

## **SPECIAL ISSUE**

# **Diversity and Equity in an Educational Research Partnership: A Duoethnographic Inquiry**

Clea Schmidt\* & Antoinette Gagné†

*University of Manitoba, University of Toronto, Canada*

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This article compares and contrasts the experiences of two researchers who have engaged in a 12-year collaborative partnership to explore issues of equity related to language education, immigrant learners and families, and diversifying the Canadian teaching force. A duoethnographic methodology is used, unpacking the underlying tensions of roles and positions at the start of the partnership, when Clea was a graduate student and Antoinette her supervisor. Two main issues are explored: the way we were positioned disciplinarily at the time we began our collaboration and the way graduate students are positioned in the academy generally. Artifacts related to our collaboration are highlighted to illustrate what our joint work has entailed and to consider reflexively the ways in which we have sought to make research findings relevant to a larger education audience.

**Keywords:** diversity, equity, immigrant experiences, duoethnography, advisor and graduate student positions

Este artículo compara y contrasta las experiencias de dos investigadores quienes han trabajado en asociación colaborativa durante 12 años para explorar temas de equidad relacionados a la enseñanza de idiomas, aprendices inmigrantes y sus familias, y la diversificación de la fuerza docente canadiense. Se emplea una metodología dúo-etnográfica para explorar las tensiones subyacentes de roles y posiciones al inicio de la asociación colaborativa, cuando Clea era estudiante de posgrado y Antoinette su supervisora. Se exploran dos temas principales: la manera en que nos posicionamos disciplinariamente al momento en que comenzó nuestra colaboración y la forma en que estudiantes de postgrado se sitúan en la academia. Los artefactos relacionados con nuestra colaboración son resaltados para ilustrar lo que nuestro trabajo conjunto ha implicado y para considerar

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\* Email: [Clea.Schmidt@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Clea.Schmidt@umanitoba.ca)

† Email: [antoinette.gagne@utoronto.ca](mailto:antoinette.gagne@utoronto.ca)

reflexivamente las maneras en las que hemos buscado hacer hallazgos de investigación relevantes para una audiencia educativa más amplia.

**Prologue: The beginnings of a collaborative research partnership to explore diversities in education, a duoethnographic dialogue between Clea and Antoinette**

*Clea: Our collaboration hadn't yet begun on September 11, 2001, and yet in some ways the story begins there. It was the day planes crashed into the World Trade Towers, and it was also my first class as a doctoral student at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE). I lived close enough to walk to campus, not actually knowing whether classes were running that evening or not. When I and a few other students somewhat dazedly and still reeling from the shock arrived in our classroom, we were met by our professor, who brusquely informed us, "We all know something significant happened today, and there will be time to talk later. For the moment, the bookstore down the street is holding a few copies of my book—you need to run and get them before the shop closes!" Shock turned to incredulity, yet we obediently marched down the street to retrieve our copies.*

*The book we were required to purchase featured a community attempting to create harmonious inter-ethnic relations in a societal context characterized by long-term conflict. The book made a scholarly impression given the exemplary case that formed the site of the research, the extended data collection period, and the richness of the insights documented. The book was more or less the only topic of conversation in our subsequent class discussions that term, and when I wasn't discussing the book in that course, my professor who wrote it was visiting other courses I was taking to promote it. Irony emerged on two fronts: after our required rush to the bookstore to purchase the book, we never revisited the events of 9/11 that had left us all so profoundly shaken that first day of class. Moreover, the events of 9/11 catapulted the book to a popularity beyond the educational research community; a story of efforts towards peace in a conflict zone became a news item in the mainstream media and my professor could be heard on the radio and in other venues promoting the book.*

*Antoinette: My own scholarly interests at that time centred around frustrations at the lack of an ESL focus in the initial teacher education program that led me to research the "infusion" of ESL issues and teaching strategies across the teacher education curriculum at OISE. A Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant provided the funds to form a research team to investigate this. Although there was no shortage of reports on the ever-increasing number of newcomers in K-12 classrooms, OISE continued to prepare teachers as they had for many years without any specific preparation to support the inclusion of English language learners. Only*

*those who opted to take the ESL Across the Curriculum related studies course that I taught once or twice a year to a maximum of 60 students, would receive targeted input on how to meet the needs of ELLs.*

*Clea: You and I actually met in the Spring of 2002. Eight months into my program, I had yet to be able to secure more than five minutes of my supervisor's time to discuss my program. By this point I had independently selected and completed all my coursework, was preparing to write my comprehensive exams, and had shared my emerging idea for my thesis topic on the professional development of ESL teachers with various profs in my program to see if I might garner interest from another potential supervisor, to no avail. The teacher development scholars I was taking courses with, though they were generally welcoming, viewed me as somewhat of an anomaly. Unlike them, my background was in adult ESL education, whereas they mostly hailed from K-12 educational contexts with a focus on more mainstream curriculum areas like language arts.*

