, according to Young (2004), is as challenging “as the entirety of the phenomenon of individuals who, on relocation to an unfamiliar sociocultural environment, strive to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment” (p. 339). To succeed, Asian students will encounter greater obstacles due to the fact that they tend to be interdependent and to use indirect coping strategies. However, when they study in a culture that rewards direct coping strategies, their indirect coping strategies are ineffective. Consequently, they suffer higher levels of stress (Cross, 1995).

Intercultural Incompetence

Just as many new immigrant students may feel language incompetence even at the level of doctoral studies, cultural incompetence (which may have

begun as a cultural shock) affects their identity and confidence simultaneously. To deal with this, group reflections and getting insider knowledge proved to be effective. For instance, after having had a guest professor participate in a group meeting, Yun, for the first time, began thinking about the importance of learning local culture.

The other aspect that the professor focused on was trying to understand the culture of this society. Except for the language itself, we should know the history, culture and all other background. I think this is what I am lacking. (Yun)

Intercultural competence has been unquestionably acknowledged as a vital quality of an ideal scholar in an internationalized academia. Although there may exist disagreement on its definition and elements, Stier (2006) argues that intercultural competence can be divided into three competencies. 1) “Content-competencies [which] predominantly have a one-dimensional or static character and refer to the knowing that-aspects of both the ‘other’ and the ‘home’ culture” (p. 6); 2) “Intrapersonal competencies [which] involve cognitive skills [and] emotional skills” (p. 7); and 3) “Interpersonal competencies [which] refer to interactive skills” (p. 7). Issues related to intercultural competence can be significant career determinants. Just as Reynolds and Constantine (2007) assert, lack of intercultural competence may result in lower career aspirations and lower career outcome expectations.

Strategies to fill in the gaps

Early career preparation

“I seldom thought of planning my future career development.” (Yun)

A positive outcome of this cycle of the action research project was that all participants became aware of the importance of early career preparation. Before participation, they had hardly thought about it.

I have got lots of information from it. I have never thought about them before ... I was a little disappointed to know from Dr. B that the chance to be an instructor in the university become smaller in the future. Maybe I should reconsider my career goal. (Ju-an)

Before I attended this project, I seldom thought of planning my future career development. Or I was just afraid of thinking of the future. I dwelled on the ideas that I am a female, I am not very young and I am Chinese. However, through attending this interaction project, I began to realize my advantages and disadvantages in terms of language, academic as well as my personality. (Yun)

After I met the other participants and Cathy, I began to re-think future career and job hunting and so on. I am still in the second year of my program, so that I thought it might be too early to decide what I really would like to be. But, Cathy said to me that the sooner we set a goal, the better we can prepare for it before the time comes, when we really need a job. The questionnaire also made me re-think the current situation of mine. (Nick)

As shown from their own words, all the participants acknowledged that the notion of career preparation was entirely new to them, and it was a transformative awareness for each of them. The lack of career preparation is not just limited to immigrant students, however. Golde and Dore's (2001) national lengthy survey of 27 U.S. universities and 4,000 students on doctoral education and career preparation reveals that about half to three-quarters of doctoral students say that they are not prepared for the expected teaching and service activities as faculty members. Gale and Golde (2004) further developed this thought a few years later: "This finding reinforces the perception that attention to preparation for teaching, advising, service, and governance is at best sporadic and haphazard" (p. 28-29).

Golde and Walker (2006) continued to assert that doctoral graduates are inadequately prepared to meet the challenges and needs of their respective disciplines. It is assumed that Canadian universities may share similar doctoral educational outcomes.

Adapting to host country's belief system and practice

“... I may be able to learn how to overcome cultural differences” (Nick)

Asian, especially East Asian students, come from a social system that honors tradition and hierarchical relationships, which have been heavily influenced by Confucianism. The participants recognized a need to adapt to the host country's belief system and practices; however, it is difficult for them to take initiative if it means challenging authority or even identifying a fault in the system.

Attending the Immigrant Students' Presentation on International Education last Thursday, I, as a foreign student, could not help but feel[ing] that it was a bit strange that people were addressing issues associated with difficulties in education of foreign students in the public arena. I have had difficulties in going through my programs so far ... However, I have been thinking that troubles that foreign students have are supposed to be managed by foreign students themselves, and they cannot blame *Others* for their difficulties. I am too shy to speak out my problems to people, particularly Canadians. I am thinking that I came here in Canada because I wanted to. I was not invited by anyone from this country ... I am still thinking that it would be outrageous and shameful to speak out my problems to Canadians, which I think are something that I have to manage by myself. (Nick)

... I may be able to learn how to overcome cultural differences, differences in ways of speaking and using language, and difference in ways of thinking. (Nick)

As newcomers influenced by one's home country's political system and social beliefs, Asian immigrant students may suffer a feeling of shame by secretly blaming themselves for their initial incapability, rather than examining the other

sources of their sufferings or seeking outside support. This behavior is influenced by their home country's cultural conceptualization of a personal issue. Gross and Mucmullen (1982) indicate that the identification of a problem and the decision of seeking outside help involves individual judgment and value belief. As for Asian people's reaction towards problems, Kleinman (1980) found in his cross-cultural study that many of them do not define or articulate personal issues in psychological terms.

Nick's feelings of "shame" and "self-blame" are no different from common symptoms caused by acculturation. Seeman (1959), whose work still remains relevant, recognizes feelings of alienation in five ways: powerlessness (being unable to determine an action result), meaninglessness (being unclear what ought to believe), normlessness (their social norms being no longer effective in new environment), isolation (attributing low award values to goal or beliefs they value highly), and self-estrangement (loss of meaning or pride in one's work).

Faculty support

"This is our problem, how can't we know what we want?" (Cathy)

At the end of Cycle One, with an emancipated mind inspired by critical pedagogy, I revealed how I decided to take control of my life by gaining power through working with three other Asian immigrant students. I had never realized that our problems needed to be dealt with together with more knowledgeable, capable, and successful faculty members until my supervisor first appeared in a meeting with the participants.

What impressed me most are Dr. B's provocative questions. I remembered the time when she asked me if she could come to talk to us. Her reason

was something like this: “You, as students, are in the darkness trying to figure out what you are missing and how to fill in the gap. In a way, I know what you don’t know and can see what you can’t see.” My instant response at hearing this remark was: “This is our problem, how can’t we know what we want?” After Dr. B raised her first question as a guest speaker, I immediately realized how narrow, shallow and biased my understandings were even if I am working on my own problems. Once again, I saw how giant the gap was between Dr. B, a Canadian professor, and me, an immigrant student who plans to become a Canadian professor. (C. Shi, Reflection, March 23, 2007)

The project group listened to three guest speakers who were professors from the university, on language and culture, international education, and career preparation in academia. The exposure to career-related interactive lectures proved to be very helpful.

I think Dr. X understands the situation that faces the immigrant students. I read the part of the thesis of his student afterwards. I find myself also thinking of the difficulties that the immigrants confront, but not in depth. What I am going to do is to face the problems both in my study and in the daily life directly and try to overcome them in a positive attitude. (Ju-an)

Dr. B’s mentioning of “popular culture” and her identification that what affects the communication is background knowledge, not “words”, is very insightful. It allows me to see that our focus on improving language itself doesn’t help much if we do not integrate authentic cultural learning and experiences. (C. Shi, Reflection, March 23, 2007)

Support from faculty members has been recognized as a significant factor for this group’s success. Dedrick and Watson (2002) noted that supervisor support for international students might be inadequate because faculty members may not be trained to deal with the unique needs of the international student population. Goode (2007) further supported this claim by explaining that international doctoral students often do not receive adequate support from their supervisors because of the North American discourse of ‘independent learning’ that permeates higher education institutes. Other authors warn that a culture of independent

learning create difficulties for international students who have not been exposed to such a climate during their undergraduate studies. Students are reported experiencing difficulties in adapting to new expectations about the role of the teacher and learner (Huang & Klinger, 2006; Scheyvens, Wild, & Overton, 2003).

Peer support

“I have never had such an open, honest, trustworthy, and supportive relationship” (Cathy)

The awareness of others’ support and the support itself are not limited to faculty members; peer support is also recognized as very important. By conducting an action research project, the participants, including myself, developed trust towards one another through open and honest discussions, sharing one’s doubts and opinions, and in-depth exploration of the roots of some taken-for-granted beliefs and behaviors. We became aware of our weaknesses and discovered the potential and strengths which would inspire us to bravely explore, identify, confront, and overcome our internal barriers. Moreover, we drew insights and energy from one another based on mutual trust and a collective desire.

I always say that I am busy and have no time to study English. This is only an excuse. Actually I am not that busy. If I use my time efficiently, I can do a lot of other things. Another thing is that I am somehow a little bit passive, not creative. I should overcome this shortcoming. (Ju-an)

This project leads me to rethink my own situation and the gap. I try to examine my own situation in a positive way. This new way of thinking make me realize that I have some advantages, including academic capabilities, my communication skill both in academic and in social aspects as well as my personalities. I love doing researches and I am smart, logic enough. I am a very efficient person and I like communicating with other persons. Of course, I also realize that I have some disadvantages, such as writing skills, English skills and so on. This project makes me search for information regarding career development now, which is helpful for me to plan before. The most important point is that I am encouraged to

draft a plan on fulfilling my goal step by step. Although the plan is just very elementary, it is a good start. (Yun)

The most important thing I harvest from this meeting is Cathy's talk at the final part of the meeting, especially her positive attitude towards life. Her experience has served as a great source of inspiration for me. Her spirit of persistence and optimism set good example for me. (Ju-an)

Cathy showed problems that foreign students have in pursuing an academic career and a faculty position, and possible solutions to them. I felt that Cathy's approach to solve the problems was very positive. Positive thinking, action, and reflection – these may create our own future. (Nick)

In terms of peer support versus faculty support, it has been suggested that new students may be reluctant to approach academic staff and have difficulty relating to them (Grob, 2000). Visible minority students are generally cautious of White teachers, except when they know that the White faculty member is culturally aware and sensitive (Brown & Dobbins, 2004).

Zirkel (2002) demonstrates that race- and gender-matched role models play a crucial role in the development of achievement-oriented goals. Tatum (1997) reveals that friendships with peers from the same ethnic group can foster the development of confidence in oneself. Weisz and Kemlo (2004) found that peers who share commonalities with the students in their groups were more effective in supporting their learning.

The trust, appreciation, and support from the participants, seemed to suggest that I had become what Vygotskian (1978) socio-cultural constructivist theory calls a capable peer. In this view of learning, learners construct knowledge in social interaction and through scaffolding by the teacher and others who help them reach their zone of proximal development (ZPD): "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the

level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

We learn or construct our reality based on interactions with others. Through these encounters, we shape our values, beliefs, and understandings. Immigrant graduate students have decades of encounters in their mother tongues and societal languages with people who hold relatively like-minded values. When they arrive in Canada, the majority of people they meet have like-minded values, but they are different from theirs. Thus, they must crack the code of this new “system”. Many do not venture into the system to crack it. I did; and thus in sharing my experiences, I became a capable peer.

Being consistently a step ahead of the participants in career preparation, I had valuable experiences to share. The participants especially valued hearing my personal stories of successes and failures and my reflections on how my thinking changed to overcome obstacles. It seemed that these experiences and insights were within their ZPD. It suggested that even though the knowledge, skills, and experience I provided were limited, they seemed to be at just the right level for them. Because I had just “been there, done that”, the participants could relate to my situation. Moreover, I was their peer and not a superior, so my emotional, social or practical help did not exert pressure on them. In other words, they would not feel inferior or intimidated when listening to my stories. In fact, I felt that the more we shared our lives, the more we felt closer to one another. Three years after this project ended, the members are still contacting and seeing one another.

The recognition of a role as a “more capable peer” brought me a sense of success at being able to impact upon a group of doctoral students with my professional knowledge and skills. I began to feel confident in entering further in the academic world.

Themes

Barriers perceived vary according to individual experience and attitude.

“I have been thinking about, considering, and searching for the root of my problem”. (Nick)

Personality, linguistic proficiency, functional competency, attitude, age and gender, were regarded as the most prominent barriers to adapting to the university learning community by different participants. The exploration process was considered challenging and elusive.

For these two weeks, I have been thinking about, considering, and searching for the root of my problem. “Why am I not confident in job hunting (in terms of a faculty position) in this county?” – [It is] because I do not have a confidence in speaking English. “Why?” — [It is] because there are times when I do not catch the word Canadians say, and because I cannot structure English sentences at once. If, at least, I can catch the word they say, I may want to make every effort to reply to their word. As Dr. B pointed out, lack of knowledge ranging from Canadian cultures (e.g., TV programs) to political landscapes, to social systems, to things associated with everyday life (e.g., where is a good place to take Greek dishes and which shop sells nice and cool stuff.) is part of the reasons why I cannot respond to the word Canadians say. If the reason for the lack of confidence is derived only from English proficiency, I will work on that. And then, if I had a confidence in English as much as Cathy does, I might want to speak out my problems to the public like Cathy is trying to filing a complaint. (Nick)

The elusive nature of the exploration was due to the fact that new immigrant students lack the background cultural knowledge, skills, sensitivity and years of preparatory experience necessary to be able to understand academic

culture and its values and practices. Such blind spots block the vision and action of immigrant graduate students. Their inability to succeed in a given situation or the pattern of feeling a lack of success leads back to Bandura's (1995) self efficacy theory: "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Bandura (1994) describes these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel.

Bandura differentiates two senses of self-efficacy based on attitude or style of coping and approach to confronting challenges. People with a strong sense of self-efficacy view challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, develop deeper interest in the activities in which they participate, form a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities, and recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments. People with a weak sense of self-efficacy avoid challenging tasks, believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities, focus on personal failings and negative outcomes, and quickly lose confidence in personal abilities (Bandura, 1994). In sum, one's sense of self-efficacy (strong or weak) determines/influences how external barriers are perceived and responded to.

Functioning on campus is a necessary step.

"If I were in such a situation ... all my strength would be gone". (Nick)

Learning the knowledge and skills to function on campus is a necessary step toward functioning in the mainstream society. It is a big obstacle for Asian students because of the difference in social systems and traditional beliefs. Nick, after hearing Cathy's experience in failing her application for a teaching license, reflected:

What really shocked me was what she is trying to do after that. She said she was trying to change regulations by taking this all the way to the committee. If I were in such a situation, I would put up with the regulations even though I really cannot give up getting the license. “Can’t I get a job here if I don’t go so far as to do that like Cathy is trying to do?” - when I thought so, all my strength was gone.

It seems that Nick does not see his power or agency and would more contentedly accept “the system” than challenge it. Perhaps Nick is striving to assimilate, not integrate, into Canadian mainstream society: integration accepts immigrants’ differences, whereas assimilation insists on immigrants’ complying with the normative values and national standard of Canada. The contradiction in what is said and what actually happens is addressed by Li (2003):

Despite the policy objective of defining integration as a two-way street that requires the accommodation on the part of both immigrants and Canadian society, the integration discourse suggests that it is immigrants and not Canadian society and its institutions that are required to change. (p. 10)

Li (2003) further reveals that “the changes immigrants are expected to make in the process of integration are considered necessary and positive” (p. 11). The case of Nick and other participants clearly indicates that they recognized the necessity of assimilation and were willing to comply with the existing norms and practices, but still felt overwhelmed during the process due to systemic barriers and lack of opportunity and support (perhaps in the same way that I felt abandoned and confused when I could not maintain a teaching position or obtain a teaching certificate as described in Chapter One). Although Bandura (1994) suggests that people with a strong sense of self-efficacy perceive external barriers as a source of inspiration rather than a signal to resist and retreat, not all systemic

barriers can be broken through without certain provision of opportunity or support. In sum, immigrants' successful integration requires two-way accommodation.

Understanding the Gaps through the Lens of Social Constructivism

A number of approaches offer a cultural perspective which views the disciplines in which doctoral students' research not only as intellectual domains, but also as social communities. Becher's (1989) cultural approach has opened up a number of different analyses, such as Valimaa (1998) who suggests a middle ground that considers both disciplinary and institutional cultures, focusing on the interaction between the individual and the different cultures in which they are embedded. This approach reveals the strong emotional and identity-forming impact of doctoral students' experiences while they are developing relationships with people around themselves.

Nevertheless the social community perspective has not given attention to immigrant students' experiences or their need to cross borders from other types of (i.e. international) academic and non-academic communities. It also fails to consider the skill development stressed by Boyer (1990). Austin (2002) suggests a socialization approach as a social solution for immigrant doctoral students - a process through which prospective members of a group assume the values and attitudes of the group they wish to join, which connects individual experiences with concepts of learning. Doctoral education is explored from the standpoint of how doctoral students are socialized into academic communities and careers. Austin (2002) suggests that the general notion of socialization identity and sense of belonging development are linked to doctoral students' socializing process. The

attachment of the participants to the action research group is a good case in point. These four Asian doctoral students, while suffering a loss of self-esteem, identity and a sense of belonging in a system where they were marginalized, found in the research group what they could not find elsewhere: recovery through peer support, goal setting, gap analysis, and action plans. Even though the small community they created was not a mainstream professional community they might have wanted to join, they seemed to feel at home: they were relaxed; they dared to speak out their dreams and frustrations; they heard stories that related to their past, present, and future; and they saw themselves moving towards professional integration by inviting professors to listen and to talk to them, by hosting academic events, and by joining students' organizations. In other words Austin's (2002) notion of socialization could be strengthened by acknowledging and integrating the relations between immigrant doctoral students and their previous academic communities in their home countries.

Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism and social constructionism helped me to understand the socialization barriers encountered by immigrant Ph. D. students. The term social constructivism is sometimes used interchangeably with social constructionism. While they are both sociological theories of knowledge that consider how social phenomena develop in social contexts, social constructionism refers to the development of phenomena relative to social contexts (a sociological construct) while social constructivism refers to an individual's making meaning of knowledge within a social context (a psychological construct) (Vygotsky 1978).

Social constructivism has been studied by many educational psychologists, who are concerned with its implications for teaching and learning. The most significant bases of a social constructivist theory were laid down by Vygotsky (1978) who held that the human mind is primarily social in nature. Knowledge is cultural and mediated through interaction. Who we are, and what we learn to think and do, result from co-construction. Vygotsky's social constructivism recognizes that influences on individual construction are derived from and preceded by social relationships in a world that is socially, historically, and culturally constructed. Constructivism integrates both the social as well as an individualistic approach that makes self-reflection, meaning-making, autobiography, and hence career, possible (Young & Collin, 2004).

Career represents a unique interaction of self and social experience. This discourse concerns that interaction from the perspective of the individual. It addresses how the individual constructs self over time, and in context, and includes self-definition, self and agency, purpose, and subjectivity; as well as particular forms of construction such as narrative, autobiography, life story, and the subjective career (p. 381).

Peavy (2000) explains that reality is neither discovered nor told, but constructed by investigating ambiguity:

Constructivists do not deny that there is an 'out there' reality. They claim, however, that it cannot be directly grasped. We do not discover symbolic reality; we construct it. What we know can be conveyed or instilled only by diligent perception and linguistic communication. This means that any

guidance given to others necessarily remains tentative and cannot attain the status of truth... Suggestions and advice that the giver intends to be helpful, and solutions that are offered, can be interpreted only as provisional and temporary... From the constructivist view, ambiguity is a pervasive and largely uncontrollable condition of postmodern life. The constructivist claim is that it is fruitful to take ambiguity as a good starting point for the exploration of a problem. Entirely new and local solutions often result from investigating ambiguity. (p. 5)

In understanding and acting upon my academic career pursuits to this point, I would say that critical pedagogy woke up my critical consciousness and liberated my mind from a blind admiration of anything Western to noticing some problems of *Others*, and social constructivism illuminated a path leading to change my undesired reality by working with others; for example, critical pedagogy enabled me to see that losing my first job was not my fault. I was a victim and should not be self-blamed and self-rejected. Instead, I should examine systemic problems that had caused the rejection and exclusion. However, the mere recognition of *Others'* problem did not help with the next step; it is social constructivism that enlightened me as to what to do with the problem. I learned that I had to integrate into a professional community by working with others.

Summary

Cycle Two of this action research study investigated the gaps and coping strategies of four Asian immigrant doctoral students as they undertook an academic career preparation process. The data were collected through a survey

questionnaire, reflections, meeting summaries, and email exchanges, over a four month period of time. The survey questionnaire provided background information that created a starting point for action and discussion. The written reflections proved an efficient means of collecting information, and providing the participants with an opportunity for deep reflection on their taken for granted beliefs and practices which might have partially constituted internal barriers in establishing and pursuing their career goals. At the same time, they became aware that, in order to enter academia, they needed to break down very challenging external obstacles along their career preparation pathways. The data analysis and interpretation were informed by social constructivism in alignment with critical pedagogy. It is important to be aware that immigrant doctoral students should be expected to behave differently in different environments, and the reinforcements an immigrant student group receives for a particular action may be quite different across contexts.

To sum up, the internal and external barriers and successes identified in this chapter follow.

Issue	External barrier	Internal Barrier	Success
University System. Doctoral programs and career service centers did not address the gaps in immigrant students' career preparation.	X		
Culture of disinterest and a discourse and expectation of individualism in the academy results in immigrant students feeling excluded and losing their sense of belonging (as expressed through shame, self-blame and alienation (powerlessness, meaninglessness, normalness and self estrangement).	X	X	

Discovering the support amongst faculty surprised participants and lead to the realization that they did not know what professors did in Canadian universities.		X	X
Immigrant graduate students realized which professional skills and experience they lacked and gained courage to change by seeking opportunities to communicate with local students or other immigrant students instead of living such isolated lives and communicating only with their families and members of their own linguistic communities.		X	X
Feeling of social intolerance was overcome as they worked in action research groups to discuss and overcome problems. The capable peer within the group overturned feelings that they were not alone in their challenges. Specific strategies and role models to guide them replaced emptiness and brought hope.	X	X	X
Personality, age. . . and other factors lead some immigrant graduate students to hopelessness and acceptance of a somber future. Self efficacy theory explains the state that yields great frustrations, miscommunications, embarrassment, and identity misalignments.		X	
Language incompetence was displaced by an awareness of intercultural incompetence, the inability to establish and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal and functional relationship in their academic environments. Being unable to function in the many social situations in their department lead them to retreat from participation.		X	
Process of career exploration leads to a heightened awareness of a new need in their new country and a deeper understanding of their past and future.		X	X
The distinction between acculturation and integration leads to an awareness of the need		X	X

to adapt to Canadian beliefs and practice as an additive practice and not as a replacement (subtractive) for their own cultural identity. Immigrants' professional integration is seen as a one-way assimilation, not a two-way accommodation.			
--	--	--	--

By the end of this cycle of the study, all participants expressed the same wish to continue with the focus group's activities. After having recognized some major gaps which needed to be filled, we were eager to take action to actually "fill in the gaps" - to develop our professional skills in teaching, researching, and community service. This intention led to an extended cycle of action research from one term to one academic year, which is marked as Cycle Three.

Chapter Five

Cycle Three: Experiencing Barriers and Successes in Career Preparation with Others

Setting

Phase one: Preparing for change

Inspired by the first action research group's strong desire to continue with their career preparation, I started planning for a new cycle of the study for the following spring and summer. In the ethics review application, with passion for taking our own life into control and excitement over an actual action for creating our own future, I explained from an institutional perspective why it was time to examine this issue.

According to a recent informal release by the University, approximately 20% of the total graduate student populations are international graduate students. Many of them, especially those with or those seeking landed immigrant status, pursue Canadian education as a means of integrating into mainstream society, and developing a 'more assured' way towards a professional career in North America.

While universities continue to admit international doctoral students with promising academic potential, collect their fees, and help them graduate, they take little responsibility for preparing them for career success within the academy. Despite good grades, academic awards, and completion of their degrees, many of these students struggle to acquire the insider knowledge necessary for career attainment. What higher education has not done is to move far enough away from the institutionalized behavior of exclusion, to recognize this impact. "Colored students continue to suffer neglect, disinterest, misguidance, and passive hostilities of educators and educational systems that just don't understand" (Soto, 1999). As a result, they may never acquire what they need in order to achieve their dream of becoming academics in Canada. (C, Shi, Ethics review application, 2007)

After the end of Cycle Two, my supervisor and I collaboratively made several presentations on this cycle of the study. In our article, the research need of

moving from observing to acting is approached and implied from the students' perspective:

From working on course assignments, researching and teaching assistant work, to adapting to Canadian graduate studies and life, international Ph.D. students have very little time left to focus on anything else. For many of them, looking for a job and taking the next step into a career in the Canadian professional sector can be quite a challenging endeavor. The frustrations emerging most consistently from this experience include: the tensions in adapting to the values embodied in higher education, the ambiguous messages received about priorities in the academy, a significant mismatch between the training received and what the jobs require, lack of confidence in one's expertise and developmental capacity, and disillusion in graduate studies, professional career, and societal recognition. (Bilash & Shi, 2007)

Thus, the third cycle of the study was a continuation of direction from the previous cycle. I again intended to lead the group to take action in our career development. Having already discovered the gaps between students' career goals and the graduate programs of studies, and some working strategies for filling in each of the two major gaps we had identified, I designed an academic year-long action plan (Appendix B) for the next research group to begin. I named the action plan the "Dare to Thrive" (²) plan for inspiring immigrant doctoral students to take professional initiative and responsibility for their own education and career.

The activities were organized around five key components of academic career preparation: 1) tough questions about why we are here; 2) joining a discipline or profession; 3) establishing expertise; 4) developing networks and relationships; and 5) becoming a professional. The proposed activities included workshops, mentoring, hands-on experiences, working group discussions, and conferences designed to help the participants create and pursue a professional development path that was appropriate for their particular career aspirations,

disciplinary contexts, cross-cultural experiences and stages in their graduate programs. The plan emphasized individuals' initiatives and responsibilities in integrating career preparation into their graduate studies, to complement their specialized training in degree programs.

The significance of the activities proposed in this cycle was threefold. First, it would provide insight into the current effectiveness of the university's graduate programs in preparing international Ph.D. students for a promising professional career. Second, it would promote international Ph.D. students to take professional responsibility for their own education, recognizing and capitalizing on the available supportive resources. Third, by working collaboratively with peers to develop and act on a strategic plan that addresses the gap between their academic studies and the needs within the job markets, international Ph.D. students' professional development would be greatly enhanced.

Phase two: Tensions in implementing the academic career preparation plan

After the action plan was completed, I took it to the campus international student service centre and asked for permission to use its facilities for the research group's meetings. After several exchanges, including a meeting involving my supervisor who knew some of them from previous projects, those in charge were very interested in the proposal, and even offered to join in. Later I realized that their welcoming attitude and actual participation may have been influenced by social networking (of my supervisor) and that her presence made me feel empowered. Still later I began to see how she was (and had been) acting as a

cultural broker with her insider knowledge of both the challenges faced by immigrant graduate students and the university's infrastructure.

A name for the forming group was suggested - International Graduate Student Career Club (IGSCC), and later adopted. To my happy surprise, the on-line participant recruitment advertisement attracted the attention of a graduate career advisor from the campus student career service centre, who also offered to participate. Very soon, nine immigrant Ph.D. students, from various disciplines and cultural backgrounds, including the four participants from Cycle Two, in addition to two student support staff, constituted the new action research group.

The participation of the two student support staff, Jacquie and Luke, were especially encouraging, as my field notes revealed after the first monthly meeting:

As for the working relationship among me, Jacquie and Luke, it was just amazing in our first workshop. Luke was so eager to reach out to know, to understand, and to help us. Jacquie is such a well-organized person. She never puts herself just in a facilitation provider position. She cared; she identified problems, initiated questions, and offered her suggestions.

It is truly amazing that these two representatives from the university are using their heart to work, not just their brains. They can not only provide unique insights and support us in our career development, but also bring to the research many other invaluable contributions, such as their very caring attitude, cooperative spirit, willingness to learn, and effective working strategies. When I left the workshop I felt warm, being empowered, excited, and confident in leading this group to a greater success I had never imagined could be possible. (C, Shi, Field notes, October 13, 2007)

Unexpectedly, these two insider experts' intensive involvement, in addition to the larger number of participants from more diverse linguistic, geographic and disciplinary backgrounds, had shaped this study into a different direction - from taking action in advancing professional development, to a further exploration of barriers experienced on campus in their career development.

This shift of focus began with an unexpected difference of opinion about the university's career support in our first meeting. Although I had already planned and prepared five activities aimed at helping the participants explore their career goals and identify their strengths and weaknesses in achieving their goals, none of these activity plans had a chance to be implemented because a simple warm-up question had become surprisingly complicated and completely changed the intended direction. I recorded after this meeting:

When I asked "How supportive do you think your programs and the available supportive organizations for your professional career preparation?" one participant said none. I could tell that it was difficult for the graduate career advisor to accept this statement. The international student advisor also seemed eager to understand why there was such an opinion. The career advisor cut into the students' discussion and spent a long time in introducing all the supports the career center has provided.

I realized a great learning opportunity was emerging from both sides - the international graduate students and the institution. So I asked the following question: "I believe we all know about the career center and its services, why have we ignored it and haven't utilized it? What are the obstacles in taking advantage of these supports?" I guided the student participants to think from the perspectives of language difficulties, cultural barriers, social factors, personal reasons, and discriminations if there is any. (C, Shi, Field notes, October 13, 2007)

While the student participants were thinking and writing about this question, the two staff participants were also eager to hear the answer. The day before the following month's meeting, I received an email from them asking me to direct the students' discussion towards articulating "why they don't think the services are for them" so that the student career advisor could "have an opportunity to present how they might use the services." This email also explicitly indicated that the university staff were very concerned about the issues unique to international students and were examining if the career service center had taken

all variables into consideration in providing their services to international students. They wanted to know from the immigrant students' perspective, how any gaps might be addressed.

As a result the next meeting focused on getting to know the services provided by the career center. The career advisor played a major role in guiding the discussions and the meeting ended with a visit to the career center led by the advisor.

Two weeks later, I received an email from Nick, a participant who had joined the research during the previous cycle of the study.

What I am trying to do is becoming part of this society whatever the "society" I say is small, such as a student association. I may be becoming part of the "society" these days. Or maybe, I have not yet been recognized part of them. I am not sure about that. But, no matter what, I feel lonely doing it, or what it takes me to get involved in their society, I have to overcome this difficulty. It is a really tough situation. Sometimes, I feel I want to run away. In other times, I want to give it up. (Nick)

Nick's depressed mood in addition to his passive participation in the research group's activities, to me, did not seem to be relevant to the spirit of the research team, which, guided by the caring staff, was busily exploring why we did not utilize the university's services. At this moment, I began to feel like the career services were inadequate and the staff members became a bit defensive in certain ways and to certain student participants' needs. Despite their good intentions, I thought that the staff members did not show a full understanding of the situation of the students. I also thought that the situation was much more complicated than just encouraging students to make use of the services that were available.

Nick's withdrawal from the career club activities struck me hard. I replied to him the following day:

I can't help thinking about the feelings revealed in your last letter such as "loneliness", "tough", "give up", and "run away". I feel painful actually because I have experienced the same or worse feelings than yours. That's why we are working together.

... Just as you have been doing, I am also in the process of working towards my career goal. I don't know what the future will be. But I never lose heart. I learned from my past experience that we have to construct our own pathway which is right beneath our feet. We need to be wise with strong willpower in order to decide in which direction we should make our next step. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, November 28, 2007)

Indeed, "strong willpower" was needed to "construct our own pathway".

Two months had passed since this cycle of the study had begun. Although I had reminded the participants a few times of the action plan waiting to be implemented, there was no response from either the students or the staff participants.

This change of focus of the research may be explained in three ways. One was that, with the two staff members actively involved, I felt intimidated and incompetent in continuing to act as a group leader or as the role model that I discovered I had been in the second cycle of the study. The other reason was that most new participants in this group had stronger personalities, more successful experiences, a more optimistic attitude, and better preparation for careers than the participants in the previous cycle. Further, many were from disciplines with greater job opportunities, such as science and engineering, as opposed to those in the social sciences and humanities. Since this action plan was written based on the previous study, it was proving to be inadequate for the second group to use. It

became apparent that I was no longer able to function as a “more capable peer” (Vygotsky, 1978) in these academic career preparation activities.

