

DIALOGUE FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Curriculum Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

June 2019

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Dialogue for teacher professional development

submitted by Saeed Nazari in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Curriculum Studies

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Abstract

My study bridges *self-education*, dialogue, and teacher professional development using the method of *currere*. I explore in what sense *self-reflective* writing and Gadamerian dialogue can contribute to teacher personal and professional development and foster student wellbeing. I argue that autobiography can help teachers to render their relationship with their lived experience and that hermeneutic reflexivity embedded in Gadamerian dialogue can encourage teacher professional development and increase student wellbeing in a democratic society of today. I begin with my Secondary School experience using regressive, progressive, analytic, and synthetic dimensions of *currere* to recollect, envision, analyse, and synthesize my schooling experience in order to engage more creatively as well as critically with my learning experience. Intended for teacher mobilization, social, and political enactment, I explore teacher *life-world* as curriculum to provide a personalized understanding of teacher development as transformative, creative, humanistic, holistic, and emancipatory. I embark on the power of dialogue as a reflective and intersubjective practice in teacher professional development using which teachers can engage with the humanity and selfhood of themselves, other teachers and students through open and genuine conversations to encourage highest-quality teaching for students. I argue that Gadamerian dialogue can enhance teacher knowledge by overcoming fore-understanding and pressure of opinion which contributes to teacher personal and professional development. I discuss Gadamerian dialogue can nourish students' voice by rendering the ways in which open-minded teachers can approve of students' mistakes, errors, and half-formed arguments to provide a free space for students to feel more comfortable to move from the familiar to the strange. Finally, I summarize my study, return to research questions, discuss research contributions and

limitations of my research. I conclude that *currere* facilitates self-education, connects self to social and political spheres, and encourages a hermeneutical understanding of lifeworld embedded in its analytic and synthetic phases for teacher personal and professional development. Such autobiographical understanding of self is complemented by Gadamerian hermeneutical interpretation of being rooted in history, text, and ethics as Gadamer invokes a historical, textual, and ethical understanding of teacher existential experience using self-reflective and interpretive dialogue. No specific professional development activities follow from this research.

Lay summary

My reflective research opens a pathway to understanding the meaning of curriculum using *self-education* as a preliminary step towards teacher professional development. Using hermeneutic dialogue, teachers can master the art of questioning, overcome their own preconceptions, understand students' voice and respect their agency as a precondition for a self-fulfilling educational experience. Teachers and students can shape their individuality, create their singular ways of thinking and being, and expand on their *life-world* in their educational experience using *self-reflective* dialogue.

Preface

This dissertation is original, independent, and novel work by Saeed Nazari. The final section of Chapter 3 is drawn upon my interfaith dialogue published before:

Nazari, S., & Heng Hartse, J. (2018). Duoethnography: Provoking ideology and curriculum in dialogic voices. In E. Hasebe-Ludt & C. Leggo (Eds.), *Canadian Curriculum Studies: A Métissage of Inspiration/Imagination/Interconnection* (pp. 165-173). Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Heng Hartse, J., & Nazari, S. (2018). Duoethnography: An interfaith dialogue on lived experiences in TESOL. In M. S. Wong & A. Mahboob (Eds.), *Spirituality & English Language Teaching: Religious Explorations of Teacher Identity, Pedagogy and Context* (pp. 46-62). UK: Multilingual Matters.

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Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. William F. Pinar who kindly granted me the opportunity to learn from his scholarship in the department of Curriculum and Pedagogy. Without Dr. Pinar's exemplary patience, insightful guidance, encouraging comments, and devoted commitment, this study would not be possible. He kindled the light of self-knowledge and ingrained the art of self-education, self-understanding, and self-actualization in me - an innovative meaning of life-world which will remain for my whole personal and academic life.

I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Anthony Clarke, and Dr. Carl Leggo who offered unceasing support in my thesis committee. Dr. Clarke kindly invited me to the community of curriculum theorists and provided caring support and constant encouragement from the onset of doctoral program. As a dedicated mentor, he patiently, wisely, and enthusiastically opened the mesmerizing world of teacher development and transfixed the true character of a devoted scholar in my mind. Dr. Leggo unleashed the power of self in me through his aesthetic and poetic scholarship. His *Creative Writing* course taught me the way to understand and value my creative voice as an educator and transcend my prescriptive writing methods as an English language teacher. His courageous and fearless narratives invited me to find the light within and transform from a caterpillar to a butterfly.

I owe my sincere gratitude to Dr. Anne Phelan who provoked my thoughts in her course: *Introduction to Curriculum Issues and Theories* by opening the world of subjectivity in teacher education towards me. I offer my enduring gratefulness to Dr. Stephen Petrina who caringly and patiently guided me in his course *Doctoral Seminar in Curriculum and Pedagogy*.

Dedication

In the everlasting memory of my mother who always encouraged me to keep my faith and to my devoted wife and children, studious students, and committed teachers.

Introduction

The point of entry: Autobiography and *self-education*

In her engaging paper “On the Virtues of *Currere*¹”, Baszile (2017) refers to one of her favorite quotes in *I Love, Therefore I Am* - the book she reads every morning: “Education will transform the world. *Self-education* will transform education” (Abundantlee, 2016, p. 3; quoted in Baszile 2017, p. vi). I reflect on Baszile’s citation as the point of entry into my study; I am wondering which goal one might consider for education other than *self-education*. Why should education promote self-education to transform itself? Why should education be committed to self-exploration and self-actualization of teachers and students? In what way can self-education foster self-transformation, self-fulfillment, and self-wellbeing? Can educators explore their life-world and educational experience to transform education and why should they do that?

Having been practising the autobiographical method of *currere* for over 20 years, Baszile (2017) is wondering why it is so difficult to define *currere* in absolute terms: “it is, after all, like any art, or science for that matter, subject to the idiosyncrasies of the subject. It would be, however, more than a shame for people to shy away or run away not because they disagree with the premise, but simply because they don’t know the premise” (p. vi). I can understand Baszile’s concern and am wondering why procedural education with a mere focus on tasks and learnt skills which pays scant attention to the learner’s self-exploratory learning experience, imagination, and

1. *Currere* is an autobiographical method of inquiry into educational experience which constructs the individual’s self/other understanding in four phases - regressive, progressive, analytic, and synthetic: [see <http://currereexchange.weebly.com>, and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Currere>]

fantasies might have alienated people and thereby lose connection with their selfhood. And in what way can *curre* come to the rescue?

Curre involves in self-education, and my engagement with self-reflective writing and inquiring into my educational experience has contributed to my psychological, intellectual, and emotional transformation, and has provided a meaningful understanding of education. As my study opens with an autobiographical understanding of my psychological development as an English language practitioner and emerging scholar, a brief overview of the cognitivist movement and the historical context through which the method of *curre* came into existence will follow later in chapter 1. Britzman (2009) emphasizes that our educational experience can permeate our judgment and disturb our meaning-making process and perceived reality.

Understanding that our mind owns the power to reflect on our educational experience enables the autobiographer to observe the source of the disturbance. This observation is voluntarily and unsolicited as is the method of *curre*. Yet, the question remains why we should study our educational experience? Could, for instance, this kind of research support teachers who provide care for self and others? Jung (2015, p. ii) argues that an education centered on self-care and care-for-others can connect our knowledge and ethics to make “professional judgment” and encourage students to create their standards for well-being of self, others, and the society. What if the teacher knowledge is prejudiced and in what way could they know that? Without studying their educational experience through academic research, is it possible for teachers to achieve an unbiased judgment of their knowledge and thereby problematize their professional practices? To me, admitting that there is an unleashed power of subjectivity² conditioned and restrained by

2. The term ‘subjectivity’ is the lived sense of self which is associated with circumstances of everyday life from which one’s meaning of life is constantly constructed (Pinar, 2009).

educational experience makes a convincing reason to initiate this journey. That is the reason why I draw upon the method of *currere* to develop a better understanding of my own education and to connect this knowledge to teacher professional development, and student well-being. I will study in what sense teachers can experience a transformative learning experience using the method to open creative and critical thinking spaces for themselves and their students. In the following, I will start with my Secondary School experience to highlight the way teacher dialogue can contribute to student well-being.

My first comprehensive exam experience: A narrative

I remember the time when I was in Resalat Secondary School in grade eight in Tehran when one of my teachers asked four students including myself to see the school principal during the break. We were not sure what news he was going to disclose in the office once we had a meeting with Mr. Naseri who was always passionate about the quality of our education. We all knew; however, it was an important meeting as students were rarely called to have a meeting with the principal. In our brief exchange, he informed us that because of our grades and high average scores, we were selected among the other grade eight students to take the entrance exam of Alborz High School which constantly ranked as the first or second high school in Tehran considering its educational standards. My entrance into Alborz High School could guarantee my admittance into a decent program in one of the high-ranking universities in Tehran as the *quality* of education in Alborz High School was remarkably high. The teachers were intelligent, knowledgeable, and passionate about students' achievement and were well qualified to prepare them for standardized tests and produce pre-structured educational packages for their students to

be able to pass the main university entrance exam - called Konkour in Iran - upon successful completion of high school.

What I can recall on the exam day has always been *engraved* in me as a memorable educational experience as it was my first encounter with a comprehensive entrance exam with literally rounds of multiple choice question! I started answering the first round of questions believing that I could leave the rough chair I was sitting on once finished. Then, the second round of the questions came, and the third, and the fourth! I was quite shocked and wanted to escape. Once I completed the first round of the multiple-choice questions and noticed the second round was coming, I was thinking to myself that this could be just the tip of the iceberg and was wondering what I would experience once I attend Alborz high school. Desperately panicked, I asked one of the invigilators if I could *leave* the exam setting and he informed me that exam was not finished yet and invited me to continue answering the questions to the end. Once I finished answering the questions, I left the school hallway and *never* returned. I did not even bother contacting the school for my results!

Lost in school curriculum

When I arrived home, my parents and older sister who were more engaged with my educational experience than the rest of the family asked me about Alborz School Entrance Exam experience and I informed them that I was not willing to attend the school *at all*. This critical decision at times reminds me of the poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost (Wilcox & Barron, 2000) as it really changed the path of my educational experience. As specified by the Iranian Ministry of Education, there were three main fields of study students could enroll in upon their entry into high school at a young age of 15; that is, Mathematics, Experimental Science,

and Humanities. Although I was interested in Humanities, I enrolled in Experimental Science as the career opportunities with satisfactory annual income were appealing after graduation from a decent program such as Medicine. I started my first year in Be'sat High School in my residential catchment area, which was a demanding experience with all new subjects such as Chemistry, Algebra, Physics, Geometry, and Biology among others introduced to the curriculum when I was only 15 years old. Apparently, some of my school grades went downhill. I loved learning new subjects and was committed to memorizing new themes and ideas but I had difficulty understanding Physics equations, Algebraic formulas, and Chemistry rules in the textbooks. I enjoyed learning Persian Literature, English Language, Arabic Language, and Physical Education, though. Now that I am scanning my high school master report cards, I can merely see undescriptive numerical values out of 20 with *no names* of teachers. I am wondering why I was forced to study so many subjects within a year. In what way did Chemistry formulas and Algebraic expressions, for instance, contribute to the well-being of my educational experience? Did I favor satisfactory education to know *my selfhood* in school? Why did my curriculum fail to include Music, Arts, Drawing, Painting, and Philosophy? Could I have more time to explore my own aesthetic and artistic talents at that critical and creative age in school? Couldn't the curriculum invite me to be in touch with self-education, self-exploration, and self-fulfillment? Was there an intentional disregarding, overlooking, or excluding students' selfhood in their educational experience?

In quest for quality education: Dialogue to the rescue

In search of a higher quality of education, I attended Motahari High School in Tehran and studied there for two more years in grades 10 and 11 and favored a more caring educational

experience. Upon reviewing the scores in my report cards, I notice a steady progress in my achievement during these years but I am still wondering if my scores are an indication of my self-satisfaction in those grades? Are my scores an indicator of a nurturing learning experience aimed at self-actualization and self-wellbeing? What kind of learning was valued in my high school experience? In what way did the teachers evaluate our learning progress? Clearly, I am not well satisfied with those aspects of my learning experience where I merely followed a procedural, rote learning, and parrot-fashion pattern based on a particular assessment regime. One aspect of my learning experience was teacher dialogue, and I would like to dwell on this aspect of an innovative curriculum. I remember one of my English language teachers in grade 11 who was a caring teacher as a true gentleman. In our quality time in the classroom, he opened a dialogue with all of us about the social and political aspects of education and the way those aspects could influence our selfhood. For instance, he critiqued the socio-economic status of public school teachers influencing their quality of teaching. The dialogue provided a unique democratic opportunity for the students to share their voices in the classroom openly which has given me a memorable learning experience as I could feel worthy when I was engaged in non-judgmental, and genuine conversations with my English language teacher. I recall my Biology teacher in grades 10 and 11 when he talked about his lived experience³ and shared his stories with us. As a knowledgeable, devoted, and disciplined teacher, he shared his life stories to which I paid full attention as I thought a teacher could be a knowledgeable *human* with a story to share, so I was eager to learn from his engaging stories as well as his knowledge. His real-life stories taught us new aspects of learning and being, and filled the space between the teacher and students. Not being well-satisfied with the classroom atmosphere in grade 11 and in quest of a

3. Heidegger calls it as *lebenswelt*: “the world of lived experience, the preconceptual experiential realm that is usually beyond our perceptual field” (Pinar, 1975b, p. 389).

higher quality of education, I moved to Ghods High School in grade 12 where I met another teacher who left a remarkable impression. My Arabic teacher shared his lived stories with us and critiqued the socio-political status quo, being frustrated. His teaching method was exemplary, however, his talent in engaging us with his narratives, and his life-world was mesmerizing. Involved in reading history as his hobby, he encouraged us not to be indoctrinated by the mass media and reflect on our conscious self-development. I am wondering why only a few teachers during my high school experience had the courage, enthusiasm, and talent to engage us with their stories while others were quite reserved and preferred to stick to their prescribed curriculum. Among all teachers in high school, I mainly remember those who shared their personal stories with us in a dialogic conversation and I feel truly indebted to them as they created an unparalleled space of mutual understanding and trust for me. Not all students thought such personal stories were interesting, though. Sharing teacher personal stories - their otherwise hidden aspect of curriculum - meant caring *for me*. Their narrated stories worked as the main source of inspiring teacher knowledge and understanding - teacher lifeworld - through connecting to my personhood as a student. Those teachers - I believe - did not intend to teach or preach us, but shared their very personal stories to create a democratic space of dialogue to connect prior to teaching us. Once transferring teacher knowledge can educate students, sharing teacher personal stories using dialogue in a democratic curriculum can inspire students and remain with them forever. That is the way I understand the impression they have left on me once they courageously, enthusiastically, and caringly revealed their inner life which inspired me thoroughly.

Research questions

Triggered by my experience with those teachers in high school, self-explorative and self-reflexive learning using dialogue has always been my passion - a dream that finally came true during my academic studies in my doctoral program in Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia. Prior to my entry into the program, I came across the autobiographical method of *currere* when I was engaged in an interfaith dialogue with a friend of mine - Joel Heng Hartse - who was an English language educator like myself at that time. An overview of our duoethnographic dialogue and the resulting publications are referenced at the end of Chapter 3. Long before knowing *currere*, I remember I visualised a bright future - an account of which is presented at the beginning of Chapter 1, however, I was not aware that I was engaged in the progressive phase of *currere* when I was envisioning my vivid dreams. Starting with self-education, I will move on to teacher professional development using dialogue. The following questions have guided my research:

- 1. In what way has the autobiographical method of currere encouraged an understanding of my educational experience?*
- 2. How can autobiographical research contribute to teacher development?*
- 3. In what sense can dialogue nurture teacher professional development?*
- 4. In what way can Gadamerian dialogue foster teacher professional development?*
- 5. Could Gadamerian dialogue encourage teachers to value student voice?*

To hear, understand, connect with, and empower my narrative voice by inquiring into my educational experience, my dissertation starts with the autobiographical method of *currere* in Chapter 1. Then, I broaden my inquiry into the autobiographical research in teacher development

in Chapter 2, prior to considering the way dialogue can nurture teacher professional development in Chapter 3. Finally, Gadamerian dialogue will provide an interpretive insight into teacher professional development in Chapter 4, and will help to foster student voice, wellbeing, and autonomy in Chapter 5.

Overview of the chapters

In the introduction, I regress to remember my high school educational experience to emphasize the way opening dialogue and sharing teacher stories in a procedural curriculum which is a stepwise curriculum for acquisition of motor skills by breaking them into small chunks can leave a particularly positive experience for students once they understand their subjectivity vis-à-vis teacher lived experience.

In Chapter 1, I regress to recall my educational experience using the autobiographical method of *currere*. As an emerging scholar, I remember my past educational experience and draw upon the related literature to achieve a deeper understanding of my learning experience. Informed by past educational experience and future possibilities, I discuss in what sense my subjectivity mobilizes me to enter the public sphere by learning from pedagogical knowledge.

In Chapter 2, I expand on my understanding of autobiographical research in teacher development. I study my selfhood as an educator and examine the way autobiographical knowledge of teachers has contributed to teacher development. I study the way teachers can reveal untold stories, share teaching pedagogy and practice, build evolving communities, transform traditional understanding of curriculum, and mobilize public and political spheres.

In Chapter 3, I inquire into teacher professional development as a responsibility of individual teachers and the schools they work in to ensure the highest-quality teaching. I

highlight that educators can learn to engage with the humanity and selfhood of teachers and students at schools through open and genuine conversations. In the end, I delve into interfaith dialogue as a less explored arena in teacher professional development within the context of TESOL to provide an intersubjective understanding of faith in my pedagogy and practice.