*After meeting with the Department Chair to ask for help in identifying another supervisor, I found myself on your doorstep. The metaphor of crossing a threshold is apt for the transformation that ensued and the shedding of my previously negative impressions of how academics conduct themselves. From my previous experience, I had been unable to reconcile how a professor, especially one who was conducting obviously relevant and meaningful research on topics of global significance, could seemingly place an event such as 9/11 on the backburner on the day this monumental event occurred and opt to attend instead to matters of housekeeping and self-promotion. Moreover, for a professor over an 8-month period to be virtually inaccessible to a student struck me as utterly unacceptable. Surely graduate students were more than mere consumers of professors' research?*

*Antoinette: I was thrilled when you came to discuss your research ideas. As a doctoral candidate working on issues of teacher development, our working together allowed me to cross an invisible boundary separating the Second Language Education (SLE) graduate program and teacher development.*

*I immediately felt a certain synergy between the two of us that made me believe it would be feasible to work as your supervisor. However, I was acutely aware of the tension that might arise by agreeing to work with a doctoral candidate that a professor from another program had admitted into the program.*

*Although I knew that all applicants to the PhD program had to meet high admissions standards, I was aware of the very subjective final phase of the process, which I found*

*problematic. Often students were matched with a professor without having mentioned a preference for supervision and without having a clear sense of the nature of the research they would like to undertake.*

*Clea: It's interesting because these behind-the-scenes dynamics weren't on my radar at the time. Within half an hour of talking together, we decided that you would supervise my Ph.D., I would embed my thesis research in the SSHRC-funded study you were conducting on the infusion of ESL issues and strategies across the curriculum of OISE teacher education programs, and I would work alongside you in various Teaching Assistant (TA) and Research Assistant (RA) positions. Your leadership and supervision, embodying what Cummins (2009) refers to as collaborative rather than coercive relations of power, changed my life both personally and professionally. I experienced what it means for a professor to support the excellence and achievement of all graduate students and research team members, recognizing that any individual accomplishment furthers the success of the group as a whole. We spent time in schools documenting the voices of ESL learners and teachers, developed multimedia resources for use by teachers, and implemented institution-wide professional development for professors and teacher candidates to support language learners. Two years of highly engaging and meaningful work later, and my program concluded on a much more positive note than it began.*

*Antoinette: When you suggested that you would be interested in embedding your doctoral thesis research in a SSHRC funded project focused on infusion ESL issues and teaching strategies across the teacher education continuum, I was both excited and hesitant. My excitement came from imagining a truly committed new researcher on the team. My concerns were connected to a few experiences I had had with graduate research assistants with very strong views on how the research team should function as well as who owned the data. At the time, new guidelines were being drafted to address such issues because there had been abuses of power within the university. The many consultations were creating tension as there were not clear guidelines to follow.*

*When we attended certain meetings as collaborators, do you recall how you were often viewed as a graduate student and not as a collaborator?*

*Clea: Yes, I remember often not being referred to by name, but rather simply as "Antoinette's sidekick" or as part of "Antoinette's crew"!*

*Antoinette: When we met, I had been working at OISE for a dozen years during which I had often felt that my 'kind' of research was not valued. In the subsequent years since beginning to collaborate with you, I have benefited greatly from your ability to bridge the gap between more traditional forms of research and our type of 'field connected' inquiry.*

*Clea: Though difficult to experience at the time, these events actually provided an important catalyst as I embarked on my own professorial career. Coupled with the outstanding mentoring and reciprocal learning I experienced with you, a foundation was laid for me to question the role of public intellectuals (drawing on the work of Giroux) and to consider who beyond ourselves as academics actually benefits from the research we conduct.*

The opening dialogue highlights some of the challenges and successes we experienced in attempting to situate ourselves in the larger context of educational research for diversities, and to negotiate a student/advisor relationship that would become a long-term collaboration. We saw the TESL discipline and events of wide-scale sociopolitical significance such as the 9/11 attacks relegated to the periphery of our own institution and classroom, and were marginalized ourselves as graduate students and interdisciplinary scholars. These experiences reflect the coercive power imbalances that all too frequently preside in higher education in the current era of neoliberalism and the status of social justice initiatives that struggle to garner support and sustain momentum (Apple, 2008).

Prior to beginning our collaboration 12 years ago, we both felt frustrated by the lack of disciplinary hybridity in our institution that resulted in teacher development and ESL being largely dichotomized, a trend referred to as the Balkanization of academic disciplines (Christensen, 2014). As the situation stands:

On campus after campus, professors and administrators act not as umpires between truth and truth but rather as gladiators in often-bitter fights over resources and policy, fights in which truth counts for far less than sheer bureaucratic power. At many schools these fights have grown particularly heated as traditional academic disciplines—lacking all sense of order and precedence—have fissioned and mutated into new specialties and subspecialties, each with its own academic agenda, none with a unifying vision grounded in philosophical universals. Women’s studies, ethnic studies, business ethics, sports management, leisure studies... the list of accredited disciplines just keeps growing while the shared philosophical understandings uniting the academic congeries of the modern polyversity dwindle. (Christensen, 2014, n.p.)