The following month’s meeting again focused on our experiences in using the services provided by the university in addition to sharing our career preparation experiences. The career preparation needs identified in this meeting were to develop intercultural competence and social skills, rather than gain professional knowledge and skills. So the following month’s self-directed activity was suggested by a staff participant: “Could you double your current daily social conversational time with native speakers? For example, if your average talking time with native speakers is 2 minutes a day before, could you extend it to 4 minutes a day? Please also make a record on how hard it is for you? What are the obstacles? What are you going to do to overcome the obstacles?”

This activity, honestly speaking, shocked me. I believed that the homework activity was intended to meet a common need of all student participants. But it definitely was not what I needed. At that time, I probably spoke English every minute of a day, for I had been living with my English-speaking fiancé and had been teaching an undergraduate curriculum course at the university.

I felt this group work, instead of promoting a steady change in my academic career preparation process, had actually intimidated me from advancing. Moreover, Nick’s last email and resulting withdrawal from the group activities had made me feel guilty. I felt as if I had disappointed him for not being able to implement the action plan. I knew he, like me, could not afford an unnecessarily

longer wait, and needed to experience a few minor successes so as to stay resilient in our career pursuit.

By the time the second term began, it became apparent that it would be impossible for the research group to move forward together by following my pre-determined career development plan. I consulted with my supervisor about the issue, and she agreed that I changed the research objective from finding out effective coping strategies to further exploration of barriers and successes in career preparation.

The tension caused by the conflicting needs of the research work between the others and me, showed the nature of action research - the action plan should be based on participants' emerging needs and should be planned together. Reason and Bradbury (2001) understand this as a dialogue between knowledge and action, an interactive inquiry process that balances problem solving action implemented in a collaborative context with data-driven collaborative analysis or research to understand underlying causes enabling future predictions about personal and organizational change.

Research Question and the Participants

The modified researcher question became: what are the experienced or anticipated barriers in immigrant doctoral students' academic career preparation process?

There are nine participants including me. The demographic characteristic variables include gender, age, nationality, and primary employment in home countries. The five females and four males ranged in age from early 20s to 40s

and came from Iran, Japan, Korea, Peoples' Republic of China, and Russia. The participants' primary occupations in their home countries prior to entering their doctoral programs were physiotherapist, assistant professors, researcher, engineer, engineer designer and technical manager. Because most of the data in this chapter has been collected anonymously, I can not provide more details about each participant. Where authorship is known pseudonyms has been used; otherwise "anonymous" is given.

In terms of education status, all participants' official university enrolment status was full-time and all were in the mid- or late stage of their Ph.D. programs from second to fifth year. All had completed their course work. Almost everyone worked in different subject fields including business, chemistry, medicine, engineering, agriculture, arts, and education. The driving force that led the participants to pursue a Ph.D. program was unanimously to become a teaching and researching professional in the Canadian or U.S. academia.

Data Collection and Analysis

The participants were introduced to the study through the E-newsletters of the Graduate Student Association and the university's international student service centre. Nine including me enrolled in the eight-month program after an orientation meeting.

At the beginning of the project the immigrant Ph.D. student participants were asked to complete the survey 'piloted' in the previous cycle of the study (Appendix A). Participants were also asked to participate in the semi-structured monthly peer-support professional development program activities (Appendix B),

which were designed to introduce them to the wide range of academic career requirements and to support those who were engaging in activities to prepare for academic careers in the North American context. After every monthly activity, the participants were asked to fill in an activity evaluation form including a self-assessment on the progress they were making as a result of participating in the activities (Appendix C). All these forms were anonymous. Between each meeting, I communicated with the participants either through face to face meetings or email. Some of the emails contained my reflections on the research group's activities and progress and were aimed at enhancing the group's understanding of their professional preparation process (for example, Appendix D). These were unplanned data sources but revealed some important themes. At the end of each term, participants provided a perception of their professional change by completing an open ended reflection (Appendix E). When the research was completed, a post-research interview questionnaire was sent and conducted online (Appendix F). I, as both a researcher and a peer leader, wrote field notes outlining my impressions of events during the academic year-long project.

The data analysis was a difficult task to perform with the change of the research question, the length of time, richness of data, and its varieties of sources. However, with the skills learned by thematic coding during the previous cycle of data, and with an eagerness to find the themes, after numerous hours of hard work over a period of three months, a thematic classification system gradually emerged. The same goal was aimed at achieving theme coding: mutually exclusive, exhaustive, and meaningful (Krippendorff, 1980).

Another challenge came from my unstable mood affected by the ups and downs in my personal academic career preparation experience. When my situation was positive, my interpreting approach was overly-optimistic and overlooked important difficulties. When I suffered from job loss and negative course evaluations, I became too depressed to work on the data analysis.

The analysis disclosed some significant external and internal barriers experienced by the participating immigrant doctoral students on campus. The analysis and interpretation of these data were informed mainly by social ecological theory.

Findings and Discussion

The barriers experienced and perceived by the immigrant doctoral student participants in preparing for an academic career are categorized into external and internal barriers. As stated in Chapter Two, an external barrier in this study, refers to systemic and institutional barriers that stand in the way of immigrant doctoral students in their academic career preparation. External barriers experienced by the participants are summarized into four areas: 1) barriers in adapting to doctoral programs of studies; 2) barriers in bridging gaps in professional knowledge and skills; 3) barriers in socialization to an academic profession; and 4) barriers in utilizing the university's career support services. Three internal barriers defined in Chapter Two were also identified: 1) career immaturity; 2) conflicting academic cultural values and norms; and 3) stress of acculturation.

External barriers and successes in academic career preparation

Adapting to doctoral programs of studie.

The knowledge and understanding about academic study include: knowing how to get the information the students need, knowing the milestones they must achieve and how to plan to achieve them, and knowing how to plan on accommodating this in a given time frame.

In terms of accessing degree requirement information, based on the survey results, all the participants thought that the information on degree requirements in their fields were easily accessible and most thought the information was clear. Most thought faculty and staff were well-informed about degree requirements although one said that some staff lacked specific knowledge

In terms of participating in the designing of an individualized program of studies, nearly half of the research group did not feel that they could influence the design of their own program of studies; half of the respondents said they had some input into the design of their individual programs of studies; for example, one participant stated, "If I insisted on my interest, my supervisor would give me permission in terms of courses chosen." (Anonymous)

In terms of gaining necessary academic knowledge and skills, all the responses focused on learning in the area of research, which was obviously affected by the prominent feature of this research-centered university. Some participants expressed satisfaction with their learning of necessary academic knowledge and skills:

The two practical courses (I took 12 course in total) have prepared me not only conceptually and intellectually but also with some necessary

knowledge and skills which are essential in building confidence and ensuring satisfactory performance and outcome in my later teaching. (Cathy)

Some, on the contrary, felt very frustrated especially for not having learned academic writing skills which led to rejection or failure of submission for publication, which directly related to their qualification as candidates in applying for entering academia.

I knew that I still did not know how to write a paper. At this age, no one helped me write a paper. I have to write on my own ... I have a lot of difficulties in surviving the Canadian academia ... I have been trying to write another paper in English, but this has not been realized yet. Again, I still do not know how to write a professional paper ... I feel I lost these 6 months that I have spent on the two papers. (Nick)

Nick is not alone in experiencing difficulties in academic writing and publication. One of the most significant obstacles identified in early stages of overseas study involves adapting to the use of a second language in an academic setting (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006; Scheyvens et al., 2003). Some other researchers focus on international doctoral students' difficulties at advanced level of research writing. Casanave and Hubbard (1992) suggest that more research needs to be done. Allison, Cooley, Lewkowicz, and Nunan (1998) and Dong (1998) all identify the writing needs of international students at advanced levels and echo the view that this is an area that needs to be researched. Hyland (2001, 2002) talks about identity and voice in writing. Myers (2001) addresses the missing place of personal views in writing. Thomson (2001) emphasizes the important skill of interaction while arguing in academic writing. Elbow (1991, 1995) challenges conventional notions of academic writing by introducing non-academic factors when assessing students, for example, socio-cultural factors that disturb academic

performance. Other linguistic issues identified in the literature include knowledge of the academic register and the disciplinary discourse of specific fields of study (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Gee, 2004), access to language support that is subject-specific (Balcom & Kozar, 1994), and cultural norms of language usage (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2006). In short, these authors strive for understanding international students' struggle to conform to the changed academy and seek ways to help them with academic writing. In Nick's case, he did not get the writing support he needed. Instead he tried to work it out single-handedly. This lonely struggle may be caused by a lack of support from the university or a cultural barrier that immigrant or international students could not break down even though the support was provided and known to the students. Happily the university in question now has a writing centre that could assist Nick if he knew about it and had the courage to ask for assistance.

As for the provision of learning resources, the Likert scale results of the survey described in a bit more detail in Chapter Four reveal that most participants thought they were sufficient. Some, however, expressed disappointment at the qualities of both the facilities and the facilitation.

Due to the reputation of the university and comparing it to the experience that I had back home my expectation was much higher than what I faced with so far. This is especially true considering the capacity and the quality of the work that I see in my department. (Mohsen)

Unfortunately, I felt that by continuing my program I lose many things and will gain a little. The profit and cost (it is just not money but the whole effects in your life impacts) is the dominating factor ... I felt that I am going to put lots of time and efforts and money to get a degree that makes me just suitable for very competitive job market for academia. We do not have a very well established lab and a well known supervisor and there is not much that I can do in changing the condition. To enter industry, it

would be another headache because of being over qualified. ... Plus having a PhD will limit my choices dramatically, and considering the perspective of my condition and my classmates, I feel switching to MSc will change my initial condition and creates some opportunities for me to either join industry ... I might start a PhD program somewhere else, but probably at the university with much higher reputation and at a more established lab and with a semi well-known professor ... I don't see any positive change for myself to get a PhD in Canada. (Mohamed)

Mohamed's frustrations and future considerations all revolved around a key question: how to choose a program of studies that can best serve personal career purposes? This concern echoes Golde and Dore's (2001) claim as mentioned earlier: "The training doctoral students receive is not what they want, nor does it prepare them for the jobs they take" (p. 5). In the same way, Mohamed's words proved Nagle et al.'s (2004) assertion: "Job stress was the number one concern of graduate students considering entry into academia" (p. 321).

In terms of the future employment situation of the students such as Mohamed, Bandura (1986) proposes that expectations for future action are based upon past experiences. Immigrant doctoral students develop the professional skills needed for their future professional roles during their doctoral training. Their training experiences serve as exemplars for future expectations of success the students encounter as faculty. The implication here is that a poorly prepared applicant with inadequate professional knowledge, skills and attitude will probably experience frustrations and failures when seeking career entry and maintenance in the workplace.

Bridging gaps in professional knowledge and skills

An academic faculty position in Canada usually includes three major types of duties or responsibilities: teaching, researching and community service. Therefore, the barriers experienced by the participants in their academic career preparation have been thematized within this framework.

Teaching

According to the eight out of nine survey responses received, all the participants agreed on the importance of learning teaching skills and all had interest in having teaching experiences during the period of their program of studies. The survey content focused on students' obtaining teaching opportunities, gaining basic teaching skills, and utilizing the university's teaching services.

Half of the respondent group reported that they once held a teaching appointment or assistantship while in their Ph.D. program. The few participants who had had teaching opportunities reported that they had learned important teaching skills more through teaching itself than through taking courses about teaching.

Although some important teaching skills are mainly learned by self-taught through teaching, since three teaching applications were approved by the department as a form of financial support/scholarship, I give most credits for this learning opportunity to the program of studies. (Cathy)

My supervisor was the key person who had arranged my first teaching of undergraduate students. Since this job assignment happened less than one year after I had been fired from another teaching job, and she knew that experience very well, I was extremely excited at this news, but meanwhile, very puzzled. I recorded this perplexity:

At the end of my first year of study, my supervisor asked me if I would like to co-teach a second language curriculum course. The unexpected opportunity came so suddenly and looked too good to be true. How could I be qualified to teach Canadian pre-service teachers since I was regarded as unqualified to teach my native language in a public school due to inadequate English by Education evaluators? Why did my supervisor trust me in doing such important work since she knew very well that I had been fired before? What would I teach and how would I teach these pre-service teachers? (C, Shi, Reflection, August 11, 2006)

With excitement and nervousness, I spent the following three months in intensive full-time preparation, including the completion of two related courses. This co-teaching task was completed with a strong sense of accomplishment and confidence.

The success of the co-teaching experience meant more. It gave me a sense of belonging although this step was still clumsy, and filled with a little uncertainty, un-preparedness and over-cautiousness. But I had crossed the boundary from a student in Canada to a teacher in Canada. It was not a returning to a teaching field where I had been actively involved in for the past 19 years. It was something brand new, in a foreign environment, for foreign students, transmitting foreign concepts, using foreign techniques, with foreign colleagues, towards foreign goals. But they were not totally 'foreign' this time because I was included which meant we were not foreign to each other anymore. Rather than continually being perceived as an outsider, I authorized myself the position of a professional member in a mainstream academic community. This sense of belonging was associated with fundamental human needs: security, comfort, autonomy, power, and self-actualization. Acceptance enabled me to re-establish my ambition of asserting myself as a contributor in the realm of teaching. (C, Shi, Course Work)

My supervisor had shown her trust and strong support throughout this teaching process, which led to an initial success. After having made this crucial first step, further development towards my ultimate career goal became possible.

However, not every participant in Cycle Three had obtained a teaching opportunity. The majority (six out of eight) had never been a primary course instructor or taught any courses developed by them. Those who did not have

teaching experience explained that there was no opportunity to do so because they had been granted a research assistantship or held a sizeable scholarship. Some also explained that having graduate students teach was not a common practice in their departments.

The majority of the participants never had the opportunity to teach as a primary instructor, nor did they have the occasion to develop basic university teaching skills such as curriculum development, lecturing, leading discussions, writing examinations, creating and/or grading assignments. One given reason for not having had such teaching experience was a lack of confidence:

I think in order to have more teaching experiences I need to teach as a primary instructor, rather than just as a TA. But still I am not comfortable to do so. (Nick).

While the goal of doctoral studies is gaining advanced content knowledge and research skill training, it is also founded on the understanding (perhaps even assumption) that the knowledge, skills and paradigms are being built on a foundation developed in undergraduate levels of study. The problem is that immigrant doctoral students did not necessarily acquire or experience equivalent approaches to undergraduate education in their home countries, thus creating a large gap between what they learned in their undergraduate program (beyond the content were the taken for granted values, habits, patterns and structures such as student-teacher relationships, question-answer strategies, use of the textbook, assignment design and assessment strategies, classroom entry-exit protocols) and what they needed to pursue graduate studies in Canada (initially good grades, a high TOEFL score, exemplary letters of reference and all that obtaining a student

or immigrant visa entailed; then overcoming the shock that the 'system' was different and then how the system functioned and their role within it). This gap is usually unaddressed by graduate programs of studies and possibly assumed to become filled. This lack of necessary socio-pedagogical academic and professional knowledge and skills directly affects immigrant students' confidence in even initiating an application for a teaching position.

Having not acquired basic North American teaching skills, the participants also failed to develop an area of expertise in teaching. The reasons reported include lack of time, practice and guidance, no opportunity, no role models in their particular areas, and no funding. One participant said learning teaching skills was not part of the department's expectations, "because it is not a routine in our department for students to design and develop a course" (Anonymous). One participant said that although he had a TA (teaching assistant) position, this assignment did not help him gain confidence in teaching.

I have not had experience of being a main instructor for any courses. TA works that I have done were just assisting the courses. I do not have confidence in speaking English for 50 to 80 minutes without break.
(Anonymous)

In terms of utilizing university teaching services, most participants took advantage of this service by claiming that it helped them understand teaching and learning. Some chose it because it was mandatory by their departments when applying for any teaching assistant positions. One who did not use this service explained that he was not ready for it yet.

... in order to participate in that program, I had to prepare [a] talk or lecture. I did not feel up to the making of a "mock" lecture. (Anonymous)

Researching

In terms of the perceived usefulness of their training in basic researching skills such as grant application, research design and sample selection, measurement, qualitative and quantitative methods in survey research design, data collection and analysis, and result presentation, most of the participants responded “good” except one who had not received any training – “I have learned it by myself.” (Anonymous)

Most conducted research in collaboration with one or more faculty members. However, one participant felt isolation in his research work.

... the academic contacts with the students are not so much and looks like people are doing research in kind of an isolated way. (Anonymous)

These quotes reveal learning relationships between students and faculty members. Those who have opportunities of cooperation and collaboration with others feel satisfied and appreciate being included. The feeling of belonging to part of something bigger and more hopeful, and being connected in a meaningful way may lead to more committed participation with others in creating something important to them, as some researchers (Ricks, Charlesworth, Bellefeuille, & Field, 1999) have claimed.

Regarding other aspects of research, most participants expressed satisfaction. Concerning funding, most had received more or less. Half of the group assisted in writing a grant proposal. None, except one, published as a sole author although half of the group published as a co-author. All had attended at least one academic conference and presented a paper or poster session at least at

one academic conference. Most received funding to pay for expenses related to attending an academic conference. Most had developed an area of expertise in researching and demonstrated this expertise to others. In formulating a research topic, most participants expressed that they had received adequate faculty guidance in choosing research topics. Support from faculty members has been recognized as a significant factor for students' success in some research. Although the data did not reveal an issue, it is important to be aware that cultural differences may give rise to different expectations of international students' supervision.

Community Service

In terms of the usefulness of training in community services skills such as understanding, conducting or reflecting on the importance of community service, the Likert scale survey results reported half of the responses as "Good" or "Very good". The other half of the research group had less satisfactory experiences; for example, one participant noted:

I feel kind of isolated as the people in our field almost do not exist in our department and also we are not linked to the governmental or industrial firms. (Anonymous)

For professional immigrant doctoral students, learning to function as a social member by serving campus communities is an essential way to learn to adapt eventually to their host country's social reality. However, gaps exist in bridging students through this needed integration process.

To compare the participants' responses on their preparation of professional skills including teaching, researching, and community service with some related

literature, I noticed that the participants shared similar experiences with others. In a study of 187 doctoral students at six American universities, Golde (1997) found that 90% felt prepared to conduct research, whereas only 63% felt prepared to teach undergraduates, 33% to teach graduate students, 30% to advise undergraduates, 26% to advise graduate students, 38% to obtain research funding, and 19% to participate in university governance and service. Similarly, Bikos and Furry (1999) did not find any significant gains in performance accomplishment in career decision-making of international graduate students.

Some researchers have explored what might have caused insignificant gains. Olaniran (1999) investigated the effectiveness of a workshop designed to prepare newly appointed international graduate students for teaching positions. The author concluded that a 'one size fits all' approach was inadequate in addressing the unique needs of international students and that cultural adaptation needed to be included as a focal point. Ruwe and Al-Wazedi (2003) explored issues associated with international graduate students' first teaching experiences. They stressed that a strong mentoring relationship between students and their advisors is critical to promoting successful teaching experiences. Wanta (2003) identified two prominent issues that need to be addressed: increasing international students' confidence in using their second language and the promotion of initiatives for faculty members to foster mentorship with graduate teaching assistants. Zamel (1995) examined the frustrations involved in teaching and learning English and the need to help graduate students and faculty to see that to lack English proficiency did not mean being deficient in intelligence.

The reviewed literature raises new questions about what immigrant doctoral students expect from their Canadian academic programs and whether or not their expectations have been met. The students' needs and satisfactions seem to be rarely understood from their perspectives. McLean and Ransom (2005) understood this phenomenon as cultural imperialism:

With increasing commodification of the higher education sector, concern about the language and academic skills of international students is of political and economic as well as pedagogical concern. What is not always acknowledged is the culturally-imperialistic way in which concerns about language and academic skills of international students are often considered. (p. 2)

A consequence of this conception, according to these authors, is that "in most universities, it is expected that international students perform in and are assessed against the conventions of the host country's educational values and practices; it is further assumed that students will know and understand these" (p. 2). This deficit approach (Smart, Davis, Volet, & Milne, 1998) implies that any 'problem' is the student's, it is the role of academics to 'correct' the problem and it is the student's responsibility to 'adjust'.

Both Lawrence (2001) and McInnis (2003) recognized that part of the responsibility for this 'problem' is a lack of faculty and institutional understanding of an increasingly diverse student population and the range of educational backgrounds and experiences that they bring. Lawrence (2001)

cautioned that many academics limit themselves to ‘pure’ teaching rather than a ‘value-added’ style of teaching (p 4).

Socialization to academic profession

Allatt (1993) identifies two forms of social capital: social networks and sociability. Social networks provide support and access to resources. They consist of contacts and group memberships based on social exchange, obligations and shared identities, and are sustained through “the unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed” (Allatt, 1993, p. 143).

Networking skills are one of the most essential and difficult soft skills for immigrant students to acquire. Most participants in Cycle Three claimed that they knew the important professional organizations in their field through publications, discussions with classmates or with professors, conferences, reading academic journals. All had considered joining professional organizations. All planned to attend professional association conferences. However, almost none participated actively in a professional network. The reasons chosen from the provided options in the survey question include: being new to Canada, being short of time, lacking opportunity, awareness, and confidence, and being afraid to make mistakes. Yun’s experience is representative: she totally ignored networking while engaging in her course study.

I have been so involved in academic studying for the first two years and neglected the other aspects in PhD programs, such as communication skills, networking building and social activities. (Yun)

With regard to the usefulness of the received training in professional networking skills including tools and techniques, rules, resources, references, and maintaining individual communication style, half of the research group received no training. The obstacles that the students identified in a networking role-play activity, according to a monthly meeting summary, included feeling intimidated, acting too abruptly, being unfocused on getting enough information on the job itself, being uncomfortable in interrupting others' conversations, feeling difficulty and discomfort in breaking up an already formed group, and not knowing how to end a conversation appropriately.

The barriers experienced in networking are not only the result of a lack of soft skills. Systemic barriers directly relate to networking as well, which means even though the immigrant students obtain the knowledge and the skills of networking, they may still be excluded from a desired professional community. The networked relations between people and the power embedded are often taken for granted by the dominant group.

For many professional immigrants, social networking plays the crucial role of providing new knowledge. Immigrants from certain cultures which value academic and professional skills over human connections may assume that their focus should be on academic success or upgrading hard skills rather than on actively developing relationships, or accumulating social capital and hence cultural capital.

Chinese students tend to stay in their own circle, reading Chinese websites only; they tend to think that going to the pub with peer students is a waste of time. As a result, communication skills are poor and there are no understandings toward western cultures. With poor communication skills,

it is of course difficult to get a decent job and to gain confidence for career. (Yun)

Situated in a strange academic, social, cultural and professional environment, professional immigrants need to know who has what opportunities, and building a social network is vital for them to better their economic position. However, it is a huge challenge for them to make all the necessary connections with all the right people and become trusted and accepted. If professional immigrants do not have the opportunity to know those who already hold professional jobs, or are educated in workplace culture, they are excluded without even having the chance to show that they can do the work, or are fired because of an ill or inappropriate fit.

Weidman, Twale and Stein (2001) defined graduate student socialization as “the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills” (p. 3). Berry (2002) named this type of integrating process academic acculturation. Austin (2002) suggested that Ph.D. students’ socialization process include the following important aspects: “observing, listening, and interacting with faculty, interacting with peers, and interacting with family and personal friends” (p. 104). Austin (2002) argued that although some students have faculty mentors who guide them carefully through the process, most lack systematic professional development opportunities, obtain minimal feedback and mentoring from faculty, and experience few opportunities for guided reflection.

Barriers in academic acculturation are often regarded as harder to break down than the barriers experienced in academic adaptation in the early stage of immigrant doctoral students' studies. The assumption is that the socializing process of immigrant Ph.D. students requires more soft skills which are difficult to be transferred to a new academic environment. This adjustment from their educational experiences in their homelands to the largely different educational practice here in Canada can be a long, painful and devastating process. Carson (1998) believed that "beneath the happy gala of ethnic and cultural diversity, there may be an invisible torrent of misconceptions, misrepresentations and misunderstandings both on a day-to-day life basis and at deeper intercultural and intercivilizational levels, which may jeopardize a globalized higher education" (p. 1).

Lacking familiarity with the local cultural environment means that common activities such as taking the bus or paying bills become stressful activities. Scheyvens et al. (2003) point out that the process of adjusting to a new culture is particularly difficult for females, who are expected to organize their household in addition to assuming their scholarly responsibilities. Similar, although the same number of women and men receive a doctoral degree, only 15-20% of tenured positions are held by women as Gannon (2007) revealed in a study in life sciences. Overall, the proportion of females in the higher ranks of academia is alarmingly small (e.g. Martinez, Botos, Dohoney, Kolla, Olivera, Qiu, Rayasam, Stavreva, & Cohen-Fix, 2007; Nelson, 2005). Since these studies

focused on mainstream academics, it is not hard to imagine how difficult it could be for female immigrant doctoral students to achieve this professional excellence.

Moreover, cultural differences are reported to interfere with the establishment of meaningful social relations with local colleagues (Huang & Klinger, 2006). This is significant because contact with local peers has been identified as a significant indicator of international graduate students' satisfaction with their program (Perrucci & Hu, 1995). The Asian immigrant doctoral students in Bilash and Shi's research (2007) recognized the same need: "There is a need to adapt to the host country's belief system and practices" (p. 15), and the adaptation process could be very confusing and painful. "As newcomers influenced by one's home country's political system and social beliefs, Asian immigrant students may suffer a feeling of shame by secretly blaming themselves for their initial incapability, rather than examining the other sources of their sufferings or seeking outside support" (p. 15).

Nevertheless, an individual is not totally powerless, and does not have to be passive. Henkel (2000) introduced an individualistic approach, a route that can lead to an academic career. Henkel highlighted how, in many cases it might be up to the individual to define the route which is best suited to him or her. However, Berry (2002) argued that integration needs to be facilitated "when the dominant society has an open and inclusive orientation toward cultural diversity" (p. 24). Berry implied that supporting immigrant doctoral students requires the nurturing of a culture which values diversity. To construct a nurturing environment, everyone related needs to be involved such as administrators, faculties, and

communities. Although the diverse composition of the student body brings many challenges, they are also opportunities to educators.

Utilizing the university's career support services

The barriers in utilizing the university's career support services are identified in four areas: in career counseling, in receiving advice about employment opportunities, in utilizing available resources, and in meeting special needs.

In this cycle of the study the usefulness of the training in career counselling and job search explored goal-setting; gap recognition between job requirements and current knowledge, skills and attitude; strategies in filling in the gap; and confidence. Half of the responding group thought the overall service was good. The other half ranked the statements as "poor". One pointed out the problem of real world connection and applicability:

I think that the attention to the academic side of that plus the fact that the research group that I am working with is not very connected to industry makes a gap here. Also in the PhD, the focus is on the stuff that is not necessarily applicable in the routine procedures of the companies.
(Mohamed)

In terms of receiving advice about employment opportunities, about half of the group received career counselling from their departments officially and unofficially, as well as from friends or colleagues, campus career service center's workshops, or career consultants. The other half of the responding group said they had no opportunity to receive advice about employment opportunities inside academia.

As for job hunting, my department does not offer a lot of training sessions officially as to how to pursue professional career. But, if you ask them, they may be helpful. (Anonymous)

As for the advice about employment opportunities outside academia, the majority claimed that they did not receive any. Some explained:

I haven't thought of going outside academia for advice. (Yun)

There was no opportunity. (Emmy)

Effectively utilizing the university's career support services, especially those provided by the career centre did not become a question until all the participants met for the first meeting. As has already been explained in the previous chapter, at that meeting, when each student participant was asked to identify their obstacles in career preparation, the first one said there was no support. This response was soon echoed by some other participants. The career advisor was understandably surprised at this response. Through further discussions after the first meeting, the student participants' feedback indicated their special needs were not respected and met.

In this study, special needs of immigrant doctoral students refer to whether or not their contexts, background and unique contexts are fully recognized and facilitated, whether or not their ambition for a professional career is identified and promoted. Most participants ranked the special service low considering factors such as international tuition fees, family expenses, and the low salary of research assistants.

All said they did not fully utilize the available resources for their career preparation; the main reason was a shortage of time.

One expressed ignorance of eligibility in obtaining support: "... I thought it was absolutely my responsibility; I didn't know that I could seek help." (Mia)

Most participants complained that the resources and services were not aimed at meeting their special needs.

The services provided are aimed at Canadian students, not at international students. There are no advising services for international students. (Emmy)

The training that I had was aimed at Canadians. I am wondering how it works for non- Canadians. (Anonymous)

Some said they had financial difficulties in being charged for career support.

There were no free consulting services that I could attend and I did not want to pay for such kind of services at this moment. (Mohamed)

In short, most participants said that they had no access to supportive resources that were culturally sensitive, integrative and transmittable enough to market their expertise and skills after graduation.

These data raised an important concern about Canadian universities recognition of international students' particular challenges. In many western countries, public funding for higher education institutes has been decreased, thus leaving administrators to seek alternative forms of revenue. Full fee-paying international students have provided one attractive source of revenue, especially when they pay a foreign student fee differential. The importance of international graduate students to the financial maintenance of western institutions is evidenced by the continual increase in the number of students admitted into such programs (Katz, 2006). Western universities have promoted international enrollment as a business solution to their financial difficulties (e.g. Ryan & Zuber-Skerritt, 1999).

Although many universities have created some level of support, “all too often, support for international students seems to exist outside the main academic mission of the institutions” (Owram, 2010).

To help understand the fundamental neglect of international students’ special learning needs, systemic discrimination can provide a lens of interpretation. Systemic discrimination can be characterized as impersonal, unconscious, unintentional, and covert. With systemic racism, it is not the intent which counts, but rather the consequence. Policies, rules, priorities, and programs may not be inherently racist or discriminatory in intent; however, they have a discriminatory effect in that they exclude certain groups from equal access to services.

To understand whether or not educational systems in Canada ensure that students receive a holistic, inclusive, anti-discriminatory education, immersed in social justice, there is a need to examine how and what they learn as well as the activities characterizing their educational experience inside and outside of the classroom (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Here is an example for such an examination: how do faculty members make connections between the past and the present, and the present and the future of students’ lives when they teach:

In developing mechanisms for providing this training, faculty must make two key assumptions: one concerning the nature of the students’ backgrounds when they enter the program, and the other regarding what awaits them when they leave. If the assumptions now

being made are not correct, we may need to consider changing the nature of doctoral training. (Fischer & Zigmond, 1998, p. 29)

To conclude, meeting the special career preparation needs of immigrant graduate students requires a joint effort of all those involved in graduate programs of studies, career service institutes, and international centers. Their integration into one effective supporting system may be helpful.

Career club

As for the career club which the research project took the form of, the participants regarded it as an effective form of support. According to a monthly meeting summary (October Monthly Meeting Summary, 2007), the responses were very positive on the impact of the career club on the participants' academic career preparation. There were three major benefits:

Clearer Goals and Enhanced Confidence

To accomplish anything, one has to begin with a vision and a goal. But the problem can be that some immigrant students simply follow what is required and expected without asking themselves, first of all, why they invest time and money to pursue a doctoral degree, what will be their desired learning outcomes, and some other important questions such as: how much time they should spend on their real priorities and who has the real power and control over their success. The participation of the career club, to some of them, brought these questions to their mind and helped them develop clearer career goals.

My career objective gets specified. Know some career goal options for Ph.D. students, Identified my needs for my career. Get serious about my career, have confidence in my future. (Anonymous)

I know what I want to do in the next two years. I know what fields I won't enter. I can envision my career in the next five years. (Mohsen)

This project helps me in considering my objective, and what I can do in order to obtain my objective. (Anonymous)

I think it provides me with an excellent opportunity to think over what I have done and what I have to do in order to obtain my objective. Reflection is a process involving pains and that's why sometimes many people just don't want to reflect. Consider my own experience in Canada. For the first one and a half years, I kept myself in studying and isolated in a small group of Chinese students. It seemed that I lived in a very small world in Canada with a very narrow focus. I attended the workshop by Cathy in 2007 when I realized that I couldn't live and study in this isolated world, where I have been asked again and again about my goals and the tools that I could use to achieve the goals just identified. Through the processes of reflection, I have identified my career objectives ... (Yun)

Yun's deep reflection helped her realize the importance of setting her career goal. This awareness can lead to a systematic career planning approach, which can help her and others make an informed choice in integrating career preparation into their programs of studies.

