IMAGINING STUDENT TEACHER IDENTITIES
THROUGH PHOTO ELICITATION INTERVIEW AND LACAN’S
PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCEPTS

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Abstract

This research utilizes photo elicitation interviews to examine the professional identities of student teachers as it is performed during a Teacher Education Program (TEP). Teacher identity research suggests that positive identification is associated with less teacher burnout and increased commitment to and performance of teaching responsibilities (Day, 2002; Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005). In addition, the use of visual metaphors in conjunction with narratives is considered to be a productive way of encouraging student teachers to seriously reflect on their identities (Sumson, 2002; Weber & Mitchell, 1996).

Six student teachers from a Canadian university TEP created photographs prior to each interview. I recommended that participants take pictures of objects and places that they associate with feeling and acting like a teacher or, conversely, a student. Using their photos as a starting point, I interviewed each participant between three and six times.

The image, Lacan’s Imaginary register, is critical to this work despite the usual dependence on words, the Symbolic. Significantly, it is the photo that covers up the Real—what the participant and researcher are incapable of saying in the Symbolic. The image functions like a dream, a manifestation of the unconscious, and, as such, it triggers an opportunity to formulate new interpretations.

The structure of the dissertation is atypical and intends to illustrate Lacan’s theories using data. Juxtaposing elements of psychoanalysis with data analysis demonstrates a method of studying the subtle and uneven shifts in the identifications of student teachers while applying Lacan’s (2007) discourse of the Analyst as a lens. Following Jackson and Mazzei (2012), “plugging data into theory into data” (p. 13) is intentionally disruptive and this method is used in this dissertation to progressively introduce and then develop Lacanian concepts, such as mirror
stage theory, the ego, the punctum, the gaze, and the Theory of Four Discourses, all of which are central to the research.

The photos elicit discussions provoking the participants and researcher to say more than they intended. Consequently, we learn that identities are relatively stable, students and teachers experience school spaces differently, and there are culturally significant tokens that constitute a teacher subject.
Preface

I am responsible for the identification and design of the research program, performance of all parts of the research other than the contribution of the participants, and analysis of the data. All photos represented in this dissertation have been collected from the participants as data and are included with their permission and consent.

This dissertation required the approval of the University of British Columbia’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). The UBC BREB Certificate of Approval Number is H12-03012.
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List of Symbols

The following symbols are used by Lacan (2007) to represent key elements that give shape to and constitute identity formation through the ‘Theory of Four Discourses.’

\( a \)........The little other; also the symbol of the object-cause of desire

\$........The barred or divided subject

\( S_1 \) .......The master signifier

\( S_2 \) .......Knowledge
List of Abbreviations

PEI ...... photo elicitation interview
FA ...... faculty advisor
SA ...... school advisor or school associate
TEP ..... Teacher Education Program
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ego Apparatus:</strong></th>
<th>Consists of the ideal ego and ego-ideal</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ego-Ideal:</strong></td>
<td>Part of the ego constructed by the image conveyed through the words and images of the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal Ego:</strong></td>
<td>The image one wishes to see of the self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity:</strong></td>
<td>In this study, an instance of identification; a stable and describable “self”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identification:</strong></td>
<td>What you “see” yourself as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imaginary:</strong></td>
<td>One of three Lacanian registers consisting of images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real:</strong></td>
<td>One of three Lacanian registers consisting of the thing that avoids symbolization; the remainder of the unconscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition:</strong></td>
<td>What others “see” you as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong></td>
<td>A person constituted in a historical, sociocultural context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superego:</strong></td>
<td>The internalized ego-ideal (of the Other) that defines the failures and shortcomings of the ideal ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbolic:</strong></td>
<td>One of three Lacanian registers consisting of signifiers and words, i.e., language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my fellow students at UBC and the professors I encountered in the course of this program. Their high expectations and academic interests are always an inspiration to me. I especially want to thank Drs. Anne Phelan, Claudia Ruitenbergh and Amy Metcalfe whose courses first introduced the concepts of philosophy, psychoanalysis, method, and teacher education that specifically motivated my doctoral work.

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I am very grateful for the support and enduring patience shown by my advisory committee—Drs. Anthony Clarke, Carl Leggo, and Susan Gerofsky. Their questions and suggestions are always insightful and give me many opportunities to improve my thinking and writing. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Clarke for being available when I needed but not pushing me to the point where I had to leave the program. Dr. Clarke’s ability to calmly take complex, messy ideas and create a path for me to follow is what I hope to do for my students.

I also offer my sincere appreciation to the six participants in this study who were courageous and trusted me with their photos and stories. At a time when they were so busy with course work, lesson planning, and teaching, these student teachers believed that the study would prove to be interesting and valuable for themselves and others. I wish you all well as you continue to learn what it means to be a teacher.
Finally, I would like to recognize the time and energy that my wife, Aliisa, spent with our two children, Graeme and Laura, while I was out late at class or writing. Without your support I would never have had enough time to complete this dissertation. Ultimately, your confidence in me to finish what I started is the reason I completed my dream. Thank you for your love and I promise to always be here for you.
For Graeme and Laura,

Worthwhile learning always changes you,

Whether or not you get a degree or a puffy hat.
Chapter One: The Ego and Identifications

As a teacher and education researcher, I am concerned with improving learning experiences for students. Specifically, I am interested in finding ways to improve the classroom context for students in the kindergarten to grade 12 school system through the impact of Teacher Education Programs. This dissertation is the result of my investigation into the idea that teacher professional identities can influence student learning. Day, Elliot, and Kington (2005) determined that positive teacher identity is linked to better classroom experiences for students and increased achievement in addition to improved well-being of teachers.

Teachers can have influence on their local setting, specifically, the classroom, but less immediate effects on the larger system of a school or district. However, as a prerequisite, the teacher must be willing to make changes and believe that change is possible. Hence, I wish to study teacher identity as it relates to student teachers’ attitudes about teaching. How do individuals come to think of themselves as professionals? How do students recognize them as teachers? Do teachers think of themselves as learners? How do formative experiences as a student and as a student teacher influence the making of teacher identity?

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) highlight the importance of understanding teacher identity with respect to teacher development. Positive (or negative) identifications with the profession have implications for the types of training opportunities undertaken and positions filled at different school settings by teachers. Moreover, it is generally expected that a teacher’s identity will shift over the course of a career. Furthermore, identity is considered as a lens for examining aspects of teacher, such as, “the ways in which students integrate a range of influences, the necessary confronting of tensions and contradictions” (p. 175) and their potential resolutions.
One challenge in the field of teacher identity research is the need to further develop a
definition of identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). While previous articulations of
identity are based on sociology and psychology, the present research project turns to Lacanian
psychoanalysis to add more nuance to the definition of identity and its relation to subjectivity
and a notion of “self.” An example of research using a Lacanian theoretical framework is offered
by Clarke, Michell, and Ellis (2016) where they study identity shifting of preservice teachers in
the interplay of the ideal ego, the image one wishes to see of the self, and the ego-ideal, the
image conveyed through the words and images of the other. For instance, the ego-ideal may be a
manifestation of the expectations placed on the preservice teacher by students, parents, and the
school and faculty advisors. Through Lacanian psychoanalysis, this research project aims to add
to an understanding of teacher identity, how it can be studied, and how it might change.

Rationale for the Structure of the Dissertation

The nature of this dissertation is succinctly captured by Atkinson’s (2004) project to theorize how student teachers form their identities in a teacher education program:

For Lacan, the subject is never a subject-in-him or herself but always a subject of the imaginary and symbolic orders, and likewise with others we can never know them in themselves but only through imaginary and symbolic identifications. Thus, our ideas of self and others are based on who we imagine [emphasis added] ourselves or others to be, or who the other thinks we are. (p. 387)

In relation to Atkinson’s work, this dissertation also discusses the subject, others, and the Imaginary and the Symbolic to conceptualize identification in Lacanian terms. In addition, this research project explores additional psychoanalytic concepts, such as the ego, that apply to identity work—the activity required to (re)imagine, (re)present, and shift identities. At the same time, the purpose of this study is to convince the reader that the method of photo elicitation
interview in combination with Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories provide insights into understanding how student teacher identifications are performative (Butler, 1997).

As a cautionary note, this dissertation intentionally does not follow a typical five-chapter structure with an introduction to the research area followed by methodology, (re)presentation of data, analysis, and discussion. Instead, taking cues from MacLure (2010), when using theoretical frameworks based on psychoanalysis and poststructuralism, for instance, it is fitting to “avoid structural hierarchies and thinking in straight lines” (p. 280). Unfortunately, researchers “have stayed trapped in the linear syntax and propositional logic of the English language, and the covert semantics of foundations and progress (‘support’, ‘exploration’, ‘grounding’, etc.)” (p. 280). Thus, I adapt MacLure’s suggestion to work through theory using examples:

This does not mean enhancing the street cred of theory by sticking some examples “into” it, which would amount to mere “application”. Rather, it would mean exploiting the strange play of the example…. The example is a single instance that nevertheless “stands for” other instances. (p. 281)

MacLure (2010) argues that some examples are exemplars. Moreover, MacLure provides a suggestion for finding exemplars:

One way to describe [an exemplar’s] beginnings would be as a kind of glow; some detail—a fieldnote fragment or video image—starts to glimmer, gathering our attention. Things both slow down and speed up at this point. On the one hand, the detail arrests the listless traverse of our attention across the surface of the screen or page that holds the data, intensifying our gaze and making us pause to burrow inside it, mining it for meaning. On the other hand, connections start to fire up: the conversation gets faster and more animated as we begin to recall other incidents and details in the project classrooms, our own childhood experiences, films or artwork that we have seen, articles that we have read. (p. 282)

Following MacLure’s description, participant-generated photos and excerpts from interviews are shared here based on their potential to glow. These are included throughout the dissertation rather than restricted to one or two chapters. In conjunction, theory is (re)presented
and (re)introduced throughout the dissertation as well. This non-traditional structure offers the possibility for any reader to also experience data and “theory in qualitative research…[as] a wondrous pursuit” (p. 284). The attempt is to use theory to work the data, find examples, think, stumble on unacknowledged prior assumptions, and write. Consequently, readers may experience “jolts” as they read through the chapters. While messy in comparison to something more predictable, this dissertation remains open to the possibility of communicating something new and unexpected.

Similar to MacLure’s use of theory to locate exemplars, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) describe a process of leading with data to make sense of theory as “plugging in” (p. 5):

We characterize our thinking with theory as making three moves: 1) disrupting the theory/practice binary by decentering each and instead showing how they constitute or make one another; 2) allowing analytical questions that are used to think with to emerge in the middle of plugging in; and 3) showing the suppleness of both theory and data when plugged in. (pp. 9-10)

Although I do not completely follow Jackson and Mazzei’s three moves, I characterize this work as “plugging data into theory into data” (p. 13) and so on with the aim of “thinking at the limit of our ability to know, as made possible by these theorists and their concepts at work, these data and their excesses” (p. 5).

Having explained the rationale for the alternative structure of this dissertation, the next section will present the research questions as a guide for what I seek to communicate followed by an exhibition of the visual data collected over the course of this project.

**Research Questions**

This qualitative study, involving six student teachers as participants, attempts to address the need to understand teacher identity in more nuanced and generative ways than currently exist. The theoretical framework, based on the seminars of Jacques Lacan, in conjunction with
the method of photo elicitation within the context of the research interview, is used to provoke insights into the study of identification as it is experienced by student teachers during a Teacher Education Program. The overarching question posed in this study is:

How might Lacanian theory be used with participant-generated photos to make sense of the transition between student and teacher identifications?

In pursuing this question, three related sub-questions are explored:

- To what extent are student teachers’ identities in this study fixed or pliable?
- How do the student teachers perform or make sense of their identities with respect to images?
- What is the relationship between an image and Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses in explaining how identity changes, shifts, and slips?

**Curating and the Curatorial**

The researcher is like a curator who selects works to construct a guided message. As the researcher, I will lead the reader through what I believe is important much like how a curator selects a variety of artistic works and creates a space for them to be viewed. The overall intention of the display (or dissertation) is to elicit meaning through the curator’s (or researcher’s) design and display. This is what Rogoff (2006) describes as *curating*.

However, the intended meaning of the curator can only be a hint. According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, due to the unconscious and the imperfection of symbolization, words always fail to be complete representations of the objects to which they refer. In addition, the receiver of the message will vary in the extent to which they understand or mistake the intent of the sender. Thus, the dissertation, like a curated exhibit, opens a space to ponder, make meaning, and construct knowledge. In contrast to curating, Rogoff (2006) describes the *curatorial* as a space to
explore new and emerging possibilities at the threshold between what is already known and what is yet unknown. In psychoanalysis, what was previously unconscious surfaces as new knowledge, the purpose of research. Likewise, this aim is shared by an art exhibit designed to facilitate meaning-making by its audience.

According to Rogoff (2006):

In the realm of ‘the curatorial’ we see various principles that might not be associated with displaying works of art; principles of the production of knowledge, of activism, of cultural circulations and translations that begin to shape and determine other forms by which arts can engage. In a sense ‘the curatorial’ is thought and critical thought at that, that does not rush to embody itself, does not rush to concretise itself, but allows us to stay with the questions until they point us in some direction we might have not been able to predict. (p. 3)

The curatorial is an analogue to the time and space necessary to analyse the data, discuss the photos and consider them with respect to Lacanian psychoanalysis and the study of teacher identifications.

Some of the photos in the data set will be discussed in more detail throughout the dissertation. I selected the photos based on the degree to which they glow for me as a researcher and teacher (MacLure, 2010). That is, the photos in the remainder of the dissertation are taken from the following collections because they stayed in my thoughts long after the interview where the participant introduced the image in the first place. I am not suggesting that my selection of photos universally glows for every viewer. Nevertheless, I will use some images to explicate Lacanian theory as it relates to photo elicitation interviews, the method used in this study, as well as identity shifting.

In this study of the transition from student to teacher identifications, photo elicitation interviews were conducted with six preservice teachers enrolled in a Teacher Education Program within the province of British Columbia, Canada. Each participant was interviewed between
three and seven times, approximately once every month from December 2012 to June 2013. Interviews were conducted at local coffee shops, at the university, or at the school where the participant’s practicum experience occurred.

It is impossible to completely explain or describe who these six participants are as individuals within the constraints of this dissertation. It is not consistent with the theoretical framework and methodology of this project to pretend to do so. Therefore, the participants introduce themselves.

Each participant was invited to submit a brief introduction of themselves in response to the question: What do you want others to know about you as a student and teacher? This short biographical profile, written by each participant, was included with a corresponding collection of images to provide an introduction to the photographers. I only edited their personal information to conceal potentially identifying information, for example, where they grew up or where they work. In addition, pseudonyms were used to further protect the identities of the participants.

In this dissertation, it is useful to begin with an exhibition of images provided by the student teachers who participated in this study. I include almost all the photographs from the data set in order to demonstrate the variety of images offered by the participants (see Figures 1 to 5). The ten omitted photos depict the faces of the participants or their peers or feature names and identifiable locations. Hence, to maintain privacy, those photos are simply left out. Each collection of images is roughly organized according to chronological order and is followed by a description of the photographer (written by the student teacher). Note that only five of the participants provide photos whereas Inderpreet prefers to talk about the visual metaphors she had in mind.
Alec, one of the student teachers involved in the study, describes himself as follows:

[Alec] was born in [Alberta] in the late 80’s and grew up immersed in a tight-knit Jewish community.... He attended semi-private Jewish day school until grade six and then transferred to a public middle school with an academic challenge focus. Throughout middle and high school [Alec] found himself in several leadership roles at his school, in the local and provincial community, and with his Jewish youth group. These positions and his supportive middle-class parents helped him travel throughout the USA and internationally to locations such as Israel, Poland, and France....
After high school, [Alec] moved to [British Columbia] in order to pursue a post-secondary education at the [University]. During the year before and after this transition, [Alec] embraced his gay identity, his critical perspective of the Israeli treatment of Palestinians, and in so doing found some distance between him and his home community and his religion. He continued his active involvement in many groups…

[Alec] sees his life as a series of non-conscious processes that are mitigated and centred around his conscious self retroactively and often arbitrarily based on his emotions and physical feelings. He continues to explore and assert his idealism but within this context of sharing control with his community, world, and body and with an openness to the vast intricacies of the world especially considering the unknowable future.

These are very interesting details that certainly matter to Alec’s identifications, but the focus of this section will be on the collection of photos produced by the participants.

*Figure 2.* Julia’s collection of participant-generated images. Photography by the participant (Julia).
Julia, another participant, provided the following description of her teacher self:

Growing up I was an avid participant in, and close observer of, the education system. As a student I was involved in multiple school-based extracurricular activities, including the school’s accreditation committee and a district-wide anti-harassment committee. Moreover, I chose to spend significant amounts of free time (professional development days, summers, and even weekends) supporting the educators who belonged to the private sphere of my life. My mom and aunt, two of the adults with whom I was closest, were both teachers.

In spite of this, my own path to teaching was a long and circuitous one. Finishing high school, and then university, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to “do” with my life, but I was adamant that I did not want to follow the footsteps of so many of my peers and “do what I knew” (pursue a teaching career). For the next several years I worked at fulfilling, challenging jobs that coincidentally allowed me to explore a different side of the education system. I became involved with a local non-profit organization operating an independent school and a day attendance program for at-risk youth, and spent additional time running home-based educational and social support programs for youth with autism. In spite of this now-obvious focus on both children and education, I failed to recognize the common denominators and continued to insist that teaching was not the route I wanted to follow.

As I looked around for a next career step, I considered a variety of options. One day I suddenly realised that many of the new skills I wanted to learn, and strengths I wanted to exercise would all be a part of teaching. It was a sudden decision to pursue my B.Ed. and become a teacher, but [it] felt like a natural path from my first day in the classroom.

Figure 3. Kate’s collection of participant-generated images. Photography by the participant (Kate).
Kate shares this about herself:

I decided in 7th grade that I wanted to be a teacher due to the influence of several inspiring teachers. This was only confirmed throughout high school, though I did toy with options that would ideally bring me more fame and renown. It was a long and windy road that eventually led me to a teacher education program, but many things along the way made it seem inevitable. One thing I know is that I would not have had the heart and dedication to enter this profession if my chief aim in life were not to glorify God. As a Christian, my desire and delight is to love God and love others. The work of a teacher requires a foundation of interest in, care for, and commitment to the education and overall well-being of children as individuals. This will be my goal as a teacher.

Looking away from this carefully crafted description, what more can a photo “say” about Kate’s teacher identity?

Figure 4. Anne’s collection of participant-generated images. Photography by the participant (Anne).
Anne’s story of becoming a teacher was presented as follows:

In 2012, I entered the…Bachelor of Education programme in elementary education. Previously, I completed a Bachelor of Science majoring in chemistry…. Many aspects of my life have led me to where I am today. My family has helped instill in me a strong moral structure that has served me constantly and has shaped my decision leading to this day. This led to me [sic] become involved in a programme for the empowerment of…youth, and to live a life where I am of service to others…. When considering who I am as an educator, parts of all these pieces of myself are evident. Through my work with the [Youth Program], and the time I spent in [Africa], I gained a strong confidence in the moral education of our children. I strongly believe that moral education needs to be a large part of a child’s schooling. Teaching, demonstrating, and fostering values such as justice, generosity, compassion, respect, and empathy in not just one classroom, but in all classrooms will help to alleviate some of the societal ills that we are seeing today. The [Youth Program] seeks to instill both a sense of service, and a feeling of responsibility and belonging to the world around us. This attitude is something I value tremendously, and I wish to inspire my students to seek creative and meaningful ways to serve their communities. As well, it values the capabilities and voices of young people causing me to seek ways to redefine the current hierarchy between students and teachers.

These experiences have shaped who I am as a teacher. As I continue to experience life and experience teaching, my identity will continue to evolve.

Figure 5. Danielle’s collection of participant-generated images. Photography by the participant (Danielle).

Danielle is the last participant to be introduced in this section:

I thought my life was on track, I had everything planned out. But once I actually started working in the health care field, I found that the reality is very different from what I had thought. Being a positive person, it was very draining to work with people who were in pain. Despite the fact that I worked at a private clinic, people were still unwilling to change their behaviour for their health, and after a couple of years I know this was not where I wanted to be. After some soul searching, I was at a coaching clinic for rugby, and
the light came on about where I was headed. I love coaching, I always have, and I wanted
to be able to stay involved in it. I realized then that teaching was where I was headed. It
seemed so obvious to me once I realized it. My love of science and passion for health and
sport would hopefully be of value in the classroom, and in the end maybe prevent some
of the debilitating injuries and illnesses I saw in my previous career. I applied to the
program at [university] within a week, and I started the program within 8 months. It has
been a wild ride, but I know it’s where I am supposed to be.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The motivation of the present study is to better understand how identifications transform,
transition, or slip from one identity to another for student teachers as they participate in a teacher
education program. Moreover, the research is an exploration of how the image relates to identity
and how the generative potential of the image allows for something that may not be readily
expressed in words when responding to a direct yet challenging question, such as: What does it
mean to be a student or a teacher?

To explore the idea of identity, this research draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis to
investigate the formation of the subject, in this instance, the beginning teacher. Lacan’s theories
are particularly suited to this inquiry because of the significance of the image in his work as well
as the possibilities of allowing unconscious thought to emerge in ways that are not possible with
only the written or spoken word. At the same time, this study uses the method of photo
elicitation interview where the image and the narrative are both important to meaning-making
and, as I argue in this dissertation, are indicative of identification and often subtle shifts in
identity.

There are two overarching contributions of the research presented in this dissertation.
First, the study provides new insights in the investigation of teacher identity and transitions from
university student to practicing professional. Examples are considered throughout the
dissertation. Second, there is a contribution to theory because the structure of photo elicitation
interview is examined through Lacan’s *Theory of Four Discourses*. Photo elicitation brings together Lacan’s *Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real* registers to generate new knowledge through the *discourse of the Analyst* (see Chapter Five). Furthermore, undergoing photo elicitation interview in its ideal form can result in alterations in identifications.

Influenced by Jackson and Mazzei (2012) and unlike a more conventional dissertation, I interweave theory, data, and analysis throughout the document. I share a selection of photos and excerpts from the interviews that not only resonate with the literature but moreover extend what we know about the ways in which student teachers think about and represent themselves. This particular structure is consistent with a performative approach to knowledge construction that is not dissimilar from an art installation:

The network of intricately woven fragments between the visual art representation and the written artefact provide multiple opportunities to understand new insights and interpret ideas that are often in conflict with each other, creating a place of tension and disorientation. The visual artwork illuminates through absence, what could not be represented through traditional modes of scholarship and the written form. (Springgay, 2001, p. ii).

Although all chapters are connected to each other, each one stands on its own as a discussion at the intersection of Lacanian theory and the research data. On the other hand, the six chapters are intended to be read in sequential order.

In Chapter One, I introduce Inderpreet to illustrate the written and spoken descriptions provided by each participant in the course of the study. However, there are limitations and gaps within narratives even when interesting and surprising details are included. Hence, Lacanian theory is introduced to provide an understanding of identity in relation to the *ego*, the *image*, *subjectivity*, and where the unsaid is what escapes language itself. The conceptual background to
the study is provided by reviewing the existing literature and the need to study student teacher identity.

In Chapter Two, Lacanian concepts are discussed in relation to reflective practice, psychoanalytic inquiry, and the potential of the image to communicate more than what is said. Participant-generated photos together with excerpts of interviews illustrate the significance of the image in identity research. Hence, photo elicitation interview is recommended as a suitable research method in this theoretical framing and the design of the study is described. The chapter concludes by considering the contribution of the image to the study of teacher identity in more detail.

In Chapter Three, I examine an early finding in the study—tokens of identification and recognition. The tokens student teachers might use to identify themselves as students or teachers is a way that identification is performative at the same time. Likewise, tokens exist to demonstrate when the other recognizes someone as a teacher. The chapter concludes with additional examples from the data set.

In Chapter Four, I explore and apply some key concepts related to Lacanian theory and used by other scholars. For example, Iskin (1997) relates the image to Lacan’s three registers—the Imaginary (images), the Symbolic (words), and the Real (escapes symbolization). Homer (2005), Foster (2008), and Howie (2007) establish the potential of the punctum and the Lacanian Real. Metz (1985) considers the importance of the off-frame in photos. And finally, I discuss Lacan’s (1998) notion of the gaze.

In Chapter Five, I introduce Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses—the Master, the University, the Hysteric, and the Analyst—both as a contribution to understanding the analysis of photo elicitation interview data and as a structure for explaining how identity changes, shifts, and
slips. A detailed explanation of Lacan’s *Four Discourses* is provided with respect to photo elicitation interview and changes in identifications. Of the Four Discourses, I suggest that the discourse of the Analyst is the ideal discursive structure for making sense of this study and alterations to identity.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I bring together the ideas presented previously to respond to the research questions. I then offer four theoretical propositions that have an impact on future teacher identity studies and identity research in general. I conclude the dissertation by situating this study in the larger context of teacher education.