In chapter 4, I inquire into the way Gadamerian dialogue can foster teacher professional development as it provides an interpretive understanding of intersubjective knowledge that complements my learning experience with *currere* and autobiography in teacher development and adds hermeneutic dialogue to teacher development. My understanding of dialogic knowledge, art of conversation, prejudice, tradition, and authority reinforces self-examination and supplements the self with a historical understanding of self/other to foster teacher professional development.

In chapter 5, I will expand on Gadamerian hermeneutics to nourish students' voice and study in what sense open-minded teachers strengthen learners' voice by understanding their mistakes, errors, and half-formed arguments as a process of their becoming, thriving, and flourishing. Teachers can provide a supportive space within which students feel more comfortable to move from the familiar [known] to the strange [unknown] and feel at home with their learning experience. Achieving self-fulfillment [what Aristotle called *eudaimonia*], students will learn to express their subjectivity, recognize their own life course, and treasure their individuality in tandem with others in their social space - what I mean by high-quality education.

In Chapter 6, I summarize findings, provide research contributions, acknowledge limitations, and suggest further research.

Chapter 1: *Currere* and my educational experience

Currere is a method that produces a self in relationship to others.

Nicolas Ng-A-Fook (2005, p. 55)

1.1 Introduction

As an English language educator and doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, I inquire into my educational experience using the autobiographical method of *currere*. My research question is: In what way has the autobiographical method of *currere* encouraged an understanding of my educational experience? Starting with a brief account of my cross-contextual educational experience to highlight the power of a single short story, I discuss the concepts of voice and place as commonplace abstractions in biographical and autobiographical literature among others [e.g. community and gender] as they resonate with my cross-contextual educational experience. I present an overview of the curriculum reconceptualist movement to trace back to the roots of cognitivism and the autobiographical method of *currere* which emerged from the movement. I ultimately underscore the significance of subjectivity, and explain free association and bracketing phenomenological processes along with the temporality of *currere*. In the following, my personalized schooling story presents a brief account of my own educational experience across two countries of residence - Iran and Canada.

1.2 An excerpt from my educational experience

I remember the time when I was walking down the street to Ghods High School in the capital city of Tehran as an eighteen-year-old senior student. I was visualizing a dreamland where I could learn something new every single day and live a peaceful life. Since my early schooling days, I had always envisioned living in a place based on the new technology, scientific innovations, and sustainable development. The place where I imagined living was like the fancy images I watched in the movies. What I can recollect more is the tidy and neat streets, green surroundings, and nice educated people walking by with a smile on their face. I am wondering what made me fantasize about living in such a place during my schooling years. Did an external experience trigger my dream, for instance, like the way humans started dreaming of flying as they watched birds flying by or was it a human innate talent of visualizing the future?

Years later as an English language practitioner at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, I have utterly realized what I dreamed of. The education I am experiencing now in my doctoral program provides that deeper understanding of self through autobiographical learning. The place I live on UBC campus is surrounded by the woods and furnished by green plants, and the educated and civilized people in my neighborhood and school are just part of my earlier dreams. Now, I am dreaming new possibilities in education for myself and others. Fantasies are not simply an escape for me anymore. They have constructed my envisioned past, present and future. With the confidence achieved through realizing my fantasies, I am envisioning new possibilities in curriculum studies each and every day. And I am wondering in what sense these imagined possibilities have informed my own teaching pedagogy and practice?

1.3 Autobiography as a cross-contextual journey

As human beings, we are always connected to and communicate with our existing social and political forces and never live in a vacuum. Our autobiography, consequently, occurs in the context of our existence. Morris (2015) notes that autobiography is not simply telling a story because our narrative is closely knit to a “historical context” (p. 211). My educational account as a personal example incorporates two historical contexts - one in each paragraph above. In the first paragraph, I have included my secondary school learning experience in Tehran as a metropolitan capital city of Iran where I grew up and completed my Bachelor’s degree in English Language and Literature in 1998. As I am recalling my memories of undergraduate studies, memorization of subject materials in a pre-structured curriculum was the key component. Miller’s (2005) teaching account of her undergraduate teacher preparation courses resonates with my own learning experience as a bachelor student:

Such perspectives had informed my English-major undergraduate studies but had in no way influenced my scant and behaviorally oriented undergraduate teacher preparation or my full-time high school teaching experiences. There, I was pressured to present predetermined, sequential, skills-oriented and measurable versions of “English” to my students - hardly ways to encourage looking “inquiringly and wonderingly on the world”.
(p. 46)

Inspired by Miller’s teaching experience, I am wondering in what way memorization and rote learning have constructed my past educational experience. Although improving mental strength through memorizing new concepts, ideas, and words is important, memorization can probably be the very first stage of learning and understanding. It was impossible for me to become a successful English language teacher without memorizing new language structures,

vocabularies, stress patterns, rhythms, chunking, punctuations, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions of English language. However, I remember cramming for final exams when we were forced to memorize a lot of language chunks and subject materials within a short period of time which has not left a pleasant educational memory of that experience in my mind. Or, I remember the time when I was teaching English language courses in classes with 50 to 60 students as a faculty member in Arsanjan Azad University between June 2003 and July 2009. As prescribed in their English language curriculum, my poor students had to take mid-term and final multiple-choice tests to achieve satisfactory scores in Basic English and General English Language courses. Sadly enough, a lot of them failed as they had trouble understanding English language grammar and reading comprehension. I am wondering why they had to take multiple-choice tests. Wasn't there a more humanistic and personalized approach to evaluate their educational experience and final achievement? In what sense has their learning experience in those classes contributed to their well-being or ill-being [test anxiety] depending on the way assessment is constructed in those contexts?

My learning journey in my doctoral program, however, takes innovative pathways into understanding my educational experience as an educator; there are no chunks or predetermined structures to memorize. Through this new understanding of education, I consider my past educational experience as externally-oriented and procedural. Thinking, living, and learning autobiographically, however, involves in a creative bottom-up processing than a static top-down step-wise procedure. The content of learning is being. Considering our life history as the content of learning, the method of *currere* invokes our educational experience in four existential phases by recollecting, envisioning, analyzing, and synthesizing our educational narratives to create new possibilities of education.

Miller (2010a) notes that autobiographical work has the potential to reveal that we have been conditioned by culture, context and history, and it goes beyond simply telling a personal story by students, teachers and educators. Stories occur within the context and history of the autobiographer, so they take the contextual and historical attributes. Regarding my cross-contextual educational experience, Miller writes autobiographical theories highlight that the self-knowledge of individuals could be continuously re-situated in streams of global mobility - a process which has made me more conscious of my existential experience in previous and current countries of residence specifically once I am involved in my writing. I am now a bilingual and bicultural educator whose 'subjectivity' has been informed by at least two languages and cultures, English and Persian. Through reading my autobiographical study, students and teachers can learn from my experience and become conscious of their own cross-contextual and trans-cultural experience as reading other autobiographical research made me aware of my own cross-contextual learning journey.

One might want to go further by reading between the lines in my autobiographical excerpt and question; what feelings regarding people, place and culture are conveyed in both places of residence? What is the main reason for visualizing a dreamland in my first place of residence? In what way was my visualization empowered by or because of my high school educational experience? In what way might I evaluate my educational experience as a doctoral student, graduate teaching assistant, and graduate research assistant? These simple phenomenological and existential questions might sound naively personal and psychoanalytical in my educational inquiry, however, probing into such questions has provided a deep understanding of my educational experience as they create new meanings of my lived experience. My review of the literature has revealed that some concepts such as voice and place

are commonly used in autobiography. Drawing on related literature, I will study these concepts in my own autobiographical account to achieve a deeper understanding of them.

1.4 Voice

Voice in autobiographical writing emerges as the most appealing and powerful concept for me. When I reflect on my autobiographical being, I understand my inner voice as an integral part of me when I am engaged in thinking and writing my dissertation. Autobiographical writing keeps me in touch with my inner voice and gives me strength through this attachment. I can hear my internal dialogue when revealing my educational stories. My autobiographical research has also given me confidence with my human voice when talking to people and presenting in academic and non-academic venues. The more connection I have with my inner voice through autobiography, the more clarity I can feel within and concentration I can invest in my performance in the public arena. Pinar et al. (1995) points out the concept of voice as pivotal in autobiographical and biographical research in the work of Janet Miller, D. Jean Clandinin, and F. Michael Connelly. Miller (1990) argues that instead of proposing an infallible argument, she purposefully creates spaces for the other teachers so that they are enabled to find their voices in ongoing conversations. She asserts that their narrative of community in many ways represent the “struggles of position and voice” among university and classroom teachers, and tensions regarding researcher stance in relation to “subjects, data, and the possibility of interpretations” (Miller, 1990, p. 8). Miller’s arguments of creating space and struggle of voice bring to mind my parenting skills at home. Happily bonding us together, it is my contemplative silence that can give sympathetic and supportive space to my family to find their voice and create their space in our dialogue. My autobiographical writing has invited me to listen to others more attentively and

to create a space for their dialectic. Creating a receptive mode of being allows a reflective space for understanding other interlocutors. Grumet's critique of autobiographical voice displays the subjectivity of a female teacher among gazers: "Teacher talk is then a defensive move deployed to assert her subjectivity in the face of the objectifying gaze" (Grumet, 1990, p. 279). The term *gaze* calls to mind the process of marginalization during which teacher subjectivity could be informed and transformed to accommodate the ideal image of onlookers in a sociopolitical context of curriculum. It is possible for teachers to achieve a balanced understanding of their personal voice vis-à-vis the strength of the social forces and circumstances surrounding them using autobiography. The process of marginalization, however, can trace back to early childhood education. In *Bitter Milk*, Grumet (1988) contends school curriculum moves the child from a private space of home to the public world and overlooks the possibility of a dialogue between the private and the public by imposing an objectified and impersonal understanding of education on the children. In this isolating, bureaucratic, and hurried transition, the child's subjectivity and voice are completely taken for granted while curriculum could be "a temporary and negotiated settlement" (p. xiii) between the private and the public lives. Marginalized teachers can reclaim their voice lost in their childhood curriculum with an autobiographical inquiry into their early educational experiences.

1.4.1 Voice and biographic situation

To reclaim their voice, teachers can understand their social, cultural, historical, and political positioning. Once teachers understand their "biographic situation" (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. 51) and become conscious of the historical period and cultural space they are situated in, they can express their autobiographical voice more fully. Being conscious of teacher thinking, knowing,

and understanding calls for a self-reflective and self-analytic study of learning experience. Teachers who explore their knowledge understand the importance of their subjective narratives otherwise overlooked. Sharing these stories can facilitate dialogue for the students to reveal their untold stories. Phelan (2005) contends that teachers have hardly been considered as “reflective practitioners” and could be given the liberty to recognize and express their voice:

[My inquiry] illustrates one teacher candidate's struggle to let go of a conception of knowledge as generalizable formulae that can be readily applied in practice and to become more open to practice itself as a site of learning. Teacher educators can nurture such openness by helping aspiring teachers to appreciate the fragility of knowledge, the epistemological value of feeling, and the priority of the particular, in teaching. (p. 339)

Reflective practitioners are conscious of their students' knowledge and how fragile this knowledge might be. Using ontological, phenomenological, and epistemological understanding of knowledge, teacher candidates can achieve a personalized way of thinking, being, and becoming. Through self-education teachers can analyze and synthesize the formulaic learning and understanding of their concepts, ideas, and practices by reflecting on their biographic situation. As Phelan asserts, the transition from formulaic learning to epistemological understanding of teacher knowledge is not an easy task. Opening new possibilities in education, teacher educators can vocalize these epistemological questions in their daily practices: Why should we follow a certain method, approach, or procedure? In what sense can self-education help us transcend the limitations of such procedural learnings? In what way can we let go of a formulaic understanding of teaching practice? Is it possible to achieve a critical, generative, and transformative understanding of teacher knowledge without using a procedural method? These questions can encourage teachers and teacher educators who have experienced traditional

schooling systems to articulate their powerful voice using epistemological understanding of being, knowledge, and learning ingrained in their biographic situation. In *Curriculum theorizing and teacher education*, Phelan (2015) acknowledges her book as a collection of voices, stories, and lives of students and teachers, and renders their voice as a means of self-expression and self-representation in dialogic encounters. She asserts that teacher candidates should have freedom to express their voice in the online wiki environment designed for teacher candidates as a *community web* to practice plurality:

Finally, participants require enough freedom to argue, debate, and negate ideas without feeling “edited” or, even more significantly, without feeling that their voices can be “deleted” from the wiki. The difficulty, of course, is that the achievement of a shared professional purpose is both a prerequisite AND an ongoing accomplishment of democratic engagement within the profession.

The freedom to express themselves in the online wiki environment anonymously can encourage teacher candidates to risk self-disclosure, potentially enabling understandings of teacher biographic situation more openly than in face-to-face classroom dialogues.

1.4.2 Voice and empowerment

To empower learners and teachers in education, we can plan to strengthen their voice. Recognizing students and teachers’ voice in curriculum, Maxine Greene (1971) argues that in articulated curriculum the subjectivity of the learner is excluded. For visualizing how estranged from self the learner might look, Greene refers to Schutz’s allegoric description of the stranger in the town looking for the map [pre-structured curriculum] asking an expert [teacher] how to get from A to B. Learners might sound like strangers to the subject of study, however, they can be

encouraged to keep in touch with themselves in quest for personal quality, subjective meaning, and individual understanding. Greene (1973) later in *Teacher as Stranger*, motivates teachers to become self-conscious about their sociopolitical, cultural, historical, and personal influences on the development of teacher subjectivity and curriculum. By taking a stranger's vantage point on daily life, she encourages the teachers to look "inquiringly and wonderingly on the (varying) world in which our students and we live" (cited in Miller, 2010a, p. 136). Through this lens, Greene situates teachers in a space of doubt, fragility, and wonder searching for an innovative and creative meaning and understanding of curriculum. Students and teachers can both assume the role of a stranger once they are engaged in exploring new dimensions of themselves and their educational experience. Who is not a stranger to self? Who knows the dimensions of their subjectivity and personhood? Being a stranger is probably more significant once teachers become alienated by going through a behavioristic schooling and a traditional curriculum. Being familiar to self for teachers can facilitate their open conversations with other educators and their students. Oakeshott (1959, p. 11) asserts that education is an invitation to a conversation in which we "learn to recognize the voices, the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation", and considers the outcome of intellectual achievement in terms of its contribution to the conversation. Our educational conversations can improve the intellectual, emotional, and social well-being of ourselves, students, and teachers. In this process of thriving, autobiographical voice can represent the identity, gender, and individuality of the recounter. Grumet (1990) elaborates on autobiographical voice as a medium for cultural, political and social processes for teachers and asserts that her use of voice as a *feminine* marker distinguishes her autobiographical work. She

theorizes a more complex notion of voice categorizing three parts in academic voice: situation, narrative, and interpretation:

The first, situation, acknowledges that we tell our story as a speech event that involves the social, cultural, and political relations in and to which we speak. Narrative,..., invites all the specificity, presence, and power that the symbolic and semiotic registers of our speaking can provide. And interpretation provides another voice, a reflexive and more distant one... . This trio may save us from the objectification of identity politics by recognizing the dynamic process through which identity is grounded in history, and desire, subjected to description and reflection and constantly presented to and negotiated with other people. (Grumet, 1990, pp. 281-82)

Understanding that teacher voice indicates socio-cultural, political, and historical meanings can inform and empower teachers and teacher educators to reclaim their identity and agency as familiar than stranger, as influential than influenced, and as social than individual in curriculum development and implementation. By telling their stories, educators can vocalize their gendered and individualized understanding of their biographic situations with other teachers to help them understand the meaning of different teaching orientations through reflection, contemplation, and constant questioning of pedagogical understanding. Recognizing teacher trio; situation, narrative, and interpretation, is a preliminary stage in a bottom-up learning process through which teacher subjectivity and personhood are regarded as pivotal to educational experience. Rooted in teacher subjectivity, voice and place are intermingled and interconnected in understanding teacher autobiographical stories and lived experiences. They are so interconnected that understanding one demands knowing the other. I will inquire into the concept

of place in autobiographical inquiries to achieve a deeper understanding of this concept in the teacher biographic situation.

1.5 Place

My former and current places of residence are embedded in my autobiographical account of educational experience. Autobiographical experience occurs in place and borrows its characteristics from place. In the University of Tehran in the capital city of Iran, I conducted my undergraduate studies in English Language and Literature between 1994 and 1998. In Shiraz University - Shiraz is a major city in Fars province in Iran - I completed my graduate studies in Teaching English as an Additional Language from 2001 to 2003. In my present place of residence on UBC campus in Vancouver, I have been living for eight years and have been conducting doctoral studies since 2015. In my autobiography, I use place as a point of entry as it is a concrete aspect of lived experience which connects me to past, present and future memories. When writing my autobiography, place ties me to my teaching experience. As place is embedded in teacher educational experience and lived memories, deeper layers of place can unfold their meaning within the contextualized story of teachers (Barane, Hugo, & Clemetsen, 2018). Regarding the deep meaning of place, Elbaz-Luwisch Freema (2014) describes her chapter on memory: “resemb[ling] a meandering stream that curves back on itself at times, but still arrives, eventually at a wider and deeper place, a fuller understanding of memory in its connections to teaching and pedagogy” (Freema, 2014, p. 2). This paradoxical understanding of place in autobiography reveals its deeper layers of memory as one *curves back* on self. As a stream meanders on its bed, teacher subjectivity [being] is contextualized and localized by its place. The interaction between teacher subjectivity and context provides new meanings as in my case -

being an Iranian-Canadian educator - my teaching experience is shaped by both contexts.

However, I could hardly imagine doing an autobiographical research in my previous country of residence. The interaction between the teacher and place opens a dialogue between them as the stream is not confined to its bed and can expand its bank. The interactive dialogue between teacher and context can provide new understanding and meaning both for the teacher and the context.