Peer support

With clearer and more realistic goals set, the participants then aspired to know how to prepare for an academic career. Some responses clearly indicate that ideas, experiences, and implications drawn from other graduate students are much needed and helpful.

I got information from peer graduate students, other people's opinions and positions. (Anonymous)

... aware of the competitiveness to apply for academic job as most of the students who participated liked to stay in academia. (Anonymous)

Communications with other graduates in our department make me realize that I should prepare beforehand. (Anonymous)

It provides an opportunity to listen to opinions and experiences of other students, especially those from other countries and with similar objectives. I used to focus on academic study only. I never paid much attention to job search. By participating this club's activities, I've changed a lot. I become more active, more open-minded, and begin to like living in Canada. I realized how many resources U of X have provided. Career Club gave lots of useful information and advices. (Yun)

I got to know some new people at the same professional development stage. (Anonymous)

The last comment seems to suggest that the insights gained from peer participants go beyond factual information to including the evolution of an emotional support network during this time of cross-cultural career transitions. Knowing that one is at the "same professional development stage" as others seems to bring acknowledgement, recognition, inclusion, and acceptance. Even though this sense of belonging did not come from the mainstream society, the companionship of people in a similar situation helped alleviate some of the most difficult aspects of re-establishing a career in a foreign country and made the process a less lonely journey.

Enhanced Motivation

Accompanied and empowered by peer participation in their career preparation, the participants felt much motivated in achieving their career goals.

I was encouraged to build up more knowledge about my field.
(Anonymous)

I began to pay attention to people's way of interacting. For now, I am trying to speak out in every student's meeting. (Anonymous)

International students have more challenges: language problems, final difficulties, over-qualification ... Next we need to fix the problems we have identified ... We should be goal-oriented, committed, confident, and consciously looking for opportunities. (Mohamed)

There is a distinction between an objective career as seen by the host society and a subjective career as seen by the individual. On objective-subjective career interdependencies, some researchers (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006; Hall & Chandler, 2004) recognize that a subjective career is important to the overall career experience, and that a dedicated subjective career may outweigh objective barriers. The implication is that, especially during career transitions and in turbulent environments, individual traits such as personal initiatives, motivation, and resilience, can positively shape the cross-cultural career transition experience. Thus, the inspiration drawn from the career club would assist the participants with their career preparation to some extent, and this impact as can be seen, was recognized and appreciated by them.

When the discussion focused on the future direction of the career club, all expressed the desire to continue with club activities, to have financial support from the university in order to allow club members to participate in university workshops and have access to other services, conduct research, and pay guest speakers. Some suggested that membership not be limited to international and Ph.D. students.

Thanks for all your efforts you have done for this career club and thanks for all your contributions in opening a door and providing me opportunities in searching for jobs and in self-reflecting ... I hope that the club will continue in the future at the University. Although [the career centre] is there for career development, our club, serving as an informal organization where we can communicate and share experiences and look for emotional support, is a supplement to [the career centre]. (Yun)

As for me, I was in a dilemma. One side of me saw the need and wanted to continue with the volunteer service work, but the other side of me felt my good

intentions were being taken for granted, for I had recently received a rejection letter for a job application I had submitted to do similar work.

I do feel that the research needs to continue and some participants desperately need the moral support that the career support center, in their words, does not provide. But at the same time, I can't help thinking: Does it meet my needs? Do I have time? Do I still want to do this very time-consuming volunteer work, which I have been doing for one and a half years?

On top of it, my application for the position of a peer educator on campus was just rejected and the pay is \$12 an hour. My only purpose was to work closely with graduate students to help them with their career development for research and future career purposes, but was told I was not qualified to do so. At the same time I got two teaching job offers and the pay is about \$55 an hour.

The rejection from being a peer educator disheartened me on my further pursuit of the research on career development. I will continue to provide support to some participants and will contact each of them individually to get needed data. But to start another year's commitment as volunteer, I am not sure if I should go for it. (C, Shi, Field notes, April 29, 2008)

In the following academic year, I followed my reasoning and not my heart.

I chose teaching as a full-time ESL instructor instead of working as a volunteer for the career club, but continued my commitment to the research project.

Internal barriers and successes in maintaining career aspiration

While many academic career preparation difficulties come from systemic barriers, so often the real obstacles come from within. Unrecognized internal barriers can become impediments to success as they keep us from moving forward. Only by discovering the real issues can we transform ourselves from feeling victimized to taking control of our own career path. Recognizing the importance of examining our internal barriers had taken quite a long time. The internal

barriers were identified in three areas: career immaturity, conflicting cultural values and beliefs, and stress of acculturation.

Career immaturity

Relevance of one's pre-program experience affects career goals and may be considered a barrier. The need, method, sequence, and pace in an academic career preparation process are individual and affected by a variety of gap variables. For example, a gap can be identified in the area of scholarly abilities, such as the gap between one's pre-program academic and professional knowledge and skills, and the selected program of studies; and between the selected program of studies and the desired occupational requirements. The hypothesis is that the wider the gap is, the more and the greater the barriers are; moreover, the harder they are to overcome.

Career maturity can be described as a person's readiness to make career decisions. According to the post-research interview results, most participants expressed having confidence in their expertise and developmental capacity because of their vision, determination, and rich research and work experiences. The expectations for professional employment immediately after completing their graduate degree included positions such as a tenure track faculty position, a researcher in an academic or non-academic setting, a postdoctoral researcher, or any professional position. Most preferred to work in a college or university. Some would also happily accept employment in industry or business, government, or a non-profit organization or foundation.

As for their estimation of the percentage of international Ph.D. graduates of their program who were employed immediately after graduation in professional jobs, the responses were quite varied. Two were optimistic, stating “more than 80%”, and one ranked “between 60-80%”. One was pessimistic: “Probably a few percents. Maybe, they get a job in their countries, and I do not know if they can successfully get a job in Canada.” (Anonymous)

Almost none of the participants knew the non-traditional jobs (for example, real estate and business) in which recent international Ph.D. graduates of their program were involved.

The obstacles identified are networking, interview skills, not knowing about the education system here in Canada, not knowing how to balance teaching, researching, and writing their thesis. As a result, most participants did not feel ready for entering an academic career.

I am happy being able to study what I wanted to study, but at the same time, I am uneasy thinking about the future. This feeling probably comes from the fact that there are many things that I want to do but I can not. (Anonymous)

I am not very confident about finding my desired job because it is very competitive and the economic situation has made it worse. (Mohsen)

... difficult to overcome obstacles in race, and gender (woman), almost impossible to have publications, thinking about giving up hope ... As a matter of fact, I still do not feel confident in getting an academic job in North America. (Yun)

I am sure about my interest in continuing my studies. But I am not sure about whether I will be suitable for the job market of a developed country like Canada or I will be over qualified for the requirements that this society needs for its development and prosperity. (Anonymous)

... Still, I am pessimistic when considering job-hunting in the academia in the future ... I began to realize that I would be in a tight spot and a point of no return of my life due to my age, which is 37. (Nick)

Bandura (1986) proposed that expectations for future action are based upon past experiences. Immigrant doctoral students develop the professional skills needed for their future professional roles during their doctoral training. Their training experiences serve as exemplars for future expectations of success the students encounter as faculty. The implication here is that a poorly prepared applicant with inadequate professional knowledge, skills, and attitude will probably become frustrated and feel (and possibly experience) failure when seeking career entry and job maintenance. I came to this understanding after having taught for six months outside a university department.

In reality, I do think that internationally trained professors, especially in the field of social sciences/arts, need to take some time to understand the educational systems and practices of Canada through formal schooling and part-time jobs before getting fully involved. After all, Canadian higher education institutions expect their faculty members to integrate into their established systems. No matter how far apart from your home countries' beliefs and practices, if you choose to become a member, you'll have to think, talk and behave like them in order to be accepted. And this learning does take time and effort. The process is very overwhelming and painful. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 21, 2008)

Immigrant Ph.D. students need to feel confident in their abilities to master the tasks required by an academic position, and they need to see their academic career as a positive and rewarding career option in order to maintain an interest in this career preparation pathway. However, due to various factors, such as initial poor academic and professional performance, a lack of social modeling, and negative social persuasion, a positive individual response can be hard to achieve.

Conflicting values and norms in academic culture

This section reveals the academic cultural value conflicts between the native cultures of these immigrant doctoral student participants and the culture of Canada. The study investigated how they coped with conflicts of cultural values and how the contradictions affected them positively or negatively. The three themes found include: lack of competent communication skills; conflicting cultural values in education, which is similar to those reported in Cycle Two; and confusion in identity.

Lack of Competent Communication Skills

“I even cannot say a single witty joke in English.” (Nick)

A lack of effective communication skills presents a major barrier to employment for everyone. The Conference Board of Canada lists communication and interpersonal skills as essential to the Canadian worker. A lack of communicative competence affects confidence in learning to function in an academic and professional community. Most participants expressed concerns or experienced some difficulties in language use such as knowing how to behave and what to say. Nick’s in-depth reflection represented this common concern about the language.

I think I have capacity enough to develop my expertise in my field, but my concern is always language barrier and communication skills in English.

I tried to join the conversation during the coffee breaks, after the reception, and in many occasions. But I found it very difficult.

On the evening of the second day of the conference, we had a banquet to entertain the guest speaker. We got together at a small, cozy Greek food restaurant ... I happened to take a seat in the front of the guest speaker ... I tried to speak to her, and to keep conversation going. It was tough. An

English native speaker could keep talking to her, but I even cannot bring up a banal, everyday life topic to her.

I heard that a job interview for an academic position (at university) lasts two to three days ... I also heard that even conversation during the lunchtime with faculty members could be used for the evaluation of the candidates. But, probably it would be extremely difficult for me to have lunch with faculty members, who I would see for the first time, keeping conversation lively. I even cannot say a single witty joke in English. ...

Once we decided the guest speaker, we started arranging the workshop, such as writing an application form for a subsidy to GSA, booking a restaurant for the banquet, making pamphlets and posters, and many other things. I could not give a name for anything. I even could not say, "I will book a restaurant for the banquet." ... There are so many things that I cannot do with confidence in this country. (Nick)

At the last meeting of the IGSCC before the Christmas break, as mentioned earlier, an international student advisor encouraged the participants to increase the amount of time they spoke with native speakers during the holidays. In the first meeting after Christmas, the monthly meeting began by having each participant share their socialization time and barriers relating to informal socialization with English native speakers. Some expressed that the daily average talking time with native speakers was about thirty minutes. The barriers to speaking more identified by the student participants were shy personality, fear of making mistakes, unfamiliarity with some topics (e.g. sports), limited English vocabulary, no opportunities, feeling painful when speaking English, and discomfort in having superficial conversations (not career related, not in a workplace setting).

As the group probed more deeply into their experiences, a conversation that began with statements about insufficient opportunity to use English revealed a fear of cultural inappropriateness which seemed to describe the power of what

Bourdieu (1972) called social capital. The participants realized that they had difficulties in building social networks and social capital without the insider knowledge of the local culture.

Conflicting Cultural Values in Education

“A man of my age would have a steady job, a couple of kids, a house, cars.” (Nick)

Presumably, the more different the cultural and societal backgrounds of the students to those perceived to be expected in Canadian contexts, the greater extent of barriers the students experience in adapting to Canadian academic and professional communities; for example, Asians often consider family a central factor in career decision making. Asian males, especially, may feel that the higher the degree one holds, and the older one becomes, the higher social status and the more income one should earn.

... a man of my age would have a steady job, a couple of kids, a house, cars, and not least, something like a so-to-speak "middle-class" lifestyle. I do not have any of those. ... Sometimes, I feel the urge to withdraw from my program right away and get whatever job I can, like a clerk at a grocery store, a restaurant, or etc. ... For the time being, the sources of income are only a bursary and occasional RA works. Having no job and just studying is so tough to me when considering about my income, particularly at this time of tax filing. Every time of this year I realize I am really a low income earner. I cannot imagine a lower level of life than my current life. My apartment is small, with only two rooms. This apartment is referred to as a “one bedroom”, but it is better to call it a bachelor suite. My wife and I live in such a small apartment. (Nick)

What Nick experienced is a sacrifice for prestige (Leung, Ivey, & Suzuki, 1994). In making career choices, Asians tend to place a strong emphasis on higher levels of education, and their families expect especially males to climb to the top of the socio-economic ladder through temporary sacrifice. However, if the

family's social status, in particular a high societal status in the home country, was lowered rather than enhanced by a family member's education, that male would usually experience a higher level of anxiety.

I shared similar contradicting views as Nick. Some of the contradictions were caused by misconceptions which resulted in confusion. I gradually came to the awareness that if one plans to work in academia, he/she still needs to be equipped with a broader vision and extensive knowledge and experience about the broader world. To this end, one needs to think outside the box. "Thinking outside the box" means coming up with creative ways to perceive and to solve problems. In order to achieve this goal, there is a need to define what the "box" is.

The "box" is the normal way of doing things and looking at things. At this stage, what I needed to examine was *my* box. The best way to start thinking out of *my* box was to identify and challenge the assumptions that make up thinking inside *my* box.

"In Chinese culture, knowledge and education are revered and advancing them usually leads to extrinsic rewards." (Cathy)

When this cycle of the study reached the half way point, I became curious about exploring the world beyond the university. I had visited some immigrant career support agencies and talked with some career consultants. This kind of contact helped me think outside my own box and discover some misconceptions inside the "box".

In Chinese culture, knowledge and education are revered and advancing them usually leads to extrinsic rewards such as desired career and wealth. The positive changes of my life in China had been constantly proving and reinforcing this belief. When starting a brand new life and career in Canada, I followed the same pattern without second thought. I did not

realize that I was now in a totally different world. Here in Canadian doctoral programs of studies, what a student should learn from education is not just necessary academic and professional knowledge and skills, but also a new dimension of wisdom that enhances our vision and expands our cognitive capacity, which enables us to become a more adaptable and capable person in a changed and changing world. (C, Shi, Reflection, May 10, 2009)

Lack of knowledge of workplace culture and expectations is yet another barrier. For instance, many Asian cultures emphasize academics rather than work experience; therefore, many immigrant Ph.D. students have misconceptions about the Canadian workplace by assuming that good marks will automatically assure a promising future. I learned this by the many failures I experienced in job searching during this period of time.

“I used to take everything I heard and read from the university as the only ‘truth’ (Cathy).

For immigrant students such as me, university is the first place they begin their Canadian lives, and initially the university is the main and perhaps only source of information they receive about their host country. The knowledge taught in the “ivory tower” can sometimes be seen as too ideal to be true in the real world. It can be misleading and bring about trouble to the naïve ones who faithfully practice beliefs preached by professors.

I used to take everything I heard and read from university as the only “truth” and naively applied this knowledge to understand and solve real life problems which university knowledge alone was not sufficient or relevant to handle. For those whose only exposure is university, they have to extend their vision and activity scope. Especially when one is pursuing a career outside academia, he/she does need to get out of this ivory tower to see what is going on in his/her intended profession, what people are talking about, what they are doing, so that one can get a feeling of how he/she can prepare for fitting in. I came to this realization one month after I set out for the real world. (C, Shi, Email to her supervisor, February 6, 2008)

It is crucial for new immigrant students to understand that the ideas they encountered at the university are well ahead of those they may observe or experience in “real world” society. Thus, they have to distinguish between advocated ideologies and street smartness, and recognize that both are needed in job attainment and sustainability. One way of knowing what is applicable and what is not yet relevant in the real world is to talk with people outside the university and become involved in the profession one plans to enter after graduation. If the sources educators use to nourish students’ overall development were generated from both mankind’s body of knowledge and the educator’s intellectual wealth and inner strength, the earlier new immigrants become exposed to them, the better understanding can be develop about the real world and its relationship to them and their studies.

Confusion in Identity

“I think I did well ...but my name was not addressed.” (Nick)

Asian names represent the hopes and dreams that the parents have for their children. While suffering identity confusion and loss, names for Asian students can become a sensitive issue.

... I was one of the organizing committee members. ... I think I did well on that. I worked from early morning to evening. But when the conference was about to draw to an end and acknowledgment to the organizing members was mentioned, my name was not addressed. We had a reception after that. During the reception, I was so sad. At the same time, I had a feeling of anger. Finally I talked to a friend of mine about that during the reception. She was surprised to hear that. Actually she did not notice my name was not mentioned. Soon, she asked someone indirectly about that, without mentioning that I was complaining. According to what she heard, my name was mentioned, but the word of acknowledgement was so quickly addressed, it might have been difficult to

catch. I know my name is difficult to say to English speakers. There are times when I cannot hear them saying my name. Maybe, that might have happened at that time again. But still I was disappointed. If somebody thanks you but you could not hear his/her word of gratitude, you would not be happy. This may sound a trivial thing to you, but there have been many occasions when I feel I wasn't recognized by this society. (Nick)

Acknowledgement and recognition from an organization where a new immigrant just started making connections can be essential for this new member to feel socially included. Hunt and Symonds (1995) explain what recognition means to a new immigrant in reconstructing a new sense of identity:

The social meaning of a defined occupation is always process; it is dynamic and ever-changing and can only be captured at a specific juncture as a snapshot captures a moment. This identity has to be constantly reinforced and reconstructed but must always retain a referral point of recognition for the practitioners to feel a sense of security and belonging. The ways in which an occupational identity is constructed and reinforced include work practices and strategies of control, use of language and public representations of this image. (p. 26)

Professions provide a sense of identity and belonging to a community, create a common set of norms and values, and define who are "insiders" and who are not. When not feeling included, uninitiated (immigrant) members may suffer an identity crisis, such as Nick or myself when I realized that this new world was not interested in me in the way I expected (as revealed in the critical incidents disclosed in Chapter One).

Stress of acculturation

Acculturation can be defined as “the exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact; the original cultural patterns of either or both groups may be altered, but the groups remain distinct” (Kottak, 2005, p. 209).

The in-depth discussions on the obstacles influencing effective communication were many and complex. Even if they had acquired excellent language proficiency, they noted that a multitude of internal factors influence their effective functioning in the new academic environment: frustration with acculturation issues; the loss of self-esteem or a loss of confidence associated with their new environment. The absence of their previous support system may aggravate these issues; anxiety can be increased due to anticipation of difficulty in establishing an academic (or any) career. This mismatch syndrome had symptoms in the group that include low self-esteem, depression, and self-rejection.

Low Self-esteem Caused by Social Exclusion

“I will take on whatever job I can get like a receptionist ... or a clerk ... or whatsoever.” (Nick)

Different socializing attitudes and partners affect whether or not ultimate career goals can be eventually achieved. The assumption is that Canadian born university graduates are willing and eager to integrate into mainstream societies and have the ability to socialize with more capable insiders, thus enabling them to move faster and more smoothly towards the centre of the desired professional communities and careers. Immigrant international students, however, may not be equipped to socialize with mainstream members, and even if becoming gainfully employed, they may remain marginalized in professional societies. As a result,

they frequently develop negative attitudes towards *others* or feelings of intimidation. Thus, they are more likely to socialize in the comfort of their own language and cultural communities.

Nick thought that to perform better in teaching Canadian students, he needed to improve his English language proficiency, but this language barrier could only be overcome if he had a positive and active attitude and if he could function well in society. Furthermore, he might have better opportunities to improve his English if he increased his socialization.

Nick found himself trapped: he probably would neither obtain an academic position in Canada nor return to Japan since he had lost the advantage of the best career age while studying in Canada.

All I have to do is, just face it! Face the reality. Consider objectively circumstances, in which I am situated. If I did all that I can do by the end of my doctoral program and could not get a job related to [my field], I will take on whatever job I can get - a non-academic position in somewhere like a receptionist, or a clerk of a shop, a food shop, or whatsoever. I could not think of going back to Japan because there would not be any jobs left out to me due to my age. (Nick)

For Nick, social exclusion seems to have played a major role in contributing to his loss of hope for a professional career.

Depression

"I could feel death being so close to me..." (Cathy)

Students' professional socialization process usually starts with socialization into students' associations. If this initial step is not successful, immigrant students may lose vision and hope. Stress is usually a natural consequence. For instance, the stress I experienced in my first time teaching and

the following attempt in maintaining a teaching position brought me to the edge of a physical and mental breakdown.

At one point my body was on the verge of collapse. In the worst time, I completely lost sleep; overdosed sleeping pills lost their power. Everyday, I was living in a dizzy world and felt that I might fall and drop dead any moment. At night when the surroundings were deadly quiet, I could feel death being so close to me. In my dreams, the beings of the death world constantly intruded and hung over. (C, Shi, Email to her supervisor, August 21, 2008)

Common symptoms of depression include silence and avoidance behaviors.

Nick, a very active participant in the second cycle of the study, stopped attending the research group's activities not long after the third cycle of the study began.

Eventually, Nick responded to my contacts and agreed to attend a private meeting with me. During the meeting, Nick shared with me his difficulties and frustrations.

I happened to be in an inspiring mood, so I talked quite loftily and gave him lots of encouragement which must have sounded hollow and inapplicable to Nick at

that moment. After quite awhile, Nick sent me a long reflection which had

shocked and grieved me for a very long time. One of his reflections clearly

explained why he had disappeared.

My feeling goes up and down with a trifle matter. I was aware of the Professional Development Week taking place a couple of weeks ago, but I did not feel like going. This is partly because I was occupied doing my papers, and partly because ... No, it's more like I did not want to go. I thought I did not need any more seminars. I do not need any warm words to comfort me. I do not need a gnome from ancient philosophers or heroes to energize me. I do not need any spiritual sayings from any ... beliefs. (Nick)

Although I eventually escaped from the heavy and powerful shadow overcast by Nick's reflection, a more intimately shared self-pity aroused only

after I experienced a similar withdrawal from the mainstream student group I had served as an instructor for three terms over a period of three years.

Maybe because I am suffering an unexpected blow of unemployment when my Ph.D. study comes to end and after having been under employed for about a year, my outlook is becoming more realistic, attitude more pessimistic, and tone is turning bitter. Reading your reflection has aroused a deeper empathy and stronger sense of self-pity. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 23, 2009)

This delayed response to Nick occurred a year later. Although a bit too late, I still wanted Nick to know that he was not alone in experiencing avoidance behavior. I also wanted him to know that I felt regretful and very sorry that I did not show enough understanding in his situation and sufferings at that time.

I shared my avoidance behavior experience with another participant.

Last term after teaching and getting my students' feedback, I had been frustrated and upset for about three months. I didn't want to reflect on or talk about it. I shut myself down from the organizations I had been very actively involved in. Although a peer student assured me again and again with evidence how successful I was in my teaching, I still couldn't handle that negative feedback. For a long time, I couldn't figure out how a very positive and successful experience of an instructor could become a fruitless and a non-appreciating learning result from the students' part? This puzzlement led to a general negation and avoidance from Canadian students and teacher education. (C, Shi, Personal Communication, April 28, 2008)

Rejection and Self-Rejection

"There would be no association to which I can belong." (Nick)

Although each individual understood language barriers from a different perspective, all agreed that the key point in addressing English as a gap was not in the language itself but in the internal barriers and social exclusion that affected their language performance. Take Nick for example, he desperately wanted to

prove that he could function as a social member in his department by joining a graduate student association; however, he did not feel he was trusted or needed:

My job in the second students' association is to manage the association's website, organize small seminars regularly, and many other things. From time to time, I felt that I was not trusted by members because of my English. During the meetings, there were many times when I did not understand what was going on. Leaving me out, the discussions went on. There were many times that I had misunderstanding with other executive members ... still I have trouble catching up with what is going on during the meetings ... You said that if you do not feel comfortable with an association, you will leave it. But if I do so, there would be no association to which I can belong. (Nick)

Having "trouble catching up with what is going on during the meetings" happened to me as well when I was trying to network with some ESL teaching professionals by joining a volunteer committee.

I recently joined a hospitality committee for a conference. The other members knew exactly what was happening and how they could fit in. In our last month's meeting, when coming to pick up a responsibility, everyone was fast. This readiness easily left a good impression to the director and other members that they were eager to contribute and capable of doing their share of work. I didn't know what was expected and how to offer my contribution. Not surprisingly, I was the only person who did not make any offers ... I felt embarrassed and helpless. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 21, 2008)

According to the definition given by Burchardt, Grand, and Piachaud (2002), social exclusion occurs when an individual is excluded from a set of two core activities which constitute participation in society: 1) the individual is not participating for reasons beyond his/her control; and 2) he or she would like to participate but is excluded.

After failing to find employment in the mainstream business world, professional immigrants may also encounter rejection from their own racial group's economic world.

To ease the pain caused by a loss of the job which I had held for nearly a year and believed that this contracted position would turn into a permanent position, and a rejection of a job application which I felt great at the interview, I decided to start my own business thinking being a business owner I would be in complete control of my life, and I would never beg for jobs or receive humiliations by being rejected again and again. I paid for posting on a Chinese website an advertisement for tutoring ESL students, on the same day, I got three messages like this: "You must be out of your mind by charging \$60 an hour. I bet you won't even be paid \$15 if you go out for a job". Thus I felt belittled and ridiculed by my own ethnic group of people. But if you think objectively, they may be right. I may still be rejected even if I apply for a \$15 per hour job. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 21, 2008)

Although psychological response impacts how a person feels about his or her personal abilities in an academic job search situation, "it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted" (Bandura, 1994, p. 5). By learning how to release stress and elevate mood when facing challenging tasks, people can improve their sense of self-efficacy. Stress and anxiety have a negative effect on self-efficacy as well as on learning. "The brain learns optimally when appropriately challenged, but downshifts under perceived threat" (Caine & Caine 1990, p. 68). It functions best in a supportive environment. Therefore, conditions that cause conflict may lead to low levels of self-efficacy and result in low participation and outcome expectations. Fortunately for me, by this time, I had had enough experience with employment and fair pay, so my self-efficacy remained intact.

To conclude, the identification and discussion on internal barriers indicate that critical consciousness (Freire, 1972) focuses on an in-depth understanding of the external and internal world. Nevertheless, even this expanded target of attention can neither help an immigrant graduate student to conform to the host

country's ideology, nor preserve one's old beliefs and practices. Facing an imbalanced, complicated, and contradicting reality, one can only hope for and work towards creating a personally balanced, simple, and integrated system.

Understanding the Barriers through the Lens of Social Ecological Theory

To help me understand the complex relationships among various factors that had caused the initial cultural conflicts and disconnections, I discovered an adopted human ecological model (Sands & Plunkett, 2005). This model is an adaptation of the Social Ecological Model (SEM) originated from the version of Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which is a framework that examines the multiple effects and interrelatedness of social elements in an environment. SEM provides a theoretical framework to analyze various contexts in conflict communication (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, & Rinderle, 2006) and is divided into social factors at four levels: macro-, exo-, meso-, and micro-, to describe influences as interpersonal, intercultural, community, and organizational. The following description of the spheres of influences in the conflict communication context is adopted from Oetzel et al., 2006, p. 731).

The microsystem is defined as the pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by a developing person in a particular setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). This layer forms a set of structures with which a person has direct contact. The person influences and is influenced by the microsystem. From an ecological perspective the education environment becomes a space

where programs, curricula, courses, professors, students, and the physical environment interact and all come together.

The mesosystems are the organizational or institutional factors that shape or structure the environment within which the individual and interpersonal relations occur (Gregson, 2001). These aspects can include rules, policies, and acceptable business etiquette within a more formal organization. Examples of organizations include schools, families, companies, churches, and sports teams. Mesosystems are essentially the norm-forming component of a group or organization in which the individual is an active participant in this group or organization. Bronfenbrenner (1979) also claimed that the richer the medium for communication in this system, the more influential it is on the microsystem.

The mesosystem links different microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). An example of the mesosystem of a university can be seen in the interactions and dynamics between two of its microsystems: that of a person's study environment and that of the same person's home and family environment. Family financial situations regarding the academic and professional success of immigrant Ph.D. students can often create a dynamic that directly and indirectly impacts the climate of studies at the university. Unrealistic high career expectations and immediate financial needs can create a tension between students and their family dependents. This tension impacts the university in various direct and indirect ways, including avoidance and silence behavior resulting from failed expectations, pressures of meeting family financial needs placed on programs by the dependents.

The exosystems refer to the community level influences, including fairly established norms, standards, and social networks (Gregson, 2001). Many organizations and interpersonal relationships compose the community, and this web of organizations and relationships creates the community. The community is larger than the meso-; however, it is considerably smaller than the respective nation or culture it simultaneously composes. Exosystems are essentially any setting which affects the individual, although the individual is not required to be an active participant (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The exosystem of a university might be comprised of such structures as provincial regulations, local economics, and federal policies.

The macrosystem is the broad social context that consists of patterns of values, belief systems, lifestyles, opportunities, customs, and resources. This system is generally considered to exert a one-way influence upon not only the developing person but the micro-, meso-, and exo-systems as well. The macrosystem of a university, for example, is embodied not only in the cultural, political, social, and economic climate of the local community, but also that of the nation as a whole.

The chronosystem represents a time-based dimension that influences the operation of all levels of the ecological system. The chronosystem refers to the socio-historical time dimension of the macrosystem in which the individual lives. The chronosystem of a university may refer to chronologically developmental changes that occur in its student body, teaching staff, curricular choices, policies, and so on.

There are three types of interactions within and between these systems: top-down effects, bottom-up effects, and interactive effects. The consideration of top-down effects (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz, 1988; Stokols, 1996) establishes that environmental effects shape individual behavior. Top-down effects are considered the most prominent of any of the social ecological components. A good case in point is the change of my role from active to passive in this cycle of the study, which was mainly caused by the participation of two staff members, who resembled and functioned as authority figures. Top-down effects can be either positive or negative. In bridging gaps in academic career preparation, when those who are on the top (such as doctoral programs, career and international support centers) act as more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978), the students will successfully reach another ZPD; however, in the absence of appropriate support, role modeling and effective scaffolding, immigrant graduate students can feel paralyzed and frustrated. Take the changed direction of the action research in Cycle Three for example, I did not feel I had received capable peers' support from the career club for my career preparation advancement and felt that I had to leave the support group in order to develop. Top-down interaction is not considered a preferred form of interaction.

Bottom-up effects describe how individuals or community affect higher levels, as in how individuals form alliances or coalitions to accomplish personal goals (Oetzel et al., 2006). Guerrero and La Valley (2006) recognize how emotions or feelings (i.e. anger, guilt, jealousy, greed, etc.) impact events. For instance, out of personal despair that the university's graduate programs did not

prepare students for career success, I organized a career club together with eight other immigrant students. This intention attracted the attention and participation of staff of several university units. Through their involvement in the study, they heard new perspectives on university services which may yield indirect or direct changes in policies and practices. This demonstrates the microcosms' impact on macrocosms.

Interactive effects are interdependent and occur simultaneously at multiple levels (Rousseau & House, 1994). For instance, in graduate programs of universities, a notable type of conflict may occur between graduate students and their supervisors; interaction affects completing the goal of some learning at the individual level, and of some fulfilling of program requirements at the department level. McLeroy et al. (1988) noted that the "ecological perspective implies reciprocal causation between the individual and the environment" (p. 354) - interactive effects.

Ecological theory provides a perspective for understanding links between individuals and wider social groups and structures. It draws attention to tensions that may exist within and between systems. From the ecological perspective professional immigrant Ph. D students are situated in one interconnected and dynamic macrosystem. The unique micro and macro systems of education, academic, and professional communities and societies; policies and regulations; and the historical moment experienced in their home countries are all taken into consideration and become parts of the whole ecological macrosystem. Even though they are living in a new exosystem and receiving Canadian doctoral

education, their mentality and behaviors are still heavily embedded in the beliefs and practices of their home countries. The barriers confronted in the process of shifting through disciplinary, institutional and societal contexts, can be more easily and more clearly seen through the lens of mesosystems, which reveals the challenges of immigrant students who interact in two cross-cultural microsystems.