**Inderpreet’s (In)complete Narrative**

Inderpreet was unable or uninclined to produce her own pictures for the purposes of this study. At times, she described images or visual metaphors she had in mind during the interview. In her autobiographical statement, Inderpreet also communicated several experiences that she felt shaped her teacher identity and which provided an understanding of student experience:

My voyage towards teaching profession initially started when I felt very satisfied and proud after teaching my younger sisters and seeing them being successful in their exams due to my teaching. Slowly and gradually, it became my passion and I started home tutoring once in [a] while after grade 12. My passion further developed when I was successful teaching engineering diploma students with the help of interesting hand[s] on activities. Even though I never did any education degree other than…bachelor of education program, I was able to build very professional yet caring relationships with my students but it was not easy (sometimes their demands were more like friends and not like students).

I always lacked very good relationships with my teachers, as they were old school sage on the stage type of educators. Therefore, I decided to become a guide on the side but not sage on the stage…. B.Ed. program trained me (theoretically) exactly what I was dreaming for as an educator, however I am still looking for practical ways to put theory into practice.

One theme Inderpreet wished to talk about early in the interviews was the relationship between a teacher and her students. She hoped that the relationship could be characterized by
genuine care much like the bond between a parent and her child. But she also recognized the
tension in the relationship. For example, at one point on practicum, she felt that she had to
comfort a distraught teenaged boy who was not able to meet his own expectations on a test but
wondered about her motivation and how it might be interpreted by others. He started crying
when he realized he failed the test, so she offered the opportunity to do a retest. Inderpreet
wanted to help him and he apologized for not doing well for her. After this incident, she
wondered about her motivations and actions. For her, it was like her son, but what would others
think? She wanted to be seen as a caring teacher but she was also thinking she should not even
touch the shoulder of a male student as a sign of care and reassurance. In the days that followed,
the student’s confidence improved and he was always asking questions and participating in class.
Inderpreet’s experiences prompted her to ask: “How do we make a line between a friendly
relationship between the students and the professionalism?”

Although confident in her own abilities as a learner, Inderpreet expressed concerns about
her classroom management skills in subsequent interviews during the latter part of her practicum.
She expected students to learn a great deal on their own from textbooks, homework, and videos
similar to her personal experience as a self-directed learner. However, some students explained
to her that they do not do homework because they are busy with clubs and activities so they rely
on spare time in class to do their homework. On the other hand, others said they spend a lot of
time after school on their homework. Inderpreet wanted to find a balance between these two
positions for her students.

In the following sections, I will convey some of the themes present in my interviews with
Inderpreet, including the concern of not being recognized as a competent teacher despite her
efforts, the impact of students on teacher identity, classroom management, and an important lesson learned from her practicum experience.

“Looked at” but unrecognized. Student teachers are acutely aware of being “looked at” and observed, not only by students, but by the school community and university faculty advisors as well. As they listen to feedback and write their own reflections about teaching, they experience the judgment of the Other\(^1\) which they internalize. That is the effect of the superego. They are guided to make changes according to what is deemed recognizable or acceptable against what does not look right for teachers. This informs how they plan and act during the next lesson and beyond.

At the same time, as participants in this study demonstrated, student teachers with robust identities wished to act in particular ways that were sometimes consistent with the expectations of others, but not always. Inderpreet, for instance, communicated this mismatch between identification and recognition. Reluctantly, she concluded that it would be necessary to conform to the expectations of her advisors whether she agreed with those expectations or not.

During her practicum, Inderpreet had three school advisors (SAs) in addition to her faculty advisor (FA) from the university. One SA permitted her the freedom to try whatever she wanted. A second SA provided her with guidelines that Inderpreet was expected to follow. And the third SA had expectations but did not always clearly communicate them in advance.

Although Inderpreet felt this third SA did not fairly communicate her expectations, Inderpreet also described her as friendly and she believed that she got along personally with this SA. In addition, this SA permitted Inderpreet to attempt different instructional strategies inspired

\(^1\) The big Other is culture and language represented by the school and faculty advisors during the practicum.
by the Teacher Education Program. However, later in the practicum, Interpreet felt that the SA had too many previously unspoken expectations resulting in negative criticism of Interpreet’s teaching during the midterm and final reports. Interpreet’s source of disappointment included her surprise to receive negative comments at those points in her practicum and, in a way, she felt she was not provided an opportunity to improve; she had already been judged. This situation provided an example of the potential disparity between identification of self and recognition of that self by someone else.

Interpreet told the FA that she was experiencing some challenges or issues with at least one of her SAs. The FA listened but would only give vague advice. The FA did not directly intervene or argue on Interpreet’s behalf that her practicum was a success by the standards of the Teacher Education Program. Consequently, Interpreet opted to do a supplementary practicum at a later date because she was not satisfied with the practicum report provided by the third SA (even though the other SA reports were very complimentary).

When asked if she attempted to emulate any of her advisors, Interpreet stated, “I never felt like I wanted to be one of [the SAs].” Nevertheless, Interpreet appreciated many of the SAs’ qualities and abilities, such as organization, providing due dates with some flexibility, and the demonstration of classroom management skills. However, Interpreet was divided between the teacher she wished herself to be and the teacher she felt she had to be. Not only was her teacher identity to be negotiated between herself and the SAs, but the FA and the students in the classroom also exerted a (de)formative influence. Interpreet’s story is one of tension that tended to be counterproductive in terms of identity development during the practicum.
A teacher identity must be recognized by students. An absence of coherence between identification, who she presented herself as, and recognition, who others perceived her as, is illustrated by Inderpreet’s recollection during an interview. Regarding her experience of teaching math, she found her students to be almost entirely focused on grades. However, Inderpreet articulated that she did not want to motivate students with grades alone because she believed it was not conducive to learning but, nevertheless, ended up doing just that with her Math 12 class. In addition, the SA wanted her to assign homework and to give them 20 problems, not just 5 which she believed would be sufficient. Furthermore, she was advised to tell the students at particular points in time that the homework questions were “very important.” In other words, the implicit message was that they might have a homework quiz the next day or that a similar type of problem might appear on a test.

Inderpreet could have tried to impress upon the students her perspective on grades, but she felt that there was a risk of losing the students’ support and the trust of the SA. Within the context of her practicum, she believed that her intention to focus on learning first and grades second was not recognized as an effective teaching strategy at the school. Combined with Inderpreet’s need to fit into the school culture and a desire to perform well during her practicum, she felt that her only reasonable alternative was to conform to the expectations of the students and SA. Although she understood the reasons for presenting grades as rewards or potentially punishments that demotivate learners (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000), she fulfilled the role of teacher in a manner acceptable to those around her by prioritizing the students’ concerns over her own. By the end of the practicum, some students told her she was a good teacher and student achievement was maintained during her time on practicum.
**Classroom management.** During her practicum, Inderpreet felt that she struggled with classroom management. Inderpreet indicated that she learned a lot from one SA who was more supportive than the other teachers because they talked about classroom management together. The SA recommended following four or five techniques consistently.

As our conversation continued, on reflection, Inderpreet saw herself as providing too many “second chances” for students to behave and follow classroom expectations in a Physics class, so it looked like she could not manage the students. Nevertheless, she persisted in maintaining her vision for teacher identity by reasoning that it was complicated to determine what the exact nature and substance of the challenges she faced were really about. She noted, in hindsight, she did not get along with the Physics SA who was quite critical of her. In addition, that SA was not wholly supportive of Inderpreet’s attempts to try teaching techniques, such as a flipped classroom where students are assigned to watch instructional videos online at home so they can spend more time exploring the actual concepts with the teacher at school (see Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). Moreover, Inderpreet’s decision to try the flipped classroom also divided the students between those who agreed with her and those who resisted this approach to learning. This presented conflict and stress for Inderpreet as she believed she was practicing the instructional strategies recommended by the university’s Teacher Education Program. One of her more supportive SAs counselled her that something new coming from the student teacher is not always well-received by the students. Inderpreet was getting the impression from others that she was not very good in her role as the classroom teacher. Ultimately, she stopped using the flipped classroom approach during her practicum.

The situation for Inderpreet, as a student teacher, was particularly vexing because, from her perspective, the Teacher Education Program encouraged her to teach in various ways,
including the flipped classroom strategy. Moreover, Inderpreet’s experiences as a student occurred in India and now, as a resident in Canada, she was looking for the best teaching techniques used in Canadian classrooms. Without first-hand experience as a secondary student in Canadian classrooms, Inderpreet believed her practicum experience was an opportunity to practice what she was now studying at university. Unfortunately, what might be recognized as good teaching by the Teacher Education Program can sometimes be at odds with what a school advisor considers proficient.

After the practicum, Inderpreet repeated one SA’s observation that what she learned at university is “more like theoretical stuff and sometimes it doesn’t work so we should do more traditional stuff [in school].” Notably, Hamilton and Pinnegar (2015) found this can be a common refrain in schools. In a final comment, Inderpreet added that this particular SA did not do “lab experiments” in her Grade 9 Science class because she did not want to deal with classroom management issues. This final comment is indicative of identity tension (real and felt) for Inderpreet within the practicum setting.

**What Inderpreet learned from the practicum experience.** During our final meeting, Inderpreet conveyed the following summary of how her practicum unfolded: “I’m going to observe them…. And then I’m going to follow [the SAs’ example]. If I want do my own stuff, it’s not going to work. But my teaching philosophy is totally different.” Inderpreet was steadfast in what she believed were better teaching methods, but she was resolved to, in general, mimic her SAs in order to meet expectations and receive very good evaluations. Inderpreet concluded:

My plan is to learn how to be a traditional teacher…. I learn how to be an inquiry teacher…. I want to be an innovative teacher in my teaching career but if I need to be a traditional teacher in my supplemental, I will do that because I want to pass. I want to be a teacher so I have to follow the instructions from the SAs and the FAs of course.
It became apparent that Inderpreet is a learner and believes that she can do very well as a teacher because she always seeks to improve whatever is set before her. I asked her if she perceived a way to deal with what appeared to be a disconnect between the ideas espoused by the university’s Teacher Education Program and what she observed while on her practicum. She expected SAs to give her feedback so that she could improve her practice but felt she never had the opportunity to do that; it was the practice of her SAs that she was supposed to largely copy and emulate. She wondered why the SAs did not follow the guidelines provided by the Teacher Education Program (e.g., encourage and support student teacher initiative). It greatly bothered her that she could not act upon the teachings of the Teacher Education Program and be seen as successful in the eyes of all her advisors.

What we learn about Inderpreet’s experiences as a student teacher is very intriguing, but, nevertheless, there is an opportunity to learn more about how identifications are performed by individuals. What is said during an interview is only a tiny fraction in comparison to what is left unsaid. The said belongs to the Symbolic register of language and the unsaid is associated with the unconscious and the Lacanian Real. To study identification, images as well as words will be considered in the following chapters, with the intent to provoke the participant to say more. In this sense, this study draws on Lacanian theory to provide a deeper or an alternative understanding of teacher identity as it is performed in practicum settings and elsewhere.

**Introducing Lacan: A Framework for Thinking About Identities**

Jacques Lacan (1901 to 1981) was a French psychoanalyst and intellectual. His numerous seminars, presented in Paris between 1953 and 1981, comprise the majority of his contributions. Beginning with “a return to Freud,” Lacan (re)interpreted and (re)inscribed Freudian psychoanalytic theory. With Lacan’s emphasis on language and additional influences from Hegel
through the lectures of Kojève, Lacan generated fissures in Freud’s work and subsequently filled and sutured those gaps (Homer, 2005).

Lacan’s lectures and writings are expansive. They have been acclaimed for their insight as well as ridiculed and dismissed for their incoherence and perplexing presentation (Aoki, 1998). Lacanian scholars generally agree that Lacan’s work spanning three decades can be broadly categorized into three stages. The first stage focuses on the Imaginary register that is best associated with images. The second stage emphasizes the Symbolic register that refers to signifiers and the structure of language. The third stage of Lacan’s work addresses the register of the Real that is enigmatic and eludes symbolization. “The Real cannot be symbolized but symbolization involves a cut into the Real and on occasions the Real disrupts the symbolic order” (Atkinson, 2004, p. 388). Transitioning from the first to last phase of his work, Lacan appears to use the same terms or signifiers but they take on alternate meanings and elaborations, thus causing some challenges to understanding his intended meanings.

Using Lacan’s work and its change in emphasis over the three stages, Chiesa (2007) develops an understanding of the subject and, by implication, the other. Similarly, in the following sections, I will use Lacanian concepts together with elaborations drawn from the literature to explain the theoretical underpinnings of the present study. First, I will focus on the important relationships among the Other, the ego and image. Second, I will consider Lacan’s mirror stage theory in more detail as it connects to the construction of the ego apparatus. Third, I

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2 Lacan elaborates Saussure’s notion of the sign as comprised of a signifier/signified. Signifiers only have meaning within a signifying chain, relations between signifiers. In Lacan’s theory, the signified slips beneath the signifier. Thus, the signifier, rather than the signified, matters more in language because the meaning of the signifier changes in relation to other signifiers and the signifier can never completely represent the signified (Chiesa, 2007; Homer, 2005).
will comment on the potential of student teachers to maintain multiple identifications. And, fourth, I will explain how identity is related to the subject and the ego.

The Other, the ego, and the image. Identity is difficult to study because it is dynamic, multiple, and contested (Brown, 2008; Dashtipour, 2009). Through a Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, identity is akin to subjectivity. At any given moment, the subject’s identity is witnessed through a composite of the projected ideal ego and the ego-ideal. The ideal ego is the ideal image one wishes to see when looking in a mirror, the ego-ideal is the image one attempts to realize because it is a socio-cultural expectation (Zizek, 2006). The identity is further shifted, appropriated, and challenged by interactions with the Other as well as organizational identities (Driver, 2009; Harding, 2007).

From the interviews, Inderpreet tells me about various affiliations with which she identifies over the course of her life thus far—Indian, immigrant, daughter, wife, mother, student, and teacher. All of these affiliations assert forces that shape Inderpreet’s sense of identification and subjectivity.

Subjects are constituted by the positions and projections made possible by the ego-ideal and the ideal ego. For Lacan, the image, imago, refers to a particularly significant image that is capable of exerting a (de)formative power over the subject’s psyche (Chiesa, 2007). The image is the central feature of the mirror stage—the (mis)recognition of an image as one’s own and the coincidental development of a self/other distinction (Homer, 2005; Lacan, 2006b; Muller & Richardson, 1982). The always imperfect translation of the image into language or, in Lacanian terminology, the Imaginary into the Symbolic prefigures the coming of the subject, the ego, and the Other. Throughout a lifetime, images and discourses of the Other constitute the subject in a progression of (mis)recognition and identification.
Furthermore, the subject does not simply observe the world but rather (re)shapes the world by projecting her/his ideal ego onto things. At the same time, the subject also introjects the perspective of an ego-ideal. The big Other, the socio-symbolic register of language, limits the possibilities of interpretation while the superego points to what is desirable. Additionally, “the subject is in-formed by his own image, is captivated by the other’s image, and objects themselves take on the rigid features of the ego” (Muller & Richardson, 1982, p. 34). Importantly, the ego, identity and subjectivity are always shifting and being (re)constituted albeit often in very minute ways once the ego apparatus is established.

For example, over the course of six meetings with Alec, another participant in this study, at least part of his narrative developed into a comparison of his teacher identity against his two SAs—an English teacher and a theatre teacher. Alec communicated concerns about some of the things the English teacher did in class, but in contrast, Alec identified positively with the theatre teacher. Interestingly, Alec’s ego appeared to be relatively unchanged over the course of the interviews even as identity was used to argue that “I am like this teacher and not like that teacher.” The ego apparatus was found to be surprisingly resilient and may be seen as the determining filter for the variety of identifications potentially available to the subject.

The mirror stage and the ego. According to Lacan’s formulation of the mirror stage, the self/other distinction begins sometime between 6 and 18 months of age when the child (mis)recognizes the Other as her/his own reflection. The reflection shows the child the possibility of being in control of her/his body, in contrast, to the limitations of the young child’s rather uncoordinated movements and seemingly fragmented body. The “mirror” does not refer specifically to a reflective surface, but rather to any image the child (mis)takes as its own (Chiesa, 2007; Muller, 1982; Muller & Richardson, 1982). For instance, in the mother’s form the
child sees the possibility of a body in control of its limbs or, later on, the image may be of another child. During the mirror stage, the child begins to distinguish her/his difference and separateness from the m/Other. This is an alienating experience for the child because s/he sees herself/himself through the image of the Other.

The mirror stage begins to establish the ego. As noted above, the ego apparatus consists of the ideal ego and the ego-ideal. The ideal ego is an image, an imaginary structure through which the subject projects herself/himself onto the external world of objects and others (Chiesa, 2007).

For Lacan, to speak of reality in relation to the ego is to speak of reality as reflected, as colored and distorted by the Imaginary order, the order of images in which the ego has its origin. In short, the ego is not an agency or function facilitating adaptation to reality through rationality, but rather a structure coloring perceptual consciousness and distorting relations with reality. (Muller, 1982, p. 237)

It then follows that the Other is recognized as bearing a familiarity with the subject as mediated through the ideal ego. In other words, how the subject perceives the world depends on her/his ego.

The ego-ideal is an image of the big Other, the Symbolic, “who watches over me and impels me to give my best, the ideal I try to follow and actualize” (Žižek, 2006, p. 80). Through the gaze of the big Other, the subject sees herself/himself from the Other’s perspective. Located at the joint of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the ego-ideal is an image through which the subject introjects the Other (Chiesa, 2007). That is, the image of the ego-ideal, an effect of language and culture, is internalized, albeit imperfectly, by the subject (Homer, 2005).

In general, if the ideal ego is a projection of the ego’s ideal image onto the external world…the ego-ideal is the subject’s introjection of another external image that has a new (de)formative effect on his psyche. In other words, the ego-ideal adds to the ego a new stratum that provides the subject with a secondary identification. (Chiesa, 2007, p. 22)
The ideal ego is based on an Imaginary (primary) identification, a (mis)recognition of the m/Other’s image as one’s own (i.e., mirror stage identifications). In contrast, the ego-ideal is based on an Imaginary/Symbolic (secondary) identification, a (mis)recognition of the self from the position of the big Other. “These identification processes can be seen as regulatory systems in which the gaze of symbolic identification tends to dominate” (Atkinson, 2004, p. 387).

The ideal ego works in relation to the ego-ideal. In one sense, they oppose each other as differing images of the self. In another sense, they change each other—the ego-ideal alters the ideal ego which alters the ego-ideal and so on. Hence, identity formation occurs in the tension between the ideal ego and ego-ideal (Clarke, Michell, & Ellis, 2016).

**Student teachers maintain more than one identification.** Inderpreet worked with three school advisors in a secondary school setting in the areas of Mathematics and Science. She perceived a mixture in the flexibility of what was expected of her but strongly felt that she was required to emulate the school advisors even when she thought there were other potentially better ways to work with students.

For Inderpreet, the practicum was a time to try out the most promising ideas from her Teacher Education courses, for example, the flipped classroom concept. Instead, she felt pressure to fit in to the existing school culture or what Cole (2003) refers to as “the denial of the personal [and] the preservation of the status quo in Teacher Education” (p. 1). That is, during the practicum she would learn to conform and in the future she would learn to innovate. She considered her teacher identity, the teacher she wished to be, as different from what she enacted on practicum, an identity that satisfied her mentoring teachers.

Like Inderpreet, Alec recounts incidents where he felt he needed to defend his identifications against alternate images and expectations. But the student teacher is not typically
in a position to directly challenge or oppose the wishes of the school and faculty advisors. The student teacher might voice concerns or perform alternate actions in response to directions from the advisor, but it is the advisor’s approval that ultimately determines what one does on practicum, the success of that practicum, and the likelihood of securing future employment. In other words, the student teacher must find a way to move forward in the practicum by becoming recognized as a teacher by the sponsor teacher(s) and faculty advisor.

What happens when the type of teacher one wishes to be is not recognized by one or more of the school and faculty advisors? In Inderpreet’s case, she experiences a considerable amount of stress and anxiety when she did not agree with what her mentors asked of her or when there was a lack of direction and approval. An identity is not necessarily altered by this confrontation as might be imagined although it may still shift gradually. What seems clear in the cases of Inderpreet and Alec, is that their identities (re)asserted themselves during my conversations with them in contrast to the teacher image represented to them by a school advisor in each case.

In order to get through the practicum, these student teachers adopted what might be considered a temporary mask. They acknowledged that they must look like the teacher they are expected to be. Meanwhile, their “truer” identities accepted this mask as temporary and as a means to becoming a professional teacher even though it differed from the teacher they hoped to be.

Using Lacanian theory as a lens for the study of teacher identity allows for the investigation of questions, such as: What happens to the ego when identification and recognition are contradictory? Can a student teacher, for instance, Inderpreet, perform a particular identity
while simultaneously maintaining others? And how is identity related to subjectivity and the ego?

**The ego and subject must be related.** It must be emphasized that “the ego is not to be confused with the subject” (Lacan, 1991, p. 193). This statement in effect points out that there is an important relationship between the ego and the subject even if they are not the same (Chiesa, 2007). Identity is an image of the subject mediated by the ego. One function of the ego is to maintain or defend the subject’s conscious sense of identity (Homer, 2005; Muller, 1982). This is achieved through the projection of the ideal ego and introjection of the ego-ideal. A series of Lacanian-like formulations may be useful to explain the relationship between the subject’s identity and the ego.

“You is a me” describes the child’s increasing sense of self and other during the mirror stage; however, the child (mis)recognizes the image of the Other as her/his own. This confusion further develops into “Me is a you.” That is, the ego-ideal is introjected by the subject. This retroactively (re)structures the ideal ego that is projected by the subject suggesting that the two egos operate reciprocally on each other: “if, on the one hand, the ideal ego is logically prior to the ego-ideal, on the other, it is inevitably reshaped by it” (Chiesa, 2007, p. 23).

Interestingly, when the child is learning language, he or she first refers to himself or herself in the third-person, the way parents speak about the child. Later the child “repeats the sentence one says to him using you instead of inverting it with the I” (Lacan, 1991, p. 166). It is rather confusing for the child to use the pronoun I considering no one ever speaks or refers to the young subject as I. Lacan concludes that the I is a linguistic reference to the you, at least at first. When the child refers to herself/himself as you (from the Other’s position), this implies that the Other’s orders, wishes, and desires are bound up in the child’s increasing sense of identity.
Eventually, “I is a you” or “You is an I” once the child is able to invert the pronouns in language. It is important to note that the subject is unavoidably under the influence of the big Other and is primed to resemble the ego-ideal as closely as possible. The extent of resemblance is limited by the captivating power of the ideal ego and unconscious desire.

In the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the subject must fully recognize that “You is an Other.” However, “despite recognizing the other as other, the ego will nevertheless, to a certain extent, continue to confuse him with his ideal image. The subject qua ego continuously competes with the other by projecting his ideal ego onto him” (Chiesa, 2007, p. 21).

Nevertheless, it is the Other who provides the possibility of an ideal image or ideal ego in the first place. Consequently, Lacan insists that “I is an Other” (Muller, 1982). The Other may be the big Other of the Symbolic order or the unconscious (the unknowable other of oneself). Additionally, the Other also refers to the superego as the introjected form of the ego-ideal (Lacan, 1991).

Žižek (2006) describes the superego as “the cruel and insatiable agency that bombards me with impossible demands and then mocks my botched attempts to meet them, the agency in whose eyes I am all the more guilty” (p. 80). The superego is the relentlessly demanding agency that accuses the subject of failing to epitomize the ego-ideal. According to Chiesa (2007), “the subject’s very entry into the Law—the institution of the tyrannical agency of the superego—renders him always-already potentially liable to be persecuted, and consequently a priori guilty” (p. 80). That is, the subject presumes that the superego is always evaluating her/him and, ultimately, always judging her/him guilty of imperfection.

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3 For discussions of the Oedipus complex refer to Chiesa, 2007, pp. 61-102, or Homer, 2005, pp. 52-53.
Similarly, Rochat (2009) suggests that “to be human is to care about reputation, it is to have ‘others in mind’… as a cardinal trait and a major determinant of the human psyche” (p. 2). The essential premise of his thesis is that “without others, we would not be. As infants we would not have survived. As adults, we would not have any explicit sense of who we are; we would have no ability, nor any inclination to be self-conscious” (p. 2). That is, we “fear the judgment of others, and whatever this judgment might be, good or bad, it determines the representation of who we are in our mind (i.e., our self-consciousness)” (p. 3). What Rochat describes as self-consciousness is precisely the identity of the subject experienced through the ego apparatus. Self-consciousness is “the representation we hold of ourselves through the eyes of others” (p. 3).

Additionally, Homer (2005) describes the subject as different from the person:

[The] subject is not the same as the individual person—it is decentred in relation to the individual. In short, Lacan de-essentializes the structure of language that speaks the subject and not the other way around. Lacan summarizes this in his famous statement, the subject is that which is represented by one signifier to another… the subject is caught up in the chain of signification and it is the signifier that marks the subject, that defines the subject’s position within the Symbolic order. (p. 45)

It is the subject’s identification that is caught in the signifying chain. Moreover, subjectivity, like identity, is (re)interpreted and (re)inscribed by the ego. That is, the subject’s identity is configured by the ego.