1.5.1 Place and social space

In curriculum studies, autobiography is composed in a constant dialogue between local place and subjectivity of teachers. There is a deeper relationship between self and place understanding which gives us a sense of the psychoanalytical and social forces directed towards self. Place shapes self and gives new identity and structure to self. My pedagogy, methodology, and practice communicate with my place and are informed by that. Without place, our understanding of these aspects of teaching will become decontextualized and unsophisticated. Edgerton (1991) confirms that autobiography does not exist in solitude and it connects self to place, history, culture, and race:

Autobiographical writing enables students to study themselves. Such study links self to place, and place is simultaneously historical, cultural, and racial. The autobiography of the “other” - indeed an “other” who shares a geographical place can provide, in a sense, a foil to one’s own history. Via another’s life one understands more fully one’s own, as well as social and historical ties that link both lives to a particular place,...” . (cited in Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 78)

Geographical places encountered either as the context of residence in autobiographer's first-hand experience or as narrated in another autobiographer's account can link the audience to their individual, historical, and cultural circumstances. Edgerton continues that to understand place in curriculum studies, one should be familiar with the concept of "other", "difference", and "them and us". She invites teachers and other curriculum workers to teach in ways that "reincorporate the excluded" and avoid "othering" people. She refers to an allegorical understanding of home as place and notes that othering people [teachers] in their home [curriculum] can reinforce the concept of Greene's *estrangement* (1973) in teacher education. Through facilitating teacher connection with place and understanding teacher social, political, and historical space, curriculum can become an interactive medium of inclusion and mutual understanding. Thinking autobiographically links teachers to and makes them conscious about their social and political space. Teacher autobiography without acknowledging its place and social space sounds like a river without its bed and bank. By connecting to social and historical space, teachers will include *others* in their own (auto)biography to prevent the process of self/other alienation in educational experience.

1.5.2 Place and emergence

In an emerging understanding of subjectivity, place signifies different meanings for curriculum theorists and practitioners. For instance, Pinar (1991) discusses that place is a form of "social psychoanalysis" rather than ground that enables the students to "emerge as figure" (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 165), and participate critically in their historical present. So, place is an emerging space of active participation in creating one's historical being. In her chapter in

Curriculum Intertext, Lynn Fels (2003) refers to an aesthetic aspect of curricular places of possibility. Fels understands curriculum as a narrative that connects us to imaginative spaces:

My work investigates curricular places of possibility, absence, and disruption realized through performance. Performance not as process nor as product, but as breath, intermingling, unexpected journey landscapes reeling against the sky in a sudden moment of recognition. I am curious about the spaces that we breathe into being through imaginative play and exploration, curricular spaces that open to us with invitation. (Fels, 2003, p. 173 cited in Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, 2003)

Without imagination, could teachers envision future possibilities within their boundaries of place? Fels' conception of performance encompasses lived memories and future opportunities of self-education as breath which is going in and out every second - a moment of consciousness within. Engaged with their autobiography, teachers can understand the conscious power of curriculum within to connect with the breathing space of learners. So, understanding place will help teachers with their careful decisions for their shared space with students. Renee Norman (2003) describes Aoki's autobiographical conception of places in-between in curriculum:

Ted spoke of place, and he dis/placed us in many different spaces and locations and in-betweennesses of curriculum. All these whispers, all these places, the movement between where we are, where we've been, where we're going, and all the many places in-between. (Norman, 2003, p. 256 cited in Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, 2003)

Norman understands Aoki's conception of place as an imaginative, creative, and imminent space of possibilities. The place of in-betweenness can refer to teachers' cross-contextual and cross-curricular lived experience as with many scholars like Aoki, the conscious transformational experience within from one space to another for educators, or the shared space

between the teachers and students in curriculum. Autobiography is intermingled with place and autobiographers assume self, informed by place, either as physical or psychological. As human beings, we are situated in place and our being responds to the conditions of place. Our memories are bound to place. Now that I am behind my screen reflecting on my past, I am in a high-rise student study center on UBC campus which reminds me of my graduate studies in Shiraz University. During my graduate studies, I stayed on the 11th floor of a high-rise dormitory [*Mofatteh*] and studied in its penthouse on the 13th floor. As I recall my memories as a graduate student in Shiraz University, I advance to my present as a doctoral student, and visualize my future in teacher education in the academe, I find my place of emergence in-between past and present. The imaginative understanding of place as emergent in Fels, Aoki, and Norman's idealization can hardly fit into a procedural curriculum. Without an overview of curriculum movement, an innovative understanding of concepts such as voice and place seems to be difficult. What follows is a brief overview of curriculum movement to recapitulate the origin of autobiographical understanding of curriculum.

1.6 The curriculum reconceptualization movement

Over the past fifty years, a movement from behaviorism to cognitivism has occurred in understanding curriculum that focuses on mental process to understand cognition which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. The cognitivist paradigm specifically argues that the “black box” of the human mind can be opened, and its content can be analyzed to be understood. While behaviorism studies human behavior in a series of stimulus-response reflexes as in animals followed by reinforcement and punishment to control the behavior, cognitivism [in response to behaviorism] inquires into human intellect. The movement highlights a personalized

aspect of education which centers upon the teachers and students' subjectivity rather than on the objectives of prescribed subject materials. The reconceptualization movement starting in the 1960s in the United States opened a space to theorize curriculum as an ongoing process of understanding conceptions of curriculum and, especially, their entwined relations to students and teachers' subjectivity and the larger society. The movement introduced a progressive understanding of learning which concentrated on the teachers and students in addition to the subject materials. Before this period, the conventional notions of curriculum centered upon designing and planning the subject materials covered as the course books at schools that overlooked the main participants of the courses - the students and their teachers. Of note, much of the movement was political; for instance, Apple, Giroux, Kincheloe, and McLaren saw students and teachers not as agents but as victims of political oppression. As Zhang Hua writes, instead of following a top-down system in which the teachers were the sole transmitters of knowledge and their students as the products shaped by that premade knowledge, the reconceptualised movement introduced an innovative bottom-up understanding of curriculum (Zhang & Pinar, 2015) which considered the subjectivity of each individual teacher and student as the pivotal point of curriculum. These political scholars shared the "bottom-up" idea concentrating on subjectivity and emphasized stories of individual teachers and students reflecting on their educational experience. Interest in the scholarly study of subjectivity from ontological [relating to the nature of being] and phenomenological [philosophical study of existential experience] perspectives increased. Learning from students and teachers' narrative inquiries through lifewriting, biography, autobiography, ethnography, and autoethnography increased (Clarke, 2012, 2014; Cohen & Porath, 2013; Leggo, 2012, 2014). Inquiries into educational experiences of each individual student and teacher opened a new space to learn about

their personal stories, including social determinants and aspirations. These lived narratives provided a unique opportunity for the researchers and authors to share their unique stories within their academic communities and for the readers to learn about and from the lived experience of each author.

1.7 The movement and Tylerian proceduralism standardization

Tero Autio (2003) argues that the reform movement in the United States took place on two levels. On the school and teacher level, the movement restructured marketing concepts of “accountability, competitiveness, and performativity” (p. 302) and valued the importance of the students and teachers, their needs, values, emotions, and learning experiences, rather than on the pre-structured educational objectives and goals. The movement was also systematically inspired by the marketization of education which embraced the Tylerian models connected to standardized tests. Instead of focusing on tests, the movement helped the educators and their students perceive and value their individual meaning at the center of education and content materials. Some key thinkers who represent the movement include William Pinar, Maxine Greene, Madeleine Grumet, Ted Aoki, Dwayne Huebner, James Macdonald, Max van Manen, David Jardine, and Donald Vandenberg (Magrini, 2015). These theorists and scholars all reflected on the meaning of teachers and students’ being, thriving, and transforming from ontological and phenomenological perspectives in educational experience. Among them Pinar, however, developed an autobiographical method in 1975 that allowed the educators and their students to practice learning about their subjectivity, including its social aspects.

I will elaborate on Pinar’s autobiographical method of *currere* and its social dimensions in self-development in more details as the point of entry to understand my educational

experience before opening a dialogue for teacher professional development in the following chapters. Without a conscious understanding of my own capabilities, potentials, and fantasies using *currere*, opening a dialogue with my professional and academic communities seems impossible.

1.8 The autobiographical method of *currere*

Autobiographical theories of curriculum were pioneered by Pinar's (1975a) autobiographical method of *currere* that challenges the traditional understandings of curriculum by drawing on phenomenological and existential traditions of thought. To supply the field of education with a substantive theoretical framework through which we understand human educational experience, Pinar introduced *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). From the Latin infinitive form of curriculum, *currere* means "to run the course" or "the running of the course" (p. 18). It is a journey in the course of one's educational experience as an alternative to the prevalent understanding of curriculum as the development and assessment of materials and instructional strategies. Rather than seeking to formulate an objective, the method is an approach to life. *Currere* draws upon the phenomenological, psychoanalytic, and existential traditions of thought to challenge hegemonic understandings of curriculum development as exclusively procedural.

The earliest interest in *currere* is traceable to Pinar's 1972 article titled *Working from Within* (Pinar, 1994a) in which he suggests that teachers start from the prefigurative or preconceptual sources of inspiration and imagination within them. Pinar notes "Like some modern painters, my students and I have come to feel that we rarely need to refer to subject matter outside ourselves. We work from a different source. We work from within" (Pinar, 1972,

p. 10). Pinar (1975a) outlines twelve efforts of traditional schooling which self-alienated children by distracting them from self-love and autonomy, and an atrophy of fantasy life and esthetical perception. He continues that “we graduate, credentialized but crazed, erudite but fragmented shells of the human possibility” (p. 381) and lays the stage for the development of an autobiographical method for curriculum inquiry in his finalizing paragraph: “What configurations this loyalty to one’s subjectivity must take, and what such configurations mean for theorists of the process of education are not yet clear. To these questions, we must proceed next” (Pinar, 1975a, p. 382). Pinar’s definition of credentialized education reminds me of my high school educational experience during which the students were crazed to compete for achieving higher scores overlooking their personhood and subjective wellbeing in the process of learning experience. To reverse this traditional experience of education, teachers and educators can work from within to re-educate themselves using the method.

As Miller asserts, *currere* - both a concept of curriculum and a form of inquiry - interrogates the students and teachers’ “inner experiences and perceptions” rather than external learning objectives and school-subject content (2010b, p. 62). Once connected to their inner world, this transformational experience can provide a conscious meaning of their subjectivity as a point of entry to self-education. Grumet considers *currere* as parental in its function: “As *currere* simultaneously acknowledges the student’s experience and encourages him to distance himself from it, *currere* is repeating the patterns of ego development initiated in the infant’s early object relations” (1976, p. 128). Acknowledging the educational experience which takes a great deal of autobiographical work precedes distancing self from the experience. Teachers understand the capacity of ego through these processes and push the boundaries prescribed by the traditional educational experience.

Currere distances the autobiographer from the nonego - the curriculum - to facilitate an entry into one's false self, constructed due to one's educational experience. The autobiographical method also facilitates one's engagement with political, public and intersubjective domains. Pinar (2011) proposes that by inquiring into the lived experience through the autobiographical method of *currere*, teachers can seek a meaning of self and reconstruct their educational experience in their context. Through *currere*, teachers can observe, understand, and reconstruct their subjectivity that has been constructed through educational experience and apply their innovative understanding to their teaching context. This emancipatory journey can open teachers to untapped layers of meaning and consciousness within. Pinar's concept of *currere* (cited in Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012), views "a person's life as curriculum" (p. 12) and involves "an act of self-interrogation in which one reclaims one's self from one's self" (p. 13) once one analyses and synthesizes the meanings of life that one carries. The method seeks "an architecture of self, a self we create and embody as we read, write, speak and listen" (Pinar, 1994c, p. 220), and through which one can "reconnect the minimalized, psychological self to the public, political sphere" (p. 219). Once this reconnection is created, students, teachers, activists, and scholars make problematic the status quo in schools and provide outlets and directions in a dialectic sphere of curriculum as included in the objectives of the *Currere Exchange* conference and journal (see <http://currereexchange.weebly.com>). Pinar (2004) argues that academic [intellectual] freedom - achieved through *currere* - is the necessary condition of education:

What can we do? First, we must understand our situations, both as individuals and as a group. For the sake of such understanding, I employ the concept of *currere* - the Latin infinitive of curriculum - to denote the running (or lived experience) of the course, in this instance, the present historical situation. This autobiographical method provides a

strategy for self-study, one phase of which seeks synthetical moments of “mobilization” when, as individuals and as teachers, we enter “the arena” to educate the public. That arena (the public sphere) - now a “shopping mall” in which citizens (and students) have been reduced to consumers - can be reconstructed in our classrooms by connecting academic knowledge to our students’ (and our own) subjectivities, to society, and to the historical moment. (Pinar, 2004, pp. xiii-xiv)

Once educators mobilize themselves through self-examination and self-study, they can transform education. Teachers can employ the autobiographical method of *currere* composed of four existential phases; regressive, progressive, analytic and synthetic during which one’s educational experience is respectively recollected, envisioned, analyzed for the present reality, and synthesized for a deeper understanding of self (Pinar, 2012) and transform education. The temporality of *currere* arises out of human being’s existential reality. Humans are temporal beings and autobiography can study such temporal reality as lived experience. In their temporality, human beings can seize a now moment - a present time. The past is lived experience of the world and the future is an envisioned possibility.

1.9 The significance of subjectivity in curriculum studies

If we consider only one single objective for educational experience, it can be self-education as the foundation of a democratic society. Without self-fulfilled individuals who can understand the strength of their voice and contribute to their public sphere, democracy loses its power. I will discuss the dialogic aspects of subjectivity and self-development in curriculum studies in detail in Chapters 3 to 5. Dewey (1916) considers educational experience as a bridge that connects self to society. Once individuals realize the significance of their subjectivity

through studying their educational experience, they will contribute to building a democratic society as social intellectuals. Curriculum in this sense becomes an individual as well as a social and political process. Pinar notes that subjectivity is significant to study and teaching, and it is not separable from the social and political:

The significance of subjectivity is that it is inseparable from the social; it is only when we - together and in solitude - reconstruct the relation between the two can we begin to restore our “shattered faith in the regeneration of life” (Lasch 1978, 207) and cultivate the “moral discipline . . . indispensable to the task of building a new order” (Lasch 1978, 235-36). Our pedagogical work is simultaneously autobiographical and political. (Pinar, 2004, p. 6)

As Pinar notes, subjectivity is not restricted to an autobiographical understanding of self, and pertains to our social and political domains. Understanding and reconnecting to our self is an introduction into understanding the nature of institutionalized knowledge we have experienced which can prepare us for socio-political enactment. Michael W. Apple (2004) underscores an understanding of this aspect of knowledge for economic, social and political transformation:

It is important to realize that while our educational institutions do function to distribute ideological values and knowledge, this is not all they do. As a system of institutions, they also ultimately help produce the type of knowledge (as a kind of commodity) that is needed to maintain the dominant *economic, political, and cultural* arrangements that now exist. I call this “technical knowledge” here. It is the tension between distribution and production that partly accounts for some of the ways schools act to *legitimate* [emphases are mine] the existing distribution of economic and cultural power. (Apple, 2004, p. xxii)

In what way is it possible to understand one's subjectivity without studying the legitimate knowledge one has acquired in educational experience? Understanding our true self is possible by reconstruction of the legitimate knowledge acquired in our educational experience. That is the reason why understanding one's subjectivity through an introspective journey is significant in curriculum. *Currere* provides this innovative understanding of our subjectivity in relation to others as Morris (2015, p. 106) asserts; "Autobiography can change our relationship with each other because we understand relations differently".

1.10 Subjectivity and evaporation of false ego (superficial self)

Inquiring into our educational experience can provide an understanding of our subjectivity - "the lived sense of self" - that is taken for granted in "circumstances of everyday life" (Pinar, 2006, p. 3). Understanding an allegorical sense of self-actualization as a journey, Wang (2004) proposes that a physical journey might give rise to a third space "a space of creating one's own subjectivity among and through the multiple layers of the self" (p. 9). This inner journey to a third space is enabled through studying our educational experience and nurturing our subjectivity through a "complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2004, p. 188) with ourselves and others. After the evaporation or shattering of false ego - superficial self Winnicott saw as a defensive facade (see Abram, 2012) - which follows regression to educational memories, progression to future possibilities, and analysis of the accounts, it is a proper time to mobilize self through synthesis to understand one's latent meaning in the present. Self-mobilization is a prerequisite for social and political mobility for teachers as Pinar (2004) confirms:

Public education structures self-formation and social reconstruction while, in many of its present forms, it blocks both. Teachers ought not be only school-subject specialists; I suggest that they become private-and-public intellectuals who understand that self-reflexivity, intellectuality, inter-disciplinarity, and erudition are as inseparable as are the subjective and the social spheres themselves. (p. 10)

Teachers and teacher educators as facilitators of this experience who are in close contact with students in the hierarchy of educational systems can understand the strength of self-erudition and include this self-awakening knowledge in their daily teaching practice. Working from within as an intellectual pedagogy and practice can equip teachers and teacher educators with a fuller understanding of their true ego disguised by legitimate knowledge. This ongoing engagement with subjectivity in curriculum studies can open fresh pathways to self-understanding and evaporation of distorted ego for teachers, educators, and students. Using self-reflexivity, teachers will understand the unexamined possibilities of education once they let go of their false ego.