A good case in point is the gap in understanding between the immigrant student participants and the administrative staff associated with the career club. Some students said the services and resources were not designed to prepare them but mainstream students for future employment; while the staff asserted that they were for everybody without any discrimination. Neither group could see the differences in microsystems well enough to concretely help or convince the other.

In some senses universities and their doctoral students share the same goal: preparation for a tenure-track academic position. The students acknowledge the academic community and programs offered by the university to meet this objective. However, these efforts are in tension within the macrosystem in which there are doubts about immigrant students' professional skills. With this tension recognized by the individual, the university provisions then seem to poorly match what is needed in the broader system which they desire to enter. This is a good example of how notions of exosystems can offer meaningful insights into contemporary challenges confronted by immigrant students in their doctoral education.

The strength of ecological theory as an interpretative lens to answer the research questions does not limit itself to the identification of tensions; it also

opens a way to think about immigrant students' agency in adopting alternative strategies to achieve competent and full participation. An ecological approach regards every member as an organism which can directly or indirectly influence micro-, meso-, and exo-systems. The norms and practices of an existing system can be challenged by introducing new discourse genres into practices, in which both students (even marginalized ones) and professors can function as agents of change. The effectiveness of their interaction strategies and activities in dealing with system tensions or contradictions can be revealed within and across individuals, disciplines and institutional contexts. Thus positive effects are potentially more likely to occur in students' learning such as enhanced cognitive development, subject-matter competence, and more focused career development.

Summary

Chapter Five presents the third cycle of the action research on the experienced external and internal barriers in academic career preparation as encountered and perceived by nine immigrant Ph.D. students of different disciplines and cultural backgrounds. This cycle of the study experienced two phases in its process: preparing for change and experiencing tension in implementing the action plan which was aimed at creating change. Four areas of external barriers in academic career preparation were identified and analyzed: adapting to doctoral programs of studies, bridging gaps in professional knowledge and skills, socializing to academic profession, and utilizing the university's career support services. Three aspects of internal barriers in maintaining career

aspiration and persistence were also identified and analyzed: career immaturity, conflicts in academic cultural values and norms, and the stress of acculturation.

The barriers identified are often caused by a lack of understanding of immigrant students' career development needs from various levels (university, faculty, department and immigrants themselves). Although an individual's coping attitudes and strategies can make a big difference in one's career development either negatively or positively, the data showed that some barriers were impossible to be overcome by individual endeavors alone. Some identified the need for crucial supports such as clear expectations from programs of studies in students' career development and systematic assistance in turning the goals into realities through relevant courses, supervisors' guidance and assistance, carefully constructed teaching, research, and service assignments, and moral support such as understanding, patience, encouragement, and recognition.

Some barriers identified by each individual participant are not necessarily affected by cultural and discipline backgrounds, and different individual coping strategies lead to significantly different results. Although confronting similar obstacles, some participants did not take them as obstacles (merely challenges or inspirations), while some regarded the same events as huge or unconquerable obstacles. Some were able to break through major barriers and make greater progress by adopting a proactive and more aggressive approach. This phenomenon indicates that other factors may play important roles in influencing students' success. Some identified factors include attitude, self-esteem, personality, social and cultural capital, previous professional experience, and the

presence of a support group. People react differently in different environments and the reinforcements an immigrant student group receives for a particular action may be experienced quite differently across contexts.

The external and internal barriers and successful strategies identified in this chapter are summarized in the following chart:

Issue	External barrier	Internal Barrier	Success
University system could be strengthened by recognizing immigrant students' learning gaps, providing effective academic writing support, increasing opportunities for immigrant students to teach, and developing programs, structures and support to help foreign students integrate (i.e. acculturation)	X		
Career services neglect immigrant students' special needs including charging fees for use and not providing programs that they perceive meet their needs, although participants did gain more knowledge about the services that were provided.	X		X
Systemic racism results in the discriminatory effect of excluding immigrant student groups from access to equality. It enables institutions to examine their own ethno-, geo-, and ego-centrism.	X		
Researching. Most participants developed an area of expertise in researching.	X		X
Value-added. The need for all systems of the ecological model to see that immigrant graduate students bring value with their differences and should not be seen as 'deficits' to themselves or others.	X	X	
Stress of acculturation results in low self-esteem, depression, and self-rejection		X	

Career Immaturity. Participants came to see that they lacked professional knowledge and skills about career searching but also developed enhanced understanding of goal setting, needs, and learning.		X	X
Intercultural incompetence involves overcoming language and cultural challenges and takes time to overcome, beginning with awareness that this needs attention.		X	X

Chapter Six

A Reflective Interpretation on Breaking Down Barriers

Cycle four, if the next phase of my career development journey were to be shared, would tell about my work teaching undergraduate ESL student teachers as a teaching assistant (TA) in my home Department as well as ESL foreign students in another faculty. I would also share details of how each position came to be and the challenges that each offered. Instead, I integrate field notes/reflections into this reflective chapter to help the reader better understand my closing interpretation and perspective.

I used to be fearless, but from the forced resignation of my first job in Canada, I learned to fear. Fear is certainly not always a bad thing. It taught me to be very sensitive to impending danger and to react with great caution. However, for a long time, fear had also burrowed its way deep down into my heart. It had been paralyzing and holding me back from living a full and productive life. Fortunately, my fearless nature and competitive qualities conquered the irrational fear and soon liberated my mind. This chapter will disclose the role that social modeling and building a support network played in this process.

The reflective interpretative approach interweaves attitude, strategy, and perspectives from theory and more practice. Four key themes are summarized and discussed: challenging negative social modeling; challenging the myth of racial equality in academia; building support network; understanding barrier transformative potential from a dialectical perspective; and integrating theoretical framework.

Challenging Negative Social Modeling

- “You can’t become an ESL teacher in an English speaking country.”
- “Why would international students want to learn from a non-native instructor after coming all the way to an English speaking country?”
- “Canadian students do not have respect for teachers.”
- “How dare you to even think about teaching Canadian students how to teach?”

These were among many of the doubts found in my reflections and field notes towards my teaching of either Canadian undergraduate students or international students. It is not difficult for me to provide more literature and personal experiences as evidence to support the claim that professional immigrants face devaluation and distrust in their own professional capabilities. For a long time the belief that the hurdles were set by *Others* dominated my beliefs.

I felt terribly sorry for myself and the people of my kind. Canadian universities are caring and supporting, in general. Professors and support staff are often willing to listen, to understand, and to help. BUT, after having been immersed in this ready to sympathize culture for so long, we could be at the risk of developing a passive and blaming attitude that defines us as victims and sees us remain as victims. We may tend to blame *Others* for our inability and misery. When we leave our fate in other’s hands, we may feel paralyzed and may lose energy to control our lives. There is no doubt that difficult situations are mainly caused by systemic barriers. However, it could be paralyzing if we keep entertaining these difficulties and frustrations. For those who are living in a hopeless situation, what they need more is not just sympathy but encouragement, opportunities, and successful experience. After realizing the danger of indulging oneself in the mood of anguish and sorrow, I turned to seek role models and success stories to help me conquer the fear of rejection. I learned that courage comes from faith, positive self-image, past success, a realistic goal, a trust in one’s professional competence, a sound justification of risk taking, will power in ensuring a successful experience,

and on-going support network. Each challenge should be embraced on its own terms. Don't assume problems are here just for you or that negative patterns are unbreakable. (C, Shi, Reflection, May 3, 2009)

As I reflected on the minor successes throughout my journey I recognized the role that self-efficacy played. "Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities to succeed" (Bandura, 1994, p. 1). People can be persuaded to believe that they have the capabilities to succeed. Receiving verbal encouragement from others helps people overcome self-doubt and focus on giving their best effort to the task at hand. In the absence of faculty members of similar racial or cultural background, media reports about the burden of immigrants to Canadian society and very limited employment options, my survival and eventual return of self confidence required the support and encouragement of many. Witnessing other people similar to one's self successfully completing a task is an important source of self-efficacy which may have the positive impact on participants in cycle two of having a capable peer, and in the absence of immigrant faculties, may account for the feeling that university services were not meeting immigrant needs.

Self-efficacy has only recently been considered as an important factor in career development, (Bakken, Byars-Winston, & Wang, 2006). Self-efficacy expectations, when viewed in relation to careers, refer to a person's beliefs regarding "career-related behaviors, educational and occupational choice, and performance and persistence in the implementation of those choices" (Betz & Hackett 1997, p. 383). They are reflected in an individual's perception about

his/her ability to perform a given task or behavior (efficacy expectation) and his/her belief about the consequences of behavior or performance (outcome expectation) (Hackett & Betz 1981). Therefore, self-efficacy is an important moderating factor. Low self-efficacy may function as a barrier by decreasing confidence and performance in overcoming external barriers; similarly, by increasing career-related self-efficacy expectations, immigrant doctoral students are more likely to persist in their professional goal and are more willing to deal with either external or internal barriers.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Hackett, and Brown (1996) draws upon Bandura's self-efficacy theory and offers a framework for career development, explaining the interplay between educational and career interests, career-related choices, and performance. SCCT highlights the relationship among social cognitive variables (e.g., self-efficacy) and their relationship with other variables in the individual's socio-contextual environment, such as gender, race/culture, family, community, and political components. Chen (1997) contends that this integration of self and social context offers an opportunity for individuals to gain a sense of control over their career development and increase their career-related self-efficacy expectations.

Challenging the Myth of Racial Equality in Academia

The feelings of rejection and exclusion, no matter how hard I had tried to avoid them, had always permeated my professional life. Rejections from students, colleagues, employers, scholarships, travel grants, or research funding, were among the most frequently visited experiences. Rejections from employers were the worst to handle. I recalled how I felt completely defeated after a phone call with a hiring staff who had given me a very clear hint of acceptance during her interview with me:

Last week when I collapsed at hearing a job application rejected, I screamed at my husband in tears: “Why should I do the thesis writing? Why should I stay with this study? What can I get out of it?” He replied: “Just because you have started it, now that it is coming to an end, you should finish it.” “What is the point of finishing it?” I became hysterical: “Even if I finish it, then what?!” For about 10 days, in my mind, the whole process of my program of study seemed to be so ironical and sickening. I feel so ashamed of myself being a doctoral student who may accomplish nothing at the end. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 23, 2009)

In the first term of the third year of my program of studies, I taught ESL student teachers and ESL students at the same time. For me, this was an ideal match, which made me believe that I could produce the best possible teaching result for both groups.

However, the students’ evaluations from these two groups were dramatically different. The overall comment from ESL student teachers was a criticism of my lack of Canadian teaching experience. One claimed the course taken from me was a waste of time and money. Some evaluating scores were below average.

The reality introduced to but unacknowledged by the ESL student teachers was that I had taught English for nineteen years in China and ESL for one year in Canada; had taught in-service English teachers in China for six years and had taught both per-service and in-service teachers for four years in three Canadian universities and colleges. However, most of the mainstream student teachers did not value them.

On the other hand, the ESL students had always given me exceptionally positive scores on their course evaluations, and I received joy-filled emails, party and dinner invitations, farewell cards and presents, meetings with their parents,

relatives, and friends, as well as compliments from directors. ESL students, in their feedback, besides expressing appreciation on what they had learned, usually addressed non-academic factors including relaxation, closeness, warmth, friendship, confidence, and inspiration drawn from my class. Some Asian students expressed that they took themselves as my children and some took me as a trustworthy friend to whom they felt comfortable to work with. Several students expressed that they felt that they had been discriminated by their previous white instructors but now felt at home with me. The very positive comment and high rating by the ESL students also seemed to be surprising. I felt that they accepted me affectionately without making a big fuss over my accent and grammatical errors.

The dominant negative evaluation from the ESL student teachers sent a strong and unmistakable message of resistance and rejection to my teaching, which had a devastating impact on my self-confidence. I had not expected that the evaluation could be so bad because I felt extremely confident and satisfied throughout the whole teaching process. My initial reaction was confusion, shame, disappointment, loss and disorientation. I decided to give up my dream of becoming a university teacher.

Nevertheless, a peer student who had been doing research in five of my classes helped me see my responsibility in educating mainstream ESL student teachers from a minority perspective. Convinced, I continued with the teaching of the same course in the following year. I felt even more comfortable with this

group of students. After the term ended, I had been immersed in a joyful mood of confidence, autonomy, and success.

Unfortunately, the same evaluation result occurred. After hearing my positive self-evaluation and seeing a big grin on my face, the fellow student who continued with his research in this class warned me that I might read unpleasant feedback, for he had already got that sense through his interviews with some of the students. Alerted by his warning, it had taken two months for me to summon up courage to open up the envelope containing the evaluation. That was the day when I got the fourth job offer from the ESL program. The day was deliberately chosen in order to have enough energy to face another brutal rejection from the students I had been so committed to helping grow academically and professionally.

Surprisingly, I was not terribly hurt this time. At that moment, I knew I had become intellectually and emotionally stronger and believed that my academic career would not be destroyed by their negative evaluations. But I lost the fighting spirit my fellow student and the chairperson had hoped for. I wrote to my fellow student on the day I read the evaluations:

The evaluation from XXX is as bad as you predicted and similar to the one from the previous year. It didn't bother me much this time. I won't teach this course again. There is really no point of repeating this negative result before I learn anything useful to change it. I guess the same thing will happen if I teach it again. I need time and new experiences to figure out the gap. (C, Shi, Email to a fellow student, March, 12, 2009)

This student quickly responded and requested a meeting to offer his positive interpretation of the evaluations. Once again, he confirmed my

qualifications and strongly insisted on my applying for the following year's teaching of the same course.

It was much more difficult this time for me to accept his advice after having received devastating students' evaluations for two years. My challenging spirit eventually conquered my logic. I applied once again for teaching this course. Shockingly, it was rejected. In an email to a student, Anna, who took the previous year's course, I described how this rejection had affected me.

I have to tell you that my application for this year's teaching had been rejected without even bothering giving any reason. After requesting for an explanation, I was told that it was because of students' evaluation, which showed no improvement had been made over the year.

I didn't make further argument. I had lost my faith in getting continuous support from the decision makers. A year ago, I was asked by the department for accepting the job offer so that I could continue to educate our ESL student teachers. A year later, I was expected to change the rejecting attitude of the mainstream students. To be honest, I had tried extremely hard to win the students' trust and to provide the best possible service. The result remained the same. As the previous group of students, this group almost unanimously continued to exclude me from teaching profession. The few great comments were not strong enough to represent the general students' voice.

My disappointment not only comes from the students, but also from those who possess hiring power. It was they who had decided how much support they would want to give to me. Now they have lost their professional judgment and ability and allowed the students to decide whether or not I was qualified for this position. It is a very sad case; however, this result truly reflects a cruel reality which many vulnerable immigrant or visible minority teachers may have experienced. (C, Shi, Email to a former undergraduate student, October 20, 2009)

The rejection of my continuing teaching of undergraduate courses from our department, for quite a long time, had disheartened and detached me from my program of studies. I even tried avoiding entering the building, for the building itself was emotionally associated with division, rejection, and exclusion. Racism,

a long-suppressed association with immigrants uncontrollably emerged. I

recorded my challenging thought with indignation:

Drawn from the distinctive evaluation results of ESL student teachers from the ESL students in my past year's teaching, I began wondering what had actually guided the mainstream students' judgments towards my teaching. I had been trying hard to avoid an association of racism in my research, and had always put the immigrant students themselves into the centre of critical examination and question. I had always thought that their difficulties were mainly caused by individual passive attitude and poor coping strategies and always thought that their barriers could be overcome by themselves as long as effective integrating attitudes and strategies could be found and followed.

However, my recent teaching experience of ESL student teachers seemed to indicate that the hurdle from the mainstream students on my way of career preparation did not have to do with my professional abilities and experiences or cultural deficiencies. It seemed to have a great deal to do with overcoming dominant stereotypes and beliefs about what immigrants were capable of accomplishing. It had to do with learning how to cope and adapt to racism and discrimination from mainstream society. (C, Shi, Reflection, April 2, 2009)

This was the first time when I mentioned openly about the association of my personal experiences with racial discrimination. This eventual confrontation was supported by a participant from Cycle Three who shared similar understanding on this issue:

One thing that I wanted to mention is that considering my three years' contacts with friends and people around the University, you touched a very sensitive and important issue (racial discrimination). In fact, I see that career finding for graduated PhDs (spec. international/immigrant students) even before the current crisis was a night mare. It is something that no reliable data is available and the University is not willing to talk about the end position of these people as it is not aligned with their marketing strategy (I think) and they are more focused on getting new students. (Mohamed, Personal communication, March 17, 2009)

When examining racism in Canadian academia, Henry and Tator, (2007) disclosed a commonly believed myth: "the reputation of the university as a site of

liberal ideology allows [racism], leading to the view that issues of race are isolated and not embedded in the structures and systems operating in the everyday life of the academy” (p. 24). Although recommendations, initiatives, and strategies on anti-academic racism have increased, the visible minority population continues to be underrepresented on campus and equity in education remains a much-sought-after goal (Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn, & Arrona, 2006).

Based on the literature review and the interviews Henry and Tator (2007) conducted with many faculty of color, they declared that “racism is deeply embedded in the culture of academia, as reflected in curriculum, pedagogy, hiring, selection and promotion practices, and in the lack of mentoring and support for faculty of color” (p. 24). These two researchers observe a remarkable commonality shared in the experiences and the barriers encountered by faculty of color, which are characterized as “pain and frustration...the sense of isolation, marginality, and exclusion from the institutional White culture” (p. 24).

It is commented that failure of understanding racism and community service is a predictor of persistence (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988). In order to understand racism, one must have the ability to recognize various manifestations such as the low expectations that faculty may have of minority students (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976).

Although many Canadian universities are now seeing an increasing number of international students or visiting scholars, diversity is poorly reflected at the level of faculty, especially in the social science and humanities disciplines. Henry and Tator (2007) provide supporting evidence from one major Canadian

university: “nearly half of its student body comes from a variety of diverse backgrounds, yet less than 11 per cent of faculty does—and the majority of these are found in engineering and other sciences” (p. 24).

Another systemic form of bias and discrimination embedded in the institutional practices and procedures within the academy is the tenure process which is viewed as one of the most overt manifestations of the continuing power of white-dominated male culture (Henry & Tator, 2007).

One may assume that it might be easier to educate the younger generation about racism; however, this task seems to be equally challenging. In the same study conducted by Henry and Tator (2007), when one professor taught about racism to white students, “the students are deathly quiet and still, glaring, hostile, their pens on their desk. They are telling me that they are not willing to learn” (p. 25). The professor clearly sensed a danger in touching upon this topic.

In terms of the impact of academic racism on students’ career aspirations and persistence, Henry and Tator (2007) anticipated that these and many other forms of racial discrimination “[has] a significant impact on career aspirations and mobility” (p. 25). Some other studies predict similar consequences that racial discrimination at work and limited job opportunities could contribute to reduced career aspirations and expectations as well as motivation for school and career success among minority students (Constantine, Erikson, Banks, & Timberlake, 1998).

In general, my literature review and personal experience indicated that current systemic racism across Canadian academia is quite worrisome. After

examining the experiences of colored students, faculty of color, and students of Aboriginal origin, Henry and Tator (2007) conclude that the experiences of the colored faculty members “reflect the failure of administrative policies, programs, and every day practices to address racism, to create a more equitable learning and working environment and, above all, to vigorously challenge the ‘culture of whiteness’ still so dominant at most Canadian universities” (p. 25).

To sum up, towards racism, it seemed that university campuses were no less tolerant than the outside world. I did not believe it was just me who faced struggles when they were at predominantly white institutions, especially in social science faculties where white supremacy ideology was still practiced and protected. From my point of view, my reality made the study especially meaningful in order to better understand systemic racism involving institutional racism, individual racism, and overarching ideologies.

Overcoming the fear of challenging negative social modeling and the myth of racial equality in academia was a crucial step towards changing undesired reality. To accomplish this task, individual effort was far from enough.

Building Support Network

Social support is the verbal and nonverbal communication between seekers (i.e., individuals receiving social support) and supporters (i.e. individuals giving social support) that reduces uncertainty about the situation, the self, the other, and the relationship (Leatham & Duck, 1990). Supportive communication helps an individual to decrease the anxiety and stress associated with something unknown.

It also helps the receiver in developing perceived control over stressful situations (Albrecht & Adelman, 1987).

Building a support network can be a powerful way to break through the isolation that many immigrant doctoral students experience, especially in their academic career preparation stage. I was fortunate to have a caring and supportive group of faculty members, peer graduate students, students, and family member who I now realize greatly assisted me with academic career preparation and development.

Faculty support

Faculty support is indispensable to students' success because "the classroom is the main point of student contact with the college" (Hagedorn, Maxwell, Rodriguez, Hocevar, & Fillpot, 2000, p. 591). As Cain (1999) notes, "the teaching faculty is the key to the community college's work. Other factors in the system, such as the support staff, administrators, politicians and students, might help draw up the route for the trip, but it is the faculty members who drive the bus" (p. 47). Among faculty members, supervisor support is crucial for immigrant students.

My supervisor was the key person who made it possible for me to teach the undergraduate students referred to in Cycle Two. Her support was not limited to providing this crucial teaching opportunity. She also played the role of a cultural broker in the personal and professional growth of the two research groups in Cycles Two and Three. She also often told me how she liked my entrepreneurial spirit, how she trusted my developmental potential, and how

important my research topic was to other immigrants and Canada. Throughout my program of studies, she had applauded every single step of progress made in my work even when the signs were only in their developing stages. She was never short of the most beautiful affirming and encouraging words. Her inspiration had effectively assisted me with overcoming some critical self-doubting and surrendering moments.

In my second year of study, when she heard I was working in a day care, the next day, she hurried into my office and presented a big pile of post-secondary recruiting advertisements on my table, and said something like: "Since you want to work, this is the place you should go." Since this moment, I knew she had expected much higher out of me. (C, Shi, Field notes, August 11, 2006)

I was very fortunate to have some other professors who had known and supported me throughout the program. One of them was a professor who had a wonderful personality. He was so easy going that he was like a buddy with whom I could always ask for a chat or dining out without much hesitation. He had a most sympathetic and loving heart towards disadvantaged international and immigrant students. His concern was not only reflected in his research but also in his everyday life with his needy students. He was also an excellent listener. I could tell, not just his mind, but his heart and soul were with me whenever I talked. He was the one with whom I felt safe to expose my confusion and frustrations and to explore understandings on a casual basis.

A female professor in another department in the faculty had become a close friend in life. We had spent lots of time shopping, dining out, camping, and partying at each other's houses. She knew what was going on in my life and was always available to comfort and advise me when things were distressing for me.

Because of the closeness in our relationship, she personalized the image of “professor” and made a remote and abstract concept of “Canadian professor” understandable and accessible. She showed me what a professor’s personal and professional life was like. She told me how she had become a professor, what her early academic career was like, and the pros and cons of being a professor. She loved the nature of a professor’s work, and always urged me to pursue an academic career. She had faith in my potential and would not allow me to give up my ambition no matter how hopeless I felt in certain situations.

There were other professors who also had very positively influenced my life. In my first attempt at organizing international graduate students to share their research with faculty members and mainstream graduate students, I received the support from a renowned professor who volunteered to be a co-chairperson and mediator connecting each presentation, and helping every student presenter better understand their work. His moderation created a magic effect. His contribution was beyond all of the students’ expectation. In a follow-up email, I commented:

I owe our presentation success immensely to your (a guest speaker’s) unique contributions: your introduction of the context, your very sharp and insightful feedback, especially your big heart, grand vision, pointed comments, and illuminating explanations. Thank you for having guided the presenters and the audience to a fuller and deeper cross-cultural understanding, and at the same time leaving us with questions for further exploration. I think your knowledge, insight, the art of language, and maybe other unknown factors as well, were skillfully manipulated by you. With it, you had guided the group through a wonderful intellectual and spiritual journey. I had not imagined this cooperative format between international students and a professor could have produced such an incredible effect. (C, Shi, Email to a professor, February 20, 2007)

Another professor was one of the few Chinese professors in our faculty. I felt close even before meeting him just because he shared same native language

and culture. He was the only precious role model I could relate to and was an available coach who inspired and guided me at every crucial stage of my student and professional life. His insider knowledge and skill were easy to understand and practical to apply. His attitude and approaches in dealing with challenging cross-cultural issues helped me anticipate some problems and smoothly integrate upstream and downstream steps in the accommodation process.

The effective learning from a mentor of the same race echoes the findings of several other studies on cross-cultural mentoring which have revealed that protégés receive more career and psychosocial support than protégés who have mentors who are not different from them (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Feldman, Folks & Turnley, 1999; Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005).

Another source of support came from my department chairperson. Three months after submitting my teaching application, she invited me to her office, listened to my understanding of some students' negative course evaluations on my previous term's teaching, and then told me how she perceived them. She told me that she had read similar evaluations of other international instructors' teaching. She also saw the need of having ESL student teachers exposed to minority instructors' teaching. In the end, she said: "I hope you accept this job offer."

From these experiences, it is obvious that strong support from faculty and administrators is a key element in promoting adaptive attitudes about self in university and work settings among immigrant doctoral students. Some researchers have suggested that social support interventions across the multiple layers of immigrant students' sociocultural contexts would be beneficial (Kenny,

Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003) and enhance academic engagement, continuity, and success (Constantine et al., 1998). For most immigrant Ph.D. students, career is not just about one's autonomy to choose based on one's skills and interests, but intertwined with factors embedded in the larger socio-cultural system. Addressing these contextual factors is a way of validating immigrant students' needs and experiences. Support from faculty members can be easily recognized as a significant factor for my personal and professional development and may be inferred to have been absent in the lives of some of the other participants in this study.

Peer support

Informed peer support has a positive and powerful influence on career advancement. In this action research project, all participants, including me, developed trust towards one another through open and honest discussions, sharing one's doubts and opinions, and in-depth exploration of the roots of some of the taken-for-granted beliefs and behaviors. We became aware of our weaknesses and drew insights and energy from one another's beliefs, understandings and experiences. I reflected how the first group of research participants had illuminated and inspired me:

I once argued with my supervisor when she suggested me to use action research methodology. I thought I had already started my career preparation and could move faster if I conducted the project alone. Now three months have passed since our project group worked collaboratively, I have never had such an open, honest, trustworthy, and supportive relationship with any other groups since I immigrated to Canada. It was a transformative process for me. We tried very hard to make sense what our problems are, why they are important to us, if we can overcome them, and how to tackle them. Their opinions revealed through discussions and reflective writings can always surprise me and challenge me; accordingly,

I often raise provocative questions to challenge their beliefs. In the beginning both of the two sides were afraid the others might be hurt by frank comments and questions, soon we realized we had already created a safe environment for us although not very comfortable because we always tried to go beyond our comfortable zones for new horizons. Their unique experiences, sharp insight, sensitive perception, critical mind, and questioning spirit, have let me see many of my stereotyped beliefs. This kind of learning can definitely not be acquired otherwise. My personal and professional growth during this period of time owes a lot to this collaborative work. (C, Shi, Field Notes, May 24, 2007)

Among all the necessary support gained from this action research, emotional support was felt most needed. Although Nick appeared to have obtained some insights and inspirations from the research activities through his self expressions, he probably has not been fully aware how other participants have benefited from his contributions. Two years after the second cycle of study when Nick had been very actively engaged, I became to understand better what impact Nick had left on me:

I have been reading your reflective writings these days (actually I have read many times over the course of research); and the impact is as powerful as the first time I read them. You have been very attentive and honest to what you have experienced and how these experiences have affected you in various ways. I can easily find so many similar experiences and frustrations in mine now. I am very grateful that you write them out so that others including me can feel we are not alone in this process of academic career transition. I am thinking hard how to analyze these data and present them. I only wish my writing is good enough to best use all the very previous data. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 23, 2009)

Nick, with his courage, honesty, and eloquence of expression, had continuously reminded me that I am not alone in experiencing struggles and frustrations in the process of academic career transition even without his awareness. Nevertheless, this kind of moral support is much more needed than lofty teaching to those who were suffering low self-esteem.

Another very important person who helped me smoothly transition through the whole teaching experience over a two year period was a fellow graduate student in my department. A mainstream Caucasian Canadian who had taught English in several countries, he also conducted research in five of the classes I taught on Canadian and international undergraduate students' different perceptions of having a visible minority and non-native English speaking teacher. Every time I received unexpected devastating students' evaluation from mainstream ESL student teachers, he shared with me his understandings from post-colonial and socio-cultural perspectives. He reassured me of the success I had identified and experienced over the undergraduate teaching process, as well as positive feedback from international ESL students. He enlightened my interpretation of the disturbing situation by successfully transcending my personal anguish and sorrows so that I could envision this individual case as a broader social issue. He also shared how he and his father (a retired university professor) used to perceive and deal with negative students' evaluations.

Under his direct guidance and reinforcement, my sense of responsibility, for the first time, went beyond that of a teacher to that of a responsible member of society. As a result, I accepted his suggestion of continuing to apply to teach the same undergraduate ESL curriculum course. Although feeling scared and vulnerable, I was convinced that I should be there to discomfort the white students' image of university instructors in terms of skin color and race and to help develop in them a sense of diversity, social complexity, and mutual respect within the ESL teaching field.

He supported my professional growth not just from a researcher's perspective; his generosity exceeded his research boundary by introducing me to a part time teaching position that I have held for two years.

Student support

Although I had been teaching for over twenty years in China and was a reasonably confident instructor, my personal standard of success depended on the students, their learning and acceptance of me. Canadian student teachers' acknowledgement and recognition were what I desperately needed to develop confidence in entering a successful academic career in Canada.

While recovering from the rejection of my teaching ability during my first teaching position in Canada (as described in chapter one) had taken me three years, then the distrust and rejection from two groups of mainstream undergraduate students turned me into a doubtful and angry individual who had a deep despair about Canadian mainstream students and the post-secondary education system in general. When I was in the worst state after having received the second group of student's course evaluations, I received an email from a student, Betty.

I have no problem believing that your ESL students think you are an exceptional teacher. You are very knowledgeable, sensitive and understanding. I also know that our XXX class had a totally different dynamic. At times I felt uncomfortable with that group of people. There were some very dominant personalities in that class and I had a hard time with some of the bad attitudes portrayed. I think that some of the people sensed that you were a bit nervous (at first, anyway) and they felt they could manipulate your easy going personality. Cathy, it was a good course and you are a good teacher. Your assignments were fair. I think that at times the class was confused by the discovery style learning, but they need to know that this is a pedagogical tool that they will likely be using in their classrooms. The XXX students are so stressed ... I think you will do fine

teaching that class next fall with the program and materials you used for our class. Just remember to give very clear instructions and let them know who's the boss! (Betty, Personal Communication, March 29, 2009)

Betty's letter cheered me up. Life came back to my surrendering heart; I could breathe and smile again. I told her, inspired by her encouragement I would apply for the following year's teaching. Betty sincerely responded: "I am happy to hear the news that you applied to teach XXX again. I hope you get it and I know you will do great. Don't let the stressed out XXX students intimidate you!" (C, Shi, Personal Communication with Betty, March 29, 2009)

Several months later, another student, Anna, learned of my failure in applying for the following year's teaching. Like Betty, Anna was a Canadian born former student, who generously provided her insight in helping me see the value of my work:

Despite the harsh and unfair treatment by your colleagues you have demonstrated superior knowledge, understanding and dedication to the betterment of this field. The students ... have a delusion of what teaching is as they have had nothing to prepare them for the real challenges that they will face teaching new immigrants. Your approach to teaching ESL made perfect sense to me as I was teaching ESL as I was going to school. Many of the theories and activities described the immigrant experience perfectly. I feel blessed to have had you as a professor and the world is missing out on what I think is the most important subject and study to this society. ... I am so sorry from the bottom of my heart that this was the result of all of your hard work. ... I know you have so much to offer this field ... the world of ESL teaching needs you desperately!! I only hope that I can be part of that because I think you are something profound and a true inspiration to me! (Anna, Personal Communication, October 25, 2009)

I was very much encouraged by Anna's compliment. My confidence bounced up to a much higher level. I admitted there were areas to be improved, but I needed to know that I was capable of teaching mainstream undergraduate students. Although the university-employer would not provide this much needed

opportunity for my further professional growth, these two students had very generously assured me of my capability and potential. Their support allowed me to see that my negative attitude towards Canadian students was an unfair and unhealthy hasty generalization about them, my professional skills and the academic system. While the institutional response of the university toward international students is sometimes one of neglect, and while some individuals reinforce this attitude of neglect (and even hostility in some cases), there are nonetheless certain individuals who make it their responsibility to offer support.