The disciplinary silos we experienced presented a false barrier that we felt strongly needed to be overcome in light of epistemological shifts in the field, what Johnson (2006) has called the ‘sociocultural turn’ in the field of second language teacher education. In ways both subtle and overt, we felt out of place. We both sought a forum and a community in which ESL-inclusive teacher education were valued and could be meaningfully explored through collaborative and engaged modes of inquiry.

Our meeting and subsequent work together helped us create a collaborative space where such dynamic inquiry became possible. We have expanded our focus and relationships over the years, considering not only ESL-inclusive education, but also issues pertaining to diversifying the teaching force, responding to the needs of immigrant parents, and the intersectionality of diversities in teaching and teacher

education. Along the way, we have found larger communities of like-minded scholars, founded and joined several international networks pertaining to our research, and been profoundly shaped by the work of key second language education and critical theorists such as Cummins (2009), whose advocacy for English language learners has shaped education pedagogy and policy throughout the world, and Giroux (2004), whose call for a critical pedagogy in higher education crosses borders of disciplinary silos and requires professors to act as agents of change.

This paper analyzes our collaborative intersecting journey to explore issues of educational diversities, the driving force behind our work, and our efforts to make our work relevant to communities both locally and internationally through meaningful and accessible research artifacts, comprised largely of websites and video resources designed for educators and researchers. We are guided by the following questions: 1) To what degree does our work benefit the members of the communities we conduct research with? 2) To what degree are we creating impact in our own communities by producing useful resources for our contexts? 3) To what degree are we contributing to a social justice agenda in education? In asking these questions, an excerpt from a letter of resignation to the French Communist party written by decolonial theorist Césaire in the mid-1950's aptly captures the balancing act we have undergone, seeking to respond to local concerns within larger global contexts:

Provincialism? Absolutely not. I'm not going to confine myself to some narrow particularism. But nor do I intend lose myself in a disembodied universalism. There are two ways to lose oneself: through walled-in segregation in the particular, or through dissolution into the "universal." My idea of the universal is that of a universal rich with all that is particular, rich with all particulars, the deepening and coexistence of all particulars. (as cited in Grosfoguel, 2012, p. 84)

## **Duoethnography**

According to the 2008 SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods,

Duoethnography is a relatively new research genre that has its genealogy embedded in two narrative research traditions: storytelling and William Pinar's concept of "currere." Its approach is to study how two or more individuals give similar and different meanings to a common phenomenon as it was experienced throughout their lives. Created by Rick Sawyer and Joe Norris, duoethnography avoids the hegemonic style of the meta-narrative found in autoethnography by critically juxtaposing the stories of two or more disparate individuals who experience a similar phenomenon. Like currere, which conceptualizes one's history as a composite of learning experiences and thus makes it an informal curriculum, duoethnography examines how individuals have acquired beliefs that influence their actions and the meanings they give them. (Norris, 2008, p. 3)

In examining how we have acquired the beliefs that influenced our actions in the development and maintenance of a 12-year collaborative partnership, it is relevant to

consider aspects of the life history of both researchers at the time our collaboration began.

### A Snapshot of Clea and Antoinette in 2002

	<b>Clea</b>	<b>Antoinette</b>
Age	24	44
Family	No children	3 children—aged 5,7,12
Early Years	Grew up in Toronto	Grew up in Montreal
Languages	English speaking	French English bilingual
Education	- Undergraduate Certificate in the Discipline of Teaching English as an International Language (D-TEIL) - M.A. in Applied Linguistics	- Concurrent B.Ed. - M.Ed. in Second Language Education - PhD in Curriculum
Position	Graduate student	Professor and supervisor
Teaching experience	2 years	25 years
Writing ability	Strong writer	Average writer
Pedagogical and scholarly orientation	Critical	Liberal
Scholarly focus	Populations marginalized by society	ELLs and their families
Mindset and work orientation	Confident, focused	Feelings of inadequacy linked to heavy workload and parenting responsibilities, scattered (teaching many different courses, balancing several projects, parenting)

This paper uses duoethnography because its theoretical foundations of social justice and challenging the status quo align with our priorities as researchers and educators; it deliberately gives voice to multiple researcher perspectives and examines overlapping concerns; and its procedures and methodological hybridity are well-suited to analyzing our long-standing collaboration around educational diversity initiatives. As Sawyer and Norris (2013) elaborate,

Grounded in social justice, duoethnography has been used purposefully to promote change. Some duoethnographers have sought to gain a critical awareness of their own narratives of experience through a dialogic process, thereby leading to a change in perspective or a restorying of a narrative; others to critique or deconstruct culturally dominant discourses by juxtaposing them with personal “counterpunctual” (Said, 1993) narratives; and others to complicate cultural meanings through a dialogic, collaborative lens. Duoethnographies are written in such a way that the voice of each duoethnographer is made explicit. Juxtaposing their stories, duoethnographers discover and explore the overlapping gray zones between their perspectives as intertwined intersections that create “hybrid identities” (Asher, 2007, p. 68) instead of binary opposites. (p. 3)