Felman (1993) indicates that “interpretations [of autobiography are] always incomplete, always interminable” (cited in Miller, 2005, p. 53). Although we must admit that we can never completely understand self, through autobiographical work we can perceive and reconstruct our subjectivity and our subjective understanding of biographical and educational significance. Autobiographical theories have provided me with a method to create a more authentic relationship with self and to be more fully myself. I have noticed that my understanding of teaching pedagogy and practice has transformed towards an individualistic curriculum and humanistic approach to education. My relationship with students is not centered on subject or materials any more, it is, however, oriented towards their individual and subjective approaches to

learning and being as I am more receptive to and understanding of their individual and social circumstances. Understanding new dimensions of my subjectivity manifested in social and political arena has made me feel grounded in my existing social, cultural and educational contexts. I participate more in academic and non-academic social activities, contribute to my Iranian-Canadian diaspora in cultural gatherings and religious rituals, and feel meaningfully connected to my present and past educational experience. The sense of belonging to a new place of residence has always been a controversial issue for many immigrants as their lived experience is cross-contextual and trans-cultural, and their educational memories have been constructed across places of residence (see Trigg, 2012). As a global citizen, I am reconstructing my subjective meaning and reality through academic scholarship and erudition and my trans-cultural lived experience has favored me a conscious understanding of place. My coherent and sustainable understanding of subjectivity has contributed to my critical as well as creative engagement with inner and outer worlds as a human, student, teacher, researcher, and educator. Following my reflective and contemplative thinking and writing, this inclusive understanding has helped me to transcend the boundaries of false self, pre-structured by a procedural understanding of curriculum and pedagogy. Reflective analysis and synthesis of learning experience is perhaps specific to human mental capacity which allows us to reconstruct our learning experience and consequently our subjective understanding of self, perceived during our educational experience. Without this self-reflective, self-analytic, self-synthetic, and self-contemplative learning experience, understanding our true self and connecting to deeper layers of meaning, inner and outer worlds seem impossible.

1.11 Free association and *currere*

To facilitate a self-exploratory journey in education, *currere* invokes the psychoanalytic technique of free association (Freud, 1920) to generate encounters of one's educational experience. One freely examines one's thoughts, memories, dreams, and fantasies without prompting or intervention. Freud claimed that this technique prevented three obstacles which blocked the process of self-realization and self-actualization. These obstacles are: *transference* which is the process of transferring feelings and emotions one has for one person to a different person, *projection* which is the process of projecting one's own qualities to a different person, and *resistance* which is the process of blocking out specific feelings, emotions, or memories. *Currere* employs a modified version of free association whereby teachers explore their own educational experience independently in four phases. The freedom in the autobiographical method of *currere* provides an unassisted technique for the teachers to explore their untapped memories in their lived experience and unravel new meanings following the analysis and synthesis of their educational experience. Pinar (1975b) considers free association as a non-judgmental or non-evaluative focus on one's lived experience that can excavate latent emotions, feelings, and memories and make the pre-conceptual - "*lebenswelt*" - more accessible (p. 389). Free association will capture the emotions or memories that might be concealed in our consciousness yet present in our unconsciousness. Bringing the concealed memories to consciousness will reveal our latent meaning and create greater awareness of the present for the researcher [autobiographer]. Pinar contends that this consciousness - presence - through free associating can make the researcher a more "existential" being (1975b, p. 390) in a sense that it empowers the researcher to more readily acknowledge existing emotions and feelings to reflect on their sources and origins to achieve a deeper understanding of current lived experience.

1.12 Bracketing

During the entire autobiographical process of *currere*, the participants will practice suspending their judgement and distancing themselves from the phenomenon experienced through a process called bracketing as it is referred to in the phenomenological literature (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; van Manen, 1984) to expand on their “lifeworld” (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 406). To understand the lived experience, Husserl (1931) considers direct seeing as looking beyond preconceptions which transcends common sensory experience. To Husserl, bracketing or “disconnecting” (1969, p. 58) as a process of phenomenological reduction provides a non-judgmental and non-interpretive understanding of images one recollects when analyzing one’s existential experience. Unlike other educational studies that mainly concentrate on the end products such as the findings, conclusions, concepts, abstractions, and generalizations as “knowledge”, *currere* penetrates what is underlying these products to “pre-conceptual experience that is their foundation” by making use of the phenomenological process of bracketing (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. 41). By alleviating the “potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions”, teachers can suspend both internal and contextualized thoughts [their natural attitude] so that they will be able to reveal their educational narratives (Tufford & Newman, 2012, p. 81). Aoki notes that in their everyday routines, teachers should place their attitude “in brackets” (2004, p. 121) and reflect on their feelings, emotions, and actions to “go beyond the immediate level of interpretation of curriculum X”. Bracketing will provide teachers with a reflective space to voluntarily critique their own meaning and interpretation of everyday curriculum and expand the boundaries of their teaching pedagogy and practice. Aoki (2004) notes that “often actions are without thoughts” as teachers are engaged with their day-to-day routine regarding the planned curriculum, and invites teachers to go beyond

their “immediate exigencies” using a “conscious effort to examine the intentions and assumptions underlying their acts” (p. 131). Bracketing provides a contemplative space for teachers to reflect on their attitudes and practices so that they will include “lived curriculum” in their routine planned curriculum (p. 420). This reflective process through bracketing will improve teachers’ thoughtful actions in their teaching practices.

1.13 Temporality of *currere*

Wang (2010) emphasizes the inner workings of temporality in *currere* and considers the “inner time, external time, and pedagogical time” (p. 275) by studying her students’ writings and interviews to understand the process of transformative learning experience for her students. In her in-depth study, she focuses on different dimensions of temporality in the method to understand the way transformation through *currere* is effective. She understands that in regressive moments of self-inquiry, students who keep silent might not be able to express their feelings and emotions due to the “grip” (p. 279) of those experiences that can be loosened by attentive teachers who understand temporality of *currere* and favor a deep knowledge of psychoanalysis. Pinar asserts that release from tensions of the past is predictable: “Work with the past, release from it, allows loosened identification with fear of the future, and allows heightened intuitive sense of where one may go” (1994b, p. 59). Huebner (1999) asserts the importance of temporality in being to open new possibilities in education. He refers to Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1962) as the most helpful source once he elaborates on the concept of time and temporality:

I do not intend or presume to provide either a presentation or an interpretation of this phenomenological ontology as he [Heidegger] develops Dasein’s temporality....

“Dasein's totality of being as care means: ahead-of-itself-already-being-in (a world) as being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world) The ‘ahead-of-itself’ is grounded in the future. In the ‘Being-already-in ...’ the character of ‘having been’ is made known. ‘Being-alongside’ becomes possible in making present”. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 375, cited in Huebner, 1999, p. 136)

This understanding of human being as a time-bound creature indicated by Heidegger is practiced in my engagement with *currere* as the method starts with Dasein’s already-being-in-the-world and progresses to Dasein’s ahead-of-itself-in-the-world prior to analysis and synthesis of the autobiographical accounts to understand one’s existential and educational experience. *Currere* as an autobiographical method deals with temporality of being as it studies self within time. Our temporality can be manifested as memories of the past or fantasies of the future in our autobiographical journey. By valorizing regressive moments, visualizing future fantasies, analyzing [understanding], and synthesizing [re-integration] the themes that arise, releasing of the past and gradual awareness will occur for the autobiographers. Regarding our understanding of being [*Dasein*] and time, Huebner (1999) writes:

[Dasein] does not simply await a future and look back upon a past. The very notion of time arises out of man’s existence, which is an emergent. The future is man facing himself in anticipation of his own potentiality for being. The past is finding himself already thrown into a world. It is the having-been which makes possible the projection of his potentiality. The present is the moment of vision when Dasein, finding himself thrown into a situation (the past), projects his own potentiality for being. Human life is not futural; nor is it past, but, rather, a present made up of a past and future brought into the

moment.... Education recognizes, assumes responsibility for, and maximizes the consequences of this awareness of man's temporality. (Huebner 1999, p. 137)

Being-already-thrown into a situation, and envisioning ahead-of-time in the situation makes human being a temporal reality. The present moment is an understanding of past lived experience, and future fantasies in a fleeing moment of now. An engagement with the temporality of being for students, teachers, and educators can provide a conscious understanding of *their* time and being in curriculum.

1.14 Concluding notes

As the notion of time arises out of human being's existence, the autobiographical method of *currere* grapples with human being's temporality. Using the progressive dimension of *currere*, I visualize my academic prospects as an emerging scholar. Involved in co-teaching, presenting, publishing, and researching, I am observing, envisioning, planning, and programming moments of possibility in my academic endeavor and future accomplishment. Recalling my past educational experience as an English language educator, I recall a traditional curriculum marked by pre-structured learning memories to understand the way my dialogic moments with teachers created a supportive space to vocalize my voice. My present situation is a moment once my temporal being - informed by past and present educational experience and conceived of fantasies of future - informs me as an individual, a student, a co-teacher, an educator, and a researcher to enter "the public sphere" to connect "academic knowledge to our students' (and our own) subjectivities, to society, and to the historical moment" (Pinar, 2004, p. xiv) freeing self from the constraints of a traditional schooling [test and stage anxiety] as an emancipatory movement in curriculum research. Releasing self as a transformative academic experience using the

autobiographical method of *currere* is the point of entry to the broader field of teacher development. In the following chapter, I will inquire into autobiographical research in teacher development to understand the way this emancipatory field of research can transform our traditional understanding of curriculum using a bottom-up processing for teachers and educators.

Chapter 2: Autobiography and teacher development

To understand the knowledge that teachers possess, we need to know it in the way that the *individual teacher* does. More importantly, as outsiders and researchers, we need to understand how teachers evolve, develop, and change their practical knowledge, and how they perceive this experience. These arguments imply an interest in the teacher as a unique *person*, and as a *learner* who possesses and develops a special type of knowledge, which is significantly influenced and shaped by experiences in various contexts.

(Richard Butt & Danielle Raymond, 1989, pp. 405-06)

2.1 Introduction

In my first chapter, I inquired into my own educational experience as an entry to teacher education using the autobiographical method of *currere*. Starting with a brief account of my educational experience, I drew upon the related literature and discussed the way I achieved a deeper understanding of my learning journey. I inquired into the concepts of voice and place as common conceptions in biographical and autobiographical research, provided an overview of the curriculum reconceptualist movement and the method of *currere*, emphasized the significance of subjectivity, explained free association and bracketing phenomenological processes and discussed the temporality of *currere*. I concluded that my subjectivity mobilizes to enter the public and political domains through connecting pedagogical knowledge to my students' [and

my own] subjectivity, to social and political domains which paves the way for teacher development. With the self-knowledge achieved through reflecting on my educational experience as an English language educator and researcher, I expand on my understanding of autobiographical research in teacher development. I critique the “rigidity of a top-down centralized system” (Zhang, 2015, p. 49) that so often has characterized traditional systems of schooling by exploring autobiographical knowledge of teachers as a bottom-up process in educational experience. Elusive questions such as “Who am I as a teacher?”, “In what way will this learning help me to better understand and learn about myself as a teacher?”, and “In what sense will this conscious self-knowledge contribute to an understanding of the field of teacher development?” animate my reflective moments in this autobiographical study. The question I am specifically posing in this chapter is: How can autobiographical research contribute to teacher development?

2.2 Problematizing education

Nel Noddings (2006) reminds us that Socrates advocated self-understanding and claimed that “unexamined life is not worth living” (p. 10). She asserts that an education that does not invite such exploration and self-reflective learning should not be labeled “*education*”. In problematizing the nature of education, Britzman (2009, p. 28) puts forward a phenomenological issue:

We have grown up in schools, have spent our childhood and adolescence observing teachers and our peers, and when we enter the field of teacher education, this avalanche of experience we have undergone, made from schooling, confirms itself (Britzman, 2003b, 2006). Growing up in education permeates our meanings of education and

learning; it lends commotions to our anticipations for and judgements towards the self and our relations with others.

As Britzman contends, our educational experience *permeates* our meaning of education which in turn disturbs our judgement towards self and other. Why is it critical for teachers to study their own educational experience? In what way would one know what educational experience one has undergone without a self-inquiry into that experience? To what extent can one's grades or descriptive semi-annual reports reflect the education one has experienced and, more importantly, the psychoanalytical journey one has undergone? Self-understanding in teacher development invites teachers and their students to inquire into their educational experience and to examine their lifeworld and permeated meaning which is the only approach to understanding their concealed meanings. This self-exploratory learning journey commits teachers to understand their educational experience once writing their autobiographical account of education and reflecting on the related literature. Through reading teacher autobiographical research, teachers and teacher educators are encouraged to reveal their own lived stories and examine the way their educational experience has permeated their understanding of education and teaching practice. By revealing autobiographical accounts of their educational experience, teachers can problematize their meaning of learning, teaching, education, schooling, and curriculum to understand their educational experience more fully. These untold stories as first-hand educational experiences can open new pathways to teacher understanding and can problematize traditional understanding of education once shared.

2.2.1 Teacher knowledge

Maxine Greene (1973) considers the teacher as an incomplete project interacting with others in the process of meaning-making, thriving, and becoming. Without problematizing the existential reality and being open to “a multiplicity of realities” (p. 11), in what way would teachers understand the nature of their own existential and experiential reality? Greene reflects on teaching as philosophy in progress and proposes that teachers can be open to problematizing their philosophy of teaching when they are in dialogue with others. As unfinished articles, teachers undergo a transformative learning experience during both inner dialogue with their own inner world and reality and outer dialogue with other teachers and students in the school (Greene, 2001). Once teachers evaluate their own philosophy of teaching as an unfinished project and reconstruct their own meaning, they are also involved in a dialogic space with their students by inviting them to reconstruct and expand on their meaning. This transformative learning experience which invites teachers and students as an educational community to problematize their educational experience using experiential inquiry has been discussed by other scholars. Once answering a question on the nature of learning and learner in educational inquiry, Clarke and Erickson (2004) note:

Our answers, as an educational community, to questions about the nature of the learning process have changed considerably over the past fifty years as we have shifted from a predominantly behaviorist model of learning to more cognitivist and phenomenological models. In fact, there is a much greater diversity of perspectives on learning now than fifty years ago with respect to the preferred ways of thinking about and studying these questions. (p. 43)

Considering the diversity of understanding of learning and teaching, reflective inquiry into teacher educational experience through autobiography reveals the quality of the education teachers have experienced. Individual educational stories like pieces of puzzle unravel new meanings of education and add to our specific understanding of those unique educational experiences. This inquiry into the psychological, social, cultural, and political content of each individual teacher will provide a meaningful understanding of education for all teachers by encouraging them to understand themselves using self-study, self-education, and autobiography.

2.2.2 Remembering and retelling

Anthony Clarke (2012) attends to teaching pedagogy and notes that his study has emerged from Avraham Cohen's interest in "inner life of the educator" (p. 58). Following Cohen's curiosity, Clarke is wondering if attending to one's inner life as an educator determines one's success in teaching pedagogy and practice, and continues with a question on consciousness of being in the world: "If, as Avraham suggests, that inner work has the potential for increasing our consciousness of being in the world, and a greater consciousness enhances the ways in which we relate to the people and contexts in which we live and work, how might catching myself being attentive to pedagogy enhance my teaching practice?" (p. 61). Clarke concludes that it is "the remembering and retelling [his story] that provides for a rendering of the relationship between teacher and learner" and argues that "a rendering of self, in whatever shape it might take (in [his] case, catching self being attentive to pedagogy), constitutes inner work" (p. 62). Clarke's notion of "remembering and retelling" reminds me of the autobiographical method of *currere's* regressive dimension that allows one to recall past memories, and his conception of "catching self being attentive to pedagogy" resembles Husserl's bracketing or "disconnecting"

(1969, p. 58) as a moment of watchfulness. Remembering and retelling educational accounts are highlighted in other scholars' narratives. For instance, Carl Leggo (2012) asserts his Christian faith and commitment in the onset, and his *love* of Christ: "I like Christ - a lot (especially his pedagogical heart, prophetic voice, poetic imagination, and provocative courage)" and states that: "In order to understand the complex and convoluted and conflicted stories that shape my experience of 'inner life', I need to learn how 'to read again, to go through again' my autobiographical texts as a religious seeker" (p. 85). I understand the only way for educators to bring peace to their students is through being at peace with themselves first. Educators could have experienced peace and tranquility within before they could bestow feelings of peace and well-being in their educational contexts. He concludes by Palmer's (2004) words on "the traditional binary opposition between light and dark" (p. 85) emphasizing that the only way to bring peace to the world is by being at peace within ourselves. Through remembering meaningful moments in their educational experience and retelling these stories, teachers can bring peace to their students, to themselves, and to the world they live in. To me, remembering can itself work as conscious moments of presence once teachers travel to their memories and explore their being within those stories. What we remember and retell and our present mode of being-in-the-world are interrelated. Remembering and retelling is the preliminary stage of inner work for teachers and educators to render their relationships with students and with their life-world.

2.2.3 The seeds of reverence

In his teacher's credo *Living Poetically*, Leggo (2012) delves into his autobiographical account that resonated with me as it calls to mind my own teaching experience. Considering his

commitment to learning and teaching, he started schooling at a young age of four, and, so far [at the time of writing my thesis], has been teaching for over 26 years at the University of British Columbia. Leggo calls his autobiographical story a “tough text full of wonder” and emphasizes that educators should restore the idea of “reverence” (Woodruff, 2001, p. 38) to its suitable place in education:

“To teach reverence”, suggested Woodruff, “you must find the seeds of reverence in each person and help them grow” (p. 13). That is, and has always been, my starting place.
(cited in Leggo, 2012, p. 90)

Leggo’s first year of teaching in 1976, at R. W. Parsons Collegiate in Robert’s Arm, Newfoundland - with 48 grade seven students reminds me of my teaching experience in Arsanjan Azad University in Fars Province in Iran with up to 60 students in General English language courses. I am wondering why my students were mostly uninterested in being at school and had a resistance to learning English language. Was it due to their schooling experience in Iran where English was taught as an additional language with inadequate time - only 2 hours per week? Or was the class size an issue? Could I change their attitude to learning this language? As an educator, in what way could I find and grow the *seeds of reverence* in my students? Without growing these seeds in themselves and in their students, educators can hardly realize full potentials and possibilities in their educational experience. The figures and numbers mentioned above remind me of Pinar’s critique of educational system when he likens public education to a shopping mall where students are reduced to customers. In the light of Pinar’s critique, now I can understand the students’ feelings about attending school when Carl Leggo recounts:

Forty-eight grade seven students are a lot of students, and many of them didn’t really want to be in school. Many of them didn’t know what they were doing in school. The few

who wanted to be in school were often upset with everybody else for being noisy nuisances. (Leggo, 2012, p. 91)

In what way can teachers change this attitude in their classrooms towards an understanding of schooling without self-education and-self learning in the first place? It is possible to cultivate the seeds of reverence in the students if teachers have already found, planted, cultivated, and maintained the seeds in themselves properly. Once teachers connect their academic knowledge to their subjectivity, they become capable of transferring this awakening experience to their students for their transformative educational experience. Teachers' self-education is the point of entry to planting seeds of knowledge and love of education in students, teachers, and educators.