The next time I met Anna was during a conference presentation. After I finished speaking about my teaching experiences, and while most of the audience was still present, Anna identified herself as my former student and told the crowd how she thought of me as her teacher, and said that the reason she chose to pursue an ESL teaching career was because of inspiration from me. I reflected on how her spontaneous speech had helped me recover from this painful loss in an email to her:

Your sincere appreciation and powerful inspiration before the crowd of audience nearly brought my tears out. It is not exaggerating that your speech is the magic medicine to help me heal. If one had never been hurt so badly by students, he or she would have difficulty in understanding what every single point you had made meant to me. I can't thank you enough for your sincerity and your most beautiful heart.

After you left, a few visible minority members of the audience came to me, thanked me for speaking about this unpleasant experience, and encouraged me to listen for personal judgment and positive feedback. I realized that I had always given up on myself by relying on *Others* to decide if I was qualified for teaching or not, and whether or not I was a good teacher. I didn't know how I had come to this point of uncertainty in my ability and disbelief in my personal judgment. I guess I have to say that my immigration and graduate teaching assistant experience had depowered

rather than empowered me as a teaching professional in certain ways. (C, Shi, Email to a former undergraduate student, October 11, 2009)

During the past five years of teaching in a Canadian university and college, I had received sincere gratitude, appreciation, and support from both international and mainstream students, from both in-service and pre-service teachers. Their recognition of my capability of serving the ESL teaching field was the most powerful motivation for me to keep pursuing an academic teaching career.

Canadian spouse support

Before marrying my Canadian Caucasian husband, I had never thought about how people would view intermarriage. When coming to the stage of writing about how my husband had supported my academic career preparation, I had quite surprising findings from some Chinese websites. One belief among some Chinese people is that foreign husbands are usually old, ugly and poor, and are often intimidated by Western women's independence, so they need young and pretty Asian wives to gain self-esteem. I chatted with two Canadian female friends to check this assumption from their perspectives; they seemed to agree. I read many similar ridiculing comments from some Chinese on the Chinese women who had married Western men. The most shocking one was one that compared marrying a Western man to picking up a piece of Western garbage discarded by Western women. Later, I understood that this is both in-group and out-group racism. This denouncing attitude reflects a perceived reason that sometimes people choose to intermarry because they are rejecting their own culture (e.g. Char, 1977).

I was married in the second year of my doctoral studies. The Canadian man I married was a younger and independent plant manager. He did not need to

marry a Chinese new immigrant to gain self-confidence and keep his house managed. He valued a women's inner strength and wished all were independent and strong. On my side, I did not marry him as a rejection of my native culture, nor was I engaged in the conscious enactment of what traditional assimilation theory promotes as believing in the disappearance of cultural differences and causing society to blend together as 'one'. My professional integrating process had been positively affected by my Canadian husband's support. Gopalkrishnan and Babacan (2007) recognize that intermarriage has consequences for socio-economic status, social and relational networks, religious practices, and lifestyle. Illuminated by their understanding, I identified three major areas of influence from my Canadian husband on my professional integration: socio-economic status, lifestyle, and socio-cultural capital.

Moving up the Socio-Economic Ladder

It is often believed that members of interracial marriages experience employment advantages over their counterparts. My moving up the economic ladder is not a stereotyped result of intermarriage between two persons of a developed and a developing country. Due to my many years of successful business in China, I already owned a decent mortgage-free house and sufficient savings before the marriage. My husband's support in my moving up economically lay at the conceptual level rather than through direct financial support.

First of all, he helped me set a boundary between volunteer work and a paid job. I used to think the more volunteer work I did the better chance I had in

getting a job out of it. I had done numerous volunteer work but had never financially benefited from any of them. There were three jobs I applied for based on my previous long-term volunteer positions including one offering \$12 an hour. Surprisingly, all applications for these jobs ended in vain. During this continuing application and rejection process, my husband kept reminding me of my worth and encouraged me to prove it in the job market rather than repeating a vicious circle by solely relying on volunteer communities for jobs.

Then there came an opportunity in applying for a teaching position in a government organization, I was told by an insider that the organization usually does not hire clients (I had been its client for three and half years). If they do need clients, they give a mug as a present; but would pay several hundred dollars to a university professor for doing the same work. By then, my Canadian husband had taught me to value my worth and maintain dignity, which helped me realize that I actually had been “utilized” for a long time, so I decide to ask not only for payment but also for the highest possible salary within the range. I was warned that I might lose this job opportunity if I asked for too much. Too much means that they may feel uncomfortable, first of all, to pay a client, whom in their eyes, is so incapable that they rely on them to look for jobs; and secondly, they may think “you should feel grateful now I am willing to give you a job. How dare you bargain with me”? I decided to take the risk in order to assert my worth and defend my dignity. A main reason that I was so bold to try my luck is that I had already been offered a course to teach by my department. Amazingly, I got a job offer call in less than a week. I was offered \$ 60 an hour, the highest I had ever been offered. (C, Shi, Email to her supervisor, April 29, 2008)

Thus, I changed the channel of job seeking from my volunteer positions to job markets backed up by my husband’s recognition and pride in my work ethic and capability. It was as if this marriage had turned me into a mainstream social member who could again take personal worth and fairness for granted.

My husband’s support continued after I obtained jobs, and he kept encouraging me to best use my skills and to gain more economic returns at the

same time; for example, in a teaching program I served, there were different levels of courses, and the pay for the top levels was higher. I preferred teaching higher levels of students, for I enjoyed the higher level of mental engagement. I had been placed in teaching positions at a wide variety of levels and had accepted whatever was assigned, for I wanted to keep a job and did not want to be regarded as being inflexible. But my husband never stopped reminding me of my preference, my strengths, and weaknesses (Lower level students might not want a non-native speaker teaching pronunciation, speaking skills, and culture). Having these thoughts in mind, whenever there was an opportunity to mention my preference, I always expressed it. Gradually I established an acknowledgement and recognition in teaching advanced classes among administrators, colleagues, and students. In the meantime, I received salary raises together with others.

Adapting to a Balanced Lifestyle

After having been a single mother for ten years, and at the same time, having been living a very fast-paced entrepreneur's life, I continued in a busy and miserable new immigrant's life. Marriage, all of a sudden, changed my routine life as if a train were riding off its track, to a side path so foreign and beautiful like an earthly paradise to me. For the first time in my life, I started enjoying the other side of life: ease, comfort, fun, love, and happiness. My mood and attitude also changed from loneliness to companionship, from loss to found, from indignation to love, and from blaming to appreciating. Rather than begging for mercy and opportunity, I began feeling empowered and being able to manage my life at my own will and at ease.

I began to have weekends and holidays spent on family and personal fun activities rather than to get on the first bus for my university office to study. An unexpected happy result was that this shift did not reduce my productivity. My physical and psychological wellbeing had enhanced to a never reached height. A student's life, for the first time, in my case, did not have to mean seventy hours of work a week. My new balanced life between study and family let me realize that students could have a real life, and they deserved a normal life as much as anybody else. The initial guilt in having the happiness of relaxation and entertainment had gradually turned to an acceptance and a necessity.

After having got several job offers at one time, after finally being able to choose freely what to take, after having gracefully declined an offer of \$60 per hour of teaching, and after being highly complimented by the director at a staff meeting, eventually, all of a sudden, all the previous hardships seemed worth living, and all the sacrifices paid back ... my damaged health began slowly and yet steadily recovering. On weekends, we often dined out or went to concerts. On holidays, we always had family and friends over for celebration. Lying on the hammock surrounded by flowers and plants, and bathed in the bright sunshine in our back yard, I often felt amazed at a life style so foreign to me. I was often wondering: do I deserve this? In the first year of marriage, my husband and I were often overwhelmed by the wonders brought by a happy marriage. (C, Shi, Reflection, August 21, 2008)

Gaining Language, Social and Cultural Capital

Reflecting on the tendency of socio-economic upward mobilization and an enriched lifestyle through marrying a Canadian, some unmentioned advantages should not be overlooked. One is the benefit of using and improving English on a daily basis and in a safe family environment. Although a foreign accent can not be eliminated at such a late age, my language had changed gradually towards a more conversational and natural style, away from its bookish and artificial style. When

my pronunciation or intonation sounded strange, my husband always exclaimed “so cute” with a big loving smile. To him, it seemed to be a cool thing to pronounce something in a different way. So my language errors were either “admired” or simply ignored. He would never tell me that my English was not good enough to be an English instructor.

Another advantage lies in an increased inter-cultural competency. An intercultural and interracial family represents the fundamental fact that we are only one race – the human race. Intercultural families demonstrate the possibility of achieving unity in diversity. Living well in an intercultural family reduces the fear of the unknown and enhances confidence in managing competently in a larger and more diverse society. In the case of our family, I could no longer stick to the beliefs and practices of my native culture. I needed to understand how my husband, his family and friends thought and functioned. Whenever there was a tension, I was forced to initiate or facilitate a strategic and smooth exchange of ideas. Different ways of understanding and approaching challenges of life, which were once thought of as differences that might cause conflicts, became opportunities for developing a beneficial flexibility of approach. I began to see my prejudices, those of others and how they could be reduced. By wrestling with difference rather than relaxing in commonalities I became engaged in on-going conflict confrontation and resolution which lead to personal and professional growth in understanding and self-understanding.

Issue	External barrier	Internal Barrier	Success
University system and academic racism. Negative social modeling and overcoming it	X		X
Built support network with - Faculty - Peers - Students - Family	X		X
Intercultural Incompetence through marriage to a Canadian - Further social integration - Gaining more opportunities - Enhanced self-esteem and confidence - Increased social, cultural, and economic capital - Balanced life style and increased productivity		X	X

Understanding Barrier Transformative Potential through the Lens of Dialectical Theory

Born in a traditional Chinese culture and growing up in an educational environment heavily influenced by Marxism and Maoism's dialectical philosophy, I began to gradually understand that critical pedagogy had enabled me to problematize an ideal ideology and practice (in my mind before immigration), social constructivism pointed the way to changing my undesired reality by working with others, ecological theory allowed me to see the complexity and dynamics of my (or any) environment, and dialectical theory helped me make the changes needed.

The survival approach I adopted in my first undergraduate teaching (a co-teaching) is an example of an application of the dialectical approach. The co-

teaching opportunity came without any anticipation. A year earlier, I had experienced the devastating forced resignation of my first teaching job in Canada, which had left me in complete confusion as to how to gain recognition from an employer. When this co-teaching job was assigned, I felt like a homeless person offered materials for constructing a new home; my old flame had been re-sparkled. I desperately needed a successful experience to restore my confidence in continuing a teaching career. In order to ensure success, I put myself into a subordinate position. I made every effort to accommodate and avoid any potential conflicts:

Later I gradually learned that, to move on from a phase of loss to a phase of recovery and reconstruction, one has to appropriate others' voices (Cathy, Coursework).

Hoffman (1989) observes and explains with great vividness what the beginning of a recreation process looks like:

Since I lack a voice of my own, the voices of others invade me as if I were a silent ventriloquist. They ricochet within me, carrying on conversations, lending me their modulations, intonations, rhythms. I do not yet possess them; they possess me. But some of them satisfy a need; some of them stick to my ribs. ... Eventually, the voices enter me; by assuming them, I gradually make them mine (pp. 219-220).

To help understand the usefulness of this survival approach, a general dialectical reasoning can be summarized into these basic concepts: Everything is transient; Everything is made out of opposing forces; Quantity changes lead to quality change; Change moves in spirals.

Western and Eastern understanding in the use of dialectic approach differs in reacting towards contradictions. Western philosophy focuses on contradictions and the attempt to overcome contradictions in favour of higher order integrations; Whereas Eastern philosophy emphasizes more on acceptance and tolerance of contradictions rather than active change towards a synthesis (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001).

One dialectical concept among many is that of Marx's and Engel's dialectical materialism; Maoism was developed from them. As other Chinese of my generation and older, I had received Maoist model of education in my many years of formal education. Maoism synthesized both the Western and Chinese philosophical traditions. Traditionally, Chinese believe the world is in constant flux and that the part cannot be understood except in relation to the whole (e. g., Nakamura, 1964/1978). This integral and changing perspective is different from that of Westerners who tend to differentiate the object from the field and to reason analytically about its behavior (Nisbett, 1998; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 1999).

Learning to divorce failure from self-image and self-worth, and to see hope and even success in failure, can be detected in the following reflection:

I stopped writing last week due to a great despair caused by failing to obtain a continual contract and then a rejection of a job application. I began doubting again why I should working so hard on my Ph.D. study, which is of no real value at all – won't keep my job and won't get me a job, either. This week the depression is reduced a lot, for my previous employer said she would very likely offer me a job in May. It seems that I am not bad in her mind. Inspired, I went back to writing. (C, Shi, Email to Nick, April 23, 2009).

Fear of failure is a self-esteem issue and arises from the mistaken belief that experiences which result in failure define one's self as a failure. Fear of failure prevents many people from reaching their full potential. It generates an inability to make committed decisions and persevere in the face of obstacles. Instead of viewing failure as something to be avoided, Mao's holistic and compromising approach turns it into a stepping-stone on the path to success. In other words, success is the destination, and so called failure is how you get there.

To answer the dominant research question on barriers and successes in immigrant students' academic career preparation, there is a need to summarize the themes that emerged throughout the three cycles of the study. Four pairs of significant contradictory relations during immigrant doctoral students' complex social interactions are identified and discussed in the following section.

Hard skills and soft skills

Professional skills are often divided into two categories: hard skills and soft skills. Both skills are important components of human capital. Hard skills are the technical expertise one needs to get a job done. The soft skills that relate to graduate employability are synthesized by Andrews and Higson (2008) as professionalism, reliability, the ability to cope with uncertainty, the ability to work under pressure, the ability to plan and think strategically, the capability to communicate and interact with others, either in teams or through networking, good written and verbal communication skills, information and communication technology skills, creativity and self-confidence, good self-management and time-management skills, a willingness to learn and accept responsibility.

The concept of soft skills can be strange to immigrant students from some cultures, and the teaching of them is not explicitly mentioned or included in doctoral programs of studies. Becoming aware of soft skills can be a long and puzzling process of experiencing unknown and confusing obstacles and failures. Take me for example, for a long time I was not able to recognise what went on behind the scenes.

Good news first. I started teaching again last Friday. My husband doesn't understand why I still can't sleep well. Last term's unexpected job loss and a "narrow escape" this time have a deeper and subtler reason other than a mere economic downturn effect. I just figured it out and I guess my assumption should be correct. It is because I had totally ignored or was lack of "street smartness". For job searching and maintenance, I always thought professional knowledge and skills were the most important areas, so I put all my time and effort here. I didn't realize that some non-academic/ professional factors could overpower them, such as visibility, personality, group recognition, comfort and acceptance. Realizing these was quite a shock to me. A self-reflecting process has been a long, confusing, disoriented and painful experience. Although this awareness angered me, belittled myself, and sacred me away for awhile, I decided to face the challenge and adjust myself, rather than running away from the problematic reality.

The role my husband played in helping me notice the cause of my job loss was not quite helpful. As always, he has been standing by my side closely and firmly, which is a great comfort and assurance. He strongly believes in my ability and has very high ranking of my work ethic, professional knowledge and skills, and connection with students. But together we have ignored some of my inner weaknesses; we have chosen to blame those who didn't give me a job. As a coping strategy, we have tried many other career options, when one fails, we turn to another one. Thus, we have been quickly trying some alternative careers and have been turning (running) away from them all, but every single option is hard to start, so my problem has no quick solution. I even suggested to him that I should work at MacDonald or Tim Horton's when the desire to work reached to a breaking point. He, of course, hated to see that I went so low to waste my "too precious brain" (his words).

Only after I got this job offer in an unusual way (instead of contacting the director by emails, I went to express my deep concern in person. I got the

offer the same day), did I gradually and painfully start understanding myself within a work environment which is composed by people and not just the teaching business. The shock and pain do not mainly come from a realization of profession and social exclusion. They are more of a blow and hurt at self-fulfilling pride - because of my past “glorious” accomplishments and admiration by many others in China, and also because of the research I have been doing, I overestimated my knowledge on this topic and my skill in my professional career advancement. Now I realized how this self-content and belief have blinded me from examining my own problems. I now feel that it actually makes very good sense in real life that E.Q. plays a more important role than I.Q. in one’s success. What makes me feel bad about or hate myself is that this is the No.1 life wisdom I had been constantly teaching my daughter and my students. You see, how ironic this has become to me, who succeeded in doing lots of things based on this belief and practice, now in a new country and with new people, I was being punished by ignoring this kind of non-academic street smartness. (C. Shi, Email to a professor, May 10, 2009)

The intensive and extensive exposure and interactions in job searching function as another trigger for my mentality transformation. As revealed, social interactions enable a new immigrant professional to open up one’s boundary, transcend the habitual patterns of time, space, and self, and constantly make multi-discipline and multi-viewpoint dialogues, then eventually create a new being who is gradually becoming an insider with increasing cultural and social capitals to function more competently in the host society. After having worked for five years in Canada, I started to understand the elusive nature of soft job skills which played powerfully in my academic career preparation.

Soft skills, valued by the Canadian knowledge economy market, are often undervalued and ignored at the beginning by immigrant students, and are often regarded as more difficult to understand and to acquire than hard skills. In Pew Charitable Trusts report, Golde and Dore (2001) put forward that students in the arts and sciences do not understand what doctoral study requires, how the process

works, and how to navigate it effectively. Their data indicate a mismatch among the purpose of doctoral education, the aspirations of the students, and the realities of their careers within and outside academia. Bowen and Rudenstein (1992) share a similar perception that there is little accountability in Ph.D. programs in the arts and sciences disciplines, and advising services are isolated and isolating. The data from Cycles Two and Three also reveal the same finding. Out of the nine participants, two (Nick and I) were from the disciplines of education and arts. Comparatively speaking, we two encountered greater difficulties as we needed to acquire more soft skills to enter our professional fields.

Purcell and Elias (2006) point out that doctoral graduates of education are more likely than those from other disciplines to enter a career in academia. Yet most studies on academic career preparation of PhD students are based on the experiences of those in the natural sciences. Students of arts and education may experience more difficulties acquiring soft skills than students from more technical disciplines because they have less transferable hard skills from the academic and professional experiences in their home countries. Their professional soft skills are contextualized elsewhere. Graduate students, in general, do not receive systematic preparation in the development of soft skills. Based on this understanding, some researchers (e.g. Vlasceanu & Voicu, 2006; Andrews & Higson, 2008) propose that university programs take responsibility to promote students' employability by equipping graduates with both hard skills and the ability to utilize softer skills and abilities.

The difficulty in acquiring soft skills can greatly impact immigrant doctoral students' career aspirations and persistence. In my case, the failure of continuing to have opportunities to teach undergraduate students was partially due to my lack of awareness and ability to negotiate. After receiving the first set of negative comments from students on my course evaluations, the department chairperson mentioned inviting me and the researcher who had been conducting research in my classes to give a presentation at a monthly faculty staff meeting. I was thrilled at the idea but did not follow through. If I had exposed the issue and had been able to make more related decision makers aware of the situation, perhaps subsequent teaching opportunities might have not been taken away from me. Not being able to see the advantages of such a presentation nor the potential opportunities that might arise rendered me with a victimized and detached attitude towards the system.

A valuable lesson I had learned is that I lacked some crucial soft skills. I needed to learn to be willing to think from the *Others'* perspectives, and to learn to deal with conflicts in a socially and professionally appropriate manner. This soft skill learning was much more difficult for me than learning hard skills, especially when my past entrepreneurial experiences are considered. For many years in China I had been the one on the very top of an organization making decisions and giving orders. I had forgotten what life at the bottom and margins of an organizational hierarchy was like. At the beginning of entering the Canadian work place, I carried on my old leadership character by talking frankly and honestly, and consequently, I was released from the system immediately and

mercilessly. Although my pride suffered unbearable pain, I found it was still hard for me to change my belief in social fairness and equality and gradually started learning how to perceive and understand my situation in a larger context and from *Others'* perspective, and to change my situation.

This street smartness or practical intelligence is different from academic intelligence, and may not be obtained directly through formal education, for the problems faced in everyday life often have little to do with the knowledge or skills acquired through formal education or the abilities used in classroom activities. To acquire street smartness or sociability (Allatt, 1993) as discussed in Cycle Three, one needs to be, first of all, aware of the difference between hard skills (academic skills) and soft (practical) skills, and then to pursue necessary soft skills to succeed.

Outsider knowledge and insider knowledge

The division between outsider and insider knowledge results from social closure and exclusion. Social exclusion is a blend of mutually reinforcing processes of deprivation, resulting in the isolation of individuals and groups from the main-stream of opportunities society has to offer. (Mayes, Berghman, & Salais, 2001).

Ideally, knowledge is passed down from earlier generations, created, and shared by everyone in a society, but this is not practicable in all societies, which has become a long standing problem in the sociology of knowledge. One conception in understanding the problem is that one group of people has the privilege to access the knowledge whereas *Others* are virtually excluded from

accessing it based on their groups' social positions. Thus, no matter how talented and hardworking the outsiders (e.g. immigrant graduate students) are, they are systemically excluded from gaining access to social and cultural capital.

Instead of solving the problem of social inequality, theories of social exclusion focusing on barriers may prevent disadvantaged groups of people from improving their lives. This is because "we may blame the advantaged groups for a failure to reach out and include the disadvantaged communities. Or we may blame the disadvantaged communities for a failure to develop and utilize their social resources in ways that allow them to compete with the advantaged communities" (Alexander, 2005, p.3). How can this vicious cycle be broken?

A dialectical approach is a complementary way of understanding the contradictory relationship between insider and outsider knowledge. The dialectical perspective is discussed in three aspects: 1) Outsider and insider knowledge is not a state but a process; 2) Outsider and insider knowledge is interactive; and 3) Outsider and insider knowledge can be transformed.

Outsider and insider knowledge are not a fixed state but an evolving process. To acquire insider knowledge one must first be aware that it exists. Then the aspiring insider must seek ways to make the necessary and appropriate knowledge visible and explicit. Next, it is necessary to validate whether or not the knowledge is a misconception or a truth in a certain context. Then, an approach needs to be developed to access the knowledge from either current or former insiders or acquire it through long term on-the-job experience and professional

socialization. This insider knowledge is far above and beyond formal education and is largely local and unique to each setting.

Outsider and insider knowledge is interactive. Isolated immigrant students have less time to become exposed and to interact with mainstream people either socially or professionally to improve their marginalized position, and have no means of socializing towards their desired career. They are more likely to further isolate themselves in their own language and cultural communities where they feel comfort and understanding from others, and hence often strengthen their belief in the impossibility of accessing insider knowledge and reduce the potential of venturing out to participate in activities that increase insider knowledge.

Outsider and insider knowledge can be transformed. Over time, what constitutes or causes exclusion changes. In a knowledge-driven and internationalized economy, outsider and insider knowledge is in a constant state of change. This is not a one-way assimilating process. The production, dissemination, and critique of information in the Canadian economy require new intellectual, technical, global, and interpersonal skills. Exclusion is not an unsolvable problem that has to remain as it is. To create a win-win situation, outsider knowledge provides alternative approaches and increases chances of greater success. Networking needs to be inclusive. It needs to connect both insiders and outsiders to break down any internal in-groups within a community.

External barriers and internal barriers

Career barriers have been described as factors that thwart the achievement of career goals (Crites, 1969). Crites (1969) saw barriers as either internal

conflicts or external frustrations that might impede career development. Swanson and Tovar (1991a) propose that attitudinal (internal), social/interpersonal (external), and interactional barriers (between internal and external) should be considered.

Some studies have investigated optimism in the career area. Creed, Patton and Bartrum (2002), for example, found that students who endorsed higher levels of optimism showed greater career planning and exploration, were more decided about their career and had more career goals, while those high in pessimism reported less career knowledge, were more indecisive and achieved more poorly academically. The findings from these studies suggest that optimism and pessimism might play a functional role in the development of career-related variables.

Another perspective in understanding external and internal barriers is self-efficacy theory. Individuals react to the same challenge differently depending on their self-efficacy expectations and action (Swanson & Woitke 1997). When facing difficulties in job acquisition and maintenance and seeing them negatively, for example, immigrant Ph.D. student's self-efficacy beliefs may be low. A social environment of job discrimination, racism, and prejudice can do likewise. However, some students may react to the same situations positively – as learning opportunities; thus, their self-efficacy may not be lowered. Whether such experiences reinforce or promote low levels of self-efficacy depends upon the individual's perceptions and whether or not the barriers are overcome.

While these psychological and cognitive career theories offer opportunities for individuals to understand and redefine barriers and gain a sense of control over their career development the dialectical approach actually became a behavior changing tool. Put another way, the former is a tool of awareness while the latter one of action.

Dialectical theory views external and internal barriers as relative concepts. For instance, in the beginning, some new immigrant doctoral students tend to think that all the difficulties and barriers that come along their way are their personal problems and it is all up to them to overcome the external barriers, as we see in Nick: “I have had difficulties in going through my programs so far ... However, I have been thinking that troubles that foreign students have are supposed to be managed by foreign students themselves, and they cannot blame *Others* for their difficulties.” (Nick, Cycle 2). As immigrant students become more enlightened through Western critical pedagogy, their belief may turn in the opposite direction, as with me.

After taking two courses on critical pedagogy in the first year of my doctoral program, I felt the theory made perfect sense to me. My shameful thinking of incapability of coping with formidable barriers immediately turned into a blaming attitude towards the unjust society. Thus all barriers in my eyes became external, and I thought that my university could correct its own misconceptions and misconduct. Of course, nothing dramatic happened. Some of my literature review on academic racism further assured me of how naive I was and how hard it would be, if not impossible, to even make a dent in the system.

This seemingly unshakeable reality forced me to explore and utilize my inner strengths to force a way out of the hard shell in which I was my own prisoner. Social constructivism empowered me to reshape my own reality and future. I began to develop internal control of my situation and believe that I could change things for the better (with strong motivation and hard work), although my progress was minimal. Ecological theory taught me that change can only happen with a joint effort from both the individual and outsiders (individuals and institutional structures) because the barriers encountered are internal, external and interactive.

Not only do individuals define “barriers” themselves, but also bring an attitude (positive or negative) and perception towards the barriers. Luzzo (1996) suggested that the perception of career-related barriers need not necessarily be viewed as negative for the individual, and that some individuals may view barriers as challenging rather than defeating. The factor that influences whether the individual perceives a barrier as being challenging or defeating is their cognitive style. Lazarus (1991) has referred to optimism/pessimism as an appraisal style as it can influence the way an individual perceives, feels and copes with a situation. Some researchers have evidenced that international students often have high expectations of what their life will be like... and they may experience psychological crises or social dysfunctions, such as interpersonal stress, low self-esteem, racial or ethnic discrimination, disappointment, resentment, anger, sadness, physical illness, and other symptoms of culture shock, when their

expectations are unmet (Leong & Chou, 1996; Oei & Notowidjojo, 1990; Winkelman, 1994).

To conclude, a dialectical approach enabled me to perceive external barriers as not necessarily defeating forces and also see that a positive attitude can turn a roadblock into a stepping stone, and a failure into a success. The dialectical approach creates much space for individuals to develop and utilize their inner strengths to conquer external barriers.

Barriers and success

Even after receiving local high-end education professional immigrants are less likely to experience continued career success since they face additional roadblocks to getting started in achieving their career goals than their Canadian-born counterparts. Despite the growing importance of this issue for Canada, limited research has been conducted to provide helpful insights on individual coping attitudes and strategies for effectively integrating into the Canadian academia with the goal of continued career success.

A reflection of mine reveals how I came to an understanding that change can happen, and change can only happen from inside out.

These initial shock, conflicts, frustrations, and denial became a driving force for study. I wanted to understand why a well-intended and capable professional such as me could have been punished and excluded from a field I had committed all my career life with passion. I wanted to continue with my teaching career. I wanted to continue to excel and to enjoy working with students. In order to achieve this wish, I needed to be understood and be accepted.

Driven by a painful eagerness of adapting and integrating, I had taken as many courses as possible in order to maximize my formal learning opportunity. This type of classroom study exposed me to a large amount of reading, thinking, discussing and writing. This intimate and intensive

contact helped me understand Canadians' ideology, beliefs and values from historical, systematic and theoretical perspectives.

This is an enlightening and insightful learning. My attitude began changing from a radical critical pedagogy, to a socio-cultural, then to an ecological attitude. For the first time, I realized the danger of self-exclusion by positioning myself in a passive, victimized and criticizing place. I began questioning the value of sympathy towards the marginalized immigrants. (C, Shi, Reflection, August 21, 2008)

From the perspective of dialectical materialism in immigrant doctoral students' life circumstances, barriers and successes co-exist even though barriers may far exceed opportunities, supports, and success. The relationship between barriers/failures and success is relative, temporary, and in constant movement, which means failure and success are interchangeable. Barriers and failures can become the preparation or a stepping stone for a success; in contrast, success may bear factors of a future failure. An active process of hard work in small steps can eventually lead to successfully achieving one's career goal. The dramatic change from failure and frustration may appear to be abrupt but is in fact built on previous gradual, insignificant and imperceptible quantitative progress. In other words, success is out there to be achieved; it is crucial to see the big picture instead of being blinded by a current (and temporary) overwhelmingly unpromising situation. Difficulties and failures are finite, but hope is infinite.

Integrating Theoretical Framework

In research on career development, Leong (1995) argued that there has been a serious limitation – a lack of a theoretical framework – and pointed out two major reasons for this limitation. One was due to the fact that most researchers were not specifically interested in career development, for they were mainly from

psychology-related disciplines. Their research questions and hypotheses had not been derived from theories on career development, but mainly from psychology. The other reason, according to Leong whose work focused on Asian Americans, was that they were particularly interested in European Americans, so the theories and the models developed were not necessarily applicable to other groups of immigrants. One of the two solutions Leong suggested is to adopt an interdisciplinary theoretical framework rather than an isolated perspective. To be specific, Leong suggested a framework consisting of psychological, sociological, and economic components.

Enlightened by Leong's interdisciplinary approach in understanding barriers experienced by immigrant doctoral students in their academic career preparation, I propose a theoretical framework consisting of critical pedagogy, social constructivism, social ecological theory, and dialectical theory in research on immigrant doctoral students' academic career preparation. Economic theory is not included at this point because it is beyond the scope of this research project. In the following section, I discuss how these four perspectives can be integrated to form a procedural, integral, and holistic conceptual framework.

Critical pedagogy

A critical approach can elucidate many things in the environment of immigrant students, including differences in cultures, traditions, beliefs and practices their home countries and their new home. Sometimes they may discover that they have experienced what Ball (1990), Miller (1990), and Macedo (1999) refer to as a process of "poisonous pedagogy", a process that decreases people's

capacity to understand the reason behind what they do and how they feel.

Sometimes the under representation of visible minority faculty members in academia presents negative social modeling, leading to the common and realistic approach of learning how to survive rather than how to thrive. Lewis (2003), in writing about minorities in engineering, points out that the individual is often taught to adapt to and survive in, rather than to change, their situation. Critical pedagogy can help them increase this awareness.