To summarize, the appearance of the subject is necessarily accompanied by the appearance of the Other and its correlative, the ego (Lacan, 1991). The subject’s identity refers to subjectivity and is mediated by the ego. That is, when a subject attempts to identify the self, the ego (re)configures a plausible identity. The ego, not to be conceived as a direct equivalent to the individual, can “be understood as the subject’s imaginary identity” (Chiesa, 2007, p. 15). Ultimately, the subject’s identity must be rendered through the ego.
Student Teacher Identity and the Teaching Profession

The application of Lacanian theory to this study of identity arises from the connection between the image and identity. However, the need to study identity comes from a research field that demonstrates the relationship between teacher commitment and positive professional identity, the challenge of understanding identity, and the use of the visual to accompany the interpretation of identity narratives. Lacan’s interests in the subject, the image and the word are used to conceptualize the method of photo elicitation interview and provide a basis for interpreting the significance of the image in student teacher identity research.

The importance of understanding teacher identity is described in the following section without reference to psychoanalysis.

Background and context: Stable identities. Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) explain that stable identities of teachers are positively associated with teacher effectiveness and dedication to the profession. Hence, this research project seeks to better understand how identity is performed by a subject throughout a Teacher Education Program consisting of university courses and a classroom-based practicum. According to the literature, identity is important to teaching, but to what extent and how might it be studied?

MacLure (1993) “argues that identity should not be seen as a stable entity—something that people have—but as something that they use, to justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relation to other people, and to the contexts in which they operate” (p. 312). In short, identification is simultaneously offering an argument as well as a statement about oneself. Identities are not only influenced by the experiences within the sociocultural field, but those identities make meanings of those same experiences. Thus, teachers with different identities may construct diverse inferences, draw alternative conclusions, and respond with idiosyncratic actions.
when encountering identical situations. Even when those actions are limited to only one possible response, teachers will have different reactions to them. That is, the interpretation of teaching experiences is much more personal and nuanced than might be generally believed.

The literature also recognizes multiple, shifting identities of individuals and differentiates a professional identity (the primary focus of this research) from a personal identity although multiple identities influence each other and it is impossible to completely separate the professional from the personal. Moreover, it is generally considered to be desirable for the individual to have compatible identities because conflicting identities may lead to negative emotions, such as guilt and shame (see Hargreaves, 1998; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; van Veen, Sleegers & van de Ven, 2005; Zembylas, 2003).

Cooper and Olson (1996) consider identity conflict as “fragmentation of self” (p. 78). They argue that multiple identities are (re)constructed “through historical, sociological, psychological and cultural influences which shape how we ‘learn’ to become teachers” (p. 78). Individualized identities that do not conform to dominant images of teachers are often discounted within the traditional contexts of schools and teacher education programs. This results in fragmentation of the self as different identities are maintained for particular contexts and ignored elsewhere. Moreover, understanding self-identity is complicated because “identity formation is an ongoing process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of our experiences as we live through them” on a day-to-day basis (p. 80). Who we are today is not exactly the same as who we will be tomorrow. Furthermore, there is a limit to the availability of recognizable teacher stereotypes although these accepted stereotypes change over time as culture changes.
In addition, Britzman (1992) suggests that identities continually slip “as they are reinflected with the accents of others” (p. 27). That is, identifications are made intersubjectively and interdiscursively:

Our identities, overdetermined by time, place, and sociality, are lived through the discourses or knowledge we employ to make sense of who we are, who we are not, and who we can become. Identity, then, always signifies relationships to the other and consequently…must be negotiated. (p. 27)

As noted earlier, identification and recognition are meaningless without the existence of the other and, specifically, a relationship between the subject and the other mediated by language. That is, individuals cannot simply self-identify but are dependent upon being recognized by the other. Self-reporting experiences related to teacher identity are thus called into question because the narrative is always an interpretation mediated by the limitations and availability of language itself (Britzman, 1992; Pitt & Britzman, 2003).

Like Britzman, Coldron and Smith (1999) emphasize the importance of identification and recognition for teachers: “Being a teacher is a matter of being seen as a teacher by himself or herself and by others; it is a matter of acquiring and then redefining an identity that is socially legitimated” (p. 712). A teacher is able to accept or reject a variety of affiliations and differences that ultimately “constitute an important part of his or her professional identity” (p. 713). The process, however, is complex because most choices remain unavailable to scrutiny since they remain in the unconscious. Only a few choices are made available in a given culture and often there may only be one allowable action. At the same time, the meanings that are attributed to such actions constantly shift. Moreover, individual action is constrained because particular choices (in relation to other choices) are embedded in social structures, such as schools.
For instance, Inderpreet enthusiastically attempted to enact a flipped classroom pedagogy promoted by her university program. However, she found that her attempts were met with considerable resistance on the part of students and criticism from at least one school advisor. She ultimately realized that it would be in her best interests to move towards and identify with more traditional classroom strategies employed by the teachers at her practicum school.

Student teachers may “take on” identities and become someone they might rather not be. Therefore, it may be advisable for teacher education programs to assist student teachers in becoming increasingly conscious of the limitations placed on their identifications by the sociocultural field in which they work. In other words, the traditions and norms that pervade their practice require as much examination as the identities that are constructed therein. Moreover, student teachers might also exercise their voices and agency by engaging in identity work. Britzman (1992) encourages such work: “Most significantly, if we can help future teachers theorize about the politics of identity, they may be better able to theorize about their own struggles in the delicate process of becoming” (p. 43). With the notion of teacher becoming in mind, this project investigates the potential of photo elicitation interview as a method to encourage student teacher identity work as discussed above.

About What Follows

The current chapter explains the rationale and structure of the dissertation, introduces the research questions, and provides context to the study of identity. Chapter Two highlights the significance of the image and argues that photo elicitation interview is an effective method for studying shifts in identification. Chapter Three presents a significant understanding emerging from the study, specifically, the existence of tokens imbued with cultural meaning to aid in identification and recognition of a student teacher. Using excerpts from the data collected in this
project, Chapter Four illustrates some often used concepts to consider how psychoanalysis has been taken up in prior research studies. Chapter Five highlights the use of Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses to explain how meaning is constructed from data and how participant identifications alter, albeit in subtle ways. Finally, Chapter Six summarizes and responds more directly to the research questions and provides some theoretical insights that may be considered in future identity studies including research on student teacher identity.
Chapter Two: Lacan, the Image, and Photo Elicitation Interview

A primary concern in the design of this research project is to utilize a method that might encourage participants to talk about their identity as teachers without reducing the conversation to comparisons with individuals they wish to emulate or those they do not like. Moreover, if participant-generated narratives tend to place the participant as a protagonist within the story, then how might it be possible to look beyond the text while, at the same time, avoiding difficult confrontations between the participants and potential challenges to their identifications?

Additionally, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) consider:

If the “I” of the participant is always becoming in the process of telling, so too the “I” of the researcher is always becoming in the process of researching, listening, and writing. What might constitute a re-telling and an approach to research that displaces many of the normalizing features of data stories and the subject in qualitative inquiry? (p. 10)

In light of these concerns, I suggest that a photo elicitation methodology and a theoretical framework based on Lacanian psychoanalysis are potentially productive in the study of student teacher identity.

In this chapter, the method of photo elicitation interview will be described as it was designed for this project in terms of Pauwels’ (2010) Integrated Framework for Visual Social Research. Then, examples of photos and excerpts from interviews will be shared and discussed to illustrate the kinds of data generated by the research method. In addition, a rationale for the importance of Lacanian psychoanalytic theories will be offered to demonstrate the significance of the image to the study of identity and how photo elicitation might provoke (re)constructions of identity.
Research Method: Photo Elicitation Interview

The intricacies of identifications as well as their shifting, context-dependent nature make the accumulation of rich descriptions through qualitative methods particularly appropriate in contrast to quantitative-oriented surveys, for instance. The method used in this research, photo elicitation interview, is intended to provide alternative entries into or viewpoints of a participant’s sense of identity (Clark-IbáÑez, 2004; Harper, 2002; Rose, 2007; Staples, 2008). In terms consistent with Pauwels’ (2010) Integrated Framework for Visual Social Research, I explain the specific variation of photo elicitation used in this study. Pauwels’ Integrated Framework has three essential considerations for using visuals in research: 1) Origin and nature of visuals; 2) Research focus and design; and 3) Format and purpose.

**Origin and nature of visuals.** Visual methods can include photography, video, animation, drawing, painting, sculpting, and building with blocks and other materials. Although each medium has some differentiating characteristics to make it distinct from other methods, each may be used to explore identities (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006). Generally, in photo elicitation, either the researcher or the participant produces or provides images, such as drawings, paintings or photographs, which become the impetus for discussion (Yates, 2010). My study uses researcher instigated visuals resulting in participant-generated images because I wanted to resist limiting the discussion by inserting my own images and understanding of teacher identity in the beginning of the project.

I asked participants to make material culture (i.e., objects and things) the subject of their images because I did not wish to have conversations characterized by comparisons between different teachers and role models. However, the participants were not prevented from depicting people, behaviours, and concepts in their photographs.
The student teachers were encouraged to make their images using automated techniques, specifically, digital photography because it is so accessible to a majority of potential participants given the number of student teachers carrying around a smartphone, tablet, or camera. Thus, asking participants to generate their own images is not as challenging as it once might have been because photos are now relatively quick to produce and share using a digital camera or a smartphone. Furthermore, for the student teachers invited to the project, using a camera to take photos is a relatively low barrier (i.e., experience in photography or art is not a prerequisite for participation) and participants do not have to consider their personal opinions about how well they can draw or paint.

**Research focus and design.** Analytical focus is on the production process with some emphasis on the participants’ verbal feedback. The interviews focus on eliciting the student teacher’s interpretation of one or more of their participant-generated images. Importantly, there is an opportunity for the researcher or the participant to keep talking as they notice something else in or about the photo as demonstrated in the three interview excerpts later in this chapter.

Photo elicitation interview is a method that utilizes an image to prompt a response or narrative. As such, the image and its interpretation by the participant form a rich set of data for analysis. As Harper (2002) notes: “Photographs appear to capture the impossible: a person gone; an event past. That extraordinary sense of seeming to retrieve something that has disappeared belongs alone to the photograph, and it leads to deep and interesting talk” (p. 23). If we accept Harper’s assertion, then photo elicitation interview permits a more nuanced investigation and potentially deeper analysis of identity because the photographic image de-centers language and text albeit momentarily in the process of reflecting-on-practice (in this instance, becoming a teacher).
Using Lacanian psychoanalysis as a theoretical foundation, the Symbolic is no longer privileged at the expense of the Imaginary and the Real. The image evokes the Imaginary order and photographic elements, such as the *punctum* and the *off-frame* (discussed in Chapter 4), that further underscore the influence of the Real. Lacan’s emphasis on the visual, the gaze, the spectator, and the Imaginary make his theories appropriate to visual studies. Specific to this project, psychoanalysis is also relevant to the study of the ego apparatus and how it structures identity and subjectivity.

The method of photo elicitation interview allows for a (re)consideration of identity in the transitional space between image (the Imaginary) and narrative (the Symbolic). The Imaginary is implicated through the (re)production and (re)interpretation of photos (or other images). Prior to any translation of the image into words, the image exerts some force or influence on the subject as suggested in Chapter One with respect to Lacan’s mirror stage proposition (Lacan, 2006; Muller & Richardson, 1982).

Notably, the sampling in this study was explorative and opportunistic (Pauwels, 2010). While some participants staged photos and were attentive to composition, in general, photos were made at times of convenience. The participants made decisions about how to make their images. However, in the course of discussing photos during interviews, participants may have asked for more prompts to indicate what they might look for as a subject for a picture. In response, I directed some of the photos to be made but participants would also forget, ignore, or re-interpret the prompt in their own way. Thus, I was often genuinely surprised by what the participants ultimately shared.
**Format and purpose.** The intended presentation of the visual data and interview transcripts collected in photo elicitation interviews is this dissertation. In Chapter One, the larger image collection is included but the remainder of the dissertation will consider a subset of photos along with participant and researcher interpretations. Notably, the status of the visual is elevated as it is an integral part of the verbal expression (Symbolic register) of identification.

The following sections describe the research design with examples of how an image or visual metaphor informs the study of teacher identity.

**Design of the study.** The initial meetings with the student teachers occurred in December 2012 and served to introduce the participants to the researcher, build trust, familiarize participants with photo elicitation, respond to immediate concerns, and open up the dialogue concerning the interests of the participants with respect to studying teacher identity. Participants were asked to produce photos that would be discussed during subsequent interviews (which were approximately 45-minutes in length). While they could take “selfies” and pictures of others, I suggested that doing so might reduce our interviews to comparisons among teachers. I was interested in what the photo does not immediately say on the surface but nonetheless contains something worth talking about. Also at this time, the consent form for participation in the study was shared with the student teachers (see Appendix A). At the end of the first meeting with each individual, all six student teachers returned signed consent forms for the study.

**Participants and their roles.** The primary role of participants was to produce images related to teacher identities as well as engage in a series of three to six interviews depending on their availability during the practicum. The guiding questions for the production of photos initially provided to the participants were:
• In your life, what objects have significant meaning (positive or negative) related to your teacher identity?
• Where do you see yourself as a teacher?
• What might you see as a teacher that you would not as a student?
• What might be a visual metaphor for teaching?

The participants were not required to have any expertise in photography. Point-and-shoot digital cameras and smartphones allowed participants to contribute to the collection of visual images without extensive training in camera-use or photographic techniques, such as composition, as a prerequisite. Consequently, photos ranged from the impromptu and immediate to planned and composed.

Harper (2002) suggests that photo elicitation “be regarded as a postmodern dialogue based on the authority of the subject rather than the researcher” (p. 15). Thus, one of the underlying principles of this project is the opportunity for the participants to share the responsibility for collecting, generating and analyzing the data. That is, they are producers and interpreters of the images (Guillemin & Drew, 2010).

In addition, the six participants were each asked to provide a description of important details with respect to how they see themselves as student teachers. These written responses featured many details of each participant. Notably, but not surprisingly, each described positive experiences as a student or the inspiration of teachers.

These autobiographies are introduced in Chapter One but their completeness is called into question. The written text cannot capture all the details. There is a great deal more information to be collected from student teachers that speaks in ways that written text does not and reveals more about the participants and their journeys to becoming teachers. Regardless of the length of the
participant’s story of how she or he came into teaching, what is striking are the numerous events that are inevitably left out of the statement. What is left unsaid, as a consequence of generating a carefully studied and written narrative, can be enlightening in terms of understanding evolving identity as a teacher. Photo elicitation interview can pursue this often unsaid or unconscious aspect of teacher development.

**Role of the researcher.** As the researcher, I assumed various roles in the course of this study. For example, I scheduled and coordinated individual meetings, established and maintained communication with participants, and ensured data was appropriately collected. I provided participants with a basic understanding of photo elicitation as part of the introduction to the study.

My experiences as a researcher and a teacher consciously and unconsciously affected my interpretation of the data. Moreover, at times I directed conversations with the participants towards topics I found interesting. Having lived through a Teacher Education Program and continuing to work as a high school teacher, I described my position as a participant observer because my own understanding of what it is to be a teacher was infused into the production and collection of data. Although the interviews encouraged the participants to speak and share thoughts about their photos, my identifications were implicated at the same time. I was complicit in the interviews regardless of whether I remained silent or prompted the participant to say more.

**Data collection.** Data was collected and managed in the following three ways:

1) *Participants’ annotated photos:* Student teachers were asked to produce photos related to their understanding of teacher identity. These images (some of which were returned to in subsequent interviews) were used to elicit stories, impressions, questions, and descriptions of experiences that suggest particular teacher identities.
Prior to each interview, participants were invited to annotate every image with a title, a description, and a comment on the thoughts and feelings evoked by the photo. These images and comments were shared with me during the course of the interview. I did not see the photos in advance of the interview where they were first discussed.

2) **Semi-structured interviews**: The interviews which were approximately 45 minutes in duration were audio recorded. In photo elicitation interview, the images as provided by the participant were used as a catalyst for the conversation that ensued. As the interviewer, I was responsible for encouraging the participant to speak to the significance of the images they wished to share. Although, I spoke much less than the participants, I aimed for the interview to be conversational in the Gadamerian (1990) sense:

   The more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct. Rather, it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it. The way one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own twists and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows in advance what will come out of a conversation. (p. 383)

3) **Researcher’s field notes**: Immediately following interviews and meetings, I wrote down the main ideas, insights and significant observations raised by the participants. I also recorded personal impressions, comments and concerns related to the research questions and the participant-generated images. These field notes became a running record of ideas, provocations, analysis, and tentative claims about student teacher identity and were essential in the process of constructing this document.
Having detailed the method used to collect data in this research, I will explain why Lacanian psychoanalysis is relevant to understanding the potential of photo elicitation interviews. Examples of the data will also be (re)presented.

**What Fails to Appear in Reflection and Narrative: An Entry Point for Lacan**

A much valued disposition in Teacher Education is reflection (Elliott-Johns, 2014; Loughran, 2002; Schön, 1983; 1987). Reflection can be used, for example, to promote critical thinking about curriculum and pedagogy. Although reflection can take many forms, it often depends largely or entirely on words, or what Lacan calls the Symbolic register, one of three Lacanian registers in conjunction with the Imaginary and the Real (Homer, 2005). The Symbolic register is the language and the socio-cultural order into which a subject is immersed. That is, words and signifiers are inherited rather than innate to the person.

The Symbolic register is in contrast to the Real which always escapes symbolization. Due to the Real, there are unavoidable imperfections or gaps in any narrated reflection. Metaphors and written accounts of teacher identities, such as reflective journals, are limited by their dependence on the Symbolic or available language and cultural scripts (Britzman, 1986; Reynolds, 1996; Sumsion, 2003). Moreover, King (2000) argues that the meaning and interpretation of a memory operates on the time of *deferred action* where events in the present conjure memories of the past. For Pitt and Britzman (2003) deferred action is a psychoanalytic concept that heightens the problem of how emotional significance and new ideas are made from past and present experiences. The supposition is that settling on significance is delayed for two reasons: the force of an event is felt before it can be understood, and a current event may take its force and revisions from an earlier scene. (p. 758)

Importantly, there are differences among an event, an individual’s experience of an event, her/his memory of an event, and any communication of an event to others. That is, what we
know in the present has critical implications for how we remember the past. “This paradoxical ‘knowing’ and ‘not knowing’ is the position of any autobiographical narrator, who, in the present moment of the narration, possesses the knowledge that she did not have ‘then’, in the moment of the experience” (King, 2000, p. 2). Hence, when the participants in this study attempt to talk about their identities as student teachers or about events in their lives, the narrative is always already filtered, translated, and interpreted. Furthermore, a remainder—some thing that refuses to be communicated—is generated in the process of telling a narrative. This thing belongs to the Lacanian Real.

Unfortunately, for the purposes of research, we are often left with only the spoken or written version of the memory of the event through the lens of the participant’s current identity. This is concerning because we tend to think of experiences as instrumental in forming identities. More specifically, it “is commonly accepted that identity, or a sense of self, is constructed by and through narratives: the stories we all tell ourselves and each other about our lives” (King, 2000, p. 2). What might be missed is that the stories we are able to share depend significantly on our identities at the time of the telling. That is, we are as much written by the text as we are writers of the text (Clarke, 2011).

“The symbolic never fully represents the subject nor can the subject ever state who he or she is” (Atkinson, 2004, p. 387). Due to the inability of words alone to communicate a “true” identity, the Lacanian theoretical framework adopted in this study suggests a (re)turn to the visual. In other words, a consideration and place of the image, Lacan’s Imaginary register, that seeds the formation of the ego prior to the entry of the subject in the Symbolic and continues to have a (de)formative effect on the ego throughout the subject’s life. In the following sections,
data from different participants will be used to illustrate the limitation of narratives and the potential of images to elicit new meanings.

**The possibilities of psychoanalytic inquiry.** As much as Julia is able to put into words how she came into teaching (refer to Julia’s profile in Chapter One), it is minor in comparison to everything that was left out as a remainder. The inability of Julia or any other person to completely say who she is, can be attributed to that person’s unconscious. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, Freud’s discovery of the unconscious undermines the Cartesian subject, a self-conscious, autonomous, and thinking individual (Briton, 1995). Lacan expands on the Freudian unconscious by considering theories of language and perception unknown to Freud. In Briton’s interpretation of Lacan’s theories, the subject must be de-centered because the unconscious is an unknowable other in relation to the conscious subject: “the unconscious is the locus of thought—the subject of enunciation—and the conscious subject is the locus of language—the enunciated subject” (p. 64). In Julia’s autobiographical reflection of herself, she is the enunciated subject. Her description is limited by memory, her present identity, culture, and the availability of words.

The “enunciated subject” implies that the discourse constitutes the conscious subject rather than the other way around. Interestingly, Lacanian psychoanalysis essentially draws on the impossibility of the signifier to completely represent the signified in the Symbolic register. The remains of the unconscious make it impossible for the conscious subject to perfectly represent itself. Consequently, when participants are asked to reflect and speak about their identifications, the description is always incomplete and, furthermore, “research cannot be immune from crises of representation in education and that the very design of narrative research enacts the crisis of representing teaching and learning” (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 757). Pitt and Britzman suggest the following qualities of psychoanalytically informed research: emotional significance,
symbolization as a barrier to understanding, and the existence of a “strange and conflictive interplay between data and theory” (p. 759). Moreover, in relation to the immediate study, “narratives are not the culmination of experience but constructions made from both conscious and unconscious dynamics” (p. 759). In other words, there is

   an interpretive paradox at the heart of psychoanalytic inquiry: interpretation makes narrative, but there is also something within narrative that resists its own interpretation. There can be no original moment in research that gives birth to interpretation even as we must use narratives as the force of interpretive research. (Pitt & Britzman, 2003, p. 759)

In short, interview transcripts are full of gaps and omissions that are unavoidable. Hence, analysis is performed on very incomplete data because all that is said is miniscule in comparison to all that is left unsaid. However, psychoanalytic inquiry accepts this situation and, at the same time, can imagine possible solutions for eliciting more information during and after interviews.

   Taking into consideration the complexities of the unconscious, deferred action, symbolization, and interpretation as well as their effects on participant narratives, psychoanalytically informed research will benefit from methods that encourage participants to say more than they intended, to signify what might have been left as a remainder in the unconscious. That is, to allow the unconscious, the subject of enunciation, to speak. As such, establishing a visual component to the data collection can provoke more than a repetition of what has already been said.

   Alec: More than he planned to say. The first photo Alec wished to discuss featured a media collection he shared with his partner (see Figure 6). Alec told me that you can tell a lot about a person based on what media they own or inherit. He also expressed that even the simple fact that he still uses CDs, DVDs, and VHS tapes says something about his personality. However, the richness of photo elicitation interview was exemplified by what happens next.
Just as we are about to move to the next photo, a movie title (Idiocracy, centre of photo) captures Alec’s attention:

*Idiocracy*. I really like Mike Judge, the guy who does *Beavis and Butt-Head*¹ and *Office Space*², I like this…ironic celebration of the death of culture. Like this sort of romantic look at people who completely [are] like of the lowest common denominator type…And I guess…in terms of how that relates to my own identity and…like compared to students and whatnot is as much as I recognize like the Beavis and Butt-Head personality is not what I’m looking to instill in a student; it is something that I think is like completely legitimate and like fulfilling for people who like to sit around and make cynical jokes and not really engage in high culture. Like I think that’s completely an entitled sort of perspective. So as a teacher, I think…English, it seems like they’re taught, like we’re supposed to be teaching students so that they can perform in university like so they can write academic papers at this high level.

Alec continues to describe his perspectives on teaching English and theatre classes:

⁴ An animated TV series, created by Mike Judge, that first aired on MTV from 1993 to 2011.

I see [English classes] more about exploring ideas and allowing students to pursue an idea on like on their own formal terms. Like not necessarily having to do an essay that’s really like academic language and stuff if they are more comfortable trying to like come up with a movie, a documentary sort of script…instead of an essay. That would be a cool idea. And I think that…the theatre is definitely more open to that. Theatre teachers are like allowed to encourage their students to pursue un-academic sort of careers but there’s this…really standard, conventional sort of progression that’s expected from high school students that are quote unquote “successful.”

From Alec’s description, he appears to describe two different personalities that he has to bring to teaching depending on which class he is leading. Our conversation causes Alec to think more about how these two dispositions can resolve themselves into a more uniform teacher identity:

I think it could be consistent for me as like a teacher in my own classroom but as a student teacher I think it has to be quite distinct because my theatre teacher is very much like the kind of teacher I would like to be. She’s…open to students pursuing their own projects and creating their own sort of frameworks for how their gonna involve themselves in the project…versus the English teacher who’s much more conventional, lecture-style, specific assignments, notes, that kind of thing.