The current study contains elements of all three of the objectives noted above. We are critically analyzing our own experiences as teacher education researchers who have sought to deepen understandings of diversity in particular ways individually and collaboratively. Moreover, in discussing the types of products we have created based on our research, we disrupt dominant discourses that define success in the academy according to traditional outputs such as peer-reviewed publications at the expense of more relevant grassroots resources produced with and for community participants. Finally, the dialogue we engage in throughout the article complicates the role of professors and supports Giroux's (2004) understanding of public intellectuals who must deliberately address larger social problems as part of their mandate.

To accomplish these objectives, we incorporate duoethnography's flexible design components, including multiple dialogues, examination of deeply buried meanings and subordinated counternarratives, critical collaboration, synergy of data collection and analysis, and acknowledgment of the transactional engagement of readers (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). As is common with duoethnography, we do not have a separate literature review section but integrate appropriate scholarly references throughout the article. Data are derived from selected research artifacts and analysis of processes we have mutually contributed to over the past 12 years. These artifacts include the ESL Infusion and Diversity in Teaching websites, research reports, and collaborative works including conference presentations. In preparing this article, recursive analysis took place through collaborative writing and dialogue sessions. Dialogues about our mutual history and collaboration experiences were recorded and appropriate excerpts interwoven in the article to delineate our voices as researchers.

In subsequent sections we explore the driving forces behind our work, and highlight contributions and products stemming from our 12-year ongoing collaborative working relationship. In the process, we analyze how our work has evolved and how our foci have both expanded and become refined at different points. We then explore the impact of our work, revisiting the three research questions outlined in the prologue, before concluding with an epilogue that points to our current and future initiatives and offering some concluding thoughts about the ways in which graduate students and professors can develop meaningful partnerships.

### **The Driving Force Behind our Work**

*Clea: The shift in terms of Canadian federal funding priorities and the ever-more competitive nature of grants has really changed these past few years. I've found many of the changes to be problematic (e.g., preference seems to be given to positivist methodologies and conservative research designs rather than emergent and innovative approaches). One positive change that I see, however, has been the greater emphasis on knowledge mobilization. While I may not agree with how the Canadian federal funding agencies define and control knowledge mobilization, I feel increasingly confident to negotiate and enact a concept such as this in ways that are relevant and empowering for me and the communities I work with. I fully support that research should be meaningful and accessible to the communities involved. This has underpinned a great deal of our work these past 12 years, wouldn't you say?*

*Producing meaningful and accessible artifacts certainly motivated me to work on our joint creation of websites and video resources for use in teacher education that have been directly connected to our research. I currently use the Diversity in Teaching site (<http://wordpress.oise.utoronto.ca/diversityinteaching>) in virtually every course I teach, engaging pre- and in-service teachers with the locally developed resources and video clips. I also find the sites useful for my graduate students in second language education to explore contemporary issues and topics of concern for their own research.*

*A: Your comment about engaging communities resonates strongly with me. The desire to learn how to include immigrant children and their families, internationally educated teachers, and immigrants in Canadian schools has motivated me to speak directly to these various groups to understand their experiences first hand and to find out from them directly how the “system” and individuals within might best respond to their needs and address their concerns.*

*The desire to push back against the status quo and make space for new voices to be heard also acted as a driving force in several studies I conducted (e.g., Gagné & Soto Gordon, 2014).*

*Ensuring that research findings are accessible and formatted in appealing ways to ensure they are of use to those who would most benefit from them have pushed me to explore new applications. The technological advances made on the Internet have been strong catalysts for disseminating research findings and teaching documents in various ways.*

Fifteen years ago, Dede (1999) was one of the first scholars to discuss the potential of technology as a contributor to creative knowledge mobilization, identifying three main principles that reflect our own knowledge mobilization efforts. First, Dede (1999) pointed out that technology “enable[s] a shift from the transfer and assimilation of information to the creation, sharing, and mastery of knowledge” (p. 1). The ability to socially construct shared meaning from research findings has been facilitated by the multi-modal web-based tools we have used to engage community groups, and in particular, the teachers we work with on a daily basis in our classrooms.