Through increasing individual consciousness, critical pedagogy challenges educator's traditional perspectives. Simon (1987) makes a distinction between teaching and pedagogy: teaching means educators use specific strategies and techniques to meet predefined objectives which are insufficient in increasing students' access to power. In Simon's words, education is "a practice whose aim is the enhancement of human possibility" (1987, p. 2). He believes that "pedagogy is simultaneously about the details of what students and others might do together *and* the cultural politics such practice support" (1987, p. 2).

Above all, a critical approach calls for action from both students and faculty in at least three areas: they must be able to identify that the reality of visible minority's under-representation is unjust; they must respond to their critical thinking; and action within the system must transform students' tolerance, avoidance, and silence to empowerment and help them see themselves as changing and change agents. Thus, critical pedagogy is a very useful and powerful tool for immigrant doctoral students to examine the root of their

problems, and to motivate them towards career aspiration and persistence in their pursuit of an academic career.

Social constructivism

Vygotsky's theory (1978) of social constructivism emphasizes cultural and social influences on cognitive development. Social constructivism helps immigrant students understand the transformative process of crossing borders in every major aspect of their lives, in making meaning of their reality, in constructing their own desired reality, in shifting from their previous professional knowledge of the experts and specialists to the local cultural knowledge, and in enabling them to take initiatives and responsibilities for self-reliance and self-sufficiency through social interactions. But they cannot do this alone. They need faculty and peer role models, supportive departments and those who will provide explicit insider knowledge. The university infrastructure would do well to create opportunities for "situated learning" for immigrants, through which they can take part in activities which are directly relevant to the application of learning in their new Canadian context (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

The implementation of "constructivism" in the career field is being fostered by the way in which career practitioners seek approaches that are closer to the everyday situations of practice than those available to them through career research and theory (Mahoney, 2003). Moreover, ambiguity and uncertainty are postmodern conditions; there is no black-white, true-false, or right-wrong reality. The reality immigrant students face is more complicated, more vague, and the construction process is more complex and time-consuming, but can be fruitful.

The university infrastructure would do well to create opportunities for “situated learning” for immigrants, through which they can take part in activities which are directly relevant to the application of learning and which take place within a culture similar to the applied setting (Brown et al., 1989).

As Diagram 6-1 reveals, I learned how the university functioned through the assistance of insiders, how Canadian society functioned through the assistance of other insiders (especially my Canadian born and raised husband), and overcame feelings of isolation by becoming valued and experiencing some successes. This collectivity of understanding, encouragement, and growing confidence offered me hope, the fuel for perseverance, and accounts in part for my success in transforming challenge into opportunity.

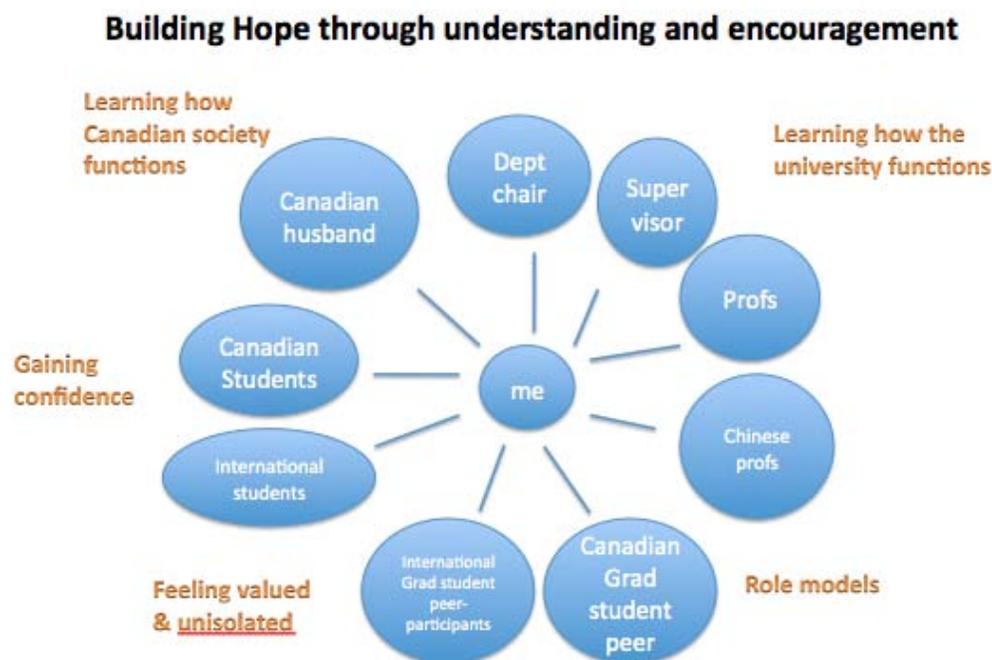


Diagram 6-1: Sources of support that lead to success for immigrant graduate students

However, despite my valiant efforts to share my growing insider knowledge with my peers in Cycles Two and Three of the study, Diagram 6-2 shows how reduced sources of support (lack of insider knowledge) for some participants can lead to a path of despair, such as Nick experienced. It may be that there is a minimum threshold of support and contact with insiders, a tipping point (Gladwell, 2000) that is needed to sustain hope and fuel growth.

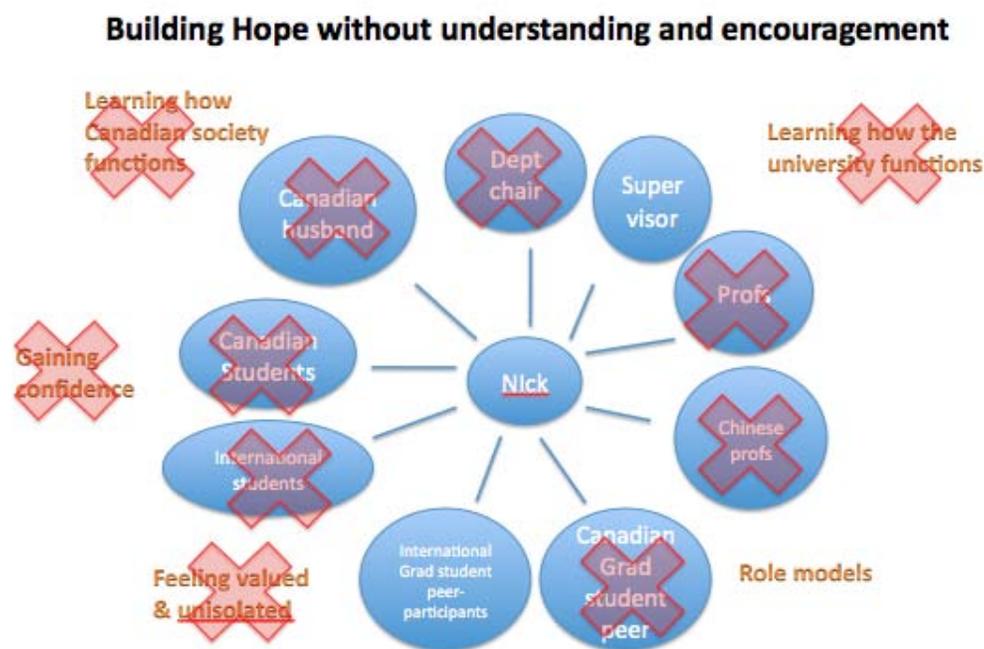


Diagram 6-2: The absence of sources of support lead to despair for immigrant graduate students

Social ecological theory

Bronfenbrenner (1995)'s ecological theory is appropriate for describing the complex systems of an internationalized university campus and its relationship to the broader society. Ecological theory considers aspects of doctoral education and experience as in part reflecting immigrant students' past academic practices, traditions and conventions, complex webs of relationships between people and the

strategies they use, the social groups with whom they interact, norms guiding social interaction, and the structure of culturally organized environments.

Its five layers of ecological systems have strong impacts on understanding immigrant doctoral students' progression, quality of learning, and external accountability; for example, the microsystem may encourage a student to experiment with an innovative teaching approach, but the exosystem may set barriers on the practice and may even stop it by firing the practitioner. Thus confusion may arise from the immigrant students as to what is counted by the external professional field, whether or not the quality of teaching is achieved, and also what progress he/she is making: forwards or backwards.

Microsystem activity operates in a mesosystem at a similar level; for example, an immigrant Ph.D. student of education writes his thesis in the morning on her home country's curriculum reform, a topic that she can relate to her past teaching and researching experience (one microsystem), teaches undergraduates in the afternoon by employing new knowledge and skills just required from the host country's doctoral education (another microsystem). Here the same student is engaging not only in two different microsystems, but each of which is a part of different macrosystems – with different objectives, beliefs, communities, conventions, and so on. Contradictions or tensions between elements of two systems are obvious. However, people often find ways of working around these tensions so that they are not perceived or experienced as opposing forces. In other cases, people may be so alert to the tensions or contradictions caused by the two exosystems that they may lose sight of their similarities and as a consequence may

be unable to cross the seemingly unbridgeable gaps. In short, immigrant students' doctoral education can be understood in terms of tensions within and between systems from an ecological theory perspective.

“Joint function” is another concept in Bronfenbrenner's (1989) notion of ecological theory. It regards the characteristics of a person as a joint function of the characteristics of the person and of the environment over the course of the person's life up to the time of observation (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 191). This concept promotes immigrant students' action on environmental interventions that focus on social support and on individually oriented interventions targeted toward increasing individuals' abilities to deal with environmental barriers to their career goals.

To implement the ideas of “joint function”, Scharmer (2000) suggests a practical approach in perceiving a reality by observing the full process of social reality formation, the full process of coming-into-being of social action, by seeing its descending movement from thought and consciousness to language, behavior, and action. The implication is that an understanding of the new academic world should not be based on the emerged phenomena, the seemingly fixed reality. This implication will help immigrant Ph.D. students investigate and understand how some thoughts are formed and then decide if there is a need to make changes.

To conclude, educational systems are complex, dynamic systems with multidirectional linkages and processes that interconnect the different layers within the system. In order to understand various and on-going external and internal barriers immigrant Ph.D. students are experiencing and to make sense of

how universities and other communities can facilitate the students in tackling obstacles, ecological theory maintains close attention to the purposes of activities, which is particularly helpful in understanding the tensions experienced by the students as they navigate different systems and engage in different activities. Moreover, ecological theory pro-activates social dynamics, reshapes power structures, and accelerates the process towards a full participation of all members.

Dialectical theory

Dialectical theory focuses on the nature of contradictions in social interaction and how tensions arising from contradictions are managed (Baxter, 1994). Only a few contemporary philosophers have ventured to utilize a dialectical theory as an approach to the investigation of human symbolic processes (eg. Altman, Vinsel, & Brown, 1981; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Conville, 1983; Rawlins, 1992). In contrast to the three popular theories mentioned above, a dialectical theory is rarely used as an approach for examining issues of immigrants' integration. Friedrichs (1970) has suggested the possibility of a dialectical paradigm to bridge the split between system and conflict theorists as well as between Marxists and non-Marxists.

Burke (1945) argues that other approaches to dialectic have "repeatedly lost track of [their] dramatistic origins, when thinkers lay all their stress upon the attempt to decide whether it [dialectic] leads to true knowledge, or when they have so rigidified its forms in some particular disposition of terms (or dogma) that the underlying liquidity of its Grammar becomes concealed" (p. 243). It is akin to how people are affected by advertisers, Burke explains, who want us to just

respond to their messages and persuasions without challenging their implied social control. “But, we can create space - a pause in which we can forestall the act or reaction to such a stimulus. It is in this space we can create transformation” (Boje, Luhman, & Cunliffe, 2003, p. 6).

Dialectical theory, like ecological theory, views the reality of professional immigrants as living, multi-layered, unknown, unpredictable, and in tension. However, a dialectical approach goes beyond. It can enable immigrant doctoral students to envision their marginalized social status from a macro and changing perspective which indicates that no barriers are permanent, and there is a possibility of having their situations changed. A dialectical approach can inspire them to take initiatives and responsibilities for their own future. In other words, a dialectical approach not only shows possibilities and opportunities, but also provides the tool of making changes happen: change starts from inside, and outside support can only become effective through inside cooperation. The understanding and dealing with contradictions and transformations embedded in a dialectical approach are what vulnerable groups need most.

In my case, the implication of a transformation has enabled me to achieve the most meaningful success in applying this libratory dialectical approach to the analysis of several pairs of oppositional and seemly unconquerable barrier forces in immigrants’ academic career preparation: hard skills and soft skills, outsider knowledge and insider knowledge, external barriers and internal barriers, and barriers and success. Thus, a dialectical approach is more practical and functional

in assisting immigrants, especially those who have experienced trauma, to regain hope, power, and a view of totality and change.

Another contribution of a dialectical perspective is that it regards contradiction as a common phenomenon of everyday life. Therefore, instead of taking contradictions as problems, people may be encouraged to respond more positively to dialectical tensions.

To conclude, while a dialectical stance may have its own limitations, it also offers immigrant graduate students a tool through which they may be able to see their reality – past, present and future.

An integrated framework

Of all the four adopted theories - critical pedagogy, social constructivism, social ecological theory, and dialectical approach - everyone has its own irreplaceable strengths and is evidenced by this study to be particularly insightful in offering understanding of barrier breaking experiences of immigrant doctoral students in their academic career preparation. However, based on a personal observation and understanding, none of the four theories seems to be sufficient or fits all different needs if being used in an isolated way as an interpretative lens. Some weaknesses of these concepts are examined and discussed below.

First, about critical pedagogy, one major weakness worth addressing is its division and separation from *Others*. Even though critical pedagogy is aware of the necessity and importance of working together, the sense of separating one from the dominant *Others* is still an unmistakable message, which could be a hamper rather than a promoter in assisting immigrant students in creating and

maintaining a healthy and supportive academic and professional environment and relationships. There is also a danger of criticizing *Others* only without examining one's own gaps as an individual and a professional of a new society.

Take me for example, critical pedagogy succeeded in helping me see systemic barriers set in my way towards professional integration. This awareness made me believe that I had been devalued and excluded by the mainstream society. A blaming attitude and separation had limited me to a marginalized world of immigrants. I tended to make judgment and predictions from a "loser's" perspective; for example, I failed to see that some difficulties in career development were caused by personal professional limitations rather than by social prejudices. My focus of attention was directed towards the broader social context rather than examining my inner barriers at the same time. Such a self-fulfilling prophesy may lead to a vicious circle.

In brief, critical pedagogy does not promote immigrant students to self-examine their own blind spots and misconceptions which could affect effective adaptation and integration into academic communities. This perspective of regarding the individual as a changing agent in socio-cultural contexts is where social constructivism comes into full play.

Social constructivism does not center on why but on how people make meaning of the taught, experienced or given knowledge, and how they co-construct their identities and realities out of uncertainty and ambiguity. This understanding in co-exploring and changing process in a social context gives immigrant students a tool to work with.

However, social constructivism denies the existence of objective knowledge since “there are many ways to structure the world, and there are many meanings or perspectives for any event or concept.” Thus, “there is not a correct meaning that we are striving for” (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992). This rejection of absolutism characterizes constructivist approaches to learning. Mayer (2004) argues that constructivist learning may not be effective for all learners, suggesting that learners may become behaviourally active rather than “cognitively active”. Mayer proposes “guided practice” (Mayer, 2004, p. 15). The “guided practice” and universal decontextualised knowledge can be very much needed by new immigrant doctoral students who do not have adequate attitude, knowledge, and skills, to explore, to evaluate, and to transform themselves in a complex and new environment. Therefore, a necessary awareness of the environment, a joint functioning with *Others* rather than a solo effort in creating or changing a social reality is overlooked. Social ecological theory provides this multilayer and interactive perspective.

A social ecological approach views individuals’ activities as operations on the lowest level and the margin of an organizational micro system. Social ecological theory “builds on the ideas of Charles Darwin about nature, of Adam Smith about economic life and of Herbert Spencer about the evolution of human societies” (Glaser, 2006, p. 134). A biological perspective in perceiving economic movement within human society leads to an assumption that humanity, like other forms of life, is invariably driven by competition which pushes other potential system drivers such as cooperation, self-sacrifice, community-orientation or love

into the background (Hosang et al., 2005). Glaser (2006) claims that this approach also neglects the human capacity for reflection and value change.

This weakness of social ecological theory in viewing humanity as 'being driven' rather than 'driving' clearly implies that competition will invariably prevail; as a result, only the strongest and the fittest dominant members will grasp and occupy the most and the best social wealth, resources, and opportunities; in contrast, the insignificant, weak, and marginalized immigrants will hardly survive the competition. This biological angle of evaluating humanity not only neglects and discourages human's reflective and changing power, but also entices immigrants to accept the cruel reality. To address this unjust issue, critical pedagogy is a more relevant approach. It educates and empowers immigrant Ph.D. students to function as active agents in influencing their environment in order to create a reality of equality and fairness, rather than powerlessly function and try to survive in changed professional and societal environments.

Dialectical theory also has its limitations. It has been criticised by some philosophers such as Karl Popper (1992) who attacked the dialectical method for its willingness "to put up with contradictions", encourage, and justify irrationalism. My argument is that many vulnerable new professional immigrants may not have the social status or influence to "put up" or not to "put up" with social control. They can be victimized and traumatized without even being noticed by others and without being understood by themselves, either. What they need initially is not to fight for what is "true" or what is "just"; instead, they need to survive out of their limitations by understanding that there is no final reality but

instead a dynamic and changing reality based on subjective assumptions. The dialectical perspective encourages the development of a person's agency, motivation, and resilience in dealing with some of the oppositions present in their professional career establishment.

Despite the limitations of every one of these theories, the combination of their strengths may produce a very useful interpretative lens for researchers and a set of tools for immigrant graduate students who are seeking success in their studies and a future career. As a package critical pedagogy, social constructivism, ecological theory, and in some cases, dialectic theory, provide an integrated and holistic theoretical framework for researchers and a starting point for discussion and reflection for immigrant graduate students. With capable peers who can guide discussions and help frame understandings immigrant graduate students may well experience less anxiety, more ease at identifying and overcoming barriers and ultimately make more contributions to Canadian society.

Chapter Seven: Implications and Recommendations

Implications

This study investigated the barriers immigrant Ph.D. students experience in their academic career preparation. Specific research questions were:

1. What are some major external barriers that immigrant Ph.D. students experience in integrating into Canadian academic and professional communities?
2. What are some major internal barriers that immigrant Ph.D. students experience in integrating into Canadian academic and professional communities?
3. What coping attitudes and strategies (i.e. their consciousness) do they use to break down and overcome the barriers experienced?

The findings of the study have been discussed in previous chapters but also raise a number of questions and issues of relevance to policy makers and practitioners in immigration, media, universities, and immigrant service communities, as well as to professional immigrant doctoral students themselves.

Immigration policy makers and practitioners

The results of this career barrier study indicate that two conditions may help foreign professional immigrants to have a positive experience in meeting Canadian labor market needs and on their own quality of life.

1. Immigration policy makers and practitioners may benefit from becoming aware of the gaps between policies and practices regarding the recognition and utilization of the education, skills, qualifications, and working experiences of

professional immigrants, during the employment processes of hiring, probation and promotion.

2. Immigration policy makers and conveyors of policies have the responsibility to objectively inform potential professional immigrants of the documented difficulties they will face in seeking employment. Without advising them that they will be giving up well-established lives to immigrate to Canada, the good intention of having foreign professionals to partially solve labor shortages and population aging problems in Canada may not be fully realized. Moreover, highly accomplished immigrants may discover unexpected conditions of economic and psychological poverty caused by a lack of recognition and income opportunity in their new homeland, which may be made worst by the realization that they are losing occupational positions and support networks in their home countries.

Public media

The media must become more aware of their role in a diverse society; their presentations shape public opinion about immigrants and their images and definitions. Social modeling profoundly affects public opinions and professional immigrant doctoral students' self perceptions at the same time. Images of immigrants who are social welfare recipients and who are opportunistic can convey messages to immigrants that this is what they are supposed to be.

In a Canadian study, media coverage of immigrants was grouped into five categories: the economic implications of immigration; individual human interest stories; social and health dimensions of immigration; criminal association with

immigration; and factually informational articles (Mahtani & Mountz, 2002, p. 17). The results of this study also confirmed the findings of other research (e.g. Ducharme 1986; Peter 1981; Moodley 1983; van Dijk 1993): colored professional immigrants, as other immigrants, are negatively represented, under represented, inaccurately, or incompletely represented by the media. Such results benefit neither immigrants nor mainstream society.

Universities

Although immigrant students trained in Canadian universities may be in a better position for marketing themselves than other immigrants as identified by some researchers in an earlier section, they face the challenge of entering high level employment such as academia which is more complicated and competitive. The study suggests that the skill levels and the success likelihood of immigrant doctoral students in continuing an academic career depend critically on differentiating programs and services at the graduate level. Thus, post-secondary educational policy and practices will play a crucial role in determining to what extent immigrant doctoral students will achieve their career goals after the investment of their human capital in their host country's education.

Here are some suggestions enlightened by the study.

1. An important role for universities is to bring awareness of immigrant students' needs and support the development of academic career relevant attitudes, skills, and experiences. To achieve this goal, universities must go beyond envisioning students, especially international students, as merely a means of meeting financial needs. The success of universities should be measured by the

success of students including minority students such as immigrant and international students. It may be necessary to keep statistics on these groups.

2. Faculty members are the key to actualizing a university mission statement. There is a need to increase cross-cultural understanding among faculty members, develop differentiated program and curriculum, and provide differentiated instruction and outcome assessment. “One size fits all” programs are obviously outdated in today’s increasingly internationalized campus.

3. In addition to examining problematic graduate programs of studies, universities need also to explore the effectiveness of their student support centers in meeting immigrant students’ special needs in career preparation; for instance, career service centers can offer special orientations on career planning and seminars on adjustment to Canadian professional communities. An international students’ center can provide more career related peer support and networking activities. The popular cultural and social events and activities that many universities offer may need to expand in order to facilitate immigrant students’ academic career preparation.

4. Universities need to see themselves as and become role models in employment fairness and equity by hiring more visible minority faculty members to practice what they advocate and to inspire immigrant students to pursue academic careers.

5. Universities need to learn to benefit from the foreign minds by consciously, creatively, and effectively developing their potential to their fullest extent.

Professional immigrant service communities

The study identified that in the university where the study was conducted, three major factors influenced international students' career preparation: people overseeing and managing programs of studies, services offered by the career service center, and programs offered through the international students' service center. Although international graduate students were provided with non-differentiated programs of studies, the human support varied from individual to individual and department to department. However, a clear need was identified for informed faculty, administration and programs in departments and support services that cater to the unique needs of immigrants.

1. Such services, while similar to those offered to mainstream students, require immigrant role models, more explicit information about the taken-for-granted society and opportunities for guided practice. The international center focused on cultural bridging events and activities, in addition to taking care of students' living needs such as accommodation. However, none of these services targeted the special needs of academic career preparation for immigrant graduate students.

2. There was little partnership among these service agencies aimed at incorporating resources and strengths in assisting this group with career preparation success. Not only were these services isolated within an institution, services provided by communities in the larger society were not effectively incorporated, either; for example, most participants in the study had never heard of a government-funded professional immigrant service organization which was

located in the same neighborhood as the university. In short, it is essential for related services in a community to integrate their support services at the level of programs, resources, and manpower for the best possible results.

3. Resources and opportunities need cultural translation and transmission through cultural translators or brokers. It is critical to promote student career advisors' cultural sensitivity and competence in working as cultural translators and transmitters. To acquire this inter-cultural competence, service staff must be willing to unlearn and then to relearn about their students and their services. A defensive and blaming attitude will only depower rather than empower their student-clients.

Professional immigrant doctoral students

The study results strongly indicate that it is essential to address some commonly ignored development areas such as soft skills and dialectical thinking.

1. Immigrant doctoral students need to be aware of possible gaps in professional responsibilities which may not be included or be the same in their home countries but required in entering academia of host countries as faculty members.

2. It is far from enough to develop hard professional skills alone. Soft skills can be as important as hard skills for immigrant doctoral students to maintain academic career aspirations and persistence.

3. Immigrant doctoral students need to seek out capable peers, be they role models in their own departments or faculties or insider friends or acquaintances.

4. When facing overwhelmingly internal and external barriers on a daily basis, and when experiencing on-going setbacks and frustrations, immigrant doctoral students must constantly remind themselves of their past accomplishments, their competitive skills, their potential, and their career ambitions. It may be very difficult to keep confidence unchallenged and hope intact, but this may be the only way for them to see hope in barriers, to turn failures into successes, and to make big dreams come true by making small-step progress.

Recommendations

This study focused on the barriers experienced by nine professional immigrant doctoral students in their academic career preparation process. Specific recommendations are offered for research and practice.

1. There is a need to conduct quantitative and more qualitative research on the experiences of those who have overcome barriers and have secured tenure track faculty positions in Canadian post-secondary institutions. Although great effort was exerted to discover and present useful coping attitudes and strategies to break down barriers from my own experience, one person's minor progress is insignificant in revealing prominent and applicable patterns of success. Therefore, the literature review indicates that there are far too few research studies on academic career success of immigrant doctoral students. The fact is that this group of people desperately needs to hold hope, to rebuild confidence, to acquire coping

strategies, and to feel connected by understanding how those who are like them have successfully achieved their career goals in Canadian academia.

2. The Government of Canada needs to be more responsible in communicating career opportunities (actual barriers, employment data, realistic expectations, cultural norms, etc.) to international students and immigrants. This might best be done through written documents, ongoing workshops, and counseling services that extend over a period of time of study and settlement (e.g., 1-3 years).

The job-searching frustrations experienced by the three immigrant doctoral students of education described in the beginning of this thesis have always exerted a strong affective resonance in me, for they are not alone in having these difficulties as I see similar confusion, setbacks and disappointments all the time from the immigrant graduate students in education around me. Immigrant doctoral students need to understand unique barriers experienced by them in their academic career preparation. One way to understand why barriers are particularly great for students of social sciences including education can be found in social capital theory. Employers, who are uncertain about what immigrants know, may not recognize their human capital (McDade, 1988). This is especially true for immigrant students of education. Because their social capital was initially socially constructed in their home countries, whose educational ideology may be in conflict with that of Canada, entry can be more difficult. More research is needed to examine what the crucial barriers are for immigrant educators, why they exist and how to break through in this tightly organized profession.

3. Universities (colleges, technical institutes, etc.) could take greater responsibility and accountability in understanding the unique needs, interests, and experiences of international students.

A. Central administration needs to take a more proactive leadership role with university personnel and programs.

B. Deans, Department Chairs, Faculty and Service units could greatly benefit from cross cultural awareness sensitivity training on a regular basis.

A 'one size fits all' approach is inappropriate and inadequate in addressing the unique career preparation needs of professional immigrant doctoral students who make up a significant size of the graduate student population.

Because "student motivation (for their future careers) could be reduced when a disconnection arises within the socialization and training process ... graduate training programs are not adequately structured to enhance CDSE (career decision-making self-efficacy) in graduate students of color" (Campbell, 2002, p. 7). Courageous campuses need to apply what research has confirmed and create responsive programs for an increasingly diverse student population with a range of educational backgrounds and experiences and professors need to be able to provide culturally sensitive and career related assignments and education.

4. More research is needed on understanding and eliminating academic (and systemic) racism. Universities should be a place of practicing what they advocate rather than a place of tolerating and promoting what they denounce. The patterns revealed in Henry and Tator (2007)'s study on the experiences of the colored faculty members "reflect the failure of administrative policies, programs,

and everyday practices to address racism, to create a more equitable learning and working environment and, above all, to vigorously challenge the ‘culture of whiteness’ still so dominant at most Canadian universities” (p. 25). To research in this area could be challenging for faculty members of color, for they may be afraid of negative consequences such as not being hired or not being promoted. Even though this could be a risky research area, it is still worth doing for the benefits of all. It is admirable that some research was conducted by Caucasians, and Canadian academia needs more researchers like Henry and Tator to address academic racism.

5. Specific university-community partnerships need to be implemented to facilitate career experiences for international students. Career development opportunities and experiences are essential for reducing the barriers and improving the successes of immigrant doctoral students. To successfully support such integration, it is important for universities to partner with professional community-based immigrant organizations that can facilitate cultural and social transactions. Based on study results and the paucity of literature, research is also needed on the disconnection between university degree granting and credentializing institutions and why professional associations, certificates or licensing organizations, and potential employers resist hiring professional immigrants. Attention to lack of alignment of standards used to measure English proficiency is also required.

Closing

This study began with my personal exploration of what an academic career preparation process was like from an immigrant doctoral student's perspective. During the process, various external, internal and interaction barriers were identified. In order to build strength to continue with the exploration, planning, and preparation, three other Asian immigrant doctoral students were recruited to form an action research group to understand the barriers experienced and to be experienced on our way towards professional integration in Canadian academia. Four months later when the first cycle was completed, inspired by a team spirit, we four students continued the action research project by inviting more participants to follow a year-long professional development plan I developed based on the findings of the first project. With two university support staff joining us in the third action research cycle, the prescribed group action plan was not followed; instead, a total of nine participants continued to share barriers experienced on an on-going basis and engaged in discussions about what they meant to a future academic career and how to overcome them. This in-depth exploration aided by the experienced support staff, however, did not stop me from a parallel implementation of my own self-designed action plan. Thus the research proceeded to its final stage – the second autobiographical account of my experiences in understanding and breaking through some barriers encountered as a sessional ESL instructor. The process of this three-cycle action research study endured for more than four years throughout my program of study.

Enormous data were produced over this period of time. Chronologically, critical pedagogy, social constructivism, social ecological theory, and dialectical philosophy had become the lenses of interpreting the collected data. In addition to serving as data analysis tools, these theories also guided me to break down some major barriers encountered in my academic study and career preparation.

The research results revealed more external barriers than successes in breaking through barriers (See charts at the end of Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6). Even though the intention of the research was not only to identify and acknowledge barriers, but also to search for ways to continue the academic career I had pursued for nineteen years before immigration, I accepted the emerging themes and reported them as they were. I also noted the importance of hope and how a lack of hope became another barrier to overcome along the path to career attainment. The research results also revealed that immigrant graduate students need guidance and support in overcoming internal barriers. The offered four theoretical lenses as a holistic coping approach might be presented to immigrant graduate students in a series of interconnected relationship-building seminars.

Several recommendations were made. Theoretically, a holistic and integrated theoretical framework was presented for data interpretation. Practically, based on the findings, a number of recommendations were made for immigration policy makers and practitioners, mass media, universities, immigrant service communities, and professional immigrant doctoral students themselves. Finally, several areas are suggested for further research: focus on success rather than on barriers alone; unique barriers experienced by immigrant students of education;

effectiveness of doctor programs of studies aimed at immigrant students' academic career success; academic racism; and building university-community partnership network.

In addition to the theoretical framework and recommendations, the thesis makes the contribution of helping others see firsthand the nature of the suffering that career attainment plays among immigrant graduate students. Perhaps Canadian staff and students as well as other immigrants will find in it moments of clarity about former interactions and ideas for future ones. Perhaps Canadian and academic insiders will more clearly see what they must provide as support for their new colleagues – time, information, patience, explanations, friendship and trust. Only that can keep our hope strong enough to continue on this journey that someone in almost every Canadian family once made.

Chapter Eight: Epilogue

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
 Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
 It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
 We ask ourselves,
 Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?
 Actually, who are you not to be?
 You are a child of God.
 Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
 We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
 It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
 And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people
 permission to do the same.
 As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically
 liberates others (Williamson, 1996).*

Seeing my thesis completed, my supervisor asked if I would like to give an overall reflection on my life as an immigrant and add a final touch to the thesis to bring this chapter of my life to a close. It made perfect sense to look back before moving on.

A few people's questions and comments including my thesis, characteristics, and career, leapt out of my mind and kept challenging me to think about *my box* and to break through *my box* – a personal limitation of vision and action. The following dialogues are the imaginary ones I made in my mind over the years.