The differences between Alec’s experiences in the theatre versus the English class are underscored by the fact that the theatre teacher asked Alec to choose how he would be introduced and known to the class whereas the English teacher simply introduced Alec by his surname:

Even my name is different in the two classes ‘cause I am [Alec] in one of them… So even that makes for a pretty different sort of sense of self… If you’re being called by your last name by a bunch of students, then it’s like “Oh this is this character who is being created for this class” but when I’m being called by my first name then it’s just sort of me.

Additionally, with respect to the notion of creating a character for a class, Alec makes a link to clothing which is not something I predicted we would talk about prior to this conversation:
The fancy dress that you’re supposed to wear, like that we’re really encouraged to wear formal clothes on this practicum experience. But I didn’t really want to but then a couple of my teachers were like “No, it’s really important. Like even if you don’t want to do it for your career like people within the hallways, like administration will know who you are.” And then the other day at the school, the English teacher, the one who’s more strict, brought up that on his short practicum he wore a collared shirt the first day of his practicum and never has worn a collared shirt to school since. So I’m starting to think maybe I could get away with not dressing very formally ‘cause neither of my teachers that I’m working with do… I guess that’s somewhat important to me—the idea…that you, when you dress in a certain way, this collared shirt and etcetera, you’re sort of trying to get the respect and…the authority from the students without actually earning it. You’re not doing anything to get it. You’re just like symbolically positioning yourself in a way that they recognize as this means authority; this person’s wearing this kind of shirt. And I think that it’s…I hope I’m completely capable of earning respect and authority. That I don’t need to dress a certain way in order to…. So that’s important for me.

This interview gave rise to a signifying chain that began with the image of Alec’s media collection. I asked Alec if he feels like becoming a teacher is adopting some sort of role:

Yeah…I think especially in this English class it’s like, the last name; that I can’t feel like me. It feels like a role and the dressing in the certain way…. In the theatre class…I’m very much myself on my own terms…. In the English class, he [the teacher] often like pigeon-holes me into perspectives…“Oh, Mr. A’s Jewish.” Like, and I don’t identify with [inaudible] Judaism…. So, yes, definitely about playing a role. And I’d like to think that that’s a bit of a factor of student teaching not of actual teaching. But I recognize that in real teaching, you also can’t be completely yourself with a student. You’ve gotta have some sort of…I mean at least in things that could be misinterpreted you have to have that distance…. I learned in one of my other classes that we’re not actually supposed to be open about our sexuality or even if you’re straight apparently you’re technically not supposed to be open about your spouse in front of your students. And I don’t know if that’s necessarily something that I’ll have to struggle, deal with…. That’s sort of an interesting rule, I think, because like obviously the way it’s stated isn’t that you’re not allowed to reveal this part of your identity but that, in effect, it ends up meaning that you have to sort of play the role of an asexual person who is probably assumed to be straight.

Alec identified more positively with the theatre teacher than with the English teacher. Over the course of our interviews, he could articulate several instances where he did not agree with the English teacher’s practice and how he might do things differently. For example, a seemingly benign photo of a closed curtain shown in Figure 7 elicited a comment by Alec to open up the windows and allow natural light into the classroom rather than maintain the English
teacher’s habit of keeping it closed. The conflict of identity, in this case, positions Alec with his own sense of who he is and how he wishes to portray himself as a teacher against the identity exhibited by the English teacher.

![Figure 7. Window covering. Photography by the participant (Alec).](image)

On the one hand, we see from Alec’s narrative that he can describe his teacher identity in relation to the theatre teacher and the English teacher. In short, he identifies more with the theatre school advisor than the English school advisor. However, the focus on photos brings about further, unrehearsed conversation, such as when Alec notices the movie title, *Idiocracy*, that sets him thinking about the different expectations between theatre and English class, his teacher name, his clothing, and the portrayal of a teacher identity that is not entirely determined by the individual.
The Importance of the Image in Identity Research

Moving beyond written text, the visual provides an alternative for eliciting aspects of teacher identity that can (re)configure the accepted cultural scripts. Images, like text, have the potential to prompt meaning-making (Weber & Mitchell, 1996). Moreover, images “offer a different kind of glimpse into human sense-making than written or spoken texts do, because they can express that which is not easily put into words: the ineffable, the elusive, the not-yet-thought-through, the sub-conscious” (p. 304). That is, images are able to say more than the participant intended or the researcher expected, thus, hinting at the potential use of images in conjunction with psychoanalytic theory to make meaning of images.

The unavoidable incompleteness of narrative demonstrates the need to entertain other possibilities, like the image, or what Lacan calls the Imaginary, in psychoanalytically informed research. Lacan’s psychoanalytic concepts are well-suited to investigating the significance of the visual without undermining the importance of language. Lacan’s insights in this domain are deeply invested in understanding three registers: the Imaginary (images), the Symbolic (language), and the Real (or the remainder that escapes symbolization and remains concealed by the Imaginary). With appropriate methods, the image can assert its significance in any reflection on or about identity.

Kate: The photo means more than its referent. Kate provides an image of her car, the referent, parked at her mother’s house (see Figure 8) which is in close proximity to her practicum school and coincidentally is the elementary school she attended as a child. The photo is not about the car as much as it is about shifting from the student’s perspective to the teacher’s role, dispositions, and habits. Kate explains:
There was one day where…I went into the [coffee shop] before work and then I didn’t have enough time so I went directly to school and parked in the staff parking lot and I just realized how different that felt to be amongst the other teacher and staff cars…like very much different because I was coming into the school from a different way, from the way that the teachers come in as opposed to the students.

The disruptive experience of entering teacher spaces at a school is felt not only by Kate in the staff parking lot, but I imagine, based on my own experience, can be felt by many student teachers when they enter a staff room, attend a meeting, stand behind the teacher’s desk or at the front of the class, or operate the photocopier. It is the realization that you are in an authorized role and location.

Figure 8. Staff Parking. The license plate is blurred. Photography by the participant (Kate).

I asked Kate if she would now regularly park in the staff lot to feel more a part of the school community as a teacher. After some consideration, Kate shared a conversation she had with her peers at the university:

We talk at [university]…if some of my classmates see some of their students outside of school, they don’t like it and they would go away or they…hope that the kid won’t see them. And I’ve always been the opposite like I’ve always wanted to be a part of the community and run into them at [the grocery store].
In the photo elicitation interview, Kate began by commenting on the image she wished to share. Prior to the interview, she was able to think about and rehearse what she wants to say. However, as the researcher, I responded to the image and her words to ask a question or make a comment she may not have anticipated. In this case, she asserted her openness to being a part of the school community and being recognized as a teacher.

For me, when I first saw the image of the car, the referent in this photo, it was largely unremarkable, but I include it as an example where the significance of the photo to the participant leads to an unexpected comment on the transition from student to teacher identification. Specifically, students and teachers experience school spaces differently. Kate walks to her practicum school from her mother’s house and enters the same door as she did when she attended as a student. Taking on a teacher identity, she must become familiar with experiencing the school from a teacher’s perspective—parking at the school, signing in at the office, opening the classroom, preparing lessons, etc.

Julia: The need for photo elicitation interview. Julia provided the following image of a decorated box that she titled “Life as a student teacher,” shown in Figure 9. Julia explained its significance during her second interview:

That one was a project that my school advisor gave me to do which is to decorate a box. In a way, I think it summarized sort of like my experience and changing perception of what the role so far of being a teacher candidate has been especially in the classroom where initially I sort of expected to be doing more technical and more student-directed stuff and literally was given a box to decorate [laughter]. It’s just sort of a different expectation. I think a lot of what we’re doing has been observation which is great and is good to see but not at all what I pictured when I thought about what the program would look like.

Moreover, Julia noted that her classroom experiences would be what she made of it “but also a lot more gradual than what [she] expected.”
Julia continued the interview with a photo of what she chose to put inside the box, initially made for her practicum, as part of an auto-geography project assigned for one of the courses in her Teacher Education Program (see Figure 10).
Julia shared her thoughts about the project:

We actually, for one of our on-campus courses, had a project to develop an auto-geography. And we were supposed to be reflecting on some of the themes that we learned in our class on diverse learners…. I really tried to channel sort of in this assignment reflecting on what I was bringing…into teaching and how that was going to shape me. So I did Russian nesting dolls and then broke them out into different categories. So I had one that was risk and one that was resilience and one that was privilege…and I think I did life experience. And so I used those to represent myself. But again coming back to sort of this idea of really imagining and creating who I am or I’m going to be as a teacher based on what my experiences are, what I’m bringing to the profession…. Another thing I didn’t anticipate about the program is how much time we’d sort of have to spend thinking about what we believed about a topic or…how we would choose to teach something rather than just sort of learning the components of developing a lesson and the stages of child development.

For Julia, the project was an opportunity to experience personal risk because she had to really think not only about her identity but also about her commitment to participating fully in the Teacher Education Program. We discussed her sense of the Teacher Education Program with respect to the auto-geography project assigned during the program:

Julia: Really, truly investing in the program because it was an assignment that you could treat really superficially or you could truly, you know, look at…what’s made up your life and what’s made up who you are and what your values are and express those. And I chose to do that more for my own sort of long-term benefit than for the course but I actually think that it’s one of the more valuable assignments that I’ve…done so far.

John: So would you say that…in the process of doing this assignment, you had to make that switch in terms of buying into this idea of…it’s about this whole process of becoming a teacher as opposed to here’s what you need to do, here are the skills you need as a teacher?

Julia: Absolutely.

Within the Teacher Education Program there were openings, such as the auto-geography project described by Julia, for candidates to explore how their identities impact who they are or will be as teachers. Julia also commented that the degree of commitment to coursework ran the full spectrum for her peers—from disinterest to deep involvement—but her belief was that
regardless of critiques of the program she would participate as fully as possible in what was asked of her.

Like the other participants in this study, Julia appears to be an excellent student and intends to be invested in her chosen career path. While that may or may not be true for other teacher candidates not involved with this project, it is interesting to see how her positive identification as a student translates into her teacher identity.

The photos and interview excerpts shared in this chapter illustrate the potential of photo elicitation interview as a research method for investigating identifications as illustrated by Julia’s reaction to including these two photos as a part of this study: “But again coming back to sort of this idea of really imagining and creating who I am or I’m going to be as a teacher based on what my experiences are, what I’m bringing to the profession.” Photo elicitation interview provides a way to go beyond rehearsed spoken and written reflections and narratives of identities by encouraging the unconscious to speak (something slips out). The method of photo elicitation interview, outlined in the following section, provides opportunities for participants and the researcher to say more than they intended.

**Julia: Learning to Teach is Like a Growing Plant**

Returning to Julia and a set of images she generated within the context of this research, we see one of the more familiar metaphors for learning in a set of three photos that she shared towards the end of her practicum (see Figures 11, 12 and 13). The images are reminiscent of the garden metaphor that is often used to represent learning contexts (Baptist, 2002).

When speaking about these photos, Julia began by describing the referent in the photos and the context for taking the pictures in the first place.
The end of my first week I planted seeds…. A friend had given me these little tiny plant pods with seeds…. I had taken pictures…. at the end of each week just to show the girl there’s these little seeds sprouting…. And it was interesting because they actually came up really quickly. And I was surprised…. After the first weekend, “Oh my goodness, I already have sprouts!”

*Figure 11. A metaphor for learning to teach: In bud. Photography by the participant (Julia).*

*Figure 12. A metaphor for learning to teach: Sprouting up. Photography by the participant (Julia).*
Figure 13. A metaphor for learning to teach: Growing tall. Photography by the participant (Julia).

Julia’s description and explanation of the images, like others in this chapter, illustrate how photo elicitation interview encourages participants to begin by talking about things they know. The method recognizes the participants as experts due to the simple fact that they captured the photo in the first place. In a Lacanian sense, the participant is *the subject presumed to know*, rather than the interviewer/researcher.

Although Julia found the images personally meaningful, she only commented on the context of the photos and what they suggested to her, at first. But in the midst of the interview,
she continued to interpret the meaning of the photos with respect to her thoughts about teacher identity:

I sort of initially thought they’d be a representation of my growth…. Hopefully, if they survive, they’ll make it through the summer until I’m finished the program which I thought will be kinda cool.

Interestingly, as Julia and I consider the images together, Julia continues to elaborate on what the photos mean to her. Although her written autobiography represents a confident individual, competent learner, and future teacher, the photos hint at another aspect of her identity as she describes her response to some challenges during her practicum.

Julia: They do represent; they do reflect growth…. What’s interesting is that…it happens much more quickly than I realized. So when they first sprouted I thought, “Oh, this is much faster.” Like…this doesn’t indicate where I’m at, at all. But then I could say…within two weeks of practicum I started to feel like I had my feet sort of under me and things…were on track. So it was a rough start.

John: Was that surprising?

Julia: It wasn’t surprising but it was surprising…because I anticipated there might be some…differences between my school advisor and…our style…. I had anticipated that there might be some things that came up that, like I couldn’t really prevent them but I knew that eventually there were things that would sort of surface…. In the first couple of weeks I was really thrown off ‘cause…they arose much more quickly than I expected. And really it was just mostly [inaudible] stress that I was internalizing…. Things like, because I’m in the French program…right now, it’s about 20% that I’m teaching elsewhere with other classes. And week two, I got a text message…. “You need to leave me lesson plans when you leave the room to teach somewhere else. I need another lesson plan for what’s happening in the classroom.” And my faculty advisor didn’t really support me.

By Friday of week two, Julia was told that her unit plans were great, but the school advisor wanted her to change her topic and start teaching the new topic on the upcoming Monday. On reflection, Julia felt very overwhelmed at the time, but found a way to cope with the situation and all the unexpected things that would come up in the course of teaching a new topic.
Julia:  Okay…. This is what we’re doing. Fine. Then I’ll do it and do it well. And that’s given me some confidence…. If things change a little bit or the expectation changes…last week I had a surprise lesson to give…. Okay. That’s fine. We’ll do something. And I can handle it. So trial by fire but it’s worked out okay.

Since I only met with participants from three to six times, it was uncertain to what extent the participants might feel comfortable enough to verbalize anything that makes them appear vulnerable. However, using photo elicitation interview appeared to encourage the participants to share unrehearsed and impromptu thoughts. For instance, our topics of conversation included professional concerns, criticisms of the practicum and Teacher Education courses, stories of disagreements with peers and advisors, challenges with controlling their classes, and uncertainty in their lesson planning. Some photos also depicted aspects of the participants’ personal lives, such as what they do and where they go outside of school.

The examples in this dissertation show how the method of photo elicitation interview may be used as a way to understand and explore how student teachers perform their identifications within the context of the practicum in a Teacher Education Program. Lacan’s theories, emerging from psychoanalysis, linguistics, and visual culture, provide a conceptual framework that considers the coming of the subject in the midst of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. While Lacan underscores the importance of the image in the formation of the ego, making sense of the broader contribution of the image to the field of identity research is a central feature of this study.

**Why Use Photo Elicitation Interview to Study Identity?**

Recently researchers have turned towards the visual as a rich source of data (Rose, 2011). The visual turn does not aim to dismiss the importance of the discursive but to highlight the prominence of the visual within our culture. As Rogoff (1998) claims,
At one level we certainly focus on the centrality of vision and the visual world in producing meanings, establishing and maintaining aesthetic values, gender stereotypes and power relations within culture. At another level we recognize that opening up the field of vision as an arena in which cultural meanings get constituted, also simultaneously anchors to it an entire range of analyses and interpretations of the audio, the spatial, and of the psychic dynamics of spectatorship. (p. 14)

Although not going as far as Rogoff suggests, this project makes a concerted effort to consider both the discursive, through the interview texts, and the visual, through the photos. It would be challenging to gather the same depth in the data with only the interview transcripts or only the photographs.

Other studies on teacher identity similarly emphasize the significance of visual metaphors as participants are encouraged to think critically about their identifications, actions, and responses as classroom teachers that words alone cannot capture. Bullough (1991) suggests the importance of both visual and verbal metaphor analysis in constructing personal teaching metaphors during a teacher education program. Undertaking metaphor analysis with student teachers develops their capacity for critical reflection on professional identity—an essential element of Teacher Education. Although Bullough believes in the potential of metaphor analysis, one limitation is the focus on self and the need to “reach beyond self and engage in a broader consideration of the context of teaching and of schooling…self must be seen in relation to the identification and creation of conditions needed for professional development” (p. 49). Thus, both visual and verbal identifications always need close scrutiny within the context of individual practice.

Relatedly, Reynolds (1996) considers how teacher identities are (re)shaped and (re)constructed through opportunities of reflection, distancing, and experiencing different material conditions from what are generally taken-for-granted. Reynolds invokes the term
“cultural scripts” to refer to “those subjectivities available to us to choose from as we play our part” (p. 71). Examples of cultural scripts that she offers within the teaching profession include: the child saver, the learned one, the super parent/coach/friend, the professional, and the gardener. The sociocultural field limits the variety of appropriate teacher identities. However, although teachers may follow the prescribed cultural scripts, there is always the potential to misappropriate, reinterpret, or reimagine those scripts. Photo elicitation provides the possibility for interrupting the sociocultural field and up-ending the status quo in ways that are hopefully generative and safe; individuals are free to share or refrain as they see fit.

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology and method of the study and hinted at the possibilities of analysis as the theory, data, and interpretation are intermingled to illustrate how participants perform identifications during a photo elicitation interview. In the following three chapters, theory and data analysis will be (re)presented in greater detail to more fully demonstrate the possibilities of Lacan in conjunction with photo elicitation interview in the study of student teacher identity.
Chapter Three: Tokens of Identification and Recognition

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the one theme that I could not ignore: There are culturally significant tokens that mark a person in the role of a teacher. Perhaps it is a predictable result, but nevertheless the participants performed their transition from student to teacher with the help of tokens. These tokens may vary from the obvious, for example, a name tag or degree certificate, to the subtle, such as a coffee cup or pair of shoes.

In the following section, I will represent a photo and interview excerpt from Julia. Then, I will discuss the concept of the “self” in relation to Lacan’s theories, identification and recognition. After, I return to discussions of photos from Julia, Alec, and Kate to highlight the significance of tokens in the performance of teaching.

Julia: Teacher Identification and Recognition

One of the photos, taken by Julia, featured her “Student Teacher” badge issued by her practicum school (see Figure 14). This badge was different from the generic “Visitor” tag she had used earlier in the practicum. Julia’s new badge meant that she no longer needed to sign into the visitor log when arriving at the school. Seemingly a trivial change, when represented by Julia as an image from her practicum, it takes on greater significance during the interview:

Julia: By the middle of week two, I think it was one of the [Education Assistants] kind of realized: “You’re here every day. This is silly.” And made up student teacher badges. So it felt slightly more legitimate. And what was interesting is that students even really noticed…. “Oh, your badge changed. Now you’re a student teacher. Okay.”

So it’s kind of one of those markers where I sort of felt like the school community in a way was acknowledging that we’re more than just popping in for a day.

John: It’s like a literal badge of honor.
Julia: Absolutely. Really. Truly. Yes…. On the one hand it’s not…. I wouldn’t exactly want to be marked as a student teacher all day, every day. But it’s better than being a visitor.

That also represents sort of routine…make sure I have my lunch packed, get to school, get the badge on, sign in—it’s the real sign in book now…pick up the attendance folder…. All of those little things that are not what you learn at all in your [Teacher Education] classes but certainly a big part of…doing the job.

Julia communicated how important all the seemingly minor tasks and actions performed by a teacher add up to an identity. In effect, she was learning to play the part of a teacher.

*Figure 14.* No longer a visitor. Photo is blurred to protect identity. Photography by the participant (Julia).
The “Self”

It is also important to clarify the Lacanian notion of self. In a modernist sense, the fixed and knowable self denotes a person who can transcend the limits of the sociocultural field. This self is congruent to Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* — I think, therefore I am. Moreover, the self maintains autonomy or free will despite being in a community with others.

Britzman (1992) challenges this notion of a knowable self with a poststructuralist conceptualization of identification. In poststructuralism, the idea of a fixed self-identity is problematized by social, cultural, and historical contexts. The *subject* is seen and interpreted through a sociocultural lens. At the same time, the subject is able to see and interpret but through the same lens. Additionally, in Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory, a self is not completely knowable because of the unconscious and the lack inherent in language (Homer, 2005). That is, language always fails to perfectly communicate intended meaning. Furthermore, a self may have multiple, at times incoherent, and contested identities (Dashtipour, 2009). Thus, within the psychoanalytic theoretical framework adopted in this research, the self is more appropriately conceived as a subject.

The term “subject” signifies at least three distinct features not suggested by the term “self.” First, a subject is a generalized placeholder, a position that may be occupied by any person. Second, individuals are subjected and constituted by biological, social, cultural and historical contexts. However, that is not to say that subjects are pre-determined and without agency. Rather, subjects retain agency because they are able to (re)interpret and (re)inscribe their subjectivities even while they remain constrained by external forces. And third, subjects are under scrutiny by the Law (Nealon & Giroux, 2012). Consequently, subjectivity is a reminder
that a person is called into a subject position by the Other precisely because that person finds herself/himself in an intersubjective, sociocultural field.

Although Lacan is not unique in his thinking about the dynamic, complex and unknowable subject, this study uses Lacan’s notion of a subject who is always arriving (never completely here), always in the process of being made, never in final form (Homer, 2005). Thus, the professional identities suggested by the student teachers in this study are always incomplete, influenced by our shared culture, and subject to the interpretation of others, for example, the practicum advisors, the students and their families, and myself as the researcher.

Julia’s student teacher badge (see Figure 14) is recognition by the community notifying everyone who sees it that Julia belongs at the school as a student teacher. I appreciate this story and its photo because I recognize its features retroactively\(^6\) in my own memories of becoming a teacher.

**Identification and Recognition by the Other**

Using Lacanian psychoanalytic theory primarily mediated by Chiesa’s (2007) philosophical reading of Lacan’s *oeuvre*, it is possible to consider identity as the product of identification. Identity is provisionally stable whereas identification is the act that produces an identity. Moreover, identity is an effect of subjectivization or constituting the subject (Chiesa, 2007). That is, identity is an image of the subject mediated through the ego.

Identity and subjectivity are not the same thing but are very much related. Identity refers to how the subject appears to herself as well as how she might appear from the Other’s

\(^6\) Earlier in the dissertation, the idea that present circumstances can conjure up memories and inscribe them with meaning retroactively was called “deferred action” in psychoanalytic terms. I do not actually recall whether or not I had a badge like Julia during my practicum, but I do remember signing in at the office as a student teacher.
perspective (recognizability). Lacan (1991) states that the “ego is constituted in relation to the other” (p. 50). Similarly, subjectivity suggests the identification of the subject and what the subject looks like under the *gaze* of the Other. Importantly, identity and subjectivity are contingent on the identification of and recognition by others. As noted earlier, there is no identity without the other (Rochat, 2009).

In a Lacanian sense, the subject is in a perpetual state of flux where identification is continually being negotiated through images and signifiers (words). Since the meaning of a signifier is inherently incomplete and lacking and the meaning shifts as historical, social and cultural contexts change, the identity of the subject also shifts. At times, alterations in identity may be very gradual so that it appears quite stable. (Un)surprisingly, the participants’ identities in this study appeared to be quite robust and resilient despite encounters with the Other (e.g., their school advisors). Hypothetically, however, significant shifts in identity can be provoked by new experiences, changes in our relationships with others, and the underlying operations of the unconscious.

With respect to the participants in this study, it became clear that their identities, as revealed to me, were not going to make dramatic shifts in the course of our interviews. They may have faced challenges over the course of the Teacher Education Program, but they found a way to overcome them with their egos intact. They expected to encounter issues and equally, they expected to figure out solutions. Importantly, in the face of having their own confidence disturbed, they attributed most complications to a lack of support from the school or faculty advisor or the personalities of their students. This was illustrated by Inderpreet’s story (Chapter 1), Alec’s story (Chapter 2), and Julia’s reflection on how learning to teach is like a growing plant (Chapter 2). The result was only minor and gradual changes to their own identifications.
So far, in this chapter, I have discussed identification and recognition as concepts dependent on the Other. The big Other is language and culture rather than a person. Notably, a token or thing may also stand in for the Other. As a result, student teachers need to affiliate themselves with tokens that signify “teacher” to their students and advisors. They may find these tokens, for example, buying acceptable clothes, or they may be given tokens as recognition of becoming teachers.

To better understand these ideas through a Lacanian interpretation, it is helpful to consider how identifications are performed by student teachers through examples from the data. The next two examples again come from Julia and they demonstrate the idea of tokens, identification, and recognition very clearly. Following, Alec shares a story of school keys that are a potentially powerful token of teaching. And finally, Kate describes her use of a “bird caller” that is simultaneously a performance of teacher identity.

**Julia: Tokens of identification.** The term “identification” emphasizes the ongoing process of becoming or identity work in contrast to the static view of a coherent, completely knowable self. In the Lacanian psychoanalytic sense of the word, identity presumes the notion of becoming, much like identification or identity-shifting. Although identity may also suggest a static image of the subject, it is never actually unchanging. Thus, identity and identification are used somewhat interchangeably in this dissertation.