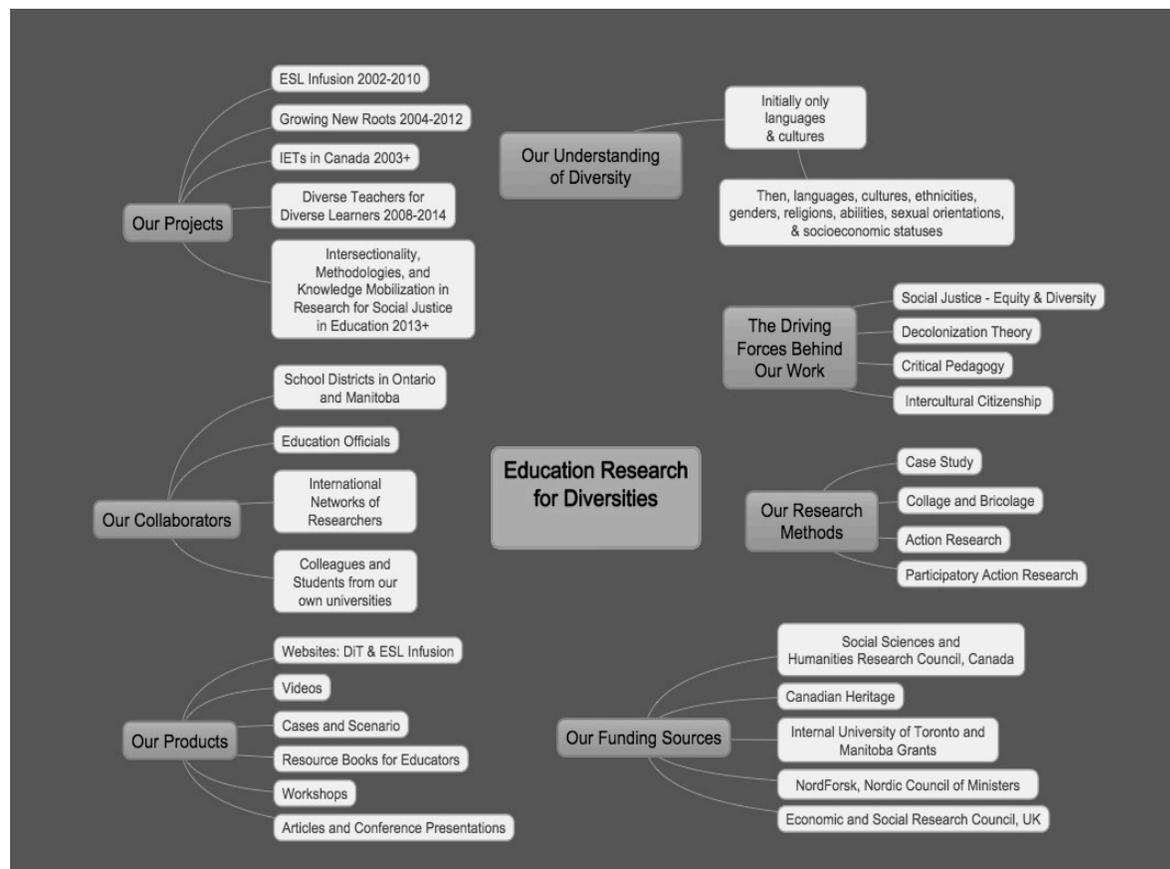
Second, Dede (1999) notes that “dissemination efforts must include all the information necessary for successful implementation of an exemplary practice, imparting a set of related innovations that mutually reinforce overall systemic change” (p. 1). The breadth and depth of information we have used to disseminate our work on the web has allowed for some of our initiatives to directly influence others’ work in the same area. Most notably, a SSHRC-funded International Opportunities Fund project on migrant teachers allowed us to establish an international network of scholars interested in teacher migration and integration into the local workforce, and create a corresponding website called *Diversity in Teaching* (<http://wordpress.oise.utoronto.ca/diversityinteaching/>). The detailed resources and information produced and shared from our project led directly to other seminar, networking, and research projects among members of that original network, putting issues of migrant teachers ‘on the map’ in

contexts where they had previously been underrepresented, such as in some Nordic settings.

Dede's (1999) final observation is that "a major challenge in generalizing and scaling up an educational innovation is helping practitioners 'unlearn' the beliefs, values, assumptions, and culture underlying their organization's standard operating practices" (p. 1). We and other members of the language teaching profession have long recognized the value of discomfort and questioning one's own beliefs as a learning tool (Johnson, 1995), and yet have also been acutely mindful that a one-time professional development workshop can hardly allow for the time and space needed to help shift dominant beliefs and assumptions (Schmidt, 2004). Having an evolving set of tools and resources to work with in different formats with particular groups over time has allowed us to address that concern.

### A 12-year Ongoing Collaborative Working Relationship

Our 12-year long collaboration has involved five interrelated strands, a range of collaborators, various research methodologies, diverse outcomes and sources of funding. Figure 1 is an attempt to capture the many themes explored as well as the driving forces behind our work.



## ESL Infusion Initiative

The **ESL Infusion Initiative** was multi-faceted and spanned from 2002 to 2010. It involved providing support to teacher educators to learn how to integrate topics related to English language learners (ELLs) across the teacher education curriculum as well as to work directly with teacher candidates on how to meet the needs of ELLs in K-12 classrooms.

To fill the gap in Canadian resources, we developed a series of videos and handbooks focusing on issues and teaching strategies related to ELLs in primary, middle and secondary schools. In this series of videos and resource books, students share their experiences as language learners in the Canadian school system and their teachers provide advice as to how educators can facilitate the overall success of ELLs.