2.3 Autobiography in teacher education

Pinar et al. (1995) identified three main streams of scholarship linked to autobiographical and biographical research. They indicated that like streams these scholarships occasionally might merge with the themes and methods of one another, however, it is possible to classify these streams meandering on their own. The first stream they term as *autobiographical theory and practice* encompasses these major concepts: *currere*, collaboration, voice, dialogue journals, place, and so on. The second stream is characterized as *feminist autobiography* including concepts of community, reclaiming of self, and so on. The final main stream of studies concentrates on *teachers' biography and autobiography*. This stream, as the focus of my chapter, comprises four categories which I will discuss each scholarship in the following.

2.4 Teachers' biographical and autobiographical research

Pinar et al. (1995, p. 553) identified four categories for teachers' biographical and autobiographical research: "teachers' collaborative autobiography [Butt and Raymond], narrative inquiry: personal practical knowledge [Clandinin and Connelly], teacher lore [Schubert and Ayers], and studying teachers' lives [Goodson]". Looking at teaching from inside is noticeable in each of the four categories in autobiographical and biographical research. In *Research on teachers' knowledge: The evolution of a discourse*, Freema Elbaz (1991) concentrates on teacher knowledge "from the inside" (p. 2) to understand curriculum as biographical and autobiographical text. Elbaz primarily focused on teacher thinking, the culture of teaching, and the personal practical knowledge of teachers. Schubert used teacher lore to indicate an inner focus on teaching and teacher practice: "We use lore to specifically delineate that knowledge which has guiding power in teachers' lives and work. We are moving beyond viewing knowledge as concepts to include the values, beliefs, [visions], and images that guide everyday work of teachers (a pervasive notion of experiential knowledge)" (Schubert, 1991, p. 224, cited in Pinar et al., 1995).

Elbaz (2005) draws on ideas about teacher knowledge, teacher development and school reform, and focuses on narrative as methodology for understanding the lives and profession of teachers. Elbaz asserts that "Narrative research makes it possible to pay attention to the wider concerns that shape the work of teaching, looking at the whole lives of teachers and other educational practitioners, and exploring those lives as embedded in multiple contexts" (p. x). Challenging the authoritative discourses of educational policy, theory and research, Elbaz (2014) examines diverse ways of thinking, writing and theorizing from biographical and autobiographical research which is contextualized in teacher practice, and explores the way

place-based teaching plays a pivotal role in teacher autobiographical thinking, pedagogical knowledge and practice. Once educators write their autobiography, they can engage in collaborative autobiography to share their personal, educational, social, and political perspectives in dialogue. Sharing ideas, teaching pedagogy, and practice using collaborative autobiography can contribute to educators' self/other education and joint wellbeing.

2.4.1 Collaborative autobiography

The way biography brings together experience, thought, acting, theory, practice, research development and self education [and wellbeing], and the way it makes research relationships among insiders and outsiders more collaborative, gives biography, as an epistemology, tremendous integrative, synergistic, and emancipatory potential[s].

(Butt & Raymond, 1987, p. 88)

Richard Butt and Danielle Raymond (1989) emphasized on understanding teacher thinking and knowledge through biography and autobiography and claimed that researchers have not paid sufficient attention to this reservoir of untapped knowledge of teachers to understand what knowledge they possess and how they have learned that knowledge. They introduced “life course” research (p. 403) to focus on teachers' perspectives on the changes experienced during their professional practice and what the teachers have learned from such changes. *Life cycle* research has been employed in psychology and other applied behavioral sciences like cognitive science and anthropology. Butt and Raymond drew upon this type of research to inquire into the nature of teaching, teacher knowledge and practice and called it “life course” which in reconceptualist research resembles the autobiographical method of *currere* as running the course

of life during which teachers explore their lived experience to understand their autobiographical meaning:

The prime interest of our own work is the nature and development of the knowledge [and understanding] that teachers hold and use. We focus initially on the individual autobiography, looking eventually for commonalities among teachers. We see the process of autobiographical writing as emancipatory and as assisting in teacher development. We see individual case studies, collections of case studies, and the identification of collective commonalities as informing school improvement efforts. (Butt & Raymond, 1989, p. 405)

Butt and Raymond (1987) accentuated the strength of biography over phenomenology and claimed that biography highlights the “conscious and unconscious of [lived experience in] the past over the present” and is well suited to understanding teaching experience and the curriculum while phenomenology is obsessed with “the present” (p. 76). Butt and Raymond explored teacher biography and autobiography as educational praxis. Autobiographical and biographical praxis refers to conceptualization of teacher thought, knowledge and experience. Praxeology refers to the deep meaning and understanding of human action as they are engaged in purposeful behaviors. Butt (1990) asks four fundamental and provocative questions in research on teacher knowledge:

What is the nature of my working reality? How do I think and act in that context and why? How, through my worklife experience and personal history, did I come to be that way? How do I wish to become in my professional future? (Butt, et al., 1990, p. 257, cited in Pinar et al., 1995)

Schubert (1991) considers praxis as a combination of theory and practice in teachers' work and focuses on their biographical and autobiographical research to explore the "experiential knowledge that informs their teaching or the revealed stories about their practical experiences" (p. 208). Butt and Raymond identified significant features in teacher autobiographical research such as teachers' personal experience as educational praxis in schools and the necessity of sharing this personal experience in forming teacher community and not only writing their teaching experiences. They believed that collaboration and cooperation is essential in biographical and autobiographical praxis, and considered the teachers as co-researchers in the classroom (Butt & Raymond, 1987, 1988, 1992). So, collaborative autobiography can open a dialogue among educators and researchers to share their educational experience with each other. Specifically in critical thinking and reasoning, this method can provide a learning opportunity for the discussants or interlocutors to imagine new possibilities in education. Sharing ideas, thoughts, and educational experiences using the method can strengthen teacher professional knowledge and understanding, and empower teacher community in academic and professional institutes.

2.4.2 Narrative inquiry: Personal practical knowledge

The educational importance of this work [narrative inquiry] is that it brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived.

(F. Michael Connelly & D. Jean Clandinin, 1990, p. 3)

In teacher development, narrative inquiry follows *currere* as an autobiographical method of inquiry into lived experience of teachers. Narrative inquiry is a process of meaning making

from personal experience mainly through storytelling (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Drawing from over twenty years of experience in teacher education in their book on narrative inquiry as a qualitative method, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) discuss that understanding teacher experience as lived and told has gained popularity in educational and social science research. They trace the origins of narrative inquiry in social sciences and offer practical frameworks for conducting fieldwork and composing field notes. Chambers (2003, p. 230) asserts that Clandinin and Connelly are “undoubtedly Canada’s best known curriculum scholars of narrative inquiry”. Chambers indicated that Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 190) discovered that *relationship* is “at the heart of thinking narratively ... key to what it is that narrative inquirers do” (cited in Chambers, 2003, p. 230). Considering humans as “storytelling organisms” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2), narratives help teachers to understand their storied lives in classrooms individually and socially and achieve their meaning. Using a variety of methods including journal records, interview transcripts, observations, storytelling, autobiographical and biographical writing, teachers can report and reconstruct their lived experience. Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990) propose that teachers enact theories of teaching and learning residing in their heads in their routine practice in the classroom. Personal practical knowledge is a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge rooted in teachers’ lived experience. Clandinin (2013) defines personal practical knowledge as: “*Personal practical knowledge* is knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person’s [biographical] being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person’s experiential history, both professional and personal” (p. 68). Regarding the shared meaning of personal practical knowledge, Clandinin (2013, p. 72) draws upon Dwyer (1979) dialectical and intersubjective understanding of knowledge:

The research process is, accordingly, an interactive, dialectical one characterized by Dwyer (1979) as “a particular form of social action that creates dialectical confrontations and produces intersubjective meaning”. (p. 211)

Teachers negotiate and reconstruct meanings of their teaching experience in class through narrative accounts. The meaning emerged through the process of working together with the researcher in the classroom - when offering interpretations and talking together - as a shared process. Neither teacher nor researcher remains unchanged. The method focuses on the experience of individual teachers and researchers collaboratively and cooperatively. Once teachers discuss their meanings, they examine their own understanding of lived experience in their teaching communities. Clandinin (2013) states that personal practical knowledge is to be discovered in teachers’ routine practice:

Personal practical knowledge is revealed through interpretations of observed practices over time and is given biographical, personal meaning through reconstructions of the teacher’s narratives of experience. Personal practical knowledge is, therefore, found in practice. It is knowledge which is experiential, embodied, and based on the narrative of experience. (p. 69)

Personal practical knowledge mirrors teacher auto-ethnographical studies as teachers’ lived experience includes its context of pedagogy and practice as in auto-ethnography. Aligned with personal practical knowledge, teacher lore unravels teacher autobiographical knowledge and lived stories as a transformative approach to learning and teaching.

2.4.3 Teacher lore

We must come to know how students view their worlds [inner and outer] if we want to teach them.

(William H. Schubert & Ann Lynn Lopez Schubert, 1981, p. 249)

Pinar et al. (1995) consider William H. Schubert as the principal author of this category of research. Schubert (1991) indicated that teacher lore - learning from our own experience - is “the study of the knowledge, ideas, perspectives, and understandings of teachers. In part, it is inquiry into the beliefs, values, and images that guide teachers’ work” (p. 207). William Schubert explores the concept of praxis in teacher lore like Richard Butt to refer to the combination of theory and practice in teachers’ experience. Schubert (1991) strived to disclose the experiential knowledge of teachers that narrates their teaching experience and/or the revealed stories pertaining to such experiences. Considering the combined dimension of theory and practice in teaching experience, teacher lore resembles the personal practical knowledge that Connelly and Clandinin inquired into in teaching pedagogy and practice. In *Our journeys into teaching*, Schubert (1992) considers teacher lore as including “both what I have gained from other teachers for my own teaching and what I can offer other teachers from my experience” (p. 9). In a collaborative conversation, our teaching experience can inform other teachers’ practice and their teaching experience can guide our teaching practice.

Shulman (1987) defines “pedagogical content knowledge” as the capability of the teacher “to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students” (p. 15). Shulman asserts that teachers should not only understand “the structures of subject

matter” [hard skills], but they have to understand “the principles of inquiry” [soft skills] that helps them answer two types of questions in their practice: “what are the important ideas and skills in this domain? How are new ideas added and deficient ones dropped by those who produce knowledge [e.g. teachers and students] in this area?” (1987, p. 9). Knowing content subject does not suffice successful teaching. Teachers can master pedagogical content knowledge to be able to have a meaningful pedagogical experience in the classroom. “Pedagogical content knowledge” intersects with the notions of “teacher lore” and “personal practical knowledge”. All three concepts underscore specific knowledge in addition to teacher’s knowledge of the subject being taught. Schubert (1991) emphasizes the necessity of a community of practice dedicated to ongoing dialogue and collaborative conversation:

Through these efforts, we hope to encourage the continued consideration of both the reflective process and the context of teachers' experiential repertoires of knowledge and values that give meaning and direction to their work. We hope, too, that teacher lore...engages collaborative efforts of teachers, scholars, and interested others to interpret praxis in ways that would not be possible without serious dialogue, conversation, and sharing. (p. 223, cited in Pinar et al., 1995)

Using teacher lore, dialogue as a reflective and collaborative process can facilitate learning and teaching. In my personal experience using teacher lore as an English language teacher in productive conversations with another language educator referenced at the end of Chapter 3, we exchanged our interfaith knowledge and perspectives to understand the way our shared and different values informed our pedagogy and practice. I personally understand teacher lore as a source of knowledge, belief, value, and pedagogical experience that can be only accessible opening genuine dialogue discussed in the following chapter in more detail.

2.4.4 Teachers' lives

Historical amnesia allows curriculum reconstruction to be presented as curriculum revolution.

(Ivor F. Goodson, 1989, p. 137)

Goodson and Walker (1991, p. 139) highlight the importance of life history and narrative writing in educational research. Using an allegoric example, Goodson and Walker emphasize that “the singer” is more important than “the song”. They refer to Robin Morton’s (1973) elaboration of the importance of subjectivity in music: “The opinion grew in me that it was *in* the [subjectivity of the] singer that the song becomes relevant. Analyzing it in terms of motif, or rhyming structure, or minute variation becomes, in my view sterile if the one who carries the particular song is forgotten” (cited in Goodson and Walker, 1991). The teachers and students as the agents of education carry the meaning and rhythm of curriculum, and are interconnected with the subject materials. As the singer and the song are interrelated, we cannot include the singer and exclude the other.

In reconceptualizing education, teachers can find an opportunity to articulate their voice which is central to educational research. Goodson and Walker (1991) regard autobiographical research as a new paradigm to enact a reconceptualization of teacher development: “Primarily the focus has been on the teacher’s practice. What is needed is a focus that listens above all to the person at whom ‘development’ is aimed” (p. 142). Goodson (2002) in *Teachers' professional lives*, reinforces the significance of studies of the teachers’ work and life in restructuring the educational status quo:

Studies of the teacher's life and work throw new light on the 'language of power' which is used within official rhetorics and discourses of educational change (Goodson, 1992).

When we look at teaching as lived experience and work, we often find that seductive rhetorics of change pronounced in policy, break down into cynical, contradictory, or resistant voices within the lives of teachers themselves. ... If we wish to enhance teachers' professional lives, we have to direct our inquisitive gaze at teachers' own experienced worlds, and from there, pose demanding questions to those who seek to change and restructure the teacher's work from above [in a top-down process]. (Goodson, 2002, p. 22).

Goodson's inquiry into teachers' experience, Butt and Raymond's research on collaborative autobiography, Clandinin and Connelly's study on personal practical knowledge, and Schubert and Ayers' research on teacher lore all exhibit an interest in lifeworld and lived experience of teachers biographically and autobiographically through which teachers transform from within - an emancipatory process for educational, social, and political transformation.

2.5 Attunement and self-understanding

Heidegger (1996) used the term "*Befindlichkeit*" translated as *attunement* in English or as *disposition* in French (p. xv) as a phenomenological element which means "being in a mood" or "being situated in a mood". Heidegger's conception of attunement refers to the way we sense ourselves in situations, and it encompasses both inside and outside feelings. As human beings, we are always situated in a context and respond to our intrinsic feelings, emotions, and thoughts, as well as external motivations, and triggers. To experience attunement, one's understanding of being is open towards what is yet-to-be-established but is-not-yet-there - a feeling of suspension.

For Heidegger, all human beings find themselves in the world in a certain way which transforms their beings to experience what is there but not completely manifested yet. This world of meaning is awaiting to be explored by human beings, constantly communicates with them, and ongoingly contributes to their meaning-making process. The mental or emotional state to experience attunement has not a specific condition and do not particularly come from inside or outside worlds, but it requires the presence and connectivity of being to one's lifeworld. Heidegger understands attunement as sensitivity to what unfolds to us as a mental image that can make things visible through "unlocking" or opening their phenomenality: "To be in certain attunement means that we have sensibility to see some aspects of things, or that we are capable of understanding things in a certain way. In this way, we can - 'unlock' - things as phenomena so that we can grasp them" (Demuth, 2012, p. 15). To understand their being and lifeworld, teachers can remain open, perceptive, and sensible to what unfolds to them, what unravels. Wang (2018) uses attunement to describe an educational theory of learning different from what proposed by Heidegger: "Describing my own life history (autobiography) provided a new way of experiencing, of thinking, of theorizing. In a phrase, I became more open to myself. I term this attunement" (p. 76). Wang understands attunement as a new way of learning, understanding, and being, once positioned within something unfamiliar, unknown, and yet unexplored. This understanding of attunement can contribute to teacher development once they remain more open to self and others. Heidegger's attunement looks like Husserl's conception of bracketing as suspension of judgement in understanding one's existential experience, and Noddings' (1984) understanding of *care* as a "feeling mode":

[To understand the situation] we enter a feeling mode, but it is not necessarily an emotional mode. In such a mode, we receive what-is-there as nearly as possible without

evaluation or assessment. We are in the world of relation, having stepped out of the instrumental world; we have either not yet established goals or we have suspended striving for those already established. We are not attempting to transform the world, but we are allowing ourselves to be transformed. This is, clearly not a degradation of consciousness, although it may be accompanied by an observable change in energy pattern. (Noddings, 1984, p. 34)

Attunement occurs within an openness to our lived experience in a world that we have little control over its circumstances but can exchange our subjective meaning and understanding with the world within our circumstances. Teachers' autobiographical study can attune their understanding-of-being-in-the-world in a way that they become more open to what occurs to them. This unique capability of teachers enables them to reflect on their own thoughts, ideas, pedagogy, practice and professional experience in ways that distinguishes them as autobiographical beings. Some disturbances such as anxiety and depression can probably come in their way to obstruct attunement in one's educational experience and to slow the process of being attentive and living in the moment, however, autobiography can give teachers a way to understand, think, and analyze by being open to what occurs to them, what unfolds, what is being manifested but is not-there-yet in their daily practice. This understanding also attunes teachers to what unravels without preconceptions, judgements, interpretations, and expectations. As a meaning-making being, teachers can remain open to new ways of understanding, envisioning, and analyzing as they are getting repositioned [attuned] by new experiences unfolding to them every single moment. Huebner (1999) considers being open to the internal and external worlds for an attuned learning experience:

Every mode of knowing is a mode of being open, vulnerable, and available to the internal and external world[s]. The form of a human being is [probably] complete and fixed only at death. Aspects of the self and most of the external world always remain beyond the structures and schemes of knowing. Present forms of knowing are always incomplete, always fallible. Behind every confidence and certainty is residual doubt. (p. 349)

To perceive the meanings of their lifeworld unfolding to them, teachers can remain in the mode of incompleteness which helps them clear their mind constantly from preconceptions and presuppositions to understand the meaning of their own and their students' educational experience. As Lipari (2014) notes one can stay open and attuned by listening to people attentively and trying to understand new meanings receptively and responsively. Lipari draws upon a broad range of interdisciplinary fields such as philosophy, psychology, communication, linguistics, sound studies and quantum physics to problematize our attention to listening as a way of being: "By changing our thinking about listening, we may be freed to dismantle the linguistic prison houses that confine us to misconceptions of our own making about who we are, what we do, and how we might live peacefully with others on this planet" (p. 3). Attentive listening evokes connection to others to achieve an inter-subjective meaning and opens curriculum spaces for a "multiplicity of realities" (Miller, 2005, p. 47). Listening attentively is not restricted to human voice to decipher its implied meaning as we can listen to other sounds in nature and interpret their corresponding meanings. Drawing upon this understanding, my doctoral learning experience is not restricted to my academic study. I am in dialogue with my worlds - inner and outer - to understand and interpret new world experiences occurring to me. The inner circle of my reflective dialogue attunes me to listening to my breathing rhythm, heartbeat, and psychoanalytical conversation as I am reading and writing this autobiographical chapter. In the

outer circle, I am overhearing the voices, sounds and noises in the Beanery where I am sitting behind a table to render my thoughts into meaning to manifest reflections on the paper.