Identification signals another important meaning when it is paired with recognition. In identification, a person identifies her subjectivity or his subjectivity to others whereas in recognition, others recognize a subject. That is, a person’s identification is necessarily dependent on her/his recognition by others (Phelan, 2010). For all intents and purposes, we could argue that there is no reason for a person to take up an identity (or even be an individual) except out of the
need to identify oneself with and for others. Jackson and Mazzei (2012), following the work of Butler, suggest that “desire for recognition is in actuality a site of power, where who gets to be recognized, and by whom, is governed by social norms” (p. 77). Thus, the student teacher’s identification in the school system is entirely dependent on her/his recognizability through the eyes of others—students, parents, advisors, administrators, etc.

Near the end of the school practicum, Julia captured a photo of the various forms and documents that she was required to complete in order to make the transition from student teacher to practicing professional in the eyes of school districts, the government, and the public. Even in the title of the photo (“Making it Official”) Julia signals a shift in identification (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Making it official. Photography by the participant (Julia).

These forms represent a legitimate credentialing process that is essential to securing a teaching position in the BC public school system and that is recognizable elsewhere, for example, a private school or a museum. However, it is the Teacher Education Program and the
practicum experience that must be successfully completed before the forms can be submitted. Being registered with the government department that regulates the teaching profession provides a formal certificate to indicate one’s status and position as a certified teacher. The teaching certificate or the university degree can be displayed as a token to identify the holder as a teacher.

**Julia: Tokens of recognition.** Recognition is neither limited to the school environment nor certification by a government agency. Interestingly, during the winter holidays prior to her extended practicum, Julia received numerous gifts from her family that recognized her as a teacher, for instance, a collection of “teacher stamps” on Christmas morning (see Figure 16).

![Figure 16. Christmas morning. Photography by the participant (Julia).](image)

What came out of [the stocking] was a bunch of stamps, like teacher, very specific teacher stamps, like “[Please sign and] return to me,” and it was really a recognition for me of this being kind of a new identity…. I recognize how pervasive…like it is an identity…it will be a consistent part of my life but I think because it’s not quite there yet it was a bit of an adjustment when I opened them and “Oh, this makes sense,” but not at all what I would have expected.
Sometimes others recognize your identity before you do. New teachers, especially young teachers, notice when the pupils in their classrooms, regardless of the student teacher’s age, address them as Ms. or Mr., for example. This salutation is one form of recognition of student to teacher. In addition, some participants mentioned moments during the practicum where they were given a gift from their students. For instance, Alec was given a bouquet of flowers from the students who recognized him as the theatre director.

**Alec: The meaning of school keys.** I would not have appreciated the significance of a set of keys to teacher identity if Alec had not brought it to my attention (see Figure 17):

These are the keys that I have for [school]…. I think they’re a symbol as well as something that actually has physical power. So there’s one for the English classroom, one for the drama room, one for the drama office, one for all the bathrooms and the like workrooms…. It’s sort of weird to me I think, that you can’t use the same bathrooms as students. Like I guess I understand…there’s some sort of culture there…. All the teachers’ bathrooms are locked at the school.

*Figure 17. School keys. Photography by the participant (Alec).*
The keys also caused Alec to recollect a memory from his days as a middle school student:

I remember that whenever you were in the hallway doing like extra-curricular type stuff, which I did a lot of, like student council and drama stuff then. If you heard someone walking with the keys jingling, you knew you had to like start acting like you were doing something appropriate…. So it’s funny now that I have these keys and I keep them on the carabiner and when I walk I make the sound that was for me a symbol of like gotta act on task or whatever…. But it’s also funny having a lot of keys. It seems like a status thing. And not like a typical like high social status kind of way. But it's like somehow there’s something about keys.

Forgetting my own keys at home once or twice a year was particularly meaningful in terms of Alec’s reference to school keys. The unusual occurrence when a teacher forgets her/his keys and has to borrow another set from the office or wait around for a colleague to open a door are moments of inconvenience and embarrassment. For a (student) teacher, the jingle of the keys as you walk down the school hallway announces your presence to students. For a student teacher, the responsibility that comes with the keys marks you as a member of the staff, no longer dependent on a “real” teacher to come and open a door for you. For a student teacher, having keys means you do not have to wait with the students until a teacher unlocks a door.

Some of the participants were provided with keys, others, such as Kate, were not. I shared Alec’s photo of keys with Kate during another interview and she responded to the image of the keys:

When I see keys I get kind of excited because I want keys. My [school advisor] not being there right now…I don’t have access easily to things. Whenever I want to go to the art room to get art supplies or the laptops, I need to ask somebody for the keys. Even in the morning I can’t get into the classroom without somebody’s help. I can’t get into the back cupboard for the projector without getting somebody’s keys…. I don’t have access easily to all of these things that would make my teaching day so much easier.

It seems like not having keys was an indication that a student teacher was not a teacher. Kate believed that keys would help her to feel more self-sufficient, recognized, and even
respected as a teacher. Also, the convenience of having access to one’s classrooms signifies trust and confidence in one as an authorized member of the teaching community.

The keys are seemingly trivial, an ordinary part of working at an institution with locked rooms. However, having keys is equivalent to carrying an identification card. They are both tokens of identification and recognition that strongly imply you belong in the building. Without keys, the student teacher would have to identify herself/himself to every teacher who did not immediately recognize her/him. The keys grant the holder the apparent right to be there (in the school). Moreover, keys convey a sense of authority or power in the form of access to rooms otherwise restricted to others (e.g., students or visitors).

**Kate: Bird caller.** Like Inderpreet, Kate believed she struggled with classroom management throughout the practicum. Hence, she presented the image of a bird caller (see Figure 18) as a reminder of an attention-getting technique she used as a classroom management strategy:

I was getting sick of just counting down from 5. That’s what my sponsor teacher did…. I wanted to get some more variety in there…. [The bird caller] was great because it was loud enough that it was a distinct sound, different from a voice and then I would silently count down from 5 to give them just a few seconds to wrap up whatever they were working on.

I think one of the challenges for why it was also a challenge for me, like just to get their attention, was because for the most part, at least up until this long practicum and then at the beginning of it too…I always felt like “Why should they give their attention to me?” Like that’s such a presumptuous thing…to command the attention of thirty kids. Like “Who am I to do that and what do I have to offer them?”

It is interesting to hear Kate talk about her reflections on teaching. She questions her actions and motivations with respect to the purposes of school and her role as a teacher. It is a seemingly essential question to answer: If I am the teacher, under what circumstances must students listen to me? Kate continues:
So I think it was about maybe three weeks ago that I got fed up with the 6s and 7s and their disrespect, of not responding when… their attention was being asked for by several people, not just me. And I was walking to my car and I was just replaying like the lecture that I gave them and…I was just reflecting over what I said and stuff. And I thought to myself like they have to listen to me. Why? Because I’m the teacher. And…it just felt like a poignant moment… because it just became about a different thing. It became about like this is a job that I’m here to do. It’s not like about me personally…like why should they listen to me as an individual…like considering my age, considering my experience and knowledge or whatever. But it’s just because like I’m responsible and I’m doing the work that my aim is for them to learn from and so in order for that to happen I need their attention so that I can facilitate their learning.

Figure 18. Bird caller. Photography by the participant (Kate).

Without recognition as the teacher, it is challenging to work with students. This interview may have been an opportunity to further pursue the ideas of authority and respect associated with
the role of the teacher, but the purpose of this research is not for me to complicate the participants’ teacher identities, especially if they feel like they have worked something out. Evidently, photo elicitation interview opens up possibilities for the student teachers to work on their identifications themselves (an issue that is taken up further in Chapter 5).

Kate’s bird caller is an example of a token that, visually, is not readily associated with teaching. On the other hand, as a means to get the students’ attention, the function of the bird caller in Kate’s class is very much a valued object.

**How is Identity Performed?**

Tokens, such as a badge or keys, when given to student teachers, are indicative of ongoing identity work. In addition to these tokens, the student teachers also search for their own ways to make themselves distinctive as members of the teaching staff, often by their selection of clothing. In the case of new secondary school teachers who may only be a few years older than some of their students, they might deliberately plan to make their attire different from the way in which high school students dress. From the student teachers’ perspective, clothing helps one look more professional, responsible, and distinguishable as a teacher. It is a uniform in the sense that others equate the uniform with a particular role. This can be as simple as a tie or shoes.

Another set of photos by Julia featured contrasting clothing between what she might wear to university as a student and what she might wear to her practicum school as a student teacher. Julia’s photos (see Figures 19 and 20) and associated commentary are very important in terms of showing how Julia identifies herself in the two different contexts:

I chose these items because they’re sort of the contrast to the teacher bag and teacher shoes. But the other thing was that for me they’re a part of the student identity and I hadn’t been a student in quite a while. So…coming back, it was kind of like picking up things that I hadn’t…like I hadn’t used a backpack in forever. And rain boots. I have a pair that I wear like to go to the pumpkin patch, right? But so literally having to pick up
these things that are obviously everyday attire here, that hadn’t at all been a part of my life. It is like a student uniform when I look around campus and see everybody’s wearing their gumboots.

Figure 19. University uniform. Photography by the participant (Julia).

In contrast to the student clothes, Figure 20 depicts clothing Julia chose to wear as a student teacher:

This is the bag and the shoes that I wear, pretty much every week, for practicum. And I picked…it because…it contrasts one of the other pictures that I took. But it’s almost like, at this point, sort of this experience of putting on a uniform. And there was a lot of discussion at the beginning of the program in particular about what…professionalism looks like—literally looks like—and what to wear on our first day and what our first day of practicum is going to…look like, but very much focused on attire. And I found irony in it because…my school advisor gave the students an opportunity to guess what I was doing in the classroom. And the very first guess was a student who said, “I think she’s learning to be a teacher.” And when pressed to explain why, literally said, “Because she’s wearing teacher clothes.” And it’s so funny but in a way that really is the marker for them, right? And at this stage, to some degree, I think for a lot of us as teacher candidates that’s kind of the marker. Like Thursday’s the day that we put on our teacher clothes and we go to the classroom. And what we’re doing isn’t necessarily all that different than what we’re doing here [at university] but it’s just sort of the uniform that we put on.
The students in Julia’s practicum classroom identified/recognized her as a teacher based on her clothes. The situation, location, experience, and other small details added together suggest that Julia had taken up the role of a teacher. (Un)consciously, teachers try to look like their perceived image of a teacher—an amalgamation of images of former teachers, images they encounter in their Teacher Education Program, and images in print or film. The images come from the big Other of culture. “Like verbal communication, dress is a socially determined activity” (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 56).

In putting on their teacher visage, student teachers have to accept the need to present themselves in a particular way in order to be recognizable. Even when the student teachers are attempting to emulate a particular image of “teacher” (perhaps someone they know), they cannot construct a perfect imitation and must fill in the gaps from their own experiences and personal
identifications. One possible outcome is that the student teachers are comfortable with the image they present and are able to conform to the image expected of them by their school and faculty advisors. Another possible outcome is that the student teachers search for alternate images more in line with their personal identifications rather than an externally imposed or expected image. The challenge for such students lies in convincing others to recognize this alternative image as a viable teacher image, perhaps by ensuring some characteristics remain familiar or expected. “In dressing, we address ourselves, others, and the world. How we clothe ourselves becomes an integral part of our self-identity” (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 57).

Another way to think about the performance of identity is through Butler’s (1990) theory of performativity. Playing a role, dressing up, and wearing masks as a performance of identity are not completely conscious decisions. Although teaching subjects have agency, their choices are very much limited to what is recognizable—determined in the socio-cultural field. That is, a subject cannot simply drop a set of tokens and practices that aid in the identification of teacher and pick up an entirely different set to identify as something else (Butler, 2004).

According to Jackson and Mazzei (2012), Butler’s concerns revolve around gendered subjectivities and identities. Although the focus of this study is not gender identity, gender, ethnicity, and class are always-already part of a subject’s identification. Hence, (re)reading Jackson and Mazzei’s interpretation of Butler’s theory of performativity:

What we, as qualitative researchers, find illuminating and exciting about thinking with performativity is how it makes visible the constitution of the subject with/in conflicting and simultaneous, yet temporal, contexts. In this way, performativity offers a way out of stable, humanist binaries and instead emphasizes the doing and undoing of [identity] constituted through repetition; that is, [identity] as an effect of practice. (p. 72)

In this sense, there are performative acts available to the subject that can constitute a teacher identity. Notably, these performatives make the subject’s teacher identity, rather than the other
way around. That is, a (student) teacher does not choose to do/perform actions that are then associated with teaching, instead performative acts constitute the subject as recognizable in the role of a teacher. For instance, in this chapter, Alec walking down a school corridor with his keys jingling might be (mis)taken for a teacher which, in turn, constitutes Alec as a teacher. Kate’s performative act to gather the students’ attention, for instance, with a bird caller, puts her in the role of teacher.

Teacher identity is not merely performance, but performative. To paraphrase Jackson and Mazzei (2012): “People do not choose their [teacher identities]; [teacher identity] gets produced as people repeat themselves. People do not take on roles to act out as in a performance; people become subjects through repetition” (pp. 72-73). Put simply, the subject’s identity is “an effect of the performance” (p. 73). Importantly, performative acts can never be perfectly repeated due to their dependence on the socio-cultural field, the Symbolic register. Thus, performatives never completely produce a subject without also cutting an opening for a subject to be different than intended.

Summary

The practicum is an opportunity for student teachers to practice a particular identification and to make changes accordingly. For example, most of the student teachers in this study dressed more formally at the beginning of their practicum and then relaxed their dress code slightly towards the end of the practicum. However, because the student teacher is being observed and evaluated, she or he is limited in the degree of change that might be tolerated. One of the most difficult situations for a student teacher is when those in authority or the pupils in the classroom do not recognize the student teacher’s tokens of identification be they clothing or otherwise (e.g., pedagogical position). In the first chapter of this dissertation, Inderpreet describes a situation
where one school advisor and some students disagreed with a teaching strategy, the flipped classroom, that eventually lead to a negative assessment by the advisor.

Before Julia decided to apply to the Teacher Education Program, she had many experiences, for example, volunteering in schools, that likely enabled her to more easily accommodate an image of herself as a teacher. Moreover, her teacher image was largely in line with institutional expectations of a teacher. However, she admitted that she initially resisted entering the profession. It was only after a sudden realization that teaching was logically the next stage of her career path that she made these particular shifts in her identification. In our conversations, she demonstrated her willingness to reflect on her image (and actions) as a teacher. While she did not appear to have any challenges in being recognized as a teacher, her shift from student to teacher was uneven in its progression. That is, identity shifts and the work that is done to form identifications often occurs unnoticed. These changes in identification are so subtle that it requires considerable reflection to notice them. And yet, through photo elicitation interviews, identity shifts are sometimes more readily detectable and, at times, unexpected.

Prior to this research, I assumed that over the course of the Teacher Education Program student teachers would significantly change their opinions about education, curriculum, pedagogy, teaching, and learning. However, for the six participants involved in this research, their identities in relation to these particular dimensions of becoming teachers appeared relatively stable. Some things changed for the participants but not in ways that were markedly obvious or unnecessarily uncomfortable for the participants. Each of them seemed to cope reasonably well with the transition from student teacher to beginning professional.

In the context of schooling, teachers identify themselves through their affiliations with and differences from others. In this study, these “others” include objects or tokens as well as
other teachers and students. Tokens of identification and recognition are vital elements in transitioning to the role of a teacher. Tokens, such as clothes, keys, and name tags, represent characteristics of a teaching subject that are recognized within the sociocultural field of the school.
Chapter Four: Data Analysis Through a Lacanian Psychoanalytic Lens

In the previous chapter, analysis of the data produced through the method of photo elicitation interview revealed tokens of identification (e.g., school keys) and tokens of recognition (e.g., teacher stamps). In illustrating the potential of the photo elicitation interview, identification and recognition were discussed in language consistent with Lacanian terminology. Lacan’s theories emphasized the construction of a subject who is seen by others as an identity which is dynamic yet sufficiently stable over a period of time, at least for the participants in this study.

This chapter will concentrate more directly on the potential of a psychoanalytic conceptual lens in conducting data analysis. It begins with a brief discussion noting that psychoanalytic analysis is not the same as therapeutic analysis. Then, the possibilities of data analysis in psychoanalytically informed research are considered. Later, excerpts from the data are used to think about the punctum and the Real, the off-frame, and the gaze in the analysis of the participant-generated images. These additional elements extend the possibilities for thinking about and making sense of the student teachers’ photos and their subsequent identity constructions.

Psychoanalytically Informed Research, Not Psychotherapy

It is important to address the use of psychoanalysis in the present study on teacher identity or similar research. Specifically, there is some debate around the appropriate ethical use of psychoanalysis in qualitative research (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Kvale, 1999; Wetherell, 2005). Psychoanalysis is typically thought of as therapy or treatment for the mind. However, while psychoanalysis is used as a theoretical lens in this dissertation, the intent of this research is not therapeutic. That is, the research undertaken for this study should not be confused with an
encounter between the analyst and the analysand (Kvale, 1999). Participants, such as the student teachers in this study, are not receiving treatment. Indeed, from the perspective of the participant, their lives as student teachers are unfolding according to their Teacher Education Program and are generally unremarkable.

If this project does not involve psychoanalyzing the participants, how then is Lacanian theory taken up? Rose (2011) underscores the difference between psychoanalysis in the context of therapy and psychoanalysis in the context of research involving, among other things, visual culture:

Psychoanalysis often takes the form of a therapeutic practice, with an individual talking to their analyst over a long period of time, hoping to find rest from some sort of psychic pain or blockage. However, the psychoanalytic skills brought to bear on the analysis of an individual are not those used in relation to visual culture. Psychoanalysis is not used to analyse the personality of the person producing a particular image, although this can be done…. Those writers using psychoanalysis…are not interested in the producer of images as an individual. Instead, psychoanalytic concepts are used to interpret aspects of visual images and in particular their effects on spectators. Psychoanalysis does not have a strict code of methodological conduct like content analysis…. Rather, psychoanalytic critics often work with just one or two psychoanalytic concepts, exploring their articulation—or rearticulation—through a particular image. (p. 108)

Although Rose (2011) points out that multiple interpretations of an image are possible depending on the combination of psychoanalytic concepts used in the analysis, “there is no absolute right or wrong way to interpret a visual image” (p. 108). Although many interpretations are possible, it is important to consider that in a particular context and historical moment there are a select and potentially identifiable set of interpretations that surface more than others due to our inherited and shared culture and language. Thus, not just any interpretation is imaginable nor are all interpretations equally probable.

In this research project, a visual methodology is infused with Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory to demonstrate how the method of photo elicitation interview can be used in the study of
identity because it simultaneously promotes identity work—the (re)interpretation, (re)imagination, and (re)constitution of identifications—for the research participants. Lacanian psychoanalysis provides insights into the relationship between image and identity and suggests opportunities for analyzing images in conjunction with interview transcripts.

**The Contribution of Psychoanalytically Informed Research**

Despite its often confusing articulations, psychoanalytic theories (re)focus data analysis on things that otherwise remain unseen and unspoken, in other words, unconscious. In contrast, traditional coding techniques used to analyze data are more likely to focus on what is already known rather than working through more obscure formulations. Ideally, research explores and constructs new knowledge and this ideal may be served by using analyses derived from psychoanalysis.

One example of analysis that is distinctly different from traditional coding is Janzen’s (2011) *symptomatic analysis*. In Janzen’s research, she questions the traditional techniques of coding and organizing data that fail “to take seriously the resonant moments,” thus, dismissing the unconscious and uncanny (p. 150). In contrast to traditional coding, a symptomatic analysis, while seeking the resonant, tolerates and also summons suspicions of narrative, language and representation within the movements of the discursive. The resonant moments hailed and foregrounded within a symptomatic analysis tell about the research, but also tell on the researcher. What is resonant is also subjective, belying universality, yet remains symptomatic of something missing. (p. 150)

Symptomatic analysis is non-linear. Consciously or unconsciously, analysis occurs while participating in interviews, reading transcripts, preparing follow-up questions for interviews, (re)reading field notes, and talking with others about the project. Speculations are continually (re)formed, elaborated, and sometimes forgotten. In a symptomatic analysis, some elements
occurring within the discourses of the researcher and researched predominantly influence the investigation:

What is important for the study at hand is the assertion that texts—in this case, as a reference to data—can be read symptomatically in order to be considered in larger theoretical or conceptual contexts, and thus allowing for a working through, a learning, or an interpretation of something yet unthought in the becoming of the teaching subject. (Janzen, 2011, p. 65)

Similarly, Brown (2008) determines that the use of psychoanalytic theory is not to find confirmation of what we already expect to see but to find disruptions and circle around absences with the hope of searching for something previously unnoticed, unsaid, and unconscious—the thing that is concealed or hidden by the obvious, the already named, and already thought. As noted earlier, with photo elicitation interview there is an additional opportunity to summon an unconscious communication through the responses of the participant and researcher to the images provided. Inconsistent accounts circle gaps in our symbolic understanding and are symptomatic of a remainder that exists but is as yet undisputed. In addition, the results of the analysis are dependent upon the person performing the analysis.

This research project argues that photo elicitation interview and Lacanian psychoanalysis form a powerful methodology for the study of identity and other constructions that are personal, social, cultural, and historical at the same time.

In What Ways Might Lacanian Theory Influence Methodology?

Rose (2011) succinctly summarizes the significance of Lacanian theory to methodologies involving visuality and visual culture:

We are made as subjects through disciplines, taboos and prohibitions. And in the sorts of psychoanalysis influenced by Lacan, visuality is one of those disciplines. We learn to see in particular ways, and this is a process that is reiterated every time we look. Thus visualities and visual images are given a kind of agency by psychoanalysis, because our immersion in a certain kind of visuality and our encounters with certain kinds of visual
images tutor us into particular kinds of subjectivity. Thus psychoanalytic approaches, while centrally concerned with the psychic processes of subjectivity and visuality, also address the social modality of these processes by considering their cultural constitution. (p. 111)

Moreover, Rose highlights the relationship of the visual to subjectivity. Hence, in this study, images serve as starting points for interviews about transitioning from a student to teacher role.

It is important to note that the methodology employed in this project is not immediately concerned with compositional interpretation—“ways of describing the content, colour, spatial organization, light and expressive content of a still image, and the mise-en-scene, montage, sound…” (Rose, 2011, p. 57). Compositional analysis alone fails to encourage the study of an image’s production or how it is taken up, interpreted, and used by the author and his or her audience. Moreover, “with its unproblematized concern for visual images ‘as they are’, it does not allow for a reflexivity that considers the particularity of any interpretation” (p. 57). In contrast to compositional analysis, the methodology under consideration in this study involves working with various psychoanalytic concepts to deepen, extend, and enrich interpretations of images.

As I continue to theorize the use of Lacanian psychoanalysis with photo elicitation interview, I first limit the meaning of “photo” to include only photographs—images produced by a camera and viewed on paper or some sort of digital projection—rather than its broader association with drawings, paintings, sculptures, etc. Certainly a photograph shares many characteristics with other forms of image generation. However, for the purpose of conceptualizing a visual method based on psychoanalysis, it is useful to limit the discussion to a narrower focus, in this instance, digital photographic images, made easier with the proliferation of point-and-shoot cameras and smartphones.
In the next four sections, some concepts used to connect Lacanian theory with images will be considered. First, Iskin (1997) explains how the three registers of the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real interact to constitute the subject. Second, Barthes’ (1981) notion of the punctum, often related to the Lacanian Real (Foster, 2008; Homer, 2005; Howie, 2007), is illustrated with a photograph. Third, the relevance of the off-frame in photography is likewise illustrated with a participant-generated photo (Metz, 1985). And fourth, Lacan’s (1998) idea of the gaze will be explained in relation to being recognized as a competent teacher by others.

**Acknowledging the power of the image.** According to Iskin (1997), Lacan’s theoretical insights suggest the importance of the image in addition to language in constituting subjectivities. “For subjects are formed not only in linguistic grammars of enunciated words and writing but also in repeated interactions with visual images and spatial constructs, stepping into prescribed positionalities that await them in the space of image-based systems” (p. 60). In addition, the development of new imaging-technologies, such as smartphones, their increasing availability, and their changing applications continually promote the influence of the photo in relation to the development of subjectivity and identity. Never before have images been so readily captured, shared, altered, and overwhelmingly present as in today’s society.

As discussed in the first and third chapters, identity and subjectivity are evidently constituted through the Imaginary register (images) and the Symbolic register (words). Human subjectivity and identity are made possible by interrelated systems of signification—the imaging chain of the Imaginary and the signifying chain of the Symbolic (Iskin, 1997). In addition, the Lacanian Real is always implicated in its relation to the two other registers.

A subject can generate written or spoken reflections and stories that integrate the ideal ego, ego-ideal, and superego. Moreover, when these narratives relate to the participant’s identity,
they also tend to reinforce a coherent life story because identity is also a means of arguing for oneself (MacLure, 1993). That is, identity makes sense out of experiences to produce a consistent, self-reinforcing view of the world. Interpreting such narratives cannot assume a straight-forward analysis of the subject’s identity because the process of identification is uneven and is always ongoing. In this study, the photo elicitation interview protocol consists of more than one way to provoke stories or reflections from the participants. Specifically, photos are used to connect the Imaginary to the Symbolic register by generating a conversation around the image and the word. However, several other concepts developed by Lacan and his commentators have immediate relevance for methodologies that involve visual components and focus on identifications.