The ESL Infusion website was developed to host resources for K-12 teachers responsible for meeting the needs of language learners in their classrooms. The site was set up to allow contributions of various kinds such as activity ideas, lesson plans, resources and scenarios. The ESL Infusion website is located at <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/eslinfusion/Home/index.html>

## Growing New Roots

There are several related projects in the **Growing New Roots Series** that include videos, transcripts, resource books for educators, articles and resources for workshops. The projects include: 1) **The Voices of Immigrant Teenagers in Canada, a small scale project that led to the production of a video** introducing the experiences of immigrant teenagers in Canada, in their own words. In addition to the video and transcript, there is a resource book, as well as additional background information and a summary of the project. 2) **Reflections of Immigrant Teenagers in Canada** builds on **Voices**, providing an extended forum where immigrant teenagers reflect on topics such as family, friends, and racism. 3) **Voices of Immigrant Families and the Teachers of their Children** offers a range of interviews which extend the **Voices and Reflections** projects. The purpose of these interviews was to examine the relationships between immigrant and refugee parents and the teachers, principals, and settlement workers who work with these communities. 4) **Coming Together – New Immigrant and Canadian Teenagers** also expands on the **Voices and Reflections** videos. In this production, English language learners and Canadian born high school students come together to describe the barriers they face communicating with each other. They also share their strategies for overcoming these challenges and suggest ways their peers, educators and parents can help. These projects are embedded on the Diversity in Teaching website at: <http://wordpress.oise.utoronto.ca/diversityinteaching/projects/project-1/>

## Internationally Educated Teachers in Canada

In addition to developing programming including workshops, courses, practicum placements, and internships to support the recertification of internationally educated teachers at the University of Toronto and the University of Manitoba, two videos focused

on the experiences of Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) and several articles were produced to highlight initiatives in each setting. These resources also appear on the Diversity in Teaching Website at <http://wordpress.oise.utoronto.ca/diversityinteaching/resources-for-diverse-teachers/>

In the **Voices of Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) and their Mentors**, different facets of the experiences of internationally educated teachers and their mentors are explored within the context of the University of Toronto and the province of Ontario. The topics include background information related to IETs, challenges, coping strategies, suggestions for IETs and their mentors.

In *Within & Without: Equity for IETs*, IETs and their mentors introduce themselves, describe their experiences as well as the various programs and services that were offered between 2005 and 2011 for IETs at the University of Manitoba. There is also an in-depth discussion on equity and diversity issues in the school system, and a corresponding handbook of professional development activities.

### **Diverse Teachers for Diverse Learners**

A SSHRC-funded International Opportunities Fund grant allowed for the creation of a network of researchers whose work focused on diverse teachers and the diversification of the teaching force. Our work together culminated in two further successful grant applications allowing the network to expand to include a wide range of issues related to diverse teachers and learners in pre-K to 12 schools.

The UK Economic and Social Research Council funded the Diverse Teachers and Diverse Learners Seminar Series from 2011 to 2013 which included a range of stakeholders from the UK as well as some representatives from Canada and the Nordic countries. The outcomes included joint publications, workshops, country overviews in 2011 and 2014 and team submissions to fund spin off projects.

NordForsk funded the activities of the Diverse Teacher for Diverse Learners Research Network with representation from Canada, Scotland, England, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland from 2011 to 2014. The outcomes included joint international conference presentations (e.g., Gagné & Schmidt, 2014) as well as a culminating conference, two edited volumes (Ragnarsdóttir & Schmidt, 2014), special issues of journals (Schmidt, Paavola, and Lefevre, 2015), and several spin off projects involving subsets of network members (e.g., Schmidt, Smyth, & Dewilde, 2014).

### **Intersectionality, Methodologies, and Knowledge Mobilization in Research for Social Justice in Education**

Several members of the three networks of researchers prepared a successful submission for a World Education Research Association International Research Network (WERA-IRN) that built on what had been learned in these contexts. The rationale for the new network is as follows:

Efforts towards socially just education often struggle for legitimacy with many equity initiatives operating in relative isolation (Trifonas, 2003), indicating a need to examine the intersectionality of such issues to garner support and

build momentum (Apple, 2008). Compounding the complexity of advancing a social justice agenda is the pressing need for appropriate methodologies that speak *with* rather than *for* participants (Griffiths, 1998), and knowledge mobilization that contributes positively to the communities involved. (Schmidt, Smyth, and Dewilde, 2014, p. 1)

## **The Impact of Our Work**

Revisiting the questions that have guided this duoethnographic inquiry, we consider the extent to which our work has made an impact and on whom. Are we benefitting the members of the community who are the focus of the research?