2.6 Temporality of autobiography

What is time? Is time past, present, or future? In what sense is one's past revealed in present? In what way is future unraveled at present? Can one be at the present moment without being in the past or future? What is the relationship between time and being? Is time a part of being or an external phenomenon to being? As curriculum has intimacy with time - it occurs within time - to understand curriculum, these phenomenological questions are essential for reflection. Dwayne E. Huebner (1999) in *The Lure of the Transcendent* invites us to explore the meaning of time by asking a simple question; "What then is time?" and answers it with delicate care and attention as a philosopher of his caliber would do: "But at any rate this much I dare affirm I know: that if nothing passed, there would be no past time; if nothing were approaching, there would be no future time; if nothing were, there would be no present time" (p.136). Huebner (1999) notes that as being is temporal or historical - past, present, and future exist only through human being's existence. The conceptions of learning, objective, or purpose point to the temporality of human being. Educators and specifically curriculum specialists strive to find a way to discuss human temporality that will enhance human's "professional power" in the world. Huebner (1999) discusses the reciprocity of time by regressing to the past and progressing to the future that is typical of autobiography in teacher development:

Both [past and future] are always found intertwined with the present: in the open circle of future and past [,] there exists no possibility which is not made concrete by real conditions, nor any realization which does not bring with it new possibilities. This

interrelation of reciprocal conditions is a historical process in which the past never assumes a final shape nor the future ever shuts its doors. (Huebner, 1999, p. 137)

In teacher development, understanding the temporality of educational experience can contribute to understanding teacher autobiography - a process in which teachers negotiate their pedagogical meaning vis-à-vis their educational experience.

Hongyu Wang (2009) discusses the conception of chronotope (time-space) in curriculum studies. She notes that understanding time-space can transform the present through “historical and cultural” encounter and “temporal, spatial, and inter/subjective” emergence in a way that the *becoming* of the world and being influence each other to embody a creative, interactive, and dialogic space between the world and being (p. 1). Wang draws upon Bakhtin’s (1986) conception of chronotope who takes the idea from Goethe’s works - in which both the world and the hero must transform to become, to emerge:

He emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition [transformation] is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. ... this is not, of course, the private bio-graphical future, but the historical future. It is as though the very foundations of the world are changing, and man must change along with them.... The image of the emerging man begins to surmount its private nature (within certain limits, of course) and enter into a completely new, *spatial* sphere of historical existence. (pp. 23-24, cited in Wang 2009, pp. 1-2)

Wang's conception of chronotope depicts teachers as historical beings in a dynamic process of transformation that gives an understanding of time-space to teacher educational context as they emerge within their biographical being to become, thrive, and prosper. Bakhtin's conception of emergence of being along with the world, once being is at the transition between two epochs [periods], mirrors Aoki's (2004) concept of place once he displaces us in different locations and in-betweenness of curriculum in a sense that both concepts are transformational, emancipatory and awakening for teachers and teacher educators. Maxine Greene (1988) in her book *The Dialectic of Freedom* believes that an aesthetic power in education can awaken reflection, imagination, and possibility. Greene considers human freedom as the "leitmotiv of our time" (1988, p. 25) by which she means our conditioned environment controlled by technological and bureaucratic forces submerge our subjectivity into a common logic of the *given*. As a response to the curriculum of our conditioned time, she encourages the educators to cultivate self-knowledge and a constant dialogue between self and society. She encourages a freedom from the dominating circumstances and invites the educators to reflect on possibility for a change: "What is left for us in this positivist, media-dominated and self-centered time? How, with so much acquiescence and so much thoughtlessness around us, we are to open people to the power of possibility?" (Greene, 1988, p. 55).

Understanding in-betweenness which assumes constant questioning and provoking teachers' knowledge, reality, and lived experience can empower teachers to transcend the boundaries set by their past educational experience. This conscious knowledge is an entry into teachers' creativity and mindful decision-making within the dominating circumstances of curriculum. Once teachers understand the dynamics of their temporal biography, they can emerge into their own lived curriculum.

2.7 Concluding notes

Parker Palmer (2012) explored the teacher's inner life and asked: "How can the teacher's selfhood become a legitimate topic in education and in our public dialogues on educational reform?" (p. 3). To illustrate the landscape of research in teacher education, he outlines three important paths woven neatly together - intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. Palmer emphasizes that teacher selfhood should be a combination of all as a holistic understanding of being and teacher personhood cannot be reduced to only intellect, emotion, and spirit: "They are interwoven in the human self and in education at its best, and I have tried to interweave them in this book as well" (p. 5). In this chapter, I strived to examine teacher's inner life through biography and autobiography and inquired into the related literature in teacher education. Autobiographical research in teacher education focuses on teachers' lifeworld and explores it as curriculum. Such new education is humanistic, holistic, creative, transformative and emancipatory once practiced by individual teachers. Using autobiographical research, teachers can reveal untold stories, share teaching pedagogy and practice, build evolving communities, and transform traditional understanding of curriculum. Once teachers explore their private sphere through biographical and autobiographical research, they can mobilize public and political spheres using dialogue. In the following chapter, I will study dialogue in teacher professional development to emphasise that dialectic in curriculum can nurture teacher professional development and contribute to a democratic society. At the end of the chapter, I will reference my own dialogic learning experience to explore interfaith understanding of our teaching pedagogy in the field of English language teaching.

Chapter 3: Dialogue and teacher professional development

There is no way to love freely, to experience freedom in loving, when you cannot feel your feelings.

(Carol Gilligan, p. 71)

Break the narrative. Refuse all the stories that have been told so far ..., and try to tell the story differently.

(Jeanette Winterson, 2001, pp. 62-63)

3.1 Introduction

In the second chapter, I inquired into teacher development using autobiographical research. Living autobiographically in teacher development nurtures a mode of being present and attentive to teacher circumstances and curricular knowledge. As an opening, I asserted that traditional system of schooling and education might disturb or constrain teacher understanding of self in curriculum. I discussed teachers' biography and autobiography as the most relevant to my study among the three streams of autobiographical research in teacher education; that is, autobiographical theory and practice, feminist autobiography, and teachers' biography and autobiography. In teachers' biography and autobiography, I inquired into four streams of scholarships - collaborative autobiography, narrative inquiry, teacher lore, and biographical studies of teachers' lives - all focused on teachers' selfhood, inner life, lived experience, and

lifeworld. I discussed attunement and temporality in teacher autobiography and concluded that they can create a mode of attentive being to autobiographical learning in teacher development once teachers understand the unfoldings which reveal who they are as educators to transform from within. My learning experience from autobiographical research and teacher development encourages me to study the way dialogue as an indispensable method for teacher development can nurture teacher professional development. My research question for this chapter is: In what sense can dialogue nurture teacher professional development?

3.2 Background

Knowing about teachers' personal, professional, and political lives and circumstances, teaching pedagogy and practice in the classroom, how they include students' voices and if they are being engaged in doing research to improve their teaching pedagogy and practice all are accessible through ongoing dialogue by teachers and teacher educators at schools. Being open to teachers' different teaching pedagogy and practise, ideas, thoughts, and fantasies of education can manifest the democratic culture of schools where the staff and faculty engage nonjudgmentally in their educational experience to improve the quality of education for the students. Teacher professional development is a responsibility of individual teachers and the schools they work in to ensure that every student receives the highest-quality teaching from the most highly-qualified teachers. Teachers as well as principals, vice-principals, and other team leaders at schools can play an important role in teacher professional development. Teachers learn to engage with the humanity and selfhood of themselves, and other teachers and students at schools through open and genuine conversations. Anthony Clarke (2012, p. 60) notes that Cohen Avaraham's (2009) notion of *inner life* as a monastic, meditative, and contemplative

understanding of teacher selfhood transformed to *inner work* indicating a more tangible, practicable, and pedagogically lived engagement during his conversation with other teachers. Reflecting on his inner work with other teachers, Clarke specified no limit to the ways their conversations unraveled - quoting Gadamer (1990):

We say that we ‘conduct’ a conversation, but 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. (pp. 383-84, cited in Clarke, 2012, p. 60)

Clarke’s understanding of dialogue gives a meaningful and humanistic grasp of conversations when the interlocutors do not consider a prescribed objective and predetermined goal as teacher presupposed thoughts of education might lead them into. I find this understanding of dialogic conversations as spontaneous, generative, democratic, and transformative and strive to inquire into the way such dialogic conversations can contribute to teacher professional development in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I will review the literature to find out the way dialogue can nurture teacher professional development.

3.3 Dialogue in teacher professional development

Understanding curriculum shifts its focus from “the separation of subject and object” to their negotiation, integration, and dialogue (Pinar et al. 1995, p. 502) that can provide a

meaningful understanding of our educational experience. Negotiating the dialogic meaning and knowledge shared between teachers and students reveals a new meaning of their educational experience. Doll (1993a) notes that in the process of meaning making, the paradox of subject-object, or teacher-learner makes sense only once one is included in the other. Learning experience is created, facilitated, and supported by dialogue. One needs the other for one's own sense of being, becoming, thriving and transforming. Doll continues, dialogue in curriculum focuses on the process of "traversing the courses of negotiating with self and others" (p. 286) to exchange meanings of our educational experience. Doll (1993b) uses the term *post-modern* to refer to a paradigmatic shift from rationalism and empiricism to deconstruction of accepted meaning in teacher development. Doll's understanding of dialogue in teacher professional development is democratic, transformative, scientific, and experiential during which a dialogic understanding of accepted meaning will arise in collaborative conversations among teachers and educators. Teachers become new subjectivity as they learn from each other in dialogic conversations to transform their understanding of education. This transformation occurs due to the nature of dialogue that can engage educators in a collaborative leaning experience. To open dialogue in teacher professional development to transform meaning, certain concepts of "truth, language, knowledge, and power" (Slattery, 2006, p. 17) can be subject to critical re-evaluation and reconstruction once we endeavor to understand the subjective meaning of teachers vis-à-vis that of students. Doll (1993b) discusses that the main advantage of post-modernism is the generation of knowledge and the transformation of learning with a shift from "discrete to relational", and from "closed systems to interactive and dissipative systems" (p. 12). Involved in this dissipative structure, the participating teachers and students transform their knowledge and align their visions as the nature of such a system demands. This understanding of curriculum is

consistent with Bakhtin's work on dialogism formed in truly democratic conversations (Holquist, 2003) that evolve to lead to better and deeper understandings of self and other in teacher professional development. Huebner (1999) asserts that real dialogue is only possible if we are "willing [and ready] to be influenced" by other interlocutors involved in our conversations. He continues that the willingness to be influenced by others demands "an openness toward the world", and the fact that one is never a "completed being" but a curious human in "the process of becoming" who makes "an attempt at ... desolitudinizing"... [self] by showing self to others and receiving [self] from others in a conversation (Huebner, 1999, p. 78). Using dialogue for teacher professional development, a relational understanding of educational experience and a willingness to be transformed and influenced by the professional experience of other teachers and teacher educators are essential so that dialogue can construct teacher professional development. Teacher subjectivity is at the core of this transformative experience and can be acknowledged by the teachers involved in. Understanding the meaning of dialogue in teacher professional development opens new possibilities for teachers and teacher educators who are eager to learn and expand on their educational and professional experience by generating collaborative and dialectic knowledge. The preliminary stage in understanding this shared knowledge is through being open and willing to understand the meaning intended or conveyed by other interlocutors involved in dialogue. Noddings (2015) invites the educators to reflect and engage in an ongoing dialogue: "a never ending vibrant examination of what we mean by a better adult" (p. 54) who follows a constructive and generative understanding of education to better connect to self and others. By "better adult", Noddings refers to Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education* and invites the teachers and educators to a dialogue about how we might better construct our notions of self, schooling, and education. Aoki (2004) notes how teachers ontologically engage in open

dialogue through which they explore the “intentions and assumptions underlying their acts” and critically reflect on their conduct in “brackets” to “go beyond the immediate level of interpretation” (Aoki et al., 2004, p. 7). In their reflective moments, teachers bracket their understanding of teaching pedagogy and practice in an inner dialogue. Regarding the dialogic understanding of “explaining”, he writes as the structure of meanings is not accessible to empirical analytic science, researchers must use interpretive explanations by entering an “intersubjective dialogue” with those who are in the research situation. In its concentration on the lifeworld and personhood of teachers, Aoki’s conception of intersubjectivity in ontological engagement of teachers in dialogue mirrors Doll’s (1993b) relational understanding of dissipative systems considering their interactive and dynamic operation exchanging energy and matter with their environment and Huebner’s (2008) conception of desolitudinizing regarding its reciprocal understanding of self in conversations with others as all these practices take teachers away from their comfort zone to engage them in unfamiliar and at times uncomfortable intersubjective and dialogic spaces. Zhang (2015) asserts that the educational process is one of “autonomy, cooperation, dialogue, and inquiry” directed by teachers, which aims at the development of “free personality, social equality, and justice” (p. 59). Regarding education as a “liberal cause and an emancipatory praxis”, Zhang continues that teachers [and students] are intellectuals with “free personality, independent spirits, and critical consciousness”. Dialogue contributes to teacher personal and professional development as it concentrates on both personal aspects [autonomy, free personality], and social and political domains [equality, justice], to develop democratic spaces of cooperative learning and mutual respect. Focusing on philosophical dialogue to enable teachers to intervene and transform the learning process, Zhenyu (2015) connects a community of philosophical inquiry (CPI) to revised Socratic dialogue

(Fisher, 2005) using which teachers get engaged in dialogic conversations to problematize traditional understanding of schooling in a top-down educational system to transform from within for professional development. Teachers as agents of education can create a dialogic and democratic space to problematize their educational experience and vocalize their individual and educational problems for their professional development.

3.4 Dialogue in critical pedagogy

Nathalia Jaramillo (2015) notes that as an emancipatory philosophy, “critical pedagogy” encourages the educators to critique the foundations of traditional schooling by replacing rote learning, banking education, and memorization with critical and rational thinking in the classroom. Critical pedagogy resituates teachers and students in a dialogic conversation informed by teaching pedagogy and practice to foster teacher and student agency for supporting social change through reflective inquiry, dialogue and collaborative action. Jaramillo (2015, p. 170) emphasizes that “decolonial pedagogy stems from an acknowledgement that the world we inhabit carries the seeds of colonial-capitalism”, and can challenge Western conceptions of democracy: “Decolonial thought is, therefore, anchored in other epistemological frameworks, value systems, and an ethical commitment to caring for others, the environment, and other ways of knowing”. Teachers in decolonial pedagogy enter dialogue with “suppressed knowledge(s) and voices to advance educational practice in support of diversity” (Jaramillo, 2015, p. 171) and to mobilize knowledge of the oppressed. Although critical pedagogy critiques some forms of autobiographical approaches to thinking and learning as apolitical, teacher subjectivity is entangled with public and political spheres. Once teacher subjectivity acknowledges and transcends boundaries of traditional education using autobiography, it steps into the world of

politics by analyzing and synthesizing teacher suppressed knowledge(s). Autobiography unlike critical pedagogy resituates teacher subjectivity in dialogue with their lifeworld and circumstances to understand the strength of their voice and personal knowledge in their public sphere. Self-education emerges once teachers educate themselves by reflecting on their own educational experience which is more analytical and synthetical than critical pedagogy as autobiographical inquiry demands a deep reflection on teacher very personal experience than on external curricular conceptions and pedagogical outputs such as banking education.