**Anne: The punctum and the Real.** It is important to note that the perspective of the viewer is different from the photographer or the photographed. Thus, it is possible for the viewer to see something unintended but nevertheless present. In Barthes’ (1981) terminology, this is called the *punctum* and it is often cited in relation to Lacan’s description of the Real and the object-cause of desire or *l’objet petit a*. Homer (2005) explains:

> The *punctum*...is a more private and personal experience; it is that which...arouses our specific interest in the photograph. The *punctum* is that contingent, accidental element in the photograph that captures our attention. As Barthes says, it is that which pricks me, but also bruises me and is poignant for me. (p. 92)

Similarly, for Foster (2008), the *punctum* is associated with a personal interpretation in contrast to a more traditional, academic approach with reference to art history and cultural studies. Moreover, the *punctum* is not intended and often not noticed by the photographer although, in some sense, it is captured. The viewer of the photo sees the *punctum* and infuses it with meaning drawn from her/his experiences as deferred action.
Barthes’ notion of the *punctum* is consistent with Lacanian theory and is important to a theorization of photo elicitation as used in this study. The *punctum* is an element of the photographic image that covers over or veils the Lacanian Real (Howie, 2007). Thus, the *punctum* permits the Imaginary and the Real to make their presence felt even as they are alienated in the Symbolic register where research data is typically (re)collected, (re)interpreted, and (re)presented.

Foster (2008) points out that Barthes’ work explains how the image itself can offer an immediate and unexpected experience not only through discourse and words, but before discourse, before any [verbal] information and interpretations have taken place and exchanged through words: it is the immediacy of the unexpected experience itself when confronted with a photograph, not just the otherness of the other person. (p. 84)

For this reason, the photo has the potential to elicit something more than what might have been originally intended or what might be said in an interview without an image.

As a research subject comments on a photo, the limits of language are tested by the personal, idiosyncratic, and emotionally charged response to the *punctum* of the image. In an attempt to translate the Imaginary effects of the photo into words, the inherent lack in language ruptures an otherwise coherent self-narrative. In response, the research subject (now the viewer) and the researcher (also a viewer) (re)present or (re)construct the *punctum* and, in doing so, identity.

Howie (2007) further proposes that analysis should consider the *punctum* of the photograph and the object-cause of desire suggested by the image because these point to what is most important to the identity of the viewer. Rogoff (1998) also notes that:

> [space] is always populated with the unrecognized obstacles which never allow us to actually “see” what is out there beyond what we expect to find. To repopulate space with all of its constitutive obstacles as we learn to recognize them and name them, is to
understand how hard we have to strain to see, and how complex is the work of visual
culture.” (p. 22)

Thus, interpretation and meaning-making through Barthes’ *punctum* and Rogoff’s “unrecognized
obstacles” is exemplified in Anne’s intended photo of the mountains through the window of her
apartment (see Figure 21).

With respect to Figure 21, Anne explains:

I was trying to take a picture of the mountain because the mountain looked really pretty. But my camera kept focusing on the rain on my window. So then, I guess instead of like fighting it, I took a picture of the rain. So…when situations I guess arise that aren’t a part of my plan, then I respond to those situations instead of like being rigid and sticking to a plan even if it isn’t working. Or like if my students are showing interest somewhere else or like asking questions about something, not like entirely off topic, but still somewhat related and just not what I had initially anticipated.

*Figure 21. A view of the mountains. Photography by the participant (Anne).*

Analyzed with respect to the *punctum*, Anne’s comments about the photo and her ability
to go with the flow of the lesson rather than enforcing the plan is an interesting idea for a student
teacher to articulate. However, I am more interested in the idea that the camera forces the photographer to focus on what is immediately in front of her instead of on the intended picture, the mountains in this case. What we are able to see is filtered by the apparatus, a camera, and by the gaze (to be discussed shortly).

I also shared this photo in an interview with another participant, Kate, to see what the photo might mean to her:

I like the picture, the way it looks in terms of the raindrops being in focus. It’s kind of different…. So it looks kinda like a short-term view because the raindrops are like the closest and that’s what’s in focus and the rest that’s beyond that like on the other side of the window is all blurry.

Kate continues to talk about the photo and its meaning for her, rather than what she sees:

I guess that speaks to how I’m feeling with my planning during the week. Like there’s so much and there’s a certain amount that I got done ahead of time. Like for the rest of the nine weeks now. But from right now, during the week, I’m pretty much working on a day-to-day basis. So, like I know what I have to do tonight which would be like the raindrops that are in focus right in front of my face. And the rest, yeah, I’ve got a dim view of it for the last part of the week. But a lot of it is… pretty blurry.

The same photo is able to elicit different meanings for each participant, Anne and Kate. Hence, the punctum is personal to the viewer and provokes particular responses. With respect to teacher identities, Anne uses the image as a visual metaphor for her understanding of a teacher’s duty to respond to the needs of the class and not be constrained unduly by her lesson plan. Alternatively, for Kate, the photo evokes her experiences as a teacher dealing with the daily preparation of lessons and having a much less detailed view of the rest of the week.

Anne: The off-frame. The off-frame is another key dimension of any image. For Metz (1985) something, perhaps a character,

will never come into the frame, will never be heard…. The spectator has no empirical knowledge of the contents of the off-frame, but at the same time cannot help imagining some off-frame, hallucinating it, dreaming the shape of this emptiness. (p. 87)
The off-frame “marks the place of an irreversible absence, a place from which the look has been averted forever” (Metz, 1985, p. 87). That is, the off-frame is always lacking in the photograph and yet there is something desirable there. Thus, photographs hint at a desire for what is missing from and sometimes veiled by the immediate image (see following section).

Related to the punctum, the off-frame also covers over the lack in the Symbolic register. So, whatever is off-frame, not captured in the photograph, is in the order of the Real, the void that continually escapes symbolization. Although the off-frame is different from the punctum, both have the potential to be retrospectively infused with meaning and significance by the viewer. Importantly, the punctum and the off-frame are perceived as the photograph’s covert message of the Real for the viewer (Howie, 2007).

Over the course of our interviews, Anne shared that one of her interests is outdoor education. She used the photo (see Figure 22) to talk about a connection she has to an alternative school where students can be outdoors and, in this case, work on the construction of a building. On seeing the photo for the first time, it immediately occurred to me that perhaps the individuals in the image should not be so close to the edge without having a safety line. Anne explained to me that the three individuals are on top of a roof perhaps 8 to 10 feet above the ground.

In Figure 22, the notion of the off-frame can be more easily apprehended. The children in the photo are looking at something hidden from the viewer—perhaps the underlying materials that are being applied to the roof, an object on the ground, or someone passing something up to them from the ground. Whatever it is they are looking at certainly prompts the viewer to speculate about the object of their attention.
Furthermore, Anne’s photo illustrates the limits of photography and the notion that much is missing from the viewer’s perspective despite the photographer’s memories of the scene that extend into the off-frame. The viewer, for instance, the researcher, notices and fills in the gaps. For example, I assume that the roof is high up and the subjects of the photo are looking over the edge at a common object or person. For me, this raises concerns about safety. For other viewers, the image might evoke different reactions. For example, although not clearly visible, a closer inspection of the image suggests that there is one instructor supervising two students. This image, therefore, might represent a demonstration of a good instructor-to-student ratio for
outdoor activities. Returning to the previous notion of the *punctum*, the picture reminds Anne of her experience with an outdoor school and the construction project undertaken by the staff and students which presented numerous learning opportunities that she doubts she will ever be able to duplicate within the four walls of a classroom.

**The “gaze.”** Lacan’s (1998) text “The four fundamentals of psychoanalysis” alludes to the complex relationships among identity, light and the gaze:

> What determines me, at the most profound level, in the visible, is the gaze that is outside. It is through the gaze that I enter light and it is from the gaze that I receive its effects. Hence it comes about that the gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which… I am *photo-graphed*. (p. 106)

This quote highlights the significance of the gaze. The gaze is external to the subject rather than originating from within. The gaze is the position from which we are looked at. Lacan (1998) states that “we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world” (p. 75). The gaze determines the subject and constitutes her/him in a socio-cultural historical moment. The gaze captures a subject just as a camera/photograph captures an instant.

For Lacan, the gaze occupies the equivalent position of the camera. Alternatively, the idea that *the photo looks back at us* also suggests the gaze. According to Rose (2011),

> [Lacan] is less interested in how the subject sees and more interested in how the subject is seen. The Gaze thus supplements his earlier account of the mirror stage. The Gaze is a form of visuality that pre-exists the individual subject; it is a visuality into which subjects are born. Like the visuality that subjects adopt as their own, though, the Gaze is culturally constituted. (p. 128)

The ways that student teachers see themselves are influenced by the gaze. They are watched not only by students, school, and faculty advisors, but by the gaze that sees them at all times. Regardless of how subjects attempt to control how they are seen—whether as students, teachers, or something else—the gaze confounds their efforts. Social media websites, such as
Facebook, are manifestations of the unrelenting gaze that (young) people are subject to these days; how they come to “see themselves” in relation to the stream of images that insert themselves into their lives is an issue worthy of examination in its own right. Iskin (1997) argues that Lacan’s conceptions of the gaze and the image in conjunction with an increasing use of imaging technologies in our society have profound significance for questions of subjectivity and identity. That is, the Lacanian subject is constituted in the gaze and signified by images (in the Imaginary order) and by signs (in the Symbolic order).

Furthermore, Iskin (1997) underscores the impact of photography on its relation to an understanding of visuality. “Under the image-world paradigm, neither ‘seeing’ nor ‘reality’ could be conceived independently of photography. Concepts of human vision became thoroughly grafted onto photography, the camera, and its lens” (p. 46). Consequently, while the photographic image indicates the actual existence of an object (i.e., the referent), at the same time, seeing the image structures how that referent is perceived. Interestingly, this may mean that if the referent no longer exists or never existed, the photo nevertheless can make the viewer believe in the existence of the referent. That is, we (mis)take the photographic image for an actual object in the world. As a result, photographs (and other images) inform and influence how we see the world and how we see ourselves in our world. What we take from those perceptions is significant in terms of identity development.

Student teachers are especially aware of being seen and observed, not only by students, but by the school and faculty advisors. As they listen to feedback and write their own reflections, they experience the judgment of the other which they internalize. Student teachers are guided to make changes according to what is deemed acceptable or recognizable and what does or does not look “right.” This dictates how they plan and act during their practicum.
An example of this circumstance was discussed in Chapter One where Inderpreet was confronted with criticisms about her teaching from a particular school advisor. The lesson she took away from her practicum was that she would have to act like her practicum supervisors in order to get positive reviews. If, in the course of her career, Inderpreet continues to consider how others view her practice, it is due to the always seeing Lacanian gaze. As subjects, there is a strong desire to be recognized and accepted in this gaze.

**Summary**

This chapter demonstrated the application of some key Lacanian concepts—the image, the *punctum*, the Real, the *off-frame*, and the gaze—in the analysis of data collected through photo elicitation interviews. These concepts have previously been described and applied by scholars in various fields including education, film theory, and visual studies. They are used here in the exploration of teacher identity.

We sometimes say that the photo “speaks” or communicates a message. It is useful to clarify that the image contains or covers over the Real lack where there is nothing but a void. The image is empty and without meaning. What “speaks” to the viewer is her/his unconscious. The unconscious sends a message that is activated by the photo.

The next chapter furthers the discussion of photo elicitation and focuses on the less-frequently used Lacanian “Theory of Four Discourses” in the analysis of data. Moreover, the Four Discourses suggest how identity work is taken up by individuals in this study, six young people transitioning from student to teacher.
Chapter Five: Lacan’s Discourse of the Analyst and Photo Elicitation Interview

This chapter illustrates MacLure’s (2010) description of a theory that offends, confuses, interrupts, and complicates. Such a challenging theory is useful because “theory’s capacity to offend is also its power to unsettle—to open up static fields of habit and practice” (p. 277). In this chapter, Lacan’s (2007) “Theory of Four Discourses” is invoked to describe the relationships among the participant, participant’s data, researcher, and meaning-making. This is significant in terms of conducting research and making sense of what and how particular practices, for example, photo elicitation interview, can be used in the production of new knowledge. While other research involves Lacan’s various theories as described in Chapter Four, his Theory of Four Discourses is not taken up as frequently with respect to methodology or identity research.

The Theory of Four Discourses describes four possible discursive structures Lacan uses to explain the relationship between a sender and a receiver of a message. With respect to psychoanalysis, it describes how the analyst and analysand might be communicating with each other while, at the same time, accounting for the influence of the unconscious. In the present research, the Theory of Four Discourses is taken up as a conceptual framework to explain the analysis of a photo elicitation interview. Lacan names the Four Discourses: the discourse of the Master, the University, the Hysteric, and the Analyst. Although each discursive structure may be applied, Lacan’s conceptualization of the discourse of the Analyst is particularly instructive for this study and provides the theoretical guidance that supports the photo elicitation method in trying to understand student teacher identity construction.

The following section draws on an image from Kate’s interview, a photograph of an apple. After I introduce the photo, I provide an overview of Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses, and I then return to Kate’s image to demonstrate the importance of the discourse of the Analyst.
(one of the Four Discourses) to show why this discourse underlies the work conducted in this study.

**Kate: The Teacher’s Gift**

According to Kate, the photo of the apple in Figure 23, *The Teacher’s Gift*, is the first idea she had for making an image about student teacher identity.

*Figure 23. The teacher's gift. Photography by the participant (Kate).*
Kate’s comments in relation to the photo reveal, in part, her current position as a student teacher:

I’ve really felt like… I really enjoy and admire some of the teachers that I’m working with right now. And I feel very much like I’m in the position of a student…. This whole program is for me to become a teacher and it’s the start of seeing other teachers as colleagues and peers as opposed to being submissive to them. Or just in a position of less authority…. And I really like being in the position of giving the apple…like enjoying good teachers and what I can learn from them and because I’ve always just really admired kind of what teachers tend to be. In terms of, I don’t know, just thinking about things more fully.

As the researcher, I am captivated by the photo, so following up on what Kate has said, I ask:

John: In that [picture], do you see yourself as the giver of the apple, or the receiver of the apple or neither?

Kate: I think right now I still feel like this is instinctual to be the giver of the apple… because that’s what I’ve had all my experience in…. But then just thinking how I am going to be in this [receiver] position and like at Christmas I received my first gift from a student, you know…and that was like really monumental.

Kate associates the giving of the apple with the student while the teacher receives the apple. In addition, Kate acknowledges that she readily identifies with the student role because she is most familiar with it. However, recently she received a Christmas gift from a student which cast her firmly into the role of teacher: “…that was like really monumental.”

This is Kate’s interpretation of the photo. However, as we will see, the photo also operates independently of Kate and its production. Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses offers a conceptual framework to understand how viewers, such as a researcher, make their own meanings from this image.
Theory of Four Discourses

Disconnected from their creation, the intent of the photographer, and the history of their referents, photos continue to live but always connected to the culture and history of the viewer. Consider encountering an image and not knowing if the referent continues to exist, looks the same as in the photo, or possibly never existed in the first place. That is, the proliferation of digital editing these days (and more primitive forms in earlier days) makes the actual existence of any referent in a photo uncertain. Thus, the creation and composition of the photograph matters little in comparison to the meaning that the viewer derives from the image.

For Lacan, “discourse” refers to a structural relationship between the sender and receiver of a message. Here, discourse is not to be confused with language, but rather refers to the apparatus of knowledge production and legitimization. However, the communication between sender and receiver is mediated by language, the Symbolic register:

[Discourse] subsists in certain fundamental relations which would literally not be able to be maintained without language. Through the instrument of language, a number of stable relations are established, inside which something that is much larger and goes much further than actual utterances can, of course, be inscribed. (Lacan, 2007, p. 13)

Moreover, there is no need to limit communication solely to the Symbolic when images, the Imaginary register, can clearly operate alongside language.

In 1969, Lacan identifies four stable discursive relations. “The four discourses are given in the form of ‘mathemes,’” (Clemens & Grigg, 2006, p. 2). This is one of Lacan’s first attempts to make use of these mathemes—formulations of concepts using symbols like variables in a mathematical formula (see Figures 24 and 25).

Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses presents a relational structure for the production of new knowledge by positioning agent, other, product, and truth into a matrix shown in Figure 24.
Briton (1997) explains Lacan’s relational structure for discourse by describing the four positions:

[The] two leftmost effects—those of agent/truth—depict the position occupied by the source of communication, the sender of a message. The two rightmost—those of other/production—denote the position of the destination of communication, the receiver of a message. In both instances, the element above the bar, whether that of agent or other, represents that which is conscious and dominant in the subject; the element below, whether that of truth or production, that which is repressed and subordinated. (Briton, 1997, p. 57)

The top position is conscious whereas the bottom position is subordinate or even unconscious. More importantly, whatever is in the bottom position undermines the top position.

In Figure 25, four discursive structures are achieved by manipulating four terms—the master signifier ($S_1$), knowledge ($S_2$), objet petit a, and the barred or divided subject ($)—consecutively through the four positions. The “four discourses do not simply describe four ways of talking but, more fundamentally, four ways of relating socially” (Cho, 2009, p. 49).

Additionally, in Cho’s interpretation of Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses, discourse refers to “the ways in which individuals are ordered and organized within a given social situation” (p. 48). Within the setting of the photo elicitation interview, between the researcher and the research subject (participant), we can see the implications of Lacan’s Four Discourses—the Master’s discourse, the University’s discourse, the Analyst’s discourse, and the Hysteric’s discourse.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discourse of the Master</td>
<td>$S_1$</td>
<td>$S_2$ $a$ The master knows nothing and depends on the production of the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse of the University</td>
<td>$S_2$</td>
<td>$S_1$ $a$ Knowledge reproduces itself as truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse of the Analyst</td>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>$S_2$ $S_1$ What was once unconscious becomes known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse of the Hysteric</td>
<td>$S$</td>
<td>$S_1$ $S_2$ The divided subject is driven by the unconscious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $S_1$: the master signifier  $S_2$: knowledge  $S$: the divided subject  $a$: the surplus object

Figure 25. Lacan’s Four Discourses: Master, University, Analyst, and Hysteric.

These matrices capture a number of features:

the fact that the subject is a being of language, differing in this respect from an individual; the fact that the subject is divided by language; and…each signifier is defined by its difference from and opposition to other signifiers. Lacan calls the place of agent the “dominant,” just as he thinks of the master’s discourse as the dominant discourse of the four. (Clemens & Grigg, 2006, p. 3)

The purpose of this exploration of the elements that constitute the Four Discourses is to demonstrate its application to research, specifically, an interpretation of what occurs within photo elicitation interview and identity work. In the sections that follow, I first elaborate on the Theory of Four Discourses in its application to research. Second, I focus on the discourse of the Analyst as a model for effective research and the construction of new knowledge. Third, I draw on an example from the data to illustrate how these Lacanian concepts may be used to explain how identity shifts with experience.
Lacan’s Four Discourses: An Overview

In the Master’s discourse, “knowledge becomes detached from the work with which it is bound up upon entering this discourse and is attached instead to the master signifier” (Zupančič, 2006, p. 161). Potentially research privileges the discourse of the Master, for example, when a researcher collects data and takes possession of the knowledge produced by the research subject (Other). The participant’s role is dismissed as the researcher processes and presents the analysis of the data in, for example, a conference presentation or in a journal publication:

[The slave’s work] passes into articulated knowledge that can be written down and thought independently of the work which it is bound up with at the outset. This is why Lacan can go on to make the rather surprising claim that what is thus being stolen from the slave (and appropriated by the master) is not the slave’s work, but his knowledge. (p. 161)

Alternately, research follows the discourse of the University when knowledge reproduces itself as truth, thus, (re)affirming the master signifier and the traditions of academic scholarship. The researcher finds in the analysis of the participants’ data support for what is already believed in the researcher’s community and, in some instances, new knowledge but only in terms of what is already known. “The constitutive lie of this [University] discourse is that it disavows its performative dimension: it always presents, for example, that which leads to a political decision, founded on power, as a simple insight into the factual state of things” (Zupančič, 2006, p. 168).

What is intriguing about the Theory of Four Discourses and specifically relevant to this study is that the discourse of the Analyst is structurally compatible with photo elicitation and offers a rationale for the analysis of collected images and interview data. As shown in Figure 26,

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7 The discourse of the University is not strictly referring to a university institution or to academia. The University’s discourse refers to any discursive structure where knowledge reproduces itself, as in bureaucratic organizations.
the photo or the participant’s narrative contains a representative of \textit{objet petit a} that “speaks to” the researcher who, in this instance, is the divided subject, $. The researcher who is presumed to know, actually is ignorant. The researcher is driven by \textit{objet petit a}, the surplus object, to construct some \textit{thing} (the master signifier, $S_1$) implicated in the photo or narrative. That is, the researcher is consequently “uncovering” a truth (knowledge, $S_2$) covered over by \textit{objet a}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>agent</th>
<th>Data or participant’s narrative and images</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The object-cause of desire covers the truth</td>
<td>a \quad \Rightarrow $</td>
<td>$S_2$ uncovers knowledge \quad $S_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth is unconscious (hidden from the agent)</td>
<td>$S_2$</td>
<td>Production is a particular construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Note.} $S_1$: the master signifier \quad $S_2$: knowledge \quad $S$: the divided subject \quad \textit{a}: the surplus object

\textit{Figure 26.} The discourse of the Analyst applied to photo elicitation interview.

\textit{Cho (2009) describes the significance of the Analyst’s discourse as follows:}

Rather than trying to master the irreducible representative of the unconscious (written here as \textit{a}), the analyst’s discourse structures relations in such a way that it causes there to be new knowledge of the unconscious. By endowing the unconscious with agency, the analyst’s discourse sets itself apart not only from the master’s but also from the other two discourses: whereas the master controls the slave, the bureaucracy controls knowledge, and the hysteric controls the master, the analyst controls nothing. The analyst is merely situated in the postion of \textit{a}...in order to help the analysand understand—not control or defend—unconscious formations. (p. 52)

Notably, the researcher is the analysand (not the Analyst) following Cho’s interpretation of Lacan’s discourse of the Analyst. Importantly, the collection of data offered by the
participants is the “representative of the unconscious” or what stands in for _objet a_. That is, _objet a_ is contained within the given image and functions as the agent. The image as well as the comments by the participant are intended to help the researcher understand what was previously unsaid, unknown, and unconscious. Moreover, the researcher (un)knowingly identifies the participant as, in Lacanian terms, the _subject supposed to know_ or the _subject presumed to know_ (Cho, 2009). The researcher then produces the master signifier in order to uncover a truth that surfaces from the unconscious or that otherwise underlies the data (see Figure 26).

Yet there remains a pitfall. There always exists the potential to slip into one of the other three discourses—the Master, the University, or the Hysteric. The discourse of the Analyst may be a difficult structure to hold together as the participant may act to satisfy what s/he believes the researcher to be looking for—forcing herself/himself into the position of the other, the analysand or the divided subject. This might reposition the researcher as the one presumed to know and then the discursive structure transforms into the Master’s discourse or the University’s discourse.

In Lacan’s discourse of the Master (see Figure 27), the master signifier (S1) as agent, becomes the narrative of the researcher when s/he co-opts the interview and forces the participant to produce or selects data that affirms what the researcher anticipates or can already articulate. Nothing previously unknown is learned from the research project. Significantly, the participant says what the researcher expects to hear and is able to understand. That is, the researcher may only make sense of what s/he already knows. Nevertheless, repressed within the interview and the photographs is a surplus (a)—unrecognizable knowledge—that potentially leaves the participant as a divided subject who abandons what s/he may have known to support the beliefs of the interviewer.
The master covers the truth from the divided subject

\[ S_1 \quad \text{Co-opts the interview} \rightarrow \quad S_2 \]

The participant prop up the master

\$ \quad \text{The participant becomes a divided subject to sustain the beliefs of the master}

\[ a \quad \text{A surplus of unrecognizable knowledge} \]

The researcher does not learn anything “new” from the participant

Note. \( S_1 \): the master signifier \( S_2 \): knowledge \$: the divided subject \( a \): the surplus object

Figure 27. The discourse of the Master applied to photo elicitation interview.

The master covers the truth from the divided subject

\[ S_2 \quad \text{Addresses} \rightarrow \quad a \]

The researcher’s speech prop up the academic knowledge

\[ S_1 \quad \text{The participant informs the researcher’s speech} \]

\$ \quad \text{The participant}

Academic knowledge is reproduced and further legitimated

Note. \( S_1 \): the master signifier \( S_2 \): knowledge \$: the divided subject \( a \): the surplus object

Figure 28. The discourse of the University applied to photo elicitation interview.