*Clea: I think some of the methodologies we've/l've worked with have generated greater impact than others with respect to positive outcomes for partner communities. The ESL Infusion Initiative was flexible enough in its design to allow us to modify the professional development we were providing to better meet the needs of participants. It quickly became apparent that attending group workshops and culling from lists of resources were unfeasible strategies for busy teacher educators. So we changed our approach and provided more individualized support, whereby professors could book one-on-one appointments with us and we could give them customized feedback on how they could raise the profile of ESL issues and strategies in the work they were doing with teacher candidates. We also took the time to synthesize the many ESL resources available and produced annotated lists of materials they could access quickly; these, too, were tailored to specific needs (e.g., elementary generalist teacher educators, secondary science teacher educators). I think in the end this ensured much greater engagement and impact.*

*Another example of a project where responsiveness to participants' needs took priority was the critical participatory action research (Schmidt, 2015) I engaged in with a group of six immigrant teachers who were either employed or seeking employment. The research design allowed us to explore issues of significance identified by the teachers themselves, and they played a big role in shaping the way we carried out data collection. From what the teachers shared during our monthly focus group discussions, they felt empowered by the chance to share their experiences and seek advice in a supportive environment. The participants were not shy about articulating their needs, and requested the researchers provide professional development around writing CVs and cover letters, which we were more than happy to do. The project also enabled a graduate student who was internationally educated herself to carve out a thesis on the same topic, which was important for me to facilitate as it echoed my OISE/UT experience with you, Antoinette. Unfortunately, such opportunities to closely involve graduate students in my research are not as commonplace as I would like them to be. Our M.Ed. and Ph.D. programs cater to full-time teachers who are necessarily part-time students, so the possibilities for their in-depth involvement are limited.*

*In some cases, it's been harder to know whether the research I've conducted has really benefitted the communities involved. Part of the challenge I feel lies in the main*

*mechanism qualitative researchers use to get input from participants in the form of member checking. In most cases I've never received detailed input from participants on interview transcripts. I ask myself at times whether some kind of immediate benefit needs to be a goal of all research. While I understand there are some instances when a researcher may be contributing to a larger goal and that the impact of the work may not be felt for some time or with the particular group(s) involved in the study, my own training in critical ethnography and my engagement with the work of critical qualitative scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln have really underscored the need to prioritize "giving back" in my research, regardless of the study design. Even when I've conducted more traditional kinds of research, such as program evaluation, I've still incorporated feedback mechanisms and professional development for participants to facilitate responsiveness and learning.*

*Antoinette: Like you, Clea, I have mixed feelings about the degree to which various activities have benefitted members of the communities who were the focus of the research. I liken the effect of various projects to the ripples created by a stone thrown into water. The participants directly involved benefit the most. The impact of the various projects likely decreased depending on the distance of the community members from the core participants. The immigrant parents, the English language learners, the internationally educated teachers, other classroom teachers or the teacher educators who took part in creating resources had an opportunity to reflect on issues and contribute their perspectives to help bring some change to an aspect of their lives that they felt strongly about. Others in the same roles who have accessed the resources developed report a sense of affirmation when they find out that they share some of the same feelings, perspectives and experiences as their peers.*

*In collaborative work with partners who work across contexts, I have seen the power of being an insider. As a teacher educator myself, I have seen that it is easier to benefit other teacher educators because of my understanding of their roles, realities and concerns. When I have collaborated with a teacher or a parent, I have seen how they have been able to benefit other teachers or parents though the use of resources generated within a project.*

*I continue to experience internal and external tension related to the less traditional dissemination strategies. Although I can refer my colleagues to websites to read or view a range of resources stemming from various projects, I still receive frequent requests for a more formal journal article or research report. In addition, when I am invited to present on one of these projects, there is often a specification to emphasize the research methodology rather than the impact on participating communities.*

Are we benefitting our own community by producing useful resources for our contexts?

*Clea: Of the three aspects of impact we are considering here, I think we have perhaps accomplished the most in this area. The teacher education resources and programming we have developed for use in our own contexts have been substantial, significant, and well-documented. Participating in all aspects of the ESL Infusion Initiative at OISE,*

*including the development and delivery of workshops, supporting professors one-on-one in infusing ESL issues and teaching strategies into their practice, and researching the impact of the initiative gave me experience and confidence moving forward with programming initiatives at the University of Manitoba. Unfortunately, my faculty has never supported the idea of ESL infusion, though they have moved forward with infusing technology and Aboriginal perspectives, so it's a matter of what subjects take priority, rather than the fact that infusion isn't perceived as a viable model.*

*Antoinette: Although I have seen some change since 2002 when the ESL Infusion Initiative was launched at OISE/UT with a focus on integrating ESL issues and strategies across the teacher education curriculum, it is only with the advent of a 5 semester 18 course, 4 practicum Master of Teaching program that there will be one compulsory course focused on meeting the needs of English language learners in elementary and secondary schools. In addition to a concerted effort at OISE to infuse ESL, numerous other factors have led to there finally being a mandatory course on inclusive pedagogy focused on ELLs. These include Ministry of Education policies, standards of practice for teachers established by the Ontario College of Teachers, and a continuing growth in the proportion of immigrant children in most urban schools in Ontario. So if anything, our collaborative projects have acted as catalysts for an increased focus on ELLs in the teacher education curriculum at the University of Toronto.*

Are we furthering social justice initiatives in education?