“Do you really think what you have experienced is racial discrimination?” (Professors of different races)

Well, believe me; I have been questioning myself since a professor started challenging me with this question two years ago. I was not sure, so I read books and articles, talked to people to check my understanding, observed how I had become who I was, and analyzed why most of my Chinese immigrant friends

were still struggling for making ends meet on a daily basis after having obtained or being very close to obtain doctoral degrees in Canada. After a constant searching for an alternative answer, I was not convinced of a different interpretation. I admitted my limitations of perceiving phenomenon in a broader and diverse way. I wanted to learn it and hoped to change my judgement someday. However, I could not persuade myself to take the component of racial discrimination out of my thesis and to interpret the related data in an alternative way. If in the future I find I have made a huge mistake on this issue, I will apologize and correct it, but not now.

“Why are you so angry whenever you start talking about your thesis?” (A friend)

I only talked once with this friend about my thesis, but the conversation took about four hours. The talk was almost my monologue. At the end of it, my friend tried to help me achieve an inner peace through religious belief; her kind attempt resulted in even more angry questioning from my side. Our friendship has been severely damaged since then, for we try not to mention my research topic and not to spend time alone.

However, she was the one who helped me to see a new characteristic that I had developed – anger. I had to agree with this new labelling. No matter how much I envied those who had smoothly integrated into a profession and appeared gracefully blended and contented, I had to seek and find peace and had to feel it from the inside out. It would not be a guided conforming, not a self-deceiving numbness, and not a forced condescending acceptance.

This was not self-indulgence and obsession but a living reality. I was forced to be familiar with anger, for each time I wrote and revised this thesis I could feel an acute pain and exclusion as if I were reliving its stories over and over again. I was also forced to re-experience unfair treatment that has never stopped until this day. If I tell you that what you read is only the tip of the iceberg above the water, what would you say about my anger? Do I have a right at least to express it in my own writing? Does this honest exposure and interpretation merit a doctoral degree?

I know my voice can be very unpleasant to hear sometimes (even though my supervisor has edited much of it), but I want to be heard: I came to Canada to make connections and not to be marginalized; to learn and to contribute; to become a better human being and not to be dehumanized; and to thrive and not to survive. But how many care?

“Have you started or are you about to start an academic career after these five years’ preparation?” (A few research participants)

This might be the most embarrassing but the most meaningful question of all. No, I now cannot see myself in this community in the near future even though I had changed my action research topic from my targeted career field to academic career preparation in order to make it happen. Unfortunately, I did not make it or should I say fortunately, I have been able to reconceptualise a new career path for myself.

In a mindset of ‘defeat’ I might ask: How am I going to face this? Should I stop struggling for maintaining a sessional position or should I continue in order to secure a possible permanent position? Should I keep trying to gain entry into

academia or should I withdraw to become a housewife? Should I leave this intimidating country to find my lost glory and dignity in my homeland? Should I work in MacDonald's or Wal-Mart like many immigrants do, while enjoying the unbeatable benefits granted equitably to all immigrants such as fresh air, open land, and first-class welfare?

In a mindset of 'opportunity' I say: Was I really free to make any choice?

Literally, I was, but would I?

"I want you to shine." (My husband)

"I am so excited at your idea of launching a new business." (My daughter)

"I can't wait for the day when you take over the steer to lead the Ugly Duckling into a little swan." (My principal in China)

Should I? Would I? Dare I? These were among the questions that I have been wondering about, because I had not the least doubt in my ability to contribute to the global society as a professional.

After hearing what my thesis was about, and what I planned to do after graduation, a long disconnected Chinese friend sighed: "You remind me of an old saying: 凤凰涅槃, 浴火重生 (feng huang nie pan, yu huo chong sheng: From the pyre was born a new phoenix)". This saying came from the well known Egyptian myth about a bird that had lived in a desert for five hundred years, and then consumed itself by fire and later rose renewed from its ashes. Well, she was right. It was high time the ugly duckling was transformed into a free and beautiful swan with only the sky as her limit.

Endnotes

¹ Critical *incident technique* is particularly interested in learning more about little-understood incidents, factors, or psychological constructs "that help promote or detract from effective performance of some activity or the experience of a specific situation or event" (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 483).

² "Dare to Thrive" was inspired by the vision statement, "Dare to Discover", issued by the university where the research took place before the research began.

References

- Adelman, C., Kemmis, S., & Jenkins, D. (1980). Rethinking the case study: Notes from the second Cambridge conference. In H. Simons (Ed.), *Towards a Science of the Singular* (pp. 45-61). Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia.
- Aitchison, C., & Lee, A. (2006). Research writing: Problems and pedagogies. *Teaching in Higher Education, 11*(3), 265-278.
- Alazzi, K., & Chiodo, J. J. (2006). Uncovering problems and identifying coping strategies of Middle Eastern university students. *International Education, 35*(2), 65-105.
- Alboim, N., Finnie, R., & Meng, M. (2005). The Discounting of immigrants' skills in Canada: Evidence and policy recommendations, *IRPP Choices, 11*(2), 1-26.
- Albrecht, T. L., Burleson, B. R., & Goldsmith, D. (1994). Supportive communication. In M. L. Knapp, & G. R. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 419-449). Sage, CA: Thousand Oaks.
- Alexander, M. L. (2005). *Social inclusion, social exclusion and social closure: What can we learn from studying the social capital of social elites?*
Retrieved from Griffith University Website:
<http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Alexander-Malcolm-final.pdf><0407>

- Allatt, P. (1993). Becoming privileged: The role of family processes. In I. Bates, & G. Riseborough (Eds.), *Youth and Inequality*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Allison, D., Cooley, L., Lewkowicz, J., & Nunan, D. (1998). Dissertation writing in action: The development of a dissertation writing support program for ESL graduate research students. *English for Specific Purposes, 17*, 199-217.
- Altman, I., Vinsel, A., & Brown, B. B. (1981). Dialectic conceptions in social psychology: An application to social penetration and privacy regulation. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, 14* (pp. 107-160). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Anderson, M. S., & Swazey, J. P. (1998). Reflections on the graduate student experience: An overview. In M. S. Anderson (Ed.), *The experience of being in graduate school: An exploration. New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, No. 101. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
- Andrews, J., & Higson, H. (2008). Graduate employability, 'soft skills' versus 'hard' business knowledge: A European study. *Higher Education in Europe, 33*(4), 411-422. Doi:10.1080/03797720802522627.
- Angelova, M., & Riazantseva, A. (1999). "If you don't tell me, how can I know?" A case study of four international students learning to write the U.S. way. *Written Communication, 16*, 491-525.

- Austin, A. E. (2002). Preparing the next generation of faculty: Graduate school as socialisation to the academic career. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(1), 94-122.
- Bakken, L., Byars-Winston, A., & Wang, M. (2006). Viewing clinical research career development through the lens of social cognitive career theory. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 11(1), 91-110.
- Balcom, P., & Kozar, S. (1994). An ESP speaking course for international graduate students. *TESL Canada Journal*, 12(1), 58-68.
- Ball, S. J. (1990). *Politics and policy making in education: Explorations in policy sociology*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (volume 3, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press.
- Bandura, A. (1995). *Self-efficacy in changing societies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Basran, G., & Zong, L. (1998). Devaluation of foreign credentials as perceived by visible minority professional immigrants. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 30(3), 6-23.
- Baxter, L. A. (1994). Thinking dialogically about communication in personal relationships. In R. L. Conville (Ed.), *Uses of "structure" in communication studies* (pp. 23-37). Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). *Relating: Dialogues and dialectics*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Becher, T. (1989). *Academic tribes and territories: The intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines*. Bury St Edmunds: SRHE & Open University Press.
- Berry, J. W. (2002). Conceptual approaches to acculturation. In K. M. Chun, P. B. Organista, & G. Marín (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in theory, measurement, and applied research* (pp. 17-37). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Betz, N. E., & Hackett, G. (1997). Applications of self-efficacy theory to the career assessment of women. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 5(4), 383-402.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bikos, L., & Furry, T. (1999). The job search club for international students: An evaluation. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 48(1), 31-44.
- Bilash, O., & Shi, W. (2007). *Leveling the playing field: Providing an infrastructure to help immigrant graduate students compete for academic opportunities*. Paper presented at The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) Conference, Edmonton, AB.
- Bird, S. J. (1994). Overlooked aspects in the education of science professionals: Mentoring, ethics, and professional responsibility. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 3, 49-55.
- Bloom, F. E. (1992). Training neuroscientists for the 21st century. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 15(10), 383-386.

- Blustein, D. L. (1997). A context-rich perspective of career exploration across the life roles. *Career Development Quarterly*, 45, 260-274.
- Boje, D. M., Luhman, J. T., & Cunliffe, A. L. (2003). A Dialectic perspective on the organization. *Theatre Metaphor American Communication Journal*, 6(2), 1-16.
- Boud, D., & Lee, A. (2005). Peer learning as pedagogic discourse. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(5), 501-515.
- Bourdieu, P. (1972). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bowen, W. G., & Rudenstine, N. L. (1992). *In pursuit of the Ph.D.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Boyer, S., & Sedlacek, W. (1988). Noncognitive predictors of academic success for international students: A longitudinal study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 29, 218-223.
- Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Boys, M. C. (1982). Narrative and religious education: A story full of promise. *Chicago Studies*, 21(1), 85-101.
- Briscoe, J. P., Hall, D. T., & DeMuth, R. L. F. (2006). Protean and boundaryless careers: An empirical exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69, 30-47.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. *Annals of Child Development, 6*, 187-249.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen & G. H. Elder (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 619-647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational Researcher, 18*(1), 32-41.
- Brown, L., & Dobbins, H. (2004). Students' of color and European American students' stigma-relevant perceptions of university instructors. *Journal of Social Issues, 60*(1), 157-174. doi:10.1111/j.0022-4537.2004.00104.x.
- Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J., & Piachaud, D. (2002). Degrees of exclusion: Developing a dynamic multidimensional measure. In J. Hills, J. Le Grand, & D. Piachaud (Eds.), *Understanding social exclusion* (pp. 30-43). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burke, K. (1945). *A grammar of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cain, M. (1999). *The community college in the twenty-first century: A systems approach*. New York: University Press of America.
- Caine, R. N., & Caine, G. (1990). Understanding a brain-based approach to learning and teaching. *Educational Leadership, 48*(2), 66-70.
- Campbell, D. (2002). *The effects of doctoral socialization on career decision-making self-efficacy*. Retrieved March 3, 2009, from <http://asstudents.unco.edu/students/AE-Extra/2002/1/Essay-3.html>

- Canagarajah, A. S. (1996). *From critical research practice to critical research reporting*. TESOL Quarterly, 30, 321–331.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1983). *Becoming critical: Knowing through action research*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin Press.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research*. Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Carson, T. (1998). *Introduction: Toward an intercultural dialogue*. Retrieved January 11, 2009, from <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/education/nav02.cfm?nav02=14381&nav01=14379>
- Casanave, C., & Hubbard, P. (1992). The writing assignments and writing problems of doctoral students: Faculty perceptions, pedagogical issues and needed research. *English for Specific Purposes*, 11, 33-49.
- Cervone, D. (2005). *Personality architecture: Within person structures and processes*. Annual Review of Psychology, 56, 423-452.
- Chang, H. (2007). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Char, W. (1977). Motivation for intercultural marriages. In W. Tseng, J. F. McDermott, & T. Marezki (Eds.), *Adjustment in intercultural marriage* (pp. 33-40). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Department of Psychiatry.
- Charmaz, K., & Mitchell, R. (1997). The myth of silent authorship: Self, substance, and style in ethnographic writing. In R. Hertz (Ed.), *Reflexivity and voice* (pp. 193-215). London: SAGE Publications.

- Chen, C. P. (1997). Career projection: Narrative in context. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training, 49*(2), 311-326.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Colbeck, C. L., & Wharton, M. P. (2006). The public scholarship: Reintegrating Boyer's four domains. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 129*, 7-19.
- Constantine, M. G., Erikson, C. D., Banks, R. W., & Timberlake, T. L. (1998). Challenges to the career development of urban racial and ethnic minority youth: Implications for vocational intervention. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 26*, 83-95.
- Conville, R. L. (1983). Second-order development in interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research, 9*, 195-207.
- Corey, S. M. (1953). *Action research to improve school practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Creed, P. A., Patton, W., & Bartrum, D. (2002). Multidimensional properties of the LOTR: Effects of optimism and pessimism on career and wellbeing related variables in adolescents. *Journal of Career Assessment, 10*, 42-61.
- Creswell, J. W. & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice, 39*(3), 124-131.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

- Crites, J. O. (1969). *Vocational psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cross, S. E. (1995). Self-construals, coping, and stress in cross-cultural adaptation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 26*(6), 673-697.
- Dedrick, R. F., & Watson, F. (2002). Mentoring needs of female, minority, and international graduate students: A content analysis of academic research guides and related print material. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 10*, 275-289.
- Diller, J. V. (1999). *Cultural diversity: A primer for the human services*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Dong, R. Y. (1998). Non-native graduate students' thesis/ dissertation writing in science: Self-reports by students and their advisors from two U.S. institutions. *English for Specific Purposes, 17*, 369-390.
- Dreher, G. F., & Cox, J. T. H. (1996). Race, gender and opportunity: A study of compensation attainment and the establishment of mentoring relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 297-308.
- Ducharme, M. (1986). The coverage of Canadian immigration policy in the *Globe and Mail* (1980-1985). *Currents: Readings in Race Relations (Toronto)*, 3(3), 6-11.
- Duffy, T. M., & Jonassen, D. H. (1992). Constructivism: New implications for instructional technology. In T. M. Duffy & D. H. Jonassen (Eds.), *Constructivism and the technology of instruction: A conversation* (pp. 1-16). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

- Ehrman, M., & Oxford, R. (1990). Adult learning styles and strategies in an intensive training setting. *Modern Language Journal, 74*(3), 311-327.
- Elbow, P. (1991). Reflections on academic discourse: How it relates to freshmen and colleagues. *College English, 53*(2), 135-155.
- Elbow, P. (1995). Being a writer vs. being an academic: A conflict in goals. *College Composition and Communication, 46*(1), 72-83.
- Elias, P., McKnight, A., Purcell, K., & Wilson, R. (1997). *A study of the labour market for social science postgraduates*. Warwick: Institute for Employment Studies.
- Ellis, C. (1998). Evocative autoethnography: Writing emotionally about our lives. In W. Tierney & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Representation and the text: Reframing the narrative voice* (pp. 116-139). New York: State University of New York.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject. In N.K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Feldman, D.C., Folks, W.R., & Turnley, W. H. (1999). Mentor-protégé diversity and its impact on international internship experiences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 597-611.
- Finkelstein, M. J., & LaCelle-Peterson, M. (1993). *Developing senior faculty as teachers. New directions for teaching and learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Fischer, B. A., & Zigmond, M. J. (1998). Survival skills for graduate school and beyond. In S. Melissa & Anderson (Eds.), *The experience of being in graduate school: An exploration*. New directions for higher education, no. 101. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin*, 51, 327-358.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Cultural action for freedom*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Education.
- Freire, P. (1976). *Education: The practice of freedom*. London: Writers and Readers Cooperative.
- Friedricks, R. W. (1970). *A sociology of sociology*. New York: Free Press.
- Gaff, J., & Pruitt-Logan, A. (1998). What happens when we really prepare graduate students to become college professors. In Anderson (Ed.), *The experience of being in graduate school: An exploration*. New directions for higher education No. 101. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gaitán, A. (2000). Exploring alternative forms of writing ethnography. Review Essay: C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), (1996). Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing forum. *Qualitative Social Research*, 1(3).
- Gale, R., & Golde, C. M. (2004). Doctoral education and the scholarship of teaching and learning. *Peer Review*, 6 (3).
- Gannon, F. (2007). The women issue— Editorial. *European Molecular Biology Organization Reports*, 8, 975.

- Gee, J. P. (2004). Learning language as a matter of learning social languages within discourses. In M.R. Hawkins (Ed.), *Language learning and teacher education: A sociocultural approach* (pp. 13-31). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Gladwell, M. (2000). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Glaser, M. (2006). The social dimension in ecosystem management: Strengths and weaknesses of human-nature mind maps. *Human Ecology Review*, 13 (2), 122-142.
- Golde, C. M. (1997). *Gaps in the training of future faculty: Doctoral student perceptions*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Albuquerque, NM.
- Golde, C. M., & Dore, T. M. (2000). *Findings from the survey on doctoral education and career preparation*. Paper presented at the Re-Envisioning the PhD Conference, Seattle, WA.
- Golde, C. M., & Dore, T. (2001). *At cross purposes: What the experiences of today's doctoral students reveal about doctoral education*. Philadelphia: Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Golde, C. M., & Walker, G. E. (Eds.). (2006). *Envisioning the future of doctoral education: Preparing stewards of the discipline*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Goode, J. (2007). Empowering or disempowering the international Ph.D. student? Constructions of the dependent and independent learner. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28, 589-603.
- Goodson, I., & Sikes, P. (2001). *Life history research in educational settings: Learning from lives*. London: OUP.
- Gopalkrishnan, N., & Babacan, H. (2007). Ties that bind: Marriage and partner choice in the Indian community in Australia in a transnational context. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 14, 507-526.
- Gowricharn, R. (2001). Introduction: Ethnic minorities and elite formation. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2, 155-167.
- Graduate student survey, Academic year 2003 – 2004, of University of Colorado-Boulder. Retrieved November, 1, 2006, from <http://www.colorado.edu/pba/surveys/grad/03/questionnaire.pdf>
- Greenaway, N. (2007, January 31). Newcomers stuck in low-income jobs: Study. *Edmonton Journal*, p. A5.
- Gregson, J. (2001). System, environmental, and policy changes: Using the social-ecological model as a framework for evaluating nutrition education and social marketing programs with low-income audiences. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 33(1), 4-15.
- Grinstaff, C. F. (1986). *A sociology-demographic profile of immigrant woman in Canada, 1981, by age at immigration, for women age 30-44*. London: University of Western Ontario Press.

- Grob, G. (2000, July). *Surviving first year in higher education*. Paper presented at the 4th Pacific Rim – First Year in Higher Education Conference: Creating Futures for a New Millennium, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.
- Gross, A., & Mucmullen, P. (1982). The help seeking model process. In V. Derlega & J. Grzelak (Eds.), *Cooperation and helping behaviour: Theories and research* (pp. 305-326). New York: Academic Press.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Guerrero, L. K., & La Valley, A. G. (2006). Conflict, emotion, and communication. In J. G. Oetzel, & S. Ting-Toomey (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of conflict communication* (pp. 69-96). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hackett, G., & Betz, N. (1981). A self-efficacy approach to the career development of women. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 18(3), 326-339.
- Hagedorn, L., Maxwell, W., Rodriguez, P., Hocevar, D., & Fillpot, J. (2000). Peer and student-faculty relations in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, 24(7), 587-599.
- Hall, D.T., & Chandler, D. (2004). Psychological success: When the career is a calling. *Technical report*. Boston University Executive Development Roundtable.
- Hechanova-Alampay, R., Beehr, T. A., Christiansen, N. D., & Van Horn, R. K. (2002). Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student

- sojourners: A longitudinal study. *School Psychology International* 23(4), 458-474.
- Henkel, M. (2000). Academic identities and policy change in higher education. *Higher education policy series 46*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Henry, F., Tator, C., Mattis, W., & Rees, T. (2000). *The colour of democracy*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Henry, F. (2004). *Concepts of race and racism and implications for OHRC policy*. Race Policy Dialogue Conference Paper. Retrieved March 28, 2010, from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/issues/racism/racepolicydialogue/fh>
- Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2007). Through a looking glass: Enduring racism on the university campus. *Academic Matters*. Retrieved March 4, 2009, from http://www.ocufa.on.ca/Academic_Matters_February2007/through_a_looking_glass.pdf
- Hoffman, E. (1989). *Lost in translation*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Holter, I. M., & Schwartz-Barcott, D. (1993). Action research: What is it? How has it been used and how can it be used in nursing? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 128, 298-304.
- Hosang, M., Fraenzle, S., & Markert, B. (2005). Die emotionale Matrix. Grundlagen für gesellschaftlichen Wandel und nachhaltige Innovation.

- Høstaker, R. (2000). Policy change and the academic professions. In Kogan, M. *Transforming higher education: A comparative study*, p. 151-158.
- Huang, J., & Klinger, D. A. (2006). Chinese graduate students at North American universities: Learning challenges and coping strategies. *Canadian and International Education*, 35(2), 48-61.
- Hufford, D. (1995). The scholarly voice and the personal voice: Reflexivity in belief studies. *Western Folklore*, 54, 57-76.
- Hunt, S., & Symonds, A. (1995). *The social meaning of midwifery*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Hyland, K. (2001). Humble servants of the discipline? Self-mention in research articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, 20, 207-226.
- Hyland, K. (2002). Activity and evaluation: Reporting practices in academic writing. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Academic Discourse* (pp. 115-130). UK: Pearson Education.
- Johnsen, H. C. G., & Normann, R. (2004). When research and practice collide: The role of action research when there is a conflict of interest with stakeholders. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 17(3), 207-235.
- Jordan, J. P. (1963). Exploratory behavior: The formation of self and occupational concepts. In D. E. Super (Ed.), *Career development: Self-concept theory, College entrance Examination* (pp. 42-78). New York, NY.
- Kanfer, R., Wanberg, C. R., & Kantrowitz, T. M. (2001). Job search and employment: Personality-motivational analysis and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 837-855.

- Katz, E. (2006). Recruiting international graduate students today. *International Educator, 15*(4), 54-58.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action researcher planner*. Victoria, Australia: Deakin University.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1990). *The action research planner*. Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kemmis, S. (2001). Exploring the relevance of clinical theory for action research: Emancipatory action research in the footsteps of Jurgen Habermas. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of action research* (pp. 91-102). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Kennedy, T., & Snicer, T. J. (2006). *The CaPS employment survey of University of Alberta graduates of 2000*. Retrieved September 10, 2007, from <http://www.ualberta.ca/CAPS/>
- Kenny, M. E., Blustein, D. L., Chaves, A., Grossman, J. M., & Gallagher, L. A. (2003). The role of perceived barriers and relational support in the educational and vocational lives of urban high school students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 50*, 142-155.
- Kleinman, A. (1980). *Patients and healers in the context of culture*. California, CA: University of California.
- Kottak, C. P. (2005). *Windows on humanity*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Krahn, H., Derwing, T., Mulder, M., & Wilkinson, L. (2000). Educated and underemployed: Refugee integration into the Canadian labour market. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 1*(1), 59-84.

- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. The Sage Commttext Series.
- Lawrence, J. (2001). Academic and first year students: Collaborating to access success in an unfamiliar university culture. Widening participation and lifelong learning. *The Journal of the Institute for Access Studies and the European Access Network*, 13(3), 1-15.
- Lazarus, R. (1991). *Emotions and adaptation*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Leatham, G., & Duck, S. (1990). Conversations with friends and the dynamics of social support. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Personal relationships and social support* (pp. 1-29). London: SAGE Publications.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1996). Career development from a social cognitive perspective. In D. Brown & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (pp. 373-421). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Leong, F. T., & Chou, E. C. (1994). The role of ethnic identity and acculturation in the vocational behavior of Asian Americans: An integrative review. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44, 155–172.
- Leong, F. T. L., & Serafica, F. C. (1995). Career development of Asian Americans: A research area in need of a good theory. In F. T. L. Leong (Ed.), *Career development and vocational behavior of racial and ethnic minorities* (pp. 67-102). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Leong, F. T. L., & Chou, E. L. (1996). Counseling international students. In P. B. Pedersen, J. G. Draguns, W. J. Lonner, & J. T. Trimble (Eds.), *Counseling*

across cultures (4th ed., pp. 210–242). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Leung, S.A., Ivey, D., & Suzuki, L. (1994). Factors affecting the career aspirations of Asian Americans. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 72, 404–410.
- Lewis, B. F. (2003). A critique of the literature on the underrepresentation of African Americans in science: Directions for future research. *Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering*, 9(3–4), 361–373.
- Li, P. S. (2001). The market worth of immigrants' educational credentials. *Canadian Public Policy*, 27(1), 23-38.
- Li, P. S. (2003). *Destination Canada: Immigration debates and issues*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Luzzo, D. A. (1996). Exploring the relationship between the perception of occupational barriers and career development. *Journal of Career Development*, 22, 239-248.
- Macedo, D. (1999). Our common culture: A poisonous pedagogy, In M. Castells, R. Flecha, P. Freire, H. A. Giroux, & P. Willis (Eds), *Critical education in the new information age* (pp. 117-138). Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Mahoney, M. J. (2003). *Constructive psychotherapy: A practical guide*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Mahtani, M., & Mountz, A. (2002). *Immigration to British Columbia: Media representation and public opinion*, Working Paper 02-15, Research on immigration and integration in the metropolis, Vancouver, BC.
- Martinez, E. D., Botos, J., Dohoney, K. M., Kolla, S. K., Olivera, A., Qiu, Y., Rayasam, G. V., Stavreva, D. A., & Cohen-Fix, O. (2007). Falling off the academia bandwagon. *European Molecular Biology Organization Reports*, 8, 977-981.
- Matsumoto, D., LeRoux, J. A., Bernhard, R., & Gray, H. (2004). Unraveling the psychological correlates of intercultural adjustment potential. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 28, 281-309. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Mayer, R. (2004). Should there be a three-strikes rule against pure discovery learning? The case for guided methods of instruction. *American Psychologist*, 59(1), 14-19.
- Mayes, D. G., Berghman, J., & Salais, R. (2001). *Social exclusion and European policy*. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar.
- McAlpine, L., & Norton, J. (2006). Reframing our approach to doctoral programs: An integrative framework for action and research. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 25(1), 3-17.
- McAlpine, L., & Amundsen, C. (2007). Academic communities and developing identity: The doctoral student journey. In P. Richards (Ed.), *Global issues in higher education* (pp. 57-83). NY: Nova Publishing.

- McDade, K. (1988). *Barriers to recognition of the credentials of immigrants in Canada*. Ottawa: Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- McInnis, C. (2003). New realities of the student experience: How should universities respond? *UniNews*, 12(9), 5.
- McLean, P., & Ransom, L. (2005). Building intercultural competencies. Implications for academic skills development. In J Carroll & J Ryan (Eds), *Teaching international students*. London: Routledge.
- McLeroy, K. R., Bibeau, D., Steckler, A., & Glanz, K. (1988). An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. *Health Education Quarterly*, 15, 351-377.
- Menges, R. J. (1996). Experiences of newly hired faculty. In L. Richlin (Ed.), *To improve the academy*, 15, (pp. 169–182). Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press and the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.
- Milewski, G. B., & Gillie, J. M. (2002). *What are the characteristics of AP teachers? An examination of survey research*. New York: The College Board (Research Report No. 2002-10).
- Miller, A. (1990). *For your own good: Hidden cruelty in child-rearing and the roots of violence* (H. Hannum & H. Hannum Trans.). (3rd ed.). New York: Noonday Press.
- Moodley, K. A. (1983). Canadian multiculturalism as ideology. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 6(3), 320-331.

- Morfin, O. J., Perez, V. H., Parker, L., Lynn, M., & Arrona, J. (2006). Hiding the politically obvious: A critical race theory preview of diversity as racial neutrality in higher education. *Educational Policy*, 20(1), 249-270.
- Mustakova-Possardt, M. (2003). Is there a roadmap to critical consciousness? Critical consciousness: A study of morality in global, historical context. *One Country*, 15(2).
- Myers, G. (2001). 'In my opinion': The place of personal views in undergraduate essays. In M. Hewings (Ed.), *Academic writing in context: Implications and applications*. Papers in Honour of T. Dudley-Evans (pp. 63-78). UK: University of Birmingham Press.
- Nagle, R. J., Suldo, S. M., Christenson, S.L., & Hansen, A. L. (2004). Graduates perceptions of academic positions in school psychology. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 19(4), 311-326.
- Nakamura, H. (1964/1978). *Ways of thinking of Eastern peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan*. Honolulu. East-West Center Press.
- Nelson, D. J. (2005). *A National analysis of diversity in science and engineering facilities at research universities*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma.
- Nisbett, R. E., Peng, K., Choi, I., & Norenzayan, A. (2001). Culture and systems of thought: Holistic versus analytic cognition. *Psychological Review*, 108, 291-310.
- Neumann, A., & Peterson, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Learning for our lives: Women, research and autobiography in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Nightingale, D., & Cromby, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Social constructionist psychology: critical analysis of theory and practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Nisbett, R. E. (1998). Essence and accident: Back to the future with Ned Jones and the correspondence bias. In J. Cooper & J. Darley (Eds.), *Attribution processes, person perception, and social interaction: The legacy of Ned Jones*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Nisbett, R. E., Peng, K., Choi, I., & Norenzayan, A. (1999). *Culture and systems of thought: Holistic vs. analytic cognition*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan.
- Oei, T. P. S., & Notowidjojo, F. (1990). Depression and loneliness in overseas students. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 36*, 121–130.
- Oetzel, J. G., Ting-Toomey, S., & Rinderle, S. (2006). Conflict communication in contexts: A social ecological perspective. In J. G. Oetzel & S. T. Toomey (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of conflict communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Olaniran, B. A. (1999). International graduate teaching assistants (IGTAs) workshop: Implications for training. *College Student Affairs Journal, 18*(2), 56-71.
- Ortiz-Walters, R., & Gilson, L. L. (2005). Mentoring in academia: An examination of the experiences of protégés of color. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 67*, 459–475.

- Owram, D. (2010). *Part two: What international students mean to Canadian universities*. Retrieved June 13, 2010, from <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/part-2-international-students.aspx>
- Peavy, R. V. (2000). Socio dynamic perspective and the practice of counseling, *NATCON Papers*. Retrieved March, 9, 2009, from <http://www.contactpoint.ca/natcon-conat/2000/pdf/pdf-00-18.pdf>
- Perrucci, R., & Hu, H. (1995). Satisfaction with social and educational experiences among international graduate students. *Research in Higher Education, 36*, 491-508.
- Peter, K. (1981). *The myth of multiculturalism and other political fables. In ethnicity, power and politics*. Toronto: Methuen.
- Peykov, P. (2004). Immigrant skilled workers: Should Canada attract more foreign students? (SIPP Public Policy Paper No. 27). Retrieved July 14, 2007, from University of Regina, Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, www.uregina.ca/sipp/documents/pdf/pp27_Immigration.pdf
- Pickering, M. (2001). *Stereotyping: The politics of representation*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave.
- Polit, D., & Hungler, B. (1991). *Nursing research: Principles and methods*. New York: JB Lippincott.
- Popper, K. (1992). What is Dialectic? In *Conjectures and refutations: The growth of scientific knowledge*, 312-35. Routledge.

- Purcell, K., & Elias, P. (2006). *The employment of social science PhDs in academic and non-academic jobs: Research skills and postgraduate training*. Economic and Social Research Council. UK.
- Rawlins, W. K. (1992). *Friendship matters: Communication, dialectics, and the life course*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H., (Ed., 2001). *The SAGE handbook of action research. participative inquiry and practice*. (1st ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Reitz, J. G. (2001). Immigrant skill utilization in the Canadian labour market: Implications of human capital research. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2(3), 347-78.
- Reynolds, A. L., & Constantine, M. G. (2007). Cultural adjustment difficulties and career development of international college students. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 15, 338-350.
- Rice, R. E., Sorcinelli, M. D., & Austin, A. E. (2000). *Heeding new voices: Academic careers for a new generation. New Pathways Inquiry #7*. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.
- Ricks, F., Charlesworth, J., Bellefeuille, G., & Field, A. (1999). *All together now: Creating a social capital mosaic*. Nepean, ON: The Vanier Institute of the Family.
- Rousseau, D. M., & House, R. J. (1994). Meso organizational behavior: Avoiding three fundamental biases. In C. L. Cooper & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Trends in organizational behavior*, 13-30. New York: John Wiley.