In the discourse of the University (see Figure 28), it is the scholarly knowledge of the academy (\( S_2 \)) that is in the position of agent, at least in the case of academic research. Here, the already accepted knowledge reproduces itself as it addresses the surplus of signification (\( a \)). This produces the divided subject (\$), the participant, as the informant for the master signifier (\( S_1 \)), the
researcher’s speech. In turn, it is the researcher’s speech that props up the legitimacy of the academic knowledge. Hence, in the discourse of the University, academic and bureaucratic knowledge is often reproduced and legitimated through research practices, structures, and traditions. That is, the data can only be understood in terms of the already accepted knowledge/paradigms while alternate interpretations remain in the unconscious.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>agent</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Interviewer’s speech</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$S$</td>
<td>$S_1$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The participant is propped up and undermined by the unconscious truth</td>
<td>Speaks to</td>
<td>The interviewer listens to the participant’s message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>$S_2$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interviewer is unaware of the knowledge produced and both participant and researcher are unsure of what it is they know</td>
<td>Repressed knowledge structures a truth</td>
<td>The interviewer constructs repressed knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $S_1$: the master signifier $S_2$: knowledge $S$: the divided subject $a$: the surplus object

*Figure 29.* The discourse of the Hysteric applied to photo elicitation interview.

One last potential consequence of the Theory of Four Discourses to the research interview is that the participant is not only the divided subject ($S$) but, in the discourse of the Hysteric, the divided subject is also the agent, that is, the sender of a message (see Figure 29). The message is received by the master signifier ($S_1$) or the interviewer’s speech to produce knowledge ($S_2$). Yet this knowledge is repressed. Nevertheless, it is this repressed knowledge that influences the surplus of signification ($a$). Hence, the participant is undermined by her/his unconscious truth while speaking to the interviewer. At the same time, the interviewer is not completely aware of the knowledge produced by the communication. That is, the master signifier
is inadequate to the task of signifying knowledge as a product of itself. In this case, both participant and researcher are likely to become more confused or unsure of what it is they know. They both desire a master to inform them of a truth.

In research, it is a useful disposition to recognize when one does not know, but it is equally important to be able to construct new knowledge. Thus, the Analyst’s discourse is a desirable structure because it repositions data as the agent which becomes the master for the hysteric and provokes the construction of new knowledge. This will be explained in more detail in the following section.

**The Discourse of the Analyst as the Ideal Structure for Photo Elicitation Interview**

Returning to the discourse of the Analyst, the agent is the surplus of signification. As shown in Figure 30, in the context of photo elicitation interview, consider the photo (and interview transcript) as the representative of the surplus \((a)\). Then, the photo speaks to the divided subject, the researcher, in the position of other while the master signifier is in the position of production. The master signifier is unconsciously elicited in the researcher and it undermines the researcher’s speech. Knowledge \((S_2)\) is then the truth that is suppressed beneath the *objet petit a*, both hidden and hinted by the photo.

If the photo (i.e., data) contains the surplus of signification, then the divided subject is the researcher trying to make sense of the photo’s message (previously discussed as the *punctum* in Chapter Four). This photo covers over the knowledge hidden beneath as truth. The master signifier—the words available to the researcher—is in the position of production yet continues to be repressed by the researcher. Together, the divided subject and the master signifier are left to analyze the participant’s data that conceals a truth. In this case, if we associate the master
signifier ($S_1$) with the words ultimately written and spoken by the researcher, then knowledge ($S_2$) is the knowledge produced (or uncovered) by research.

The photo is the representative of the object-cause of desire 
Knowledge is hidden and hinted by the photo 
Knowledge is the truth suppressed beneath a production 

Note. $S_1$: the master signifier  
$S_2$: knowledge  
$: the divided subject  
a: the surplus object

Figure 30. The discourse of the Analyst in relation to photo elicitation interview.

The surplus of signification, objet petit a, is associated with the unconscious lack in the Symbolic or a remnant of the Real. It is unavoidable to overlook what is not yet known but, nevertheless, it is the aim of research to somehow make known what is otherwise repressed or hidden and, hence, previously unspoken or unwritten. Thus, the divided subject ($) represents the researcher who attempts to ask and answer questions and becomes, ideally, separated from her/his own knowledge when exposed to the knowledge of the participant. However, this situation is elusive because the participant’s speech and photos are likely influenced by many of the same cultural, social, and historical understandings shared with the researcher.

The researcher has a set of questions and lacks the answers to those questions. Lacanian theory suggests that the answers are repressed and located within the participant’s and researcher’s unconscious, thus, escaping signification. Consequently, the researcher must recruit participants as subjects presumed to know—to have answers to the research questions—although
they themselves are not aware of their understanding. Hence, the aim of photo elicitation is to shift the researcher out of the position of subject supposed to know so the focus turns to the unconscious itself—the unconscious of the researcher and the surplus of signification contained in the data set produced by the participant.

In this case, addressing the research question directly to the participant and receiving a direct response would not characterize the research interview in this study. Instead, like a psychoanalytic interview that does not address the issue directly, the conversation must circle around the research question. Thus, photo elicitation interview is the method structurally commensurate with a Lacanian theoretical framework.

With these insights, rather than performing data analysis using thematic coding or analyzing the visual content and composition of the photos, I utilize psychoanalytic theory in the analysis of photo elicitation interviews. Rather than pretending to find the “proper” interpretation, the aim of this research is to explore new possibilities of meaning-making through the discourse of the Analyst.

I will now return to Kate’s image of an apple (see Figure 23). In this photo, a compositional analysis would comment on the balance, lighting, use of shadows, colour, etc. Indeed, it would be interesting to consider the quality of the photograph from an artistic perspective. However, the focus of this project is not the aesthetic quality of the photo, but rather what the image is able to provoke from the unconscious into the Symbolic register. In the following section, I will discuss some data provided by Kate to illustrate the operation of Lacan’s Four Discourses.
Kate: The Teacher’s Gift Revisited

Kate shared the image of the apple during our first photo elicitation interview. At that time, I was a novice at conducting interviews and I was reluctant to take over the conversation and start feeding Kate words and ideas. Simply put, I wanted the interview to focus on what Kate thinks about the image rather than what I think about the photo.

In terms of Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses, as the interviewer, I am trying to avoid the discourse of the Master as the structure of the relationship between researcher and participant. If I talk too much, the participant, for instance, Kate, might simply agree and provide responses that merely paraphrase what I say or what she expects that I want her to say. On the other hand, the interviewer must speak in order to build rapport and the semblance of a conversation. Thus, there is always a possibility of falling into the Master’s Discourse.

By using participant-generated photos in the interview, the participant, Kate, is already the “master” in terms of how the photo was taken and what it means to her. Photo elicitation interview positions participants as experts given that they try to explain something that the researcher does not already know. Thus, my conversation continues with Kate and I have to ask what she thinks the apple might symbolize.

John: What did you think the apple was? Because you could literally take it as the apple or a gift, right? But could it also be like the wisdom, the know-how, the skills, the abilities that you’re hoping to receive?

Kate: Yeah, I hadn’t thought of that yet… and it’s not like I’ve ever given a teacher an apple or anything…. I was only thinking of it [the image] from the perspective of students giving that [the apple] to the teacher.

From this exchange, Kate’s conscious intention is to explain that an apple is a symbolic gift or token of recognition from a student to a teacher. However, the photo has the potential to convey other meanings (un)intended by Kate. The goal is not to better understand Kate or any
other participant as if s/he is undergoing therapy. However, I am trying to better understand how identity is construed through the Imaginary and the Real as well as the Symbolic. After the interview, I begin to analyze what I perceive to be the message of the image through the structure of the discourse of the Analyst.

Thinking through the Analyst’s discourse, it becomes the researcher’s responsibility to make sense of the data and perhaps “find” some hidden meaning. Focusing on the referent, the gift of the apple is a staged photo and it is not completely obvious on close inspection whether one of the hands belongs to a child, although both hands appear to belong to adults simply based on the size relative to the apple and to each other. It also appears that the hand on the left is wearing a ring. The apple could be seen as being transferred or perhaps being withheld in an exchange between two adults. Images are static so the viewer is able to speculate whether or not the apple has moved or will move. In addition, the apple can symbolize knowledge, such as the pedagogical knowledge that underlies successful teaching. One possible interpretation of the image could be that knowledge is being transferred, withheld, or given by the Teacher Education Program or school advisor to the student teacher. This theme is echoed during Inderpreet’s practicum where she felt like support from the school and faculty advisors was lacking at times.

Moreover, there is a shadow cast onto the hand on the left which is also held below the hand on the right. This suggests the dominance of the one hand holding the apple over the other hand possibly anticipating the gift of knowledge. The shadow further hints at more complex social and cultural contexts in which teaching and learning to be a teacher occur. For instance, the politics of teaching casts its shadow over the classroom in issues like classroom size and composition which has a torturous history in recent years in the school district in which Kate is on practicum.
In short, Kate’s photo of the apple can be interpreted in multiple ways—from a token of recognition to a metaphor of the relationship between a student and teacher. The image of the apple is the first photo in this study to hold my attention for much longer than the interview itself. While the apple is infused with cultural meaning, for example, “an apple for the teacher” or “fruit from the tree of knowledge,” it never occurred to me beforehand that the apple can be used to speak about teacher identity.

By focusing analysis on the image and transcript as agent, Lacan’s explication of the Four Discourses encourages me to adopt the Analyst’s discourse and to look for subtle as well as obvious meanings. Importantly, it is the “not yet known” that is of primary interest here. The purpose of data analysis is to generate knowledge of student teacher identity that has a ring of truth. That is, I aim to find something other than what is obvious in the data, yet resonates with the experience of student teachers, educators, and potentially other viewers of the photo. It is Lacan’s discourse of the Analyst that appears to be generative in this pursuit and brings the study the full circle in terms of drawing together several Lacanian concepts that underlie this study’s approach to identity construction.

**Four Discourses as a Means of Understanding Identity Work**

Knowledge, constructed through Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses, like identity, is dynamically created out of the Imaginary and the Symbolic (with acknowledgment of the Real). Importantly, the Four Discourses—the Master, the University, the Analyst, and the Hysteric—are relevant to identity work, changes to the ego apparatus, and reflections on personal and professional identifications. For instance, the Master’s discourse may describe how a student teacher mimics the identity of another teacher, for example, a former teacher or the school advisor. The existence of the model teacher justifies the replication of the identity by the student
teacher while simultaneously propping up the importance of the model teacher. In the first chapter, I describe how Inderpreet was challenged to mimic a teacher who could instruct a class in the same manner as the school advisors.

The discourse of the University might promote student teacher identities shaped around the needs of the bureaucracy, i.e., the school system. Thus, a student teacher becomes what is necessary to deliver curriculum and prepare children to meet Ministry performance standards or satisfy high-stakes testing. Alternatively, the discourse of the Hysteric posits a student teacher in need of an expert teacher (master) worthy of copying. However, if a student teacher can be positioned as the divided subject in the discourse of the Analyst, then reflective practice can catalyze minor and even major shifts in identity while at the same time allowing a student teacher to act with agency. In the following sections, I illustrate how the discourse of the Hysteric and the discourse of the Analyst emerge with respect to shifting identifications.

Kate: Identity shift through the lens of the Four Discourses. As an example of using Lacan’s theories to understand how student teacher identity may shift, we continue to look at Kate’s interview.

I asked Kate if she could pinpoint a specific time when she felt like she wanted to be a teacher. Her first recollection of wanting to be a teacher was in grade 7 and she thought about it through high school. She also felt that her inspiration was “mostly because of the influence of like English teachers that were really good.” In hindsight, Kate speculates that becoming a teacher was inevitable given that her father was a teacher.

Continuing the conversation, I asked:

John: How would you describe the role that you take when you’re doing your lesson plan or you’re in the classroom as an observer? Would you describe that feeling as different from being a teacher?
Kate: Yeah, because I’m really just sitting at the side of the room for a lot of the time…. In terms of like my authority I think that’s already at least somewhat established in terms of the kids know that they have to listen to me.

John: So you feel like they see you as their teacher?

Kate: Yeah.

John: How do you think the classroom teacher sees you? In the same way?

Kate: Yeah. In the same way, as a…teacher.

John: What do you anticipate as being different between being the teacher in charge of the classroom on a day-to-day basis as opposed to the once a week or a lesson here, a lesson there?

Kate: I’ll have to be like responsible for all the little things that come up…. In terms of classroom management and little scuffle things that go on between the students like I’ll have to deal with those things. And I’ll figure out ways to deal with them. And learn from those things.

John: And are you afraid of that or ambivalent about it? Do you feel prepared for it?

Kate: In some ways. My sponsor teacher is a good example. She’s just very patient with hearing both sides of the story.

Based on this exchange, perhaps Kate’s goal is to be the amalgamation of the best teachers from her past. However, I wish to keep the conversation going at this point in the interview even though Kate has introduced all of the photos she prepared in advance. Having covered things that are somewhat easy to talk about, I ramble on to say more than I had planned.

John: Have you ever had any doubts about this career path?

Kate: I had a conversation with a friend the other day about…I couldn’t wait to actually just be in the job and be teaching because I think it’s going to be less busy than it is now in the program…. I think I had some doubts in the past month because I’m not really enjoying very much of the program at [university]…. I know that I want to do the teaching and I know this is just the means to the end.

We had to do this assignment in a group about representing music in a nontraditional way. Just with like pictures and stuff. It’s called soundscape….
We didn’t really get any much instruction on how to do it in a group and I guess I’ve had more trouble with group work in general…pretty much. Because it seems like it’s just very convenient for the teachers to have to mark like a fifth of the work…. They encourage collaboration amongst teachers. When you’re doing unit planning and getting ideas about stuff but…I don’t think I’m going to be doing that a lot….

I don’t see myself collaborating with other teachers often. Like conversations in a staff room, ideas, yes, but not like sitting down for a whole afternoon to plan a unit together…. It seems terribly inefficient. I can usually do the work in like half the time…. In my past…I’ve always been in the position of having to organize it [the group] and having to…[do] more work and so that’s kind of just like left a stench for me around group work. But I’ve had really positive experiences this term. So maybe that’ll change but it’s…like you have to add the whole element of like learning how to communicate with the person, how they think, and so it just takes so much time and I really like to just get things done.

I hate writing stuff on big pieces of paper and posting them on the wall when they’re just going to be thrown out right afterward. Like it’s difficult to see the value in that. But I guess I’m learning about that. And just with the group work too. Like at the beginning of the year at [university] I was really kind of upset about having to do so much group work because I wanted to learn from the experienced teachers not from these people that are in the same boat as I am—that don’t really know anything about it. But of course they do. Of course they have their prior experiences. But I wanted to learn from the experts that I’m paying to teach me. But then I was thinking about the kind of lessons that I think would be good for the students and they included a lot of group work.

Kate expresses that she is developing an appreciation for group work. However, her comments about not really seeing the value in collaborating with her colleagues stand out for me and I ask what she thinks about professional development.

Kate: I would probably attend more rather than less. Definitely. Especially if it’s somebody that’s like really an expert in the field…. There was one professional day in October that we participated in. I went to a workshop for gifted learners…. It wasn’t a teacher actually. It was an author who was gifted herself. And so it was a different perspective…and I got tons out of it.

I couldn’t ever be a teacher that wasn’t striving to improve. That’s the goal. I know probably most people have that goal.

Kate continues to think aloud about the value of hearing from experts versus sharing amongst colleagues. So I ask:
John: What qualifies someone as an expert?

Kate: I think it’s mostly experience. Experience like working with gifted learners or with students with special needs…fairly thorough knowledge of the field and all of the things that are involved in it.

Kate’s comments force me to think of my own inclination towards local expertise including, but not limited to, the teachers at my school. And I wonder if student teachers are more likely to look for answers from experts with experience, whereas in-service teachers just find ways to do things regardless of the source. Kate’s first interview ends here.

The potential of photo elicitation interview to uncover, in this case, mixed feelings about collaboration and Kate’s trust of experts is notable considering it was not something either of us intended to talk about. In addition, this exchange about group work and professional development illustrates the discourse of the Hysteric where the participant speaks to the researcher and both are left unsure of what meaning can be made from the conversation. This leaves the student teacher in a state of questioning and searching for an answer. Identity does not so much shift but there exists an opening for identity work to occur.

In searching for experts, Kate’s identity work is structured like the discourse of the Hysteric. She hopes to find a model teacher but perhaps there is no such expert. The master teacher does not exist and Kate must learn a little bit about being a teacher from many individuals.

My second interview with Kate is two months later and she begins by recalling our last discussion about group work in relation to the photo of the watering can (see Figure 31):  

I took it for a photography unit that I did for my art class on perspective, point of view…. So I [inaudible] of this because ever since our last conversation I haven’t been able to stop thinking about group work and team teaching and working with colleagues and stuff like that…. I have been thinking about it so much because it didn’t sit well with me that it seemed to me at least that I was looking to like be a lone boat or something and that I was
trying to think of like the reasons for that and I think one would have to do with like my history with group work in the past but that’s mostly to do with high school and early undergrad work where people do just want to tag along for the marks. And I have noticed that it definitely has changed since the beginning of this program. It was still a bit more like that in the beginning but, especially this semester, I had really positive group work. So yeah one of the reasons was history and another reason was... just loving efficiency too much. Because I find that group work takes at least double the time at least because I don’t like brainstorming a lot. I just like thinking of one good idea and going with it.

The whole theme of [the project] was perspective. And I feel like my perspective on group work and working with colleagues has changed a lot.

![Watering Can](image.jpg)

**Figure 31.** Perspective (the watering can). Photography by the participant (Kate).

Here, Kate enters into the structure of the Analyst’s discourse. The photo of the watering can catalyzes an opportunity for Kate to put into words her new perspective on the value of collaboration that takes into account her most recent, positive experiences with group work and her attitudes as a teacher along with her earlier, negative experiences. The result is a shift in Kate’s identity as a student teacher that can have some impact on her teaching.
Summary

In this chapter, Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses provides a lens for analysing interviews and understanding identity-shifting. For instance, the discourse of the Master would leave the researcher satisfied with reporting the themes that arise while coding the data, while the University’s discourse would leave the researcher content with collecting data that reflects and resonates with the themes already represented in the literature. Not to dismiss the useful work that follows these discursive structures, I aim for photo elicitation interview to provide an opportunity for the Analyst’s discourse to make meaning out of the data. The discourse of the Analyst positions the researcher to report what the data provokes the researcher to say or to construct alternative meanings, not simply what the participant says.

In addition, from a Lacanian perspective, the Analyst’s discourse can position participants to reflect on their identifications with the potential for identity-shifting. It is well known that student teachers are regularly asked to reflect on their learning (Ottesen, 2007). I argue that the discourse of the Analyst provides a structure to understand how reflection leads to changes in identity. This is particularly pertinent at a time when the notion of reflection is a much overused and poorly understood term (Atkinson, 2004; Corriero & Romeo, 2011; Tucker, 2000).
Chapter Six: How Does It All Fit Together?

The primary research question undertaken by this study is: How might Lacanian theory be used with participant-generated photos to make sense of the transition between student and teacher identifications? The guiding questions were: To what extent are student teachers’ identities in this study fixed or pliable? How do the student teachers perform or make sense of their identities with respect to images? What is the relationship between image and Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses in explaining how identity changes, shifts, and slips? Responses to these questions are taken up throughout the previous chapters, but in this concluding chapter, key elements will be (re)presented to delineate the contribution of this research to the study of student teacher professional identity.

First, a brief rendering of the existing research on teacher identity will be presented to situate the guiding questions for this study. Next, a response to each of those questions will be offered in terms of the Lacanian theoretical framework. This is followed by a response to the main research question with respect to what has been demonstrated in this dissertation. In keeping with the intention to include the participants’ photos throughout the dissertation, some images not already presented will be included in support of the earlier analyses. Finally, some theoretical insights will be proposed based on this work.

The Field of Teacher Identity Research

Reviewing the literature on teacher identity provides the language and perspectives already presented by others and provides a point of departure into the unknown. Related to this study, notable themes in the area of teacher identity research are:

- understanding the importance of professional identity to teachers and how it relates to other identities, including personal and organizational;
• studying the ability of Teacher Education Programs to encourage student teachers to problematize their professional identities;
• conceptualizing the concept of metaphor as a lens for making sense of teaching experiences; and
• envisioning the (re)construction of teacher identity as a complex process given the possible presence of competing identities.

In their investigations with pre-service and in-service teachers, Kosnik and Beck (2009) describe professional identity as “how teachers perceive themselves professionally [and] includes their sense of their goals, responsibilities, style, effectiveness, level of satisfaction, and career trajectory” (p. 130). In addition, they recognize that teachers interpret the teaching role idiosyncratically as a product of “their distinctive personality, interests, abilities, and life circumstances” (p. 131).

Identity-making, according to Kosnik and Beck (2009), is important for several reasons. First, a well-considered professional self-image supports effective teaching and reinforces teachers’ pride and motivation in the job. Second, identity work supports the well-being of teachers if it promotes compatibility among various identities, specifically, between the professional and personal. And third, through the ongoing formation of professional identity, teachers also envision a career trajectory—developing plans for career-long professional development and pursuing opportunities such as school administration.

Thomas and Beauchamp (2007) also consider the connection between professional identity and the commitment of teachers and their effectiveness in working with learners. In their study, Thomas and Beauchamp conclude that Teacher Education Programs may stimulate student teachers to question their identities, but they do not necessarily encourage student
teachers to pursue those questions: “There is definitely a need, and an interest on the part of students, to include a component in [Teacher Education] designed to raise the consciousness of student teachers about professional identity development” (p. 240). In addition, there is a need for more research into the process of developing a professional identity. “One of the complicated aspects of understanding identity is grappling with the notion of how identity shifts and reshapes” (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178).

In Teacher Education Programs, experience may often be over-generalized and assumed to (re)produce similar beliefs for every student teacher. At the same time, this assumption dismisses the existence of other highly persistent and influential traditional images of teaching (Britzman, 1992). Although we may recognize particular attributes, dispositions, and behaviors as teacherly, there is no singular, uniform definition or image of a teacher. Studying the identity formations of teachers is important because identification is “a process of social interaction”; therefore, “we can explore the extent to which social norms both delimit and embrace who we are and what we may become through our actions” (Cooper & Olson, 1996, p. 88). Teacher identity is not a universal given but a complex construction that can be fractured, (re)formed and (re)imagined by those who wish to be recognized as teachers. In short, teaching requires “continually constructing a sustainable identity” out of what is socially given and legitimated in one sense, and what is chosen in another (Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 714).

With respect to the existing literature on teacher identity, this project serves to explore how photo elicitation interview can be used to support student teachers as they question their identities and cultivate professional identifications that simultaneously satisfy personal, cultural, and societal values. A photo elicitation interview methodology is utilized in this research because
it acknowledges that both verbal and visual metaphors of teaching are relevant to professional identifications.

**To What Extent Are Student Teachers’ Identities in this Study Fixed or Pliable?**

At the beginning of this study, I presumed I would speak with student teachers who significantly altered their beliefs about teaching and how their teacher identities changed accordingly. Yet, surprisingly, none of the participants exhibited any great changes. This may be explained by recognizing that the six participants were already confident about their teaching, their personal identifications, and their identity as learners. It is possible that other student teachers, who did not volunteer for the study, could have exhibited larger changes in identification if they were less certain about their own identifications.

Consistent with the study’s conceptual framework, to some degree every participant’s identification is pliable and changes with experience. Identities argue for themselves and experiences are interpreted or ignored through the filtering lens of identification (MacLure, 1993). Notably, at least for the six participants in this study, their egos appear to be very stable and are not evidently prone to changing in significant ways with each day in the classroom. Nevertheless, as subtle as they may be, some changes must occur for each participant as s/he finds herself/himself in the position of the teacher rather than the student. Inderpreet, Alec, and Kate illustrate these minor identity shifts and persistent egos.

Inderpreet shifted her identity, at least temporarily, with the hope of satisfying her school advisors. If attempting to enact ideas, such as the flipped classroom, she learned through the Teacher Education Program was deemed ineffective or problematic, she believed she could teach the way the school advisors expected her to teach. However, once she was certified as a teacher
and had her own classroom, she would endeavor again to try different instructional strategies and lesson designs.

For Alec, his practicum permitted him to positively identify with one school advisor who taught theatre while, at the same time, questioning the decisions and actions of his other school advisor. Alec’s identity was reinforced through the affirmation he received from the theatre teacher and his students and his negative critique of his other supervisor. Working with two different teachers, Alec had many opportunities to articulate and explain the teacher qualities he hoped to develop in contrast to the qualities he found to be less than ideal.

Kate spoke about her views on the inefficiencies of group work in her first interview but had an altered opinion about it in the second. In the first interview, Kate believed that professional development as collaboration with colleagues might be a waste of time. She assumed that professional development was better spent on preparation, improving one’s own practice, and learning from experts. She wished to revisit the topic in the following interview and shared that group work can actually be productive in light of her positive experiences in collaborating with other student teachers.

Kate’s perspective on collaborative work was negative based on her experiences as a student. Her opinion of group work only improved with positive experiences in the Teacher Education Program and thinking about the value of working with others for her own students. It could be that thinking like a teacher allowed Kate to make the most significant shift in teacher identity shared by the participants.