*Clea: One of the aspects I struggle with is that despite the fact we've done considerable research with immigrant teachers, including a wide range of empirical work and policy analyses, this issue continues to be largely ignored by policymakers and funders. We and other scholars have demonstrated fairly convincingly that diversifying the teaching force in Canada goes beyond just enacting employment equity for internationally educated educators; diversity in schools needs to be affirmed on a variety of levels for the benefit of everyone involved. A search of the available literature in Canada reveals that many researchers across the country have taken up issues of immigrant teachers in their work. Yet immigrant teachers are not a priority among Canada's target immigration groups or professional organizations given ever-increasing scores of Canadian born teacher education graduates who join the ranks of the unemployed annually (Transition to Teaching, 2013). Therefore in many cases corresponding programming supports have been discontinued and research granting agencies are loathe to support our work.*

*Even on a local scale, I've been rejected in smaller grant competitions within the University of Manitoba when I've sought to document the interactions of immigrant teachers and Canadian-born teacher education students to highlight the multiple benefits of a more diverse student population in our faculty and the possibilities for reciprocal intercultural learning. The reasons for rejection cited are that research on immigrant teachers affects just a tiny portion of our population and doesn't merit the attention. So the Catch-22 prevails: Systemic marginalization of immigrant teachers,*

*due in large part to racism and linguistic discrimination (Schmidt, 2010), means we don't sufficiently recruit or support these teachers and their relatively low numbers mean they continue to remain a low priority.*

*Antoinette: Again I am ambivalent about how to respond. I have always felt that my orientation to research and pedagogy has been somewhere between liberal and transformative. A liberal orientation leading to increased awareness of important issues and a transformative orientation leading to change for the better for disenfranchised populations. I have struggled to move from the middle ground out to working and researching on the periphery where those who do social justice work are often positioned. Holding a position in a highly ranked research university where more traditional research endeavors have been favoured, has made it difficult to find support and funding for research with a focus on equity. To subvert the system and find support for various social justice projects, it was necessary to demonstrate synergies with mainstream priorities. By focusing on the centrality of the teacher in ensuring student success, we were able to make a case to fund several small-scale participatory action research projects involving marginalized populations in the production of resources for use in teacher preparation and professional development programs. In addition, in recent years as SSHRC and the University of Toronto have wanted to encourage new forms of knowledge mobilization, it has been possible to get small scale funding for website development projects centered on the findings of various projects.*

### **Epilogue: Moving forward**

Reflecting on our collaboration over the past 12 years has prompted us to explore some of the roles and tensions that can be negotiated between a graduate student and a supervisor. From the beginning of our partnership, we ventured into some uncharted territory, launching into a very involved collaboration in spite of a lack of guidelines around the roles of students in large-scale projects, and challenging hierarchies that saw some unexpected dynamics around confidence with writing and scholarly orientations.

In our ongoing work, we have attempted to make our scholarship meaningful for the communities with which we work, to varying degrees of success. We have found, at times, marginalizing influences within our own institutions at the same time as we have identified like-minded communities of scholars, several of them international, to sustain and further our efforts. Pursuing international work has been somewhat of a double-edged sword. The competition factor in global higher education can be both motivating and problematic when considering the extent to which university rankings impact the scope and types of work that receive support (Rust & Kim, 2012). Nonetheless, we continue to 'play the game' to the extent we are expected to as members of the academy, launching into new federal funding applications with renewed vigor as we consider the now well-established body of literature in the area of diverse teachers for diverse learners that was still in its infancy 12 years ago.

Moving forward, Canclini's (2014) perspective inspires us to continue in spite of challenges:

I do not think that the main option today is to defend identity or to globalize. The most illuminating studies of the globalizing process are not those that lead us to review questions of identity in isolation but those that lead us to understand the benefits of knowing what we can do and be in relation to others, like dealing with heterogeneity, difference, and inequality. (Canclini, 2014, p. 13)

### Notes on contributors:

**Dr. Clea Schmidt** is an Associate Professor of Teaching English as an Additional Language in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. She served as founding coordinator of the Academic and Professional Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) and the IET Mentorship Initiative. Her scholarly interests include advocacy and research related to equity for culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and learners. She has recently co-edited a volume published by Trentham entitled "Learning Spaces for Social Justice: International Perspectives on Exemplary Practices from Preschool to Secondary School". She has a forthcoming co-edited volume with Dr. Jens Schneider entitled "Diversifying the Teaching Force in Transnational Contexts: Critical Perspectives", to be published by Sense.

**Dr. Antoinette Gagné** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the University of Toronto. Her research has focused on teacher education for diversity and inclusion in various contexts. She has explored the experiences of young English language learners and their families as well as internationally educated teachers in Canadian schools and universities. More recently, she has been working collaboratively with a network of schools to support critical literacy and social justice initiatives.

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