Freire (2014, p. 17) underscores dialogue as a way of “knowing and learning” and asserts that it helps us value the collective nature of knowing and learning as dialogical knowledge is collective and shared. Understanding dialogue as a process of knowing and learning calls for an “epistemological curiosity” about “the element of dialogue” (p. 18). Dialogue in this sense is not an end, but a means to achieve a deeper understanding of the object of knowledge. Freire (2014, p. 19) underscores an engagement of theory and practice in dialogue and asserts that if we “negate practice for the sake of theory”, there is a danger of reducing theory “to a pure verbalism or intellectualism” and if we “negate theory for the sake of practice” and consider dialogue as mere conversation, there is a danger of losing ourselves “in the disconnectedness of practice”. To avoid such risks, Freire advocates the unity between theory and practice. Teachers and students are able to transform their educational experience into knowledge and reveal new knowledge analyzing and synthesizing previous learning experience once they get engaged in dialogue as a process of learning and knowing. Is dialogue possible without prior theoretical and practical knowledge and without any “epistemological curiosity”? Freire’s conception of dialogue in critical pedagogy can be utilized by teachers and teacher educators to inquire into their epistemological meaning in dialogic exchanges with other teachers. This collective

understanding of dialogue in teacher development reminds me of Bakhtin's conception of dialogism during which teacher epistemological quest for understanding knowledge can lead to better understanding of self and other for teacher professional development. Teachers are in a continuous dialogue with themselves and other teachers to develop an emerging meaning of their lifeworld and to excavate the epistemological meaning of their pedagogy and practice. In a Freirian sense, dialogue is potentially a critical pedagogy. Freire's dialogic understanding of epistemology values curiosity at the core of teacher personal and professional development and encourages teacher dialogue as a commitment to collaborative learning of pedagogical knowledge. Freire (2014, pp. 88-9) encourages those people whose rights of dialogue have been denied - the oppressed - to reclaim their voice and bring this "dehumanizing aggression" to a halt as dialogue - the encounter between the human being and the world - is human "primordial right". Human beings can transform the worlds - inner and outer - once they engage in dialogic conversations to achieve a new meaning of their subjectivity and their world. Dialogue is thus "an existential necessity" and provides a medium for the interlocutors to reflect on their thoughts and transform their shared reality as they address the world which is to be democratic and humanized. As an act of creation, dialogue should not be monopolized as a "crafty instrument" to dominate and suppress others and it should contain profound love and devotion for the world and for people. In teacher development, dialogue can help teachers to understand their human voice which might be oppressed and neglected during their educational experience. Sharing teacher educational experience opens new pathways to teacher knowledge, and works as a humanizing process during which an understanding of teacher subjectivity, ontology and phenomenology can be discussed, critiqued, and elevated. As teacher primordial right, dialogue brings out the untold stories of teacher lifeworld in construction with others which can transform

an understanding of their subjectivity and their pivotal role in education and school curriculum. As a caring, humanizing, and empowering process in a democratic society, teacher dialogue can be included in school philosophy of education and curriculum development to provide an invaluable access to teacher knowledge for teacher professional development and student learning experience.

3.5 Dialogue as reflective practice

Gary Poole (2012) asserts that the single best way to improve teaching pedagogy and practice is by providing opportunities for the teachers to talk to each other about their teaching. In their reflective chapter book, six scholars talk about their inner selves and reflections on their teaching pedagogy and practice using dialogue. Poole reveals the intricacy of their inner-workings and dialogic discussions: “Discussions of the products of inner work require impressive degrees of honesty and courage. There is little point in discussing simply what we think people want to hear about teaching when we know that the inner work yields more intricate content” (2012, p. 9). Facilitating teacher dialogue in school curriculum can encourage teachers to unravel their personal stories and educational narratives. Poole highlights that the exploration of inner work can render teachers vulnerable as their values, beliefs, teaching pedagogy and practice might be seriously questioned. The degree to which teachers openly accept these questions and reflect on them for their professional development can determine the flow of conversations. Avraham Cohen (2012) indicates that teachers can consciously work on the holes in their wholeness through self-reflections and dialogic conversations. Using dialogue, teachers can understand and control the climate of their own professional development and classroom dynamics. Cohen believes that “anomie and alienation” (p. 21) are pervasive in schools and

teachers can connect to students by understanding their situation using dialogue. Schools are one of the major places among others - families and communities - where anomic behavior might become endemic, and educators can connect to their students using dialogue to learn about their inner lives and untold stories to provide caring support to ensure student success. Connecting to students using dialogue to reveal teacher stories as a caring strategy, teachers share their inner work and mode of being with their students to provide reflective, educational, and humanistic learning experience. In *Education for Enlightenment*, Heesoon Bai (2012), emphasize the strength of meditation and its application in teaching pedagogy and practice in the classroom and asserts meditative thinking and contemplation can bring watchfulness and wakefulness for teachers and students. Teacher conscious presence in the classroom facilitates dialogic contributions for the students as teachers become more receptive and welcoming to their students as a result of this meditation and deep thinking. Contemplative and reflective teaching can encourage students to reflect on their educational experience and understand the mechanism of their intellectual growth and academic learning which can contribute to teacher professional development. Bai (2012) notes the influence of dialogue with other teachers who have contributed to the book as active meditation:

With these colleagues, my heart naturally and easily opens wide; and my intellect comes alive during our lively and joyful dialogue. My whole being resonates deeply with the generosity of their heart and spirit. I would not hesitate to call my manner of being with them an active meditation. (p. 66)

Teacher dialogue can give a holistic understanding of teacher personal and educational stories once they generously reveal their educational narratives with students and teachers. When we understand teachers' educational, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, social, political,

and personal stories, we can connect with their autobiographical mode of being which facilitates their professional development.

3.6 Hermeneutic reflexivity and dialogue

Kögler (1996) notes that philosophical hermeneutics reflects a different understanding of dialogue. Dialogue is not limited to “the communicative form of linguistic understanding between two subjects”, but encompasses “specific symbolic-cultural preconditions” (p. 43). Dialogue can only occur once there is a certain preunderstanding between both interlocutors. In every communication, the symbolic precondition structures and conditions the understanding and interpretation of the interlocutors engaged in the dialogue. More important than the linguistic meanings conveyed in dialogic conversations, a Gadamerian understanding of dialogue is evident in Kögler’s interpretation as our meaning is symbolically and culturally preconditioned and predetermined invoking a shared experience of life among the interlocutors. The intimacy and affinity unraveling in dialogic exchanges is a natural outcome of a genuine conversation: “the central concern is not to identify the other’s meaning as an expression of her individuality but to relate the possible truth of what she says to one’s own perspectives and assumptions” (Kögler, 1996, p. 43). To understand the intended message, the interlocutors can transcend the limits of the content-oriented dialogue specified and delimited by the medium of language. Genuine hermeneutic experience is only possible once we give ourselves to productive and spontaneous discussions which transcends the pre-structured dialogue.

Kögler (1996, p. 47) considers experience, either hermeneutic or otherwise, as an essentially *negative* disposition in interpretations of dialogue. Our experience provides new light to understand, interpret, and predict the phenomenon and can alter perceived meaning. Genuine

experience by its nature, however, is incapable of being anticipated, judged or understood. Our expectations and anticipations in dialogue might arise from previous experiences and can obstruct our true interpretations of perceived meaning and can be bracketed. Such experiences that include content language that transfers the knowledge can be altered in our new encounters that normally arise in dialogue. Bracketing such expectations through negating previous experiences can be the source of conscious experience: “by proceeding through this antithetical negativity, knowledge experiences itself to the extent that, through encountering alterity, it alters itself” (Kögler, 1996, p. 47). Kögler’s conception of antithetical negativity mirrors Elbaz’s (2014) abstraction of memory when it curves back on itself like a stream for a fuller understanding of lived experience. Confronting alterity can work as a journey toward consciousness in teacher development as teachers reflect on their educational experience to alter it.

3.7 Dialogue for preparation of teachers

Noddings (2015) notes some elements that should be included in every curriculum following the curriculum movement in the United States: “Some of the most promising aims in the Common Core emphasize cooperation, conversation (dialogue, communication), and critical thinking” (p. 170). Reflective collegiality achieved through a culture of dialogue among the teachers and students is a rational process of critical thinking. Instead of thinking of a penalty, teachers can open a dialogue with their students to understand the source of possible infractions. Noddings compares the *ethos* in public and private schools and notes that a “publicized ethos” is more noticeable in private schools and teachers choose their school based on that ethos. In her dichotomy of “soft” versus “tough” teachers considering their attitude towards enforced rules,

Noddings (2015) emphasizes the significance of dialogue: “Continual reflective, collegial dialogue is necessary, and a wise administration will respect a reasonable range of faculty positions. Teachers in preparation can think deeply about the kind of school atmosphere in which they would like to teach, and they can certainly ask about the school ethos when they are interviewed for a position. Will there be at least a cadre of teachers with whom you can work to establish and maintain an ethos of care and trust?” (p. 172). Once teachers make informed decisions by opening a dialogue on school culture prior to their entry into the cadre of educators, they facilitate their transition into school curriculum and smoothen their future development. Dialogue can not only facilitate new teachers’ informed decisions for choosing the suitable school to join but candid conversations can also contribute to school dynamics once schools can probably remain open and receptive to ethos of new teachers. Using dialogue between the cadre of educators and joining teachers can create new meanings and ultimately refresh both the novice teachers’ understanding of school sociopolitical atmosphere and the existing teachers’ creative understanding of their own curriculum. Such collaborative and dialogic understanding of school curriculum can prepare the new teachers to understand school ethos more fully.

3.7.1 Dialogue and care

Noddings (2015, p. 121) elaborates on *care* - a term specific to her authorship in teacher professional development - and asserts that “caring is best construed as a quality of relation, not primarily as a virtue belonging to an individual”. She notes that “care theorists” in education underscore the significance of ongoing dialogue in all types of relational ethics. Noddings emphasizes the importance of “continuing intellectual dialogue” among students and their teachers “to establish and maintain personal relations” which is the foundation of “all good

teaching” (2015, p. 122). Teacher intellectual dialogue can contribute to their own and their students’ wellbeing as dialogic conversations can establish and maintain a continuous support system for both as the flow of intellect can promise. Dialogue can turn to a method of being and living in human existence. Holquist (2003) considers dialogue as a key concept in all Bakhtin’s career and life: “Dialogue is present in one way or another throughout the notebooks he kept from his youth to his death at the age of 80” (p. 14). Bakhtin considers human beings in an ongoing dialogue with other works of literature and other authors. Human’s existential experience informs and is informed by previous work of literature. The previous work of literature is as informed and altered by dialogue as the present one is. Dialogue extends to both directions in the past and future as characteristic to human being’s existential experience. Human beings are temporal phenomena and extend to the past and future informed by dialogic conversations with the literature. Teachers as informed humans are in constant dialogue with other work of literature which can transform their understanding of learning and teaching. Jung-Hoon (2016) developed the concept of care autobiographically by juxtaposing *currere* and *Hakbeolism* - a uniquely Korean concept of *symbolic capital* (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) obtainable via high test scores on university entrance examinations. In his engaging book, Jung-Hoon began with a deeply sorrowful poem that captured his experience when he noticed a boy he knew on the elevator he took daily to school was no longer there! The boy had thrown himself off the high-rise apartment with a note left behind, “Mom, I cannot endure this pain any more. My brain nibbles my heart. I am sorry.” (p. 1). Jung-Hoon (2016) emphasizes that Korean education “structurally, culturally, and indeed psychologically” (p. 2) has conformed to instrumental rationality through which students - in danger of losing subjectivity - experience the burden of recurrent tests, exams, and evaluations. To value subjectivity of students, care for self

can replace the preordained goal of education which is based on “mere absorption of externally imposed information and skills” (p. 3). Jung-Hoon Jung’s *Hakbeolism* as symbolic sociocultural capital resonates with me as it animates my schooling experience in Iran and I am wondering if teachers and academic scholars can work closely together using dialogue to transform the university entrance examination system by eliminating this stressful exam from educational system and replacing it by a qualitative evaluation and descriptive method to provide caring support and empathetic understanding for students.

3.7.2 Dialogue as a democratic practice

Aligned with Bakhtin, Aoki (2004) critiques the researchers’ approach in “empirical analytical research”, and considers researchers “in dialogue with the people in the research situation” (p. 104). In a dialectical and transformative process, the researchers are involved in an ongoing conversation and interpretative analysis of ideas, perspectives, and viewpoints. Aoki’s dialogical understanding of research can provide a venue for educators in the classrooms to consider themselves and their students as the main participants of the inquiry into their teaching and learning. Although the chances were infrequent, I remember the way dialogue particularly during high school years contributed to my mental and emotional well-being and understanding of self-worth. In those years, a few teachers of mine were considered just like a friend once they dialogued on different aspects of social life during which we could express our ideas, thoughts, and critical points of view. By reflecting on lived experience, teachers can encourage their students to learn the way to develop their subjectivity, understanding which is the main step to establishing a democratic society. From the onset of my doctoral program, I have been engaged in reflective and constructive dialogue with my caring supervisor and later with my supportive

committee members to achieve a deeper understanding of my pedagogy and practice. Now I realize in what sense my meaning of education is getting reconstructed by new learnings during our dialogic conversations which help me construct a new understanding of subjectivity, curriculum, and learning experience.

Freire (2014) clarifies that dialogue between teachers and students does not place them in equal positions, however, it facilitates a democratic space and humanistic relationship. As a humanistic approach to teaching philosophy, dialogic conversations are true learning moments during which teachers and students learn from each other's lived experience. As participants in the dialogue, they can not only "retain" their identity, but also proactively "defend" it, and "thus grow together" (p. 107). Freire underlines the significance of dialogue as a transformational method in educational inquiry and warns the teachers to be wary of their authoritarian attitude to avoid imposing their own thinking on educands once facilitating critical thinking: "Pedagogical dialogue implies not only content, or cognoscible [cognizable] object around which to revolve, but also a presentation concerning it made by the educator for the educands" (2014, p. 108).

3.8 Dialogue and plurality in teacher development

Wang (2014, p. xi) emphasizes "the profoundly touching, humane, and imaginative voices" of the authors and reports on her teaching and learning experience with the two books: "My experience of teaching *Speaking of Teaching* (with amazingly positive, even enlightened responses from students) and reading *Speaking of Learning* also forms a tessellation that resonates with a patterned movement of my own temporal and intercultural learning through encounters". As she opens a dialogue with the authors and the students, Wang is involved in her conversations within. Using dialogue, educators learn about their teaching moments by inquiring

into their own immediate interior world. Dialogue in this sense, however, is not merely limited to an inner conversation or an exchange of ideas, theories, methods, and viewpoints with the other educators in the group. More importantly, being open and listening to students while teaching gives a “self-understanding in order to become better pedagogical companions to students” and develop professionally. This aspect of dialogue invites educators to self-education during which they can question their own meaning of pedagogy by empathizing with students and accommodating their viewpoints in teaching practices. Clarke (2014) discusses that their book arose from dialogue. He notes that Avraham Cohen invited them to join a conversation regarding “what it means to be an educator” (p. xxv). Sharing their stories, they opened a dialogue to question their teaching pedagogy and practice. By examining their teaching practice, their collective conversation contributed to an *emerging understanding* of their individual teaching and provided a true moment of presence, and reflection. Plurality is meaningfully practiced once teachers and educators remain open to different realities of students and in continuous dialogue with those realities to understand new dimensions of self in student and teacher educational experience. In a democratic context, teaching pedagogy and practice can be influenced, informed, and reconstructed by multiple dialogic meanings emerging from students and teachers’ educational experience. Deborah Osberg and Gert Biesta (2008) consider curriculum as a “space of emergence” and propose that in this sense curriculum “is *not* a space of common ground”. They indicate that human subjectivity can only emerge in one’s interactions with others, specifically with those who are different from us. Plurality of the space of emergence provides an opportunity for an educational experience to occur, not the educator or the educands. Osberg and Biesta (2008) contend that plurality as a condition of possibility of education might disagree with traditional understanding of schooling in which the teachers are the sole informants:

However, if plurality is the condition of possibility of education, then this challenges the conventional logic of schooling whereby everything possible is done to *reduce* the differences between the teacher and those being educated on the one hand, and the differences between the various individuals being educated by the teacher (e.g. in terms of age, gender, ability, interests, etc.) on the other. The idea of a ‘space of emergence’ suggests that difference must be maintained in the classroom. Any reduction of such difference *prevents* education from taking place.” (2008, p. 324)

Through ongoing dialogue in a pluralistic context of learning and teaching, informed teachers can create educational moments during which each student becomes able to realize their capabilities and potentials so that unique individuals emerge because of teacher conscious decisions and student collaboration in dialogic exchanges. The transformative understanding of this educational experience will support students who can confidently express their thoughts, imaginations, and fantasies without being too much concerned about judgments of their teachers and peers in educational contexts which will create emerging possibilities for education. This subjective understanding of education can empower each individual student to trust their understanding of new concepts and ideas in their educational experience to transform and emerge new possibilities and can contribute to teacher professional development. Doll and Trueit (2012) write curriculum can bring new possibilities for students by opening space for “creative emergence of new ideas and procedures” and incorporating plurality and non-linearity into understanding curriculum using conversation as the primary mode of instruction:

A focus on such challenges calls into question the efficacy of a sequentially ordered curriculum, as well as the common teaching strategy of “teaching-as-telling.” While the constructivist movement does help us see the efficacy of paying attention to the learner’s

frame - his/her schemas; the complexivist movement goes beyond this subjectivization to bring forth the concept and practice of transformation via situational self-organization.

(Doll & Trueit, 2012, p. 122)

Understanding pluralistic dialogue in teacher development can bring teachers closer to students not only by simply telling their educational stories but also by understanding situational psychoanalytic space of each individual student in the process of learning experience. Situational self-development as essential for transformative learning experience provokes a contextualized and individualized teaching experience and encourages teacher self and professional development. The teachers' primary commitment then is to include creative moments in their educational and professional experience for students so that they could understand plurality in their own otherness and in the otherness of their teachers. What makes creativity and plurality interrelated is that understanding otherness requires coming out of the comfort zone of self which needs courage and can trigger creativity.