The ego apparatus is well-established for these three student teachers—Inderpreet, Alec, and Kate. That is not to say that they are over-confident or unwilling to change but rather the ego prevents them from changing who they think they are without some compelling, or perhaps even
traumatic, experience. Such a significant experience might activate the superego to criticize the subject thus producing feelings of guilt and an impetus to shift one’s identity (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). Although identity is not fixed, once established, it is secure and highly resistant to changes that are inconsistent with the already constructed ego apparatus. Consequently, it is more often the case that minor, even imperceptible, shifts in identification occur as new experiences unfold and meanings of signifiers and images alter in relation to culture. This study demonstrates the possibility of witnessing subtle shifts in identification through the analysis of photo elicitation interview data.

**How Do the Student Teachers Perform or Make Sense of Their Identities with Respect to Images?**

My interviews with the participants did not directly take up the question: What is student teacher identity? Instead we discussed the moments where student teachers felt like students and felt like teachers. I cannot really explain what it means to be a teacher based on the data analysis undertaken in this research, but it is possible to expose what appear to be the performative acts of teacher becoming, suggested by the participants and their photographs. For example, classroom management—lecturing students about being attentive and working when needed—Inderpreet and Kate both said they struggled with classroom management. Inderpreet’s difficulties disappointed at least one school advisor which resulted in a poor review. In contrast, Kate employed performative acts that were recognizable in the classroom—a bird caller, countdown, and lecture. Interestingly, performatives can be acted out by the participants as university students complying with expectations, like group work, and completing assignments, such as the auto-geography project.
The photos generated by the participants served as reminders for their thoughts and feelings about performing the roles of student and teacher. They spoke at length, on their own or with minimal prompting, about the images of objects and places associated with their work as a teacher. For example, Julia spoke about her teacher clothes in contrast to what she wears as a student (see Chapter 3). Similarly, Anne and Kate demonstrated how they personalized and made use of classroom spaces to support their teaching and, Danielle, another participant, described her observations as a student teacher touring a school. It is through their performance and thinking as teachers, provoked by the referents within photographs, that we began to understand the performance of identity.

*Figure 32. Classroom seating. Photography by the participant (Anne).*
In one example, Anne’s classroom featured tables in groups of four rather than rows suggesting opportunities for co-operative learning among students (see Figure 32). In the course of the interview, Anne explained that the arrangement of desks and the seating plan for students was intended to encourage collaborative learning experiences. She consciously wanted to facilitate opportunities for her students to work together. Hence, she did not want to arrange the desks in rows and all facing the front of the room, i.e., the whiteboard in the photo.

![Image of a classroom with tables in groups of four](image.jpg)

*Figure 33. Math lesson on the floor. Photography by the participant (Anne).*

The participants in this study seem to develop an eye for seeing the world and finding opportunities and resources for education. At least for this research project, they are attentive to everyday objects and spaces that have potential for teaching and learning. For example,
venturing outside the confines of the classroom and into the unoccupied hallway, Anne sees the tiles on the floor as a learning space in mathematics class for teaching about the Cartesian coordinate system. Anne explains that for one lesson, she marked off a grid on the floor with tape so her students could move their bodies along the x and y-axes (see Figure 33).

Similarly, recalling when she first started to take over teaching the class, Kate remarked about an opportunity to decorate a section of wall at the front of the room with postcards that were personally meaningful to her. Creating bulletin boards, decorating walls, and making appealing visual representations to stimulate learning were talents Kate associated with elementary school teachers. Like Anne, Kate was able to weave her identifications into the classroom space for the purpose of improving their students’ learning experiences (see Figure 34).

*Figure 34. Owning the classroom. Photography by the participant (Kate).*
These three photos by Anne and Kate are representative of participant-generated photos that depict the student teachers’ ability to adapt to and transform their learning spaces and see the classroom and other places as part of the teacher and a resource for instruction. The identity of the student teacher merges with the location and, simultaneously, the place acts on the student teacher to interrupt existing identifications.

When Danielle visited another school towards the end of her practicum experience, she shared her observations of teaching practices that she wished to use in the future. In one example, she saw a “word wall” where early elementary students were able to show their thinking, the words they know, and were thinking about (see Figure 35). For Danielle, this was an effective idea and she noted it for learning/teaching potential. She thought she might use it in her own classroom one day.

Figure 35. Word wall. Photography by the participant (Danielle).

Beyond the interaction between identity and place, the performance of professional identification is also accomplished through the use of tokens or objects inscribed with cultural meaning and given to or “worn” by the teacher. These tokens of identification and recognition
signify to others whether or not someone is a teacher. It can be as straightforward as an identification badge or a set of keys, or subtle, such as a stamp or sticky notes (see Chapter 3). Tokens only work because they are recognized in the shared culture of the school system.

In addition, tokens were used as gifts of acknowledgement for fulfilling the role of teacher. Each participant was able to share stories of being recognized by their students as the teacher. For example, during our interviews, Alec recalled being given flowers for his work as a theatre director and Kate mentioned receiving a present at Christmas from a student.

The participants chose images as reminders and provocations to talk about events where they were thinking like teachers, for example, how to manage the classroom and how to create learning spaces. They also made photos of tokens used to look like a teacher, for instance, clothing, and to perform the teacher’s role, for example, school keys.

What is the relationship between image and Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses in explaining how identity changes, shifts, and slips?

This question is specifically addressed in the previous chapter where Lacan’s four structures of discourse—the Master, the University, the Analyst, and the Hysteric—are introduced and explained in relation to the research project and identity work. In photo elicitation interview there is a communicative interaction between the researcher and the participant. Each of the four discourses described by Lacan may be used to describe the potential relationships among the researcher, participant, data and construction of knowledge. I argue that the discourses of the Master and the University are to be avoided where possible for the purpose of photo elicitation interviews. In these two discursive structures, data is taken from the participant and used to prop up, confirm, or otherwise legitimize the knowledge of the researcher and bureaucracy, such as a school system. The discourse of the Hysteric is also to be avoided simply
because the construction of knowledge is uncertain. That is, it could all be invented without a basis in theory and data. Thus, we are left with the discourse of the Analyst as a potentially viable model for understanding how the method of photo elicitation interview is effective in prompting an examination of and shifts in identity.

Applying the Analyst’s discourse within the context of the photo elicitation interview, I suggest that the participant’s data, images and dialogue, are in the position of agent (see Figure 30). The participant’s function is fulfilled in the contribution of the data. The researcher is then the divided subject (the analysand) who attempts to analyze and interpret the data. The researcher tries to uncover some of what is hidden within and beneath the data although discovery will never be perfectly complete. A remainder will always exist. The researcher seeks to make sense of the images and symbols and, thus, constructs new knowledge in the Symbolic register.

It is important to note that there is no singular message to be found encoded in the data. The data merely has the potential to invite interpretation from the viewer’s own unconscious. However, it may reasonably be expected that the more each viewer shares common experiences, language, culture, history, etc., the closer the interpretations will be among individuals. Although there were only six participants in this project, I suspect that the interpretation of the same photo by many subjects will tend towards a limited number or even a single idea in some cases because our ability to communicate is limited to shared and inherited words in the Symbolic and images in the Imaginary.

In addition, Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses has relevance for identity-making in general. In short, the discourse of the Analyst is also a way to make sense of the transformative potential of reflective practice for student teachers.
How Might Lacanian Theory Be Used with Participant-Generated Photos to Make Sense of the Transition between Student and Teacher Identifications?

Lacanian theory provides a framework to look at the images and speak about identifications. For instance, using the discourse of the Analyst permits moments where participants are able to witness their own alterations in identification as students and teachers. Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories can be used with images to locate and interpret shifts in identity. In these reflective instances, identification and recognition are scrutinized until the subject is satisfied with a provisional resolution in identity.

This research project focuses on aspects of Lacanian theory that

• emphasize the (de)formative function of the image on the ego and identity, specifically mirror stage theory and the Imaginary (Chapter 1);

• assert the importance of the Imaginary and the Real without dismissing the significance of the Symbolic (Chapters 2, 3 and 4);

• clarify the construction of knowledge based on analyzing participant-generated images (Chapters 4 and 5); and

• describe how the participants, particularly through the structure of the analyst’s discourse, are able to shift their identifications (Chapter 5).

The implications of these four aspects may be noticed throughout the dissertation, although chapters are indicated where there is a focus on a specific idea. A brief summary of each is provided.
The (de)formative function of the image. According to Lacan, the ego apparatus first develops through the mirror stage where the child encounters images (Imaginary register) and mistakes what s/he sees for itself. This early misrecognition eventually leads to an understanding that there is an Other who is different from the child. The Other fails to satisfy the child’s demands and offers words rather than the illusive object-cause of desire (the Real) which results in the child’s need to speak words (Symbolic register). In the mirror stage theory, the image plays a prominent role in the formation of the ego and this has a tremendous impact on the construction of identity. That is, identity itself may be considered as an image of the subject mediated by the ego. Moreover, since the ego of each participant appears to be relatively stable, their identifications also do not show indications of big changes although minor shifts are still evident.

The Imaginary and the Real. Appreciating the important role images serve in the development of the ego, subjectivity, and, therefore, identity, using participant-generated photos in identity research in addition to interview transcripts is desirable. The image is used in photo elicitation interview to position participants as experts and encourage them to say more than they intended. This potentially provides a hint or glimpse of the previously unconscious that surfaces in the interpretation of the photograph. If successful, new knowledge is constructed and shared in the Symbolic register.

Despite the use of photographs, narrative is not displaced by the attention focused on the image. Rather the image provokes more words even as the words are used to interpret the image. Ultimately, at least in this research project, identification is communicated through words, but the images provide more context and emotional impact not easily captured in words or readily offered during the interviews (Harper, 2002). The photos depict objects and spaces that remind
the participants of their values, work as teachers and students, or personal identities. Although I include only some of the participant-generated images, interestingly, all photos have the potential to elicit a reflective conversation. In short, the use of the photo invites and enhances genuine conversations that may not have happened otherwise.

**Knowledge construction.** Photo elicitation interviews provide opportunities for the participants to question who they are as teachers and, perhaps more likely, to confirm who they think they are as teachers. Image alone may not cause any change in their teacher identifications, but in combination with the interview, participants are challenged to reconcile their memories, their descriptions, and explanations with the researcher’s interpretation and request for more information.

The discourse of the Analyst can be used to explain how the researcher interprets the unconscious message in the data. The data from the photo elicitation interview attempts to communicate with the researcher, the divided subject. The researcher is undermined by the words associated with the master signifier while the data covers up knowledge to be symbolized. Knowledge construction occurs when the researcher is able to speak a truth hinted at by the photo.

**Identity shifts through the discourse of the analyst.** Although identity can be very stable, additionally, the structure of the Analyst’s discourse serves to explain how subjects can shift their identities in often very subtle ways. Recall that the ego interprets new experiences to strengthen its own position because it cannot make sense of information that undermines itself. Nevertheless, there will be times when identity is questioned, for instance, when an experience is not easily understood but cannot be dismissed either. In this case, questions of identity will resolve when the participant adequately interprets the hidden message of the unconscious. The
message is hinted at by the image and brought into the Symbolic register as the participant enunciates a new, previously unspoken, meaning of the data. This resolution corresponds to an identity-shift, for example, Kate’s altered perceptions of group work given new experiences in the Teacher Education Program and her need to reflect on what she said during our first interview.

The transition from student (learner) to teacher is never complete and multiple identifications are possible as they change with context. Felman (1982) comments on Lacan’s apparent ability to transition between the role of analyst and analysand:

Psychoanalysis as teaching, and teaching as psychoanalysis, radically subvert the demarcation-line, the clear-cut opposition between the analyst and the analysand, between the teacher and the student (or the learner)—showing that what counts, in both cases, is precisely the transition, the struggle-filled passage from one position to the other. But the passage is itself interminable; it can never be crossed once and for all. (p. 38)

Thus, student teachers never become only teachers. They continue to be students (of teaching) and their identifications shift over a lifetime.

**Theoretical Insights and Propositions**

The use of Lacanian psychoanalysis as the theoretical lens for the research suggests that constructing themes based on interview transcripts, photographs, and field notes by recursively filtering, distilling, interpreting and coding the data is insufficient (Rose, 2007; Staples, 2008). Rather, like Freud’s use of case studies to explain his psychoanalytic theories, each photo and associated interview may be considered as a case to be interpreted. Analyzing these cases can provide support for claims that have transferability to similar contexts.

Due to the small number of participants, this study does not offer statistical generalizability where its findings are representative of larger populations. However, this type of
Qualitative research supports analytic generalization where theoretical propositions may be constructed that have application to a wider body of conceptual knowledge on the topic (Becker, 1990; Yin, 2003). To close this dissertation, I offer four theoretical propositions that have implications for subsequent studies on identity.

1. In general, subjects have an ego apparatus that resists change and adapts new experiences to maintain identity equilibrium.
2. The study of identity is as powerful, if not more powerful, with the use of images and words.
3. Tokens and places help with the explication and examination of identities.
4. Photo elicitation interview positions the viewer of the photograph as the maker of meaning.

**Identities resist change.** Early in life, according to Lacan’s mirror stage theory, individuals develop an ego. With experience and encounters with others, the subject constructs one or more identifications. Identity is a somewhat stable image of the subject seen through the filter of the ego. A well-formed ego does not readily change and maintains the subject’s identities as much as possible. New experiences are interpreted through the ego, thus, leaving identifications intact, if not, reinforced. This is accomplished, in part, as the ego misses or ignores what it does not understand. That is, an experience that may cause identity to change does not register with the ego.

Consequently, dramatic changes in beliefs and values for subjects cannot be expected as a frequent occurrence in identity research. Identities are far more likely to undergo minor alterations and uneven shifts. Even if an event occurs that cannot be ignored, the ego and, by extension, the identity can interpret the meaning of the event in its own way.
**Study identity through images as well as words.** Regardless of whether they are photographs, paintings, sketches, movies, etc., participant-generated or not, to disregard the power of the image on our identities overlooks our visual culture. At the same time, the Symbolic cannot be ignored. We are subjects of the Symbolic once we learn to communicate with the language we adopt. Therefore, given the availability of cameras and smartphones, it would be remiss not to use a combination of the visual and the verbal as tools for identity work regardless of the domain.

The images encourage the participants and the researchers to say more than they planned. The collected data may then be analyzed through the structure of the discourse of the Analyst. Potentially, something will be learned about identity and, at the same time, the identifications of the participant (and researcher) will be altered.

**Tokens and places aid in the performance of identity.** Tokens make the subject identifiable/recognizable to others whether it is clothing, name tags, tools, etc. However, they only help with recognizability if others are aware of the cultural significance of the tokens. Looking for the objects and things that are exchanged to help with identification is one way to observe how identity is performed.

Additionally, the function and use of space is indicative of identity. For example, the student teachers talk about having their own space in the classroom rather than sharing and intruding on the spaces of the school advisor. A photo by Kate shows how she set up a desk with her own things (see Figure 36).
Kate’s belongings or tokens are not simply a private reminder of her own identity, such as a personal photo. They also communicate to the class aspects of her identity she wishes to share:

So this is my designated, legitimate desk…. It seems like a big deal for me to have like my own space in the classroom and all throughout like the one week practicum visits I sort of had this space but it hasn’t been like you wouldn’t know from anything on it that it was my space ‘cause I wasn’t there the rest of the week, right? So I didn’t want to leave things there. My teacher was adamant about having a spot for me that was more permanent so that the students could know also that this is her spot. She’s a part of our classroom…and having to tell students like “Oh, you can just put it on my desk…..” I think I associate a lot of my identity as a teacher with a desk.

Her desk is carefully organized with a jar of pencils, candies to offer, a day planner and sticky notes. There is even a red pen. I observe with Kate that the binder, lesson planner, pencils and sticky notes add up to things that a teacher might use. In response, Kate states that the space, more than the things on the desk, make her feel like a teacher.
Meaning-making is the responsibility of the viewer. Anyone who views the data has an opportunity to (re)interpret the data. The meaning drawn from the data set may not be the same for the researcher, the participant, and the audience of the project. Further, it is possible that a variety of interpretations are valid. Nevertheless, it is possible that a majority of viewers will have similar and related ideas about what the image offers.

The use of photos, particularly participant-generated images, positions the participant as observer and interpreter. At the same time, the traditionally privileged position of the researcher becomes only one perspective in contrast to those represented by the participants and eventually the readers of the work. Thus, the authority of the researcher as the one presumed to know is disputed because the research subject is a contributor with essential insights into the topic under discussion. Collaboration between the researcher and participants provides opportunities for new ideas to be constructed as personal knowledge is interrupted by what others appear to know.

Although there are many examples of research using visual methods, more work remains to further investigate how analysis of images can be done (Drew & Guillemin, 2014). “There remains room for further deliberation and consolidation in this literature, particularly in discussions of how to conduct detailed examination of image content” (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p. 183). Drew and Guillemin (2014) suggest a three-stage interpretive framework: 1) Meaning-making through participant engagement; 2) Meaning-making through researcher-driven engagement; and 3) Meaning-making through re-contextualizing. They argue that this approach will yield high-quality interpretation of data.

In this project, meaning-making through participant engagement was supported in the role of participants as creators of photos and interpreters of their own work during interviews. Researcher-driven engagement was maintained through opportunities to ask questions and bring
prior theories and a conceptual framework to the data analysis. Meaning-making through re-contextualization requires applying altogether different theoretical considerations to the analysis. Overall, this research focused on the application of a Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, so it was limited in its re-contextualizing. However, in Chapter Three, Butler’s notion of performativity was introduced to make more sense of how individuals were becoming identifiable/recognizable as teachers. Following Drew and Guillemin’s (2014) suggestion, more work should be done with re-contextualizing.

**Final Words**

Vanheule (2002) outlines the importance of Lacanian psychoanalysis and its relation to qualitative research. Although Vanheule sees the potential of several Lacanian concepts, the Theory of Four Discourses is not mentioned. Within educational research, Four Discourses has been applied to pedagogical situations involving a learner and teacher (see Briton, 1995; Cho, 2009), but it is not used as often as Lacan’s three registers, the ego apparatus, or drive and desire. One contribution of this project is that it theorizes photo-elicitation through a Lacanian theoretical framework. Specifically, Lacan’s Theory of Four Discourses is used to conceptualize the researcher’s interpretation and analysis of data provided by a participant. In this situation, the researcher is in the position of analysand and the data functions like a dream. Thus, interpreting the data surfaces unconscious formations and delivers them into the Symbolic register.

“Identity processes are central to becoming and being a teacher (and a teacher educator, for that matter), and that removing the self (as fuzzy and complex as that concept may be) from teaching makes it difficult if not impossible to theorize or understand teaching in any meaningful way” (Pithouse, Mitchell, & Weber, 2009, p. 47). The need to understand identity processes is one of the immediate concerns in the field of teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).
Thus, the second essential contribution of this research is the conceptualization of identity work and the potential for individuals to shift their identifications through interpretation of the data they provide. It offers a psychoanalytical explanation for how identity shifts within the structure of the photo elicitation interview. That is, Lacan’s discourse of the Analyst is related to reflective practice and Beauchamp and Thomas underscore the importance of reflection to identity shaping:

Reflection is recognized as a key means by which teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a deep understanding of how this self fits into a larger context which involves others; in other words, reflection is a factor in the shaping of identity. (p. 182)

The connections between photo elicitation, the discourse of the Analyst, reflective practice, and identity work can be used to further develop identity research and the application of Lacanian theory to qualitative studies. Lacan’s works are quite expansive and perplexing with room for more (re)interpretation. This research attempts to provide a point of access to Lacanian concepts that may be applied to research on identity in teacher education.

The study of identity, personal and professional, is relevant to the teaching profession. However, identification is a complex construction not entirely of one’s own choosing. It is predominantly a creation of the social, cultural and historical meanings conveyed by words (the Symbolic) and images (the Imaginary). Furthermore, the Real is implicated in every word and image.

Within Teacher Education, photo elicitation may be used to question teacher candidates as they develop professional identities. Brown and Wiggins (2009) determined that photo elicitation is useful. However, despite their “efforts to expand [their] students’ perspective on culturally diverse classrooms they continued to hold traditional views on the nature of the environment, and the nature of the learner” (p. 49). Nevertheless, Hamilton (2016) found that
when student teachers used images to generate metaphors about teaching and teacher becoming, some individuals were better able to articulate their ideas about teaching and collaborate with others to learn.

Britzman (2009) argues that the training of a psychoanalyst has several features applicable to the educational encounter. Britzman urges educators to “confront the truth of trying to learn…one’s own unconscious theories” (p. 92). However, Britzman also acknowledges that “it may strike those of us in education as odd to take this quality of [psychoanalytic] training into our field; that is, to require teachers to undergo a psychoanalysis to qualify as teachers” (p. 92). This research does not presume to fulfill Britzman’s vision of the importance of psychoanalysis to teaching and learning. However, based on this study, perhaps there is a reasonable way to link psychoanalysis with Teacher Education.

Britzman (2009) suggests “that tolerating not knowing allows the work of learning to proceed, and that the analysis of one’s experience is the teacher’s significant learning” (p. 93). Therefore, it may be instructive for Teacher Education Programs to take up reflection as the study of identity through photo elicitation interviews and Lacanian psychoanalysis as described in this dissertation. Photo elicitation can provide opportunities for individuals to critically examine, question and alter their identifications as they consider their own images as well as those produced by others. This research may be considered an accessible exploration and explanation of what might happen when reflection takes a psychoanalytic turn in Teacher Education.
References


Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day*. Eugene, Or: International Society For Technology In Education (ISTE).


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Appendices

Appendix A

Instructions for participants.

Imagining Identities: A Lacanian Psychoanalytic Inquiry into Becoming a Teacher

You will be individually interviewed seven times, approximately once every month from November 2012 to June 2013. Each meeting will be scheduled for 45 minutes. In between these meetings, you will produce photos to be discussed during interviews. You do not have to have any expertise in photography. Photos may range from the unintentional and blurry to the planned and composed.

This study uses a method called photo elicitation interview (PEI) to generate data relevant to the following research question: How do student-teachers re-interpret, re-imagine, and re-construct their identities as they transition between roles of student and professional throughout a teacher education program?

In photo elicitation, either the researcher or the participant produces or provides images, in this case photographs, which become the objects of discussion. As a guide, we will follow this procedure between interviews:

1. A memory card and/or digital camera is provided to the participants. There is an opportunity to ask questions.
2. Prior to the next interview, participants are asked to produce photos that address the research questions. There might be a suggested guiding question, such as:
   - In your life, what objects have significant meaning (positive or negative) related to your teacher identity?
   - Where do you see yourself as a teacher?
   - What might you see as a teacher that you would not as a student?
   - What might be a visual metaphor for teaching?
3. Each participant records a title, a description, and a comment on thoughts and feelings evoked by at least three images.
4. After 3-4 weeks, participants are asked to return for a 45-minute individual interview where each one is asked to discuss at least three images s/he selected in advance.
5. During the interview, the participant discusses each image. The interviewer asks clarifying questions and encourages the participant to talk about the meaning and significance of each photo.
6. The interview transcript and visual content may be coded by the researcher.

Note: Due to privacy and confidentiality concerns, photos must not be taken during class time unless it is part of your regular class routine. Please focus on taking photos of objects and places while avoiding images that clearly show individual faces. Photos of recognizable people and unique places will not be published or may be reasonably altered to allow for publication while maintaining confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

If you have any questions or concerns about what you are asked to do in this study, please contact John Sarte by email, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, or by phone, xxxxxxxxxxx.

Version 1.1: 22 November 2012
Consent Form

Imagining Identities: A Lacanian Psychoanalytic Inquiry into Becoming a Teacher

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Anthony Clarke, Professor
Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy
Faculty of Education, UBC

Co-Investigator:
John Sarte, PhD Candidate/Student
Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy
Faculty of Education, UBC

This research is part of a graduate degree program. Some of the collected information will be used in a thesis (public document) and in publications, such as academic journals. The results will be publicly available, although the collected data will be accessed only by the co-investigator and the principal investigator.

Why are we doing this study?

This study will help us learn more about how student-teachers make sense of their identities as they shift between roles of university student and teacher. We are asking student-teachers to take part in this research study in order to share their understanding of teacher identity and how it might change over the course of several months as they complete course work and practicum experiences.

What happens to you in the study?

If you decide to take part in the study, we will arrange to have 7 interviews over 8 months at convenient places and times. Each interview will be 45-minutes long (5.25 hours in total). We will ask you to describe the type of teacher you are. Moreover, between interviews, you will use a digital camera to take photos related to your understanding of teacher identity. You will write a title, a description, and a thought or feeling in response to three of your images. During the study, you might spend an estimated minimum total time of 3.75 hours for taking pictures. Photos will be discussed during the interviews. Interviews will be audio recorded. The total amount of time required to participate in the research is about 9 hours from November 2012 to June 2013.

Note: Photos must not be taken during class time unless it is part of your regular class routine.

Study Results

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate dissertation and may also be published or reported in academic journal articles, books or conference presentations. A report on the results of the study will be given to the participants by email or mailing address provided on the consent form.

Version 1.0: 16 October 2012