- Ruwe, D., & Al-Wazedi, U. (2003). Training a non-native teacher. *The Clearing House*, 76, 228-229.
- Ryan, Y., & Zuber-Skerritt, O. (1999). Supervising non-English speaking background students in the globalized university. In Y. Ryan, & O. Zuber-Skerritt (Eds.), *Supervising postgraduates from non-English speaking backgrounds* (pp. 3-11). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Said, E. (2003). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Samarasekera, I. V. (2006). Message from Indira Samarasekera. Retrieved December 7, 2006, from <http://webmail:ualberta.ca/message.php?index=1831>
- Sands, T., & Plunkett, S. W. (2005). A new scale to measure adolescent reports of academic support by mothers, fathers, teachers, and friends in Latino immigrant families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 27, 244-253. doi:10.1177/0739986304273968
- Scharmer, C. O. (2000). *Presencing: Learning from the future as it emerges*. Paper presented at the Conference on Knowledge and Innovation, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland. <http://www.ottoscharmer.com>
- Schein, E. H. (1978). *Career dynamics: Matching individual and organizational needs*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Scheyvens, R., Wild, K., & Overton, J. (2003). International students pursuing postgraduate study in geography: Impediments to their learning experiences. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 27, 309-323.

- Secondary Education Graduate Program Handbook. (2006-2007). [Brochure].
University of Alberta, AB: Author.
- Sedlacek, W .E. & Brooks Jr., G. C. (1976). *Racism in American education: A model for change*. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.
- Seeman, M. (1959). *On the meaning of alienation*. Indian: The Bobbs Merrill Company.
- Simon, R. (1987). Empowerment as pedagogy of possibility. *Language Arts*, 64(4), 370.
- Smart, D., Davis, D., Volet, S., & Milne, C. (1998). *Improving social interaction between international and Australian students on university campuses*. Report for IDP Australia (unpublished).
- Smith, L. T. (2007). On tricky ground: Researching the native in an age of uncertainty. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Smith, L. (1979). An evolving logic of participant observation, educational ethnography, and other case studies. In L. Shulman (Ed.), *Review of research in education 6*, Itaska, IL: Peacock Press.
- Soto, J. J. (1999, January). Affirmative action: An anachronism in higher education? *Motion Magazine*. Retrieved June 26, 2007, from <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/soto.html>
- Stake, R. E. (1980). The case method inquiry in social inquiry. In H. Simons (Ed.), *Towards a science of the singular*. Norwich, England: CARE.

- Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (1st ed., pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Statistics Canada. (2003c). Longitudinal survey of immigrants to Canada: Process, progress and prospects. 2003 Census. Ontario: Author. Retrieved February 20, 2009, from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-611-x/index-eng.htm>
- Stier, J. (2006). Internationalisation, intercultural communication and intercultural competence. *Journal of Intercultural Communication, 11*.
- Stokols, D. (1996). Translating social ecological theory into guidelines for community health promotion. *American Journal of Health Promotion, 10*, 282-298.
- Stumpf, S. A., Colarelli, S. M., & Hartman, K. (1983). Development of the career exploration survey. (CES). *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 22*, 191-226.
- Swanson, J. L., & Tokar, D. M. (1991). College students' perceptions of barriers to career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 38*, 92-106.
- Swanson, J. L., & Woitke, M. B. (1997). Theory into practice in career assessment for women: Assessment and interventions regarding perceived career barriers. *Journal of Career Assessment, 5*(4), 443-462.
- Tatum, B. D. (1997). "Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" *And other conversations about race*. NY: Basic Books.
- Thomson, G. (2001). Interaction in academic writing: Learning to argue with the reader. *Applied Linguistics, 22*, 58-78.

- Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Trovato, F., & Grindstaff, C. F. (1986). Economic status: A census analysis of immigrant women at age thirty in Canada. *Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 23(4), 569-687.
- Valimaa, J. (1998). Culture and identity in higher education research. *Higher Education*, 36, 119-138.
- van Dijk, T. (1993). *Elite Discourse and Racism. Sage series on race and ethnic relations*, 6. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, Ontario: State University of New York.
- Vlasceanu, L., & Voicu, B. (2006). Implementation of the Bologna objectives in a sample of European private higher education institutions: Outcomes of a survey. *Higher Education in Europe*, 31(1), 25–52.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wanta, W. (2003). Teaching in a new language. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 58, 210-214.
- Ward, C., Leong, C. H., & Low, M. (2004). Personality and sojourner adjustment: An exploration of the Big Five and the cultural fit proposition. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35, 137-151.

- Weidman, J., Twale, D., & Stein, E. (2001). *Socialization of graduate and professional students in higher education: A perilous passage?* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Weisz, M., & Kemlo, L. (2004, July). *Improving student learning through peer support*. Paper presented at the 8th Pacific Rim – First Year Experience in Higher Education Conference, Queensland University of Technology & Monash University, Brisbane, Australia.
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2), 237-269.
- Williamson, M. (1996). *A return to love: Reflections on the principles of a course in miracles*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Winkelman, M. (1994). Cultural shock and adaptation. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 73, 121–126.
- Wong, J. (1997). *Red China blues: My long march from Mao to now*. Doubleday Canada.
- Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Young, R. A., & Collin, A. (2004). Introduction: Constructivism and social constructionism in the career field. Special issue on constructivism and social constructionism and career. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64(3), 373–388.

- Young, Y. K. (2004). Long-term cross-cultural adaptation. In D. Landis, J. M. Bennett, & M. J. Bennett (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training* (pp. 337-362). California: SAGE Publications.
- Zamel, V. (1995). Strangers in academia: The experiences of faculty and ESL students across the curriculum. *College Composition and Communication*, 46, 506-521.
- Zhou, M., & Kim, R. Y. (2001). Formation, consolidation, and diversification of the ethnic elite: The case of the Chinese immigrant community in the United States. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2(2), 227-247.
- Zikic, J., Novicevic, M., Harvey, M., & Breland, J. (2006). Repatriate career exploration: A path to career growth and success. *Career Development International*, 11(7), 633-649.
- Zimmerman, S. (1995). Perceptions of intercultural communication competence and international student adaptation to an American campus. *Communication Education*, 44(4), 321-335.
- Zirkel, S. (2002). Is there a place for me? Role models and achievement among White students and students of color. *Teachers College Record*, 104, 357-376.
- Zong, L. (1999). *Credential devaluation and downward occupational mobility for foreign-trained Chinese professional immigrants in Canada*. Presented at International Conference on Chinese Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean, Havana, Cuba.

Zong, L. (2001). Occupational attainment for recent Chinese professional immigrants in Canada. *Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1*, 46-59.

Zong, L. (2004). International transference of human capital and occupational attainment of recent Chinese professional immigrants in Canada. *American Review of China Studies, 5*(1&2), 81-89.

Appendix A

Survey on Immigrant Ph.D. Students' Career Preparation

1. Educational Status

1) In what year did you begin Ph.D. program?

2) In what department are/were you pursuing your degree?

Department of _____

3) What was your primary job prior to entering this program?

4) What is the driving force that led you to pursue a Ph.D. program?

A. Interest

B. Upgrade knowledge

C. Can not find a professional job in Canada

D. To become a professional in Canada or North America

E. (others) _____

5) What is your current status in your graduate program?

A. I am still taking courses.

B. I have completed course work.

C. I have passed my candidate exam.

D. I have had my dissertation/thesis proposal accepted.

E. I have defended my dissertation/thesis.

6) What is your current official enrolment status?

A. Full-time

B. Part-time

2. Support Received in Teaching

1) Have you held a teaching appointment or assistantship while in your Ph.D. program?

A. Yes.

B. No. If not, why not?

A. Not available

B. Got a scholarship that is not in teaching

C. Applied but rejected because _____

D. Did not apply because _____

2) For how many semesters have you assisted in a faculty member's course?

3) For how many semesters have you been the primary course instructor yourself?

4) Did you participate in the University Teaching Services (UTS) Graduate Teaching Program?

A. Yes. Because _____

B. No. Because _____

5) Have you taught any courses that you developed yourself?

A. Yes.

B. No.

6) Did you request an opportunity to teach or was the task assigned to you?

A. I requested the opportunity even though I have never taught before.

B. I requested the opportunity because I wanted the experience.

C. I was assigned the task.

D. No opportunity because _____

7) Have you developed an area of expertise and demonstrate this expertise to others in teaching?

A. Yes. How did this come about?

B. No. Why not?

8) How has your overall experience affected your interest in teaching at the university level?

A. Increased my interest.

B. Made no difference.

C. Decreased my interest.

D. N/A

9) How useful have you found your training in basic teaching skills? (e.g. curriculum development, lecturing, leading discussions, writing examinations, creating and/or grading assignments)

A. Excellent

B. Very good

C. Good

D. Fair

E. Poor

F. Received no training

Please comment:

3. Support Received in Researching

- 1) Have you conducted research since starting your Ph.D. program?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 2) Have you received adequate faculty guidance in formulating a research topic?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 3) Have you conducted your research in collaboration with one or more faculty members?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 4) Have you ever received research funding?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 5) Have you assisted in writing a grant proposal?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 6) Have you published as a sole author?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 7) As co-author?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 8) Have you attended an academic conference?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 9) Have you presented a paper or poster session at an academic conference?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 10) Have you received funding to pay for expenses related to attending an academic conference?
 - A. Yes.
 - B. No.

- 11) Did you request the assistantship in research or were you assigned the tasks?

- A. I requested the opportunity even though I have never conducted research before.
- B. I requested the opportunity because I wanted the experience.
- C. I was assigned the task.

12) Have you developed an area of expertise and demonstrate this expertise to others in researching?

- A. Yes. How did this come about?

- B. No. Why not?

13) How useful have you found your training in basic researching skills? (e.g. grant application, research design and sample selection, measurement, qualitative and quantitative methods in survey research design, data collection and analysis, and result presentation.)

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Fair
- E. Poor
- F. Received no training

Please comment:

4. Support Received in Community Service

1) Have you ever engaged in any community services as a volunteer?

- A. Yes. If so, how did this come about?

- B. No. If not, why not?

2) Have you developed an expertise and demonstrate this expertise to others in community service?

- A. Yes. If so, how did this come about?

- B. No. If not, why not?

3) How useful have you found your training in community services skills? (e.g. understanding, conducting or reflecting on the importance of community service)

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Fair
- E. Poor
- F. Received no training

Please comment: _____

4) What are the benefits you think international Ph. D. students can obtain from community service?

5. Support Received in Networking

1) Do you know the important professional organizations in your field?

A. Yes. If so, how did this come about?

B. No. If not, why not?

2) Have you considered joining professional organizations?

A. Yes. If so, how did this come about?

B. No. If not, why not?

3) Did you plan to attend for professional association conferences?

A. Yes. If so, why?

B. No. If not, why not?

4) Did you fit and participate actively in a professional network?

A. Yes. If so, how did this come about?

B. No. If not, why not?

5) How useful have you found your training in professional networking skills? (e.g. tools and techniques, rules, resources, references, maintaining individual style)

- A. Excellent
 - B. Very good
 - C. Good
 - D. Fair
 - E. Poor
 - F. Received no training
- Please comment:
-

6. Support Received in Career Counselling and Job Search

1) Did you enter your degree program intending to pursue a career in North American academia?

A. Yes. If so, how did this come about?

B. No. If not, why not?

2) Have you received advice about employment opportunities inside academia?

A. Yes. If Yes, from whom?

B. No. If No, why not?

3) Have you received advice about employment opportunities outside academia?

A. Yes. If Yes, from whom?

B. No. If No, why not?

4) Have you received advice on how to search for a job?

A. Yes. If Yes, from whom?

B. No. If No, why not?

5) Have you received advice on how to prepare a resume or curriculum vitae?

A. Yes. If Yes, from whom?

B. No. If No, why not?

6) Have you received advice on preparing for an interview?

A. Yes. If Yes, from whom?

B. No. If No, why not?

7) How useful have you found your training in career counselling and job search?
e.g. goal-setting, gap (between job requirement and current knowledge, skills
and attitude) recognition, strategies in filling in the gap, confidence

A. Excellent

B. Very good

C. Good

D. Fair

E. Poor

F. Received no training

Please comment:

7. Support Received in Understanding Academic Study

1) Is information on degree requirements in your field easily accessible?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

2) Is information on degree requirements clear?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

3) Are faculty and staff well-informed about degree requirements?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

4) Have you had input into the design of your individual program of study?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

5) Did you request any of the above information or were you given it?

A. I requested the information.

B. I was given it.

Please explain your answer:

6) How useful have you found the support you received in understanding academic study (e.g. know how to get the information you need, know the milestones you must achieve and plan to achieve them, know how to plan on accommodating this time frame

A. Excellent

B. Very good

C. Good

D. Fair

E. Poor

F. Received no training

Please comment on your answer:

8. Special Needs

1) Have you noticed any tensions in adapting to the values embodied in Canadian higher education?

A. Yes. If Yes, then what are the tensions?

B. No.

2) Are the messages you received about professional career preparation ambiguous?

A. Yes. If Yes, then what are the ambiguous messages?

B. No.

3) Have you recognized a mismatch/deficiency between the training received and the career jobs required?

A. Yes. If Yes, then what is the mismatch or the deficiency?

B. No.

4) Do you have confidence in your expertise and developmental capacity?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

5) Are you feeling encouraged in your graduate studies, professional career preparation, and societal recognition?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

6) Do you have access to supportive resources that are culturally sensitive, integrative and transmittable enough to market your expertise and skills after graduation?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

7) How useful have you found the support you received in meeting your special needs as an international Ph.D. student (e.g. your special needs are fully recognized and facilitated, your ambition for a professional career is identified and promoted)

A. Excellent

B. Very good

C. Good

D. Fair

E. Poor

F. Received no training

Please explain your answer:

9. General Assessment

Please rate the overall quality of your experience at the University

1) Academic experience

A. Excellent

B. Very good

C. Good

D. Fair

E. Poor

Please explain your answer:

2) The effectiveness of Ph.D. programs at preparing you for the career you wish to pursue

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Fair
- E. Poor

Please explain your answer:

3) Quality of life as an international Ph. D. student

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Fair
- E. Poor

Please explain your answer:

10. Career Preparation

1) Which of the following best describes your expectations for professional employment immediately after you complete your graduate degree?

- A. tenure track faculty position
 - B. Non-tenure track faculty position
 - C. Other teaching position
 - D. Postdoctoral researcher, fellow, or associate
 - E. Researcher, academic setting
 - F. Researcher, non-academic setting
 - G. Professional position for which my program prepared me
 - H. Other non-academic position (please describe below)
-

Please explain your answer:

2) Is the position indicated above directly related to your Ph.D. degree?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.

Please explain your answer:

3) How would you categorize the type of employer you expect to work for immediately after you complete your Ph.D. degree?

- A. College or university
 - B. Community or junior college
 - C. Elementary, secondary or special focus school
 - D. Industry or business
 - E. Non-profit organization or foundation
 - F. Federal government
 - G. State or local government
 - H. Self-employed
 - I. Other type of employer (Please describe.)
-

Please explain your answer:

4) Do you know what careers international Ph.D. graduates of your program generally entered?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.

Please explain your answer:

5) Do you know what careers the non-international Ph.D. graduates of your program generally entered?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.

Please explain your answer:

6) What is your estimation of the percentage of international Ph.D. graduates of your program who are employed immediately after graduation in professional jobs?

- A. More than 80%
- B. Between 60-80%
- C. 50%
- D. Below 50%

Please explain your answer:

7) Do you know what non-traditional jobs recent international Ph.D. graduates of your program are doing?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.

Please explain your answer:

8) Do you know what resources are available to help you explore possible professional careers?

A. Yes.

B. No

Please explain your answer:

9) Have you fully utilized the available resources for your career preparation?

A. Yes.

B. No.

Please explain your answer:

11. Personal demographics

1) Gender

A. Male

B. Female

2) Age Group

A. 20s

B. 30s

C. 40s

D. 50s

A. 60s

3) Do you have dependent children?

A. Yes.

B. No.

4) Number of dependent children.

A. 1

B. 2

C. 3 and more

5) Your status

A. Single

B. Married

6) Citizenship status

A. Canadian citizen

B. Canadian permanent resident

C. Citizen of another country with a student visa or other non-immigrant visa

7) Your nationality

Thank you very much for your assistance!

Appendix B

Immigrant Ph.D. Students' Professional Development Plan

'Dare to Thrive' International Graduate Students' Career Support Club Program (September 2007 to April 2008)

Introduction

The 'Dare to Thrive' - International Graduate Students' Career Support Club is a voluntary, self-directed professional development program open to all international graduate students, professional students, and post-doctoral fellows. Designed to introduce participants to the wide range of professional careers and requirements and to recognize participants who are engaging in activities to prepare for academic and non-academic careers, the program emphasizes individuals' initiatives and responsibilities in integrating career preparation into their graduate studies, to complement the specialized training in degree programs. The program suggests a variety of activities (including workshop sessions, mentoring, hands-on experiences, working groups, and conferences) for participants to pursue to create a professional development path that is appropriate for them given their particular career aspirations, disciplinary contexts, cross-cultural experiences and stages in their graduate programs, etc.

There is no formal enrollment into this program; rather, they may use the framework and offerings presented on the program web page to recognize, organize, and address their professional development needs.

Many of the resources listed on this page are provided by members of the 'Dare to Thrive' - International Graduate Students' Career Support Club, an informal network of students, staff, faculty, and administrators at the Club that seeks to facilitate the awareness and use of the many activities that can help international graduate students become productive and well-rounded scholars in their new home country.

Background

From working on course assignments, researching and teaching assistant work, to adapting to Canadian graduate studies and life, international graduate students have very little time left to focus on anything else. For many of them, looking for a job and taking the next step into the Canadian professional sector can be quite a challenging endeavor.

The frustrations emerging most consistently include:

- the tensions in adapting to the values embodied in higher education
- the ambiguous messages they receive about priorities in the academy
- a significant mismatch between the training received and the jobs required
- Lack of confidence in one's expertise and developmental capacity
- Disillusion in graduate studies, professional career, and societal recognition

The University has provided great services including career counseling and mentoring in areas such as CV preparation, integration into professional associations or societies, networking, and project management skills in pursuing careers inside and outside of the academy, and in seeking engaging and satisfying employment in a full range of professions and other areas.

However, international graduate students' special needs are not fully recognized and facilitated. To achieve positive outcomes from academic studies, international graduate students need peer-support to translate the available supportive resources into culturally sensitive, integrative and transmittable messages so that students' academic training can be complemented and their ability to market their expertise and skills can be facilitated.

Program Description

The unique contribution of this program is promoting international graduate students to take a professional interest and responsibility for their own educations, recognizing and capitalizing on the caring and supportive community by fostering focusing on the positives.

The program will guide international graduate students to work collaboratively with peers to develop and act on a strategic plan that addresses the gap between academic studies and professional development. The activities are organized according to five key components of professional development:

1. tough questions about why you are here
2. joining a discipline or profession
3. establishing expertise
4. developing networks and relationships
5. becoming a professional

Mission

Supporting peers for career success.

Vision

Transforming lives and communities through graduate programs

Objectives

- To establish an ongoing dialog with international graduate students to ascertain their special needs
- To promote a culture among campus audiences that recognizes the importance of professional development for international graduate students
- To translate the information about resources and opportunities
- To designing research-informed programs and practices for effective professional development

- To help the campus community integrate professional development opportunities into the learning experience
- To address international graduate students' career concerns that are not resolved at the program, department, or university's level
- To develop the ability to translate academic training into more broadly defined categories of communication, analysis, interpersonal, and organizational skills
- To pass on the culture and ethics of profession
- To offer opportunities to begin building professional networks
- To discover and transcend blind spots in career preparation
- To promote professional identity development
- To assist in developing personal and professional skills necessary to become responsible community leaders and role models
- To understand employment prospects and options within and beyond the academy
- To understand the global economy and environment and the needs of Canadian society

Program Evaluation

There will be a period assessment after each seminar and a general evaluation in the middle and by the end of the program to understand goals and objectives, needs, performance, program activities, strategies, problems, and definition of participants' success.

Seminar Description

September Tough Question about Why You Are Here

Objective

- To understand why you are in your graduate program

Activities

- Re-examine why you are in graduate program
- Reflect on in what ways you are satisfied or dissatisfied with your progress in personal and professional development at this point
- Envision your career paths for your future

October Joining a Discipline of Profession

Objective

- To know the pathways from your academic study to professional field

Activities

On Academic Study

- Know the expectations of your program

- Know how to get the information you need
- Know the milestones you must achieve and plan to achieve them
- Know additional expectations you have set for yourself
- Know how you are planning on accommodating this time frame

On Professional Organizations

- Know the important professional organizations in your field
- Consider joining professional organizations
- Make a plan to attend for professional association conferences

November Develop Your Scholarship

Objective

- To know your professional journals, fellowships, grants, and personal references

Activities

On Professional Journals

- Know important and prestigious journals in your field
- Know which journals are best for publishing your work, and which journals are most likely to publish your work
- Know which scholars are highly regarded in your field, get familiar with their work, create the opportunity to interact with them

On Fellowships and Grants

- Know the scholarships, fellowships, and research grants in your field
- Know the resources that may help you apply for fellowships and grants

On Personal References

- Identify relationships you have developed with professionals who can write strong, positive references for you.
- Find ways in maintaining these relationships and establish new relationships

December Establishing Expertise in Teaching

Objective

- To develop expertise and demonstrate this expertise to others in teaching

Activities

- Develop your teaching portfolio
- Develop expertise within your discipline and in related disciplines
- Gain teaching experience

January Establishing Expertise in Researching

Objective

- To develop expertise and demonstrate this expertise to others in researching

Activities

- Evaluate your goals to find out what depth and breadth of research methodology and scholarly experience you will need
- Examine how you are developing depth and breadth in your field, what you can do to expand your experiences
- Explore what resources are available for research development at the university
- Develop a research portfolio

February Establishing Expertise in Community Service

Objectives

- To develop expertise and demonstrate this expertise to others in community service

Activities

- Challenge yourself by gaining experience in administration and leadership to become a better leader, public speaker, or group member
- Explore available committees and other university service opportunities

March Mature in Your Discipline

Objective

- To development professional identity and skills

Activities

- Gain experience in the areas
- Write and edit academic papers
- Make formal and informal presentations
- Networking
- Negotiating
- Develop personal philosophy
- Promote yourself as a professional
- Get your work published and recognized
- Communicate effectively with others
- Understand university policy and procedures
- Develop curriculum vitae or resume
- Gain interviewing experience

April Becoming a Professional

Objective

- To negotiate your way through "colleague systems" by establishing a variety of acquaintances and relationships on multiple levels

Activities

On Networks

- Consider what networks you are already a part, what groups you might join to expand your networks, how to maintain your networks

On Becoming a Colleague

- Make connections and build relationships with other graduate students and faculty inside and outside your discipline and on and off your university campus
- Advance in your professional development by obtaining your classroom professors' help
- Use the university organizations or departments that are designed to aid your professional and personal development

On Analyzing Power Relationships

- Understand the power structure in your department and your place in it
- Find out the most effective ways to communicate with your superiors
- Identify whether your department is cooperative or competitive. How you are functioning within this environment, where you can go for advice on working effectively

On Developing a Reputation

- Make yourself visible in conferences
- Present and defend your ideas in friendly and more formal settings, use these experiences to further your goals
- Present and defend your work at poster sessions, lecture sessions, and other events at departmental, university, community, national, and international conferences
- Publish your work in appropriate peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings
- Write about your work and submit publications and grant applications
- Develop your ethical decision making skills
- Recognize reward systems, utilize them for yourself and for others

Appendix C

Information Letter

Dear International Ph.D. students,

From working on course assignments, researching and teaching assistant work, to adapting to Canadian graduate studies and life, international Ph.D. students have very little time left to focus on anything else. For many of them, looking for a job and taking the next step into a career in the Canadian professional sector can be quite a challenging endeavor. The frustrations emerging most consistently from this experience include: the tensions in adapting to the values embodied in higher education, the ambiguous messages received about priorities in the academy, a significant mismatch between the training received and what the jobs require, lack of confidence in one's expertise and developmental capacity, and disillusion in graduate studies, professional career, and societal recognition (Shi, Bilash, 2006).

The University has provided helpful services including career counseling and mentoring in areas such as CV preparation, integration into professional associations or societies, networking, and project management skills in pursuing careers inside and outside of the academy, and in seeking engaging and satisfying employment in a full range of professions and other areas. However, in this array of offerings international Ph.D. students' special needs are not fully recognized or facilitated. To achieve positive outcomes from their academic studies, international Ph.D. students need peer-support to translate available supportive resources into culturally sensitive, integrative and meaningful messages and have their academic training complemented and their ability to market their expertise and skills facilitated.

The 'Dare to Thrive' - International Graduate Students' Career Support Club is a voluntary, peer-support professional development program for international Ph.D. students. Sponsored by University International Centre, the club is designed to explore collaboratively the wide range of professional careers and requirements, the program emphasizes individuals' initiatives and responsibilities in integrating career preparation into their graduate studies and complements the specialized training in degree programs. Leaders for this program include Cathy Shi, the researcher, peer leader and an international PhD student in the Department of Secondary Education and Jacquie, the facilitator, and an international student advisor at the University International Centre.

The peer support professional development project runs from October 2007 to April 2008. It includes a variety of monthly activities including workshops, mentoring, hands-on experiences, working group discussions, and conferences which will help participants to create and pursue a professional development path that is appropriate for their particular career aspirations, disciplinary contexts, cross-cultural experiences and stages in their graduate programs. The seminars

and activities fully recognize and facilitate international Ph.D. students' special needs, raise their awareness about taking a professional interest and responsibility for their own education, translate the available supportive resources into culturally sensitive, integrative and transmittable messages so that students' academic studies and their ability to market their expertise and skills can be facilitated.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of these seminars on participants. The Ph.D. student participants will be asked to complete a survey that contains both closed and open-ended questions, and Likert scale responses (see attached form) at the beginning of the project. Completion of this survey will take approximately 30 minutes. Willing participants will be asked to participate in the semi-structured monthly peer-support professional development activities, which are designed to introduce participants to the wide range of professional careers and their requirements and to support participants who are engaging in activities to prepare for academic careers in the North American context. The program emphasizes individuals' initiatives and responsibilities in integrating career preparation into their graduate studies, to complement their specialized training in degree programs. After every monthly activity, the participants will be asked to fill in an activity evaluation form (see attached form) including a self-assessment on the progress they are making as a result of participating in the activities. Completion of each evaluation form will take approximately 15 minutes. At the end of each term, participants will also be asked to provide a perception of their professional change by filling in a form and writing an open ended reflection.

The researcher as a peer leader will keep a professional journal outlining her impressions of events during the 8-month project.

As a participant in this study, you have the right to know the research procedures, to ask any questions about the study, to know new findings. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty to you. You may continue to take part in the support program activities even if you do not wish to continue your involvement in the research. If you wish to withdraw information that you contributed during the project, please let me know by May 2008 (one month after the end of the support program. If you contact me to withdraw your data, I will have any relevant information destroyed and not used in the research findings, related publications or presentations. Withdrawal from the study at any time will result in no repercussions for participants.

You are going to be given the time and opportunity to decide freely whether to consent or not consent to participate in the study.

The researcher will work to ensure that your identity will remain completely anonymous and no means of identifying you will be used in reporting the findings; therefore, your home department will never be revealed. Pseudonyms will be used to further guarantee anonymity. It is also important for all participants to uphold the confidentiality and anonymity of other participants. Through working

together with others in the workshops and project activities, you will know the identity of other participants, and you are asked not to reveal their identity to anyone outside the group.

All documents will be handled exclusively by the researcher and the researcher's faculty supervisor and stored in a secure location in the researcher's personal domain.

If you agree to participate in this research please sign the following consent form and return it to me as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Cathy Shi (Ph. D. Student)

Appendix D

International Graduate Students Career Club Monthly Self-assessment

My Perception of my Professional Change

By the end of each month, you will have accomplished some of your self-directed professional development plans. This record will demonstrate your ability to recognize your own needs, identify actions in achieving them, resources and support that enabled your actions, and evidence of your progress. Please answer the following questions.

In the month of _____, in the year of 200_:

My professional development needs were:

My objectives were:

The actions I have taken in order to achieve these objectives include:

The evidence of my progress is:

The resources/supports that have helped me achieve it are:

The issues I am going to address in the future /next month are:

Appendix E

Sample Email Communication to Participants

Dear all,

I think the process of our career preparation is a transformative process which moves us constantly away from where we are comfortable at. This transformation, as I see it, affects us in various aspects. Here is a brief summary of my thoughts:

1. From focusing on improving linguistic competence, to learning to function effectively as an active community member.

Our learning focus will be on understanding the system in a larger society and more urgently, in our immediate community.

2. From being a student to becoming a professional

It means, in addition to achieving academic success, we must make time to study all necessary professional knowledge and skills so that we can be strong enough to compete in the future job market.

3. From a marginalized outsider of a society to move towards an active insider at the centre of the community.

Because access to resources and opportunities available within an institutional setting are unequally distributed among institutional members, access requires social capital, defined as relationships with individuals who are able and willing to provide, or negotiate the provision of institutional resources and opportunities. Therefore developing relationships especially with more capable peers and expert insiders is essential for a constant move towards the center.

4. From native language and cultural community to move towards the mainstream society.

This is a move away from comfort and ease. But since we are going to function as an active member in the mainstream society, we have to open up and embrace the diversity and differences. This process is not just assimilating or accommodating, hopefully we could embrace.

5. From a competent performer to move towards an incompetent learner in a strange, unknown but fascinating world.

I believe our transformation areas do not limit to those mentioned above. And as you all know, this process is far from being comfortable. But at least we are together.

The reason why I say this to you is to invite you to take action to make changes in our lives. Our first monthly activities are mainly based on

understanding ourselves and our institution, which is very important for our next stage.

In order to know better what to do next, I suggest you do the following things before Nov.9, our second meeting:

- visit the career center or its website to know what services it provides to Ph. D students
- reflect on what actions you have taken in October, what are the obstacles, why they are obstacles, what you plan to do next
- think why we need role models, what implications we can get from others' success
- prepare tough questions for our group discussion
- get ready to become proactive and responsible for our own future

Cathy

Appendix F

Term-End Reflection on Professional Development

Reflection on My Professional Growth

Self-reflection is foundational to the development of professional practice skills. Please write freely about your experience of professional development over the past semester. The following elements serve as a guide for your thoughts:

- Compare how you have changed personally and professionally since you participated in this action research project.
- What has been going well for you and in what areas you are struggling.
- Identify strategies and supports which assist you in dealing with these challenges
- What strategies and supports could have changed to better facilitate your learning.
- What professional knowledge and skills you have learned and had the opportunity to use.
- What you have learned about yourself.
- What skills need to be developed next.

Appendix G

Post-Research Interview Questionnaire

Dear (participants' names),

How are you recently? How is your study and career development?

Thank you very much for having participated in the career club. I am going to meet my supervisor next week to discuss with her what I should do next. Most members expressed interest in continuing with it.

This term, besides writing my candidacy exam, I spent most of my time looking for jobs, attending workshops, going to interviews, talking to work place people and career consultants. I've started a part-time teaching job one month ago and just got another one yesterday. They will be enough to keep me busy and from hunger in summer. I have learned so much from job searching in both of our ivory tower and real world.

I have always been fascinated by these questions. Hope you can send me a note with your thoughts and experiences, to help me understand.

1. Is career/professional development important to you? If so, what did you do in your career development?
2. How helpful is your program in preparing for your desired career goals? In which aspects has your Ph.D. program helped you in achieving your goal?
3. Are you confident in getting a professional job upon graduation?
4. What have you benefited most from your Ph.D. study?
5. What is the most important factor that makes a person successful, professional knowledge and skills, or attitude?

After having jumped in the real world sea for Four months, I began to understand and question many things I used to take for granted. I realized that the real world, like our home countries, is complicated, problematic, and biased.

Surrounded everyday by the people of my kind (international Ph. D. students and new immigrants), hearing their stories, and deeply touched by their hopes and hard work, I simply can not wondering every minute of my life (while being awake, sometimes in my dreams), how can we live well in this indifferent world? I need your insights to help me understand all these fundamental questions, not just for helping me with my research, but more importantly, for us, those who are still struggling in the dark, and for the next newcomers.

I am looking forward to receiving your reflections on these questions. After hearing from everybody, I'll send you my analysis and findings.