Although this otherness highlights the significance of individuality in public education as we become conscious of other individuals' space and time, there is a danger of isolation and narcissism in individuation that teachers can be conscious about in their dialogue with students. Clarke and Phelan (2017) emphasize the significance of plurality in teacher professional development by acknowledging differences. In their evaluation of the Kaye College Active Collaborative Education (ACE) programme, Clarke and Phelan notice that Kaye College invited teachers to construct their professional identity and become an agent of social change and transformation. Embracing plurality, the curriculum has included students' voice, and religious identities:

The narrative approach used in the programme not only fits with students' cultural backgrounds but also provides rich opportunities for students to recognize that a range of voices exists, to engage with the experiences and perspectives of their peers and to reconstruct their beliefs not only about education but also about religious and political identities. (p. 101)

They continue that the program acknowledges agonistic assumptions: "that a plurality of views on fundamental questions exists; that certain dimensions of human suffering are inevitable and even ordinary; and that conflict is an inescapable feature of the human condition and would exist even in a society better than the ones we have" (p. 102). Including differing perspectives in curriculum by educators provides supportive environment for marginalized individuals to express their opinions and play an active role as participating students in classroom activities. Once teachers respect each individual learner's unique circumstances in pluralistic education which values ethnic, racial, religious, and social differences for a nation's unity, students find supportive and caring space to share their voice and express their different worldviews. Keeping the right balance of differing human conditions is perhaps the most important challenge a teacher faces in a plural classroom of today. Understanding students' individuality takes painstaking effort for teachers and educators to guarantee quality education for everyone - essential for maintaining a healthy society which can be emphasized in teacher professional development.

3.9 Dialogue and individuation

Jung (2014, p. 448) considers *individuation* as a process through which "individual beings are formed and differentiated" which is distinct from the collective understanding of self. Individuation is essential to prevent from conformity in public education. Jung asserts that "any

serious check to individuality, therefore, is an artificial stunting” and a social group consisting of “stunted individuals” cannot form a healthy society. Perhaps, a society which preserves its cohesion and coherence by connecting people while preserving each individual freedom can thrive and remain more healthy and productive as noticed in developed countries with advanced education. Jung notes that individuation by itself is by no means the sole end of psychological education. Prior to regarding individuation as a goal of education, “the educational aim of adaptation to the necessary minimum of collective norms must first be attained. If a plant is to unfold its specific nature to the full, it must first be able to grow in the soil in which it is planted” (2014, p. 449). This paradoxical understanding of individuation is better perceived in democratic societies in which individuals reflect their group identity while maintaining their individual integrity. To understand the individual space of each student, other scholars employ their narrative accounts. For instance, Leggo (2014, p. 43) opens his argument with two simple and provoking questions: “What does it mean to become a teacher? What does it mean to become a learner?” Carl narrates his story as a young boy with a statement from Carol Gilligan (2002, p. 63): “it is difficult for young boys to read the world around them and show the sensitive, soft sides of themselves”. Leggo asserts that he was “a boisterous, competitive boy who loved sports and games of all kinds [and].... physically active, seemingly tireless, full of boundless energy” (p. 45). In an inner dialogue, he observes his individuality among other boys reflecting on his world and intrinsic feelings, and sincerely opens an inner dialogue on how he was afraid at that age: “I do not remember much trouble with my being “one of the boys”, but I can recall many incidents when I was not especially brave or risk-taking. I was afraid of crazed bullies, loud extroverts, and grinning liars (I still am afraid!)” (p. 45). As individuals, human beings are in a dialogue with themselves and the world they exist in. Leggo’s expository writing contains

individual characteristic of an active boy who might be misunderstood and discriminated against by his collective norms which is the source of confusion. As Jung (2014) notes, like the plant in the soil, we are all planted in certain soil and pluralistic education which values individual differences can preserve each individual student in the soil of plurality by self-education to avoid the danger of self-alienation. In pluralistic education, different races, ethnicities, and religions can have specific space to vocalize their unique voice. In teacher professional development, it is important to dialogue on these attributes to learn more about our differences to contribute to the unity of teaching community. Discussing faith as a personal value with other teachers can provide an intersubjective understanding of teachers' personal and professional identity and individuality. In the following, I provide my interfaith dialogue as an English language educator in Vancouver to note that experiencing this intersubjective space can contribute to teacher individual and professional development.

3.10 Dialogue on faith for teacher professional development: A narrative

Several years ago, I had an opportunity to open an interfaith dialogue with Joel Heng Hartse from the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia who is now as a lecturer at the Faculty of Education in Simon Fraser University. I remember the time when I was in the bus heading home from Vancouver Georgia College - an English language school in Vancouver, downtown. I opened and flipped through the book I had borrowed from Joel; *Christian and Critical Language Educators in Dialogue* coedited by Mary Shepard Wong and Suresh Canagarajah (2009). I skimmed through the table of content and read some pages about different types of dialogue among Christian and critical English language educators. As I was reading, I was wondering if I could contribute to a chapter book on interfaith

dialogue among English language educators. I was enthusiastic to share my teaching experience in my new context with other educators who came from different religious backgrounds. I was curious to know the way other religious educators in my new context would respond to my questions and concerns. I was not sure if they had encountered the same issues I was experiencing as a Muslim educator. With these questions in mind, I arranged a meeting with Joel in the Blenz Coffee at the University of British Columbia Village in the summer of 2012. Before attending the meeting, I had several email exchanges with Joel and I knew exactly what I was going to discuss. I was not quite sure how Joel, as a self-identified Evangelical Christian educator, would respond to my concerns and questions as a Shia Muslim educator. Our first meeting went quite well. We were so engaged in our interfaith conversations that Joel extended his parking time to continue our dialogue. In our very first meeting, I was so passionate about the outcome of our conversations that I proposed to co-edit a book on interfaith dialogue inviting both religious and non-religious scholars into a conversation and it took Joel by surprise. I encouraged him to think of his strong network of scholars in the academe and invite them to contribute to my proposed chapter book. At the time, I was not admitted into UBC and did not have a strong network of faculty members and scholars. That was why I asked him to initiate the invitations. Joel thought, instead, we could write a chapter for a co-edited book by Mary Shepard Wong and Ahmar Mahboob. He knew Mary from his previous engagement with Christian scholarship. He was going to see her in a conference in the United States two weeks after our meeting and discuss the possibility of including our chapter on interfaith dialogue. To our surprise, Mary was then going to send an invitation to English language educators who were interested in interfaith dialogue. Her co-edited volume; *Spirituality & English Language Teaching: Religious Explorations of Teacher Identity, Pedagogy, and Context*, encompassed a

broad perspective and invited scholars from around the world to contribute. When I received Joel's email confirming that invited us to contribute to Mary and Ahmar's co-edited volume, I became excited as it was my first opportunity in my Vancouverite context to be able to express my voice as a Muslim English language educator. To write our chapter "Attempting Interfaith Dialogue in TESOL: A Duoethnography", Joel and I scheduled monthly meetings when we could have regular conversations on our Christian and Muslim faiths. During each month, we read the related books (Wong & Canagarajah, 2009, Wong, Dörnyei, & Kristjánsson, 2013) and articles (Edge, 2003; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005) on interfaith dialogue into TESOL and reflected on how our learnings from the literature would identify our identity as two religious ESL educators. Our approach in dialogue was intentionally open-ended. Initially, we inquired into the conflicts involving Christianity and Islam through the literature (see Hadley, 2006, Karmani, 2005, 2006). Interested in interpersonal and transformative aspects of dialogue, though, we were inspired by Wong and Canagarajah (2009) as the conversations in the volume were formed by scholars who self-identified as Christian, agnostic, spiritual, atheist and so on.

I can remember when Joel asked about the five pillars of Islam in our first meeting in a café on the 4th street. I had learned about the five pillars years back in primary school. I remember I was hesitating to answer this simple question, though. And I was wondering why? Joel's provocative questions in our first meeting helped me attend my faith more fully. That was a pivotal moment in understanding and valuing my faith. Our ongoing dialogue were filled with opposing yet transformative views. Coming from the United States, Joel assumed an individualistic religious identity as a Christian ESL educator. My understanding of faith was more collective. I mainly focused on 'us' than 'I' as it was the way I learned about Islam in the

context of Iran. Joel had a clear understanding of his Christian standpoint, I should admit, and encouraged me to specify the boundaries of my faith to be able to establish a dialogue between two religions. I could hardly consider specific boundaries. Instead, I concentrated on shared values in both faiths. I am now wondering why I was concentrating on shared values. Was it because of my collective understanding of religion, faith, and spiritual values? Did our differing values carry equal socio-cultural and socio-political status in Vancouver?

3.11 Writing our interfaith dialogue into TESOL

During our regular writing and discussions, it became clear that we had a different understanding of concepts like ‘Muslim’, ‘Christian’, ‘religion’, and the ways in which these conceptions influence our personality and teaching career. We began to look for theoretical models that could accommodate a personal understanding, encompassing autobiography and *currere* (Pinar, 2011), sociological concepts of religious habitus (Mellor & Shilling, 2010), and communication perspectives on interfaith dialogue (Brown, 2013). Finally, duoethnography came out as the most effective method for us to both engage in and model the type of interpersonal academic dialogue we believed was missing and necessary once it came to understanding the role of inter-faith dialogue in TESOL. We wrote our chapter not simply as representatives of various religious beliefs, or as TESOL professionals, but ultimately as ‘different individuals trying to make meaning of their life histories and then reconceptualizing those meanings’ (Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012, p. 178). Although there is scant separation between ‘data collection’ and ‘writing’ in duoethnography as the method involves individual life histories, we generated a ‘data set’ to aid our analysis which included an 80-page document including every email we sent to each other - and periodically to others, like the editors of the

volume - between June 2012 and October 2014. Supplementary data in our original drafts of our first paper encompassed autobiographical narratives and accounts of our religious values, and our individual notes from the fourteen face-to-face meetings during the period. Typical of duoethnography, the researchers who negotiate their meaning in tandem come from different sociocultural, linguistic, religious, or political backgrounds; for instance, black and white (McClellan & Sader, 2012), immigrant and non-immigrant (Nabavi & Lund, 2012), and in our case, Christian and Muslim (Heng Hartse & Nazari, 2018; Nazari & Heng Hartse, 2018). My interfaith dialogue gave me the confidence to understand, critique, and value my faith in an intersubjective understanding of our belief systems. Dialogue opened a supportive as well as critical shared space in which I could vocalize my voice and listen to Joel's responses. It took courage to reflect, question, and understand my values in a humanistic and intersubjective space of our dialogic exchanges. Duoethnography as a non-intrusive method provided an open and empathetic arena for both of us to reflect on our verbal and non-verbal exchanges and question our cultural, social, political, and contextual understanding of faith in our life history and lived experience.

3.12 Concluding notes

In this chapter, I discussed dialogue in teacher professional development and argued that transformative dialogue as a relational learning experience can inquire into intersubjective space to vocalize suppressed knowledge in critical pedagogy and prepare teachers for a pluralistic world of today. In the concluding section of my chapter on interfaith dialogue into TESOL, I experienced intersubjective transformation once asking: "Is it possible to maintain your previous beliefs and welcome new ones?" (Heng Hartse & Nazari, 2018, p. 60). I am still wondering why

interfaith dialogue is important for teacher professional development in TESOL. Could we keep our questions regarding faith to ourselves or can we open an interfaith conversation with other educators and scholars in the field of education? And in what way does sharing our inner work on faith contribute to teacher professional development? As Poole discussed in his forward to *Speaking of Teaching*, “digging down into our values” is essential in teaching and teacher development. He continues further that it is “more challenging than discussions of teaching techniques” and “requires impressive degrees of honesty and courage” (Cohen & Porath, 2013, p. 9). The honesty, courage, and integrity Poole highlights are substantial qualities for teachers, specifically when they are responding to the questions raised during interfaith dialogue. Without an interpersonal dialogue on values and faiths in teacher development, in what way is it possible to know what beliefs and values are considered integral for participating teachers? Once we understand plurality as a condition of possibility of education, dialogue on shared or differing values and beliefs becomes significant for teacher personal development - specifically in a multicultural context of Vancouver - and can facilitate teacher professional development once educators achieve an intersubjective understanding of ethics of faith in their teaching pedagogy and practice. Now that I have discussed an overall understanding of dialogue for teacher professional development, my inquiry into Gadamer’s theoretical framework in *Truth and Method* can deepen this understanding using an interpretive and hermeneutic approach to dialogue in teacher professional development - the focus of this study in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Gadamerian dialogue and teacher professional development

The first condition in the art of conversation is ensuring that the other person is with us.

Gadamer (2004, p. 360)

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three, I discussed that dialogue can contribute to teacher professional development as a responsibility of teachers and schools they are working with to ensure highest-quality of teaching for students in a democratic society. I studied the way teachers' selfhood engaged with open and genuine conversations as a reflective practice could unravel pedagogical meanings of teaching practice and explored hermeneutic reflexivity in teacher education in a pluralistic society of today. In this chapter, I will focus specifically on a Gadamer-informed conception of dialogue as Gadamer complements an ontological, existential, and hermeneutical understanding of human being as discussed earlier in *currere* with a historically text-oriented consciousness of human subjectivity. So, Gadamer in his inner and outer circles of dialogue, concentrates on an interpretive understanding of subjectivity rooted in religious and historical consciousness and human circumstances. I will respond to the following question: In what way can Gadamerian dialogue foster teacher professional development? Of note, nowhere Gadamer explicitly spell out the educational and pedagogical implications and applications of his philosophical doctrine. What follows, therefore, is my own inferences on, and understanding of

his major work on philosophical hermeneutics and applied hermeneutics and their applications to educational settings for teacher professional development. My conclusion is that the main idea that informs the whole of Gadamer's diverse literature is that understanding, interpretation, and application form one unified construct which inquires into our meaning-making process to understand truth. I will draw upon this understanding of Gadamerian hermeneutics in the field of education for teacher professional development. Gadamer insisted on the hermeneutical foundation of ontology through text-based reading, re-reading, understanding, interpretation, and re-interpretation. Our diverse interpretations of the world around us and our judgements about the world inform our values, ethics, and decisions which are recurrent themes in Gadamerian hermeneutics. Our understanding of who we are and our meaning in the world are intrinsic to our interpretations of new ideas, thoughts, and belief systems. Teachers relate to this hermeneutic understanding once they evaluate their own reality and meaning in their interactions with students. As teachers inquire into their own reality in the world and explore if it is interconnected with the unfamiliar world of students in different educational settings, they can unfold their horizons of comprehension and hermeneutic understanding. As hermeneutics was developed as an interpretive methodology for an appropriate understanding and interpretation of religious texts, in particular, within the Judeo-Christian canon, this meaning-making methodology is historically text-oriented. To interpret the meaning of the text, Gadamer (2006) emphasizes that keeping a hermeneutical distance from the text can facilitate our scientific understanding of the text:

According to the self-understanding of science, then, it can make no difference to the historian whether a text was addressed to a particular person or was intended "to belong to all ages." The general requirement of hermeneutics is, rather, that every text must be

understood according to the aim appropriate to it. But this means that historical scholarship first seeks to understand every text in its own terms and does not accept the content of what it says as true, but leaves it undecided. Understanding is certainly concretization [actualization], but one that involves keeping a hermeneutical distance. Understanding is possible only if one keeps oneself out of play. This is the demand of science. (p. 330)

In their interpretation of the text, teachers can try to understand it according to its aim without their judgment of its content as true or false. Is it possible to keep ourselves out of play in our hermeneutic understanding to concretize our understanding of the written or oral discourse? To understand students' written and oral discourse, teachers need to keep a hermeneutical distance to concretize an interpretation of meaning. Teachers can keep themselves out of play if only they learn to suspend their own judgment, preconception, and fore-understanding in their hermeneutic understanding of the discourse. Human beings are curious creatures who inquire into the world to make sense of it and interpretation is an essence of our human condition once dealing with sources of meaning - either textual or non-textual. Hermeneutic understanding of the world is closely connected to understanding of being as humans can look within themselves and question their own realities and possibilities in relation to the world they exist in. Interpreting the meaning of written or oral discourse can reflect one's existential and ontological understanding of being. The hermeneutic meaning of a text does not reside outside intellect and is related to lived experience and creates a dialogue with human understanding for its interpretation. Gadamer (2006) indicates that Husserl's understanding of human subjectivity is deeply universal [and collective] so that he uses the term "life" for this understanding of "transcendental subjectivity":

Husserl calls this phenomenological concept of the world "life-world". ... This world horizon is a presupposition of all science as well and is, therefore, more fundamental. As a horizon phenomenon "world" is essentially related to subjectivity, and this relation means also that it "exists in transiency." ... The concept of the life-world is the antithesis of all objectivism. ... Certainly, one can inquire into the structure embracing all the worlds that man has ever experienced, which is simply the experience of the possibility of world, and in this sense we can indeed speak of an ontology of the world. (Gadamer 2006, pp. 238-39)

Our understanding of Husserl's ontology gives a historical dimension to human subjectivity and expands human horizon as being transcends its historical past and future in the present. In our interpretation of the world, we open a hermeneutic dialogue with the text within our personal-historical subjectivity. Nixon (2017) asserts that Gadamer considers this understanding of life-world as significant and establishes the ethical basis of hermeneutics on this connection: "it is by making sense of the world - and of ourselves in the world - that we realize our full human potential as ethical agents" (p. 15). For Gadamer the possibility of understanding the world and new beginnings is grounded in an interpretative understanding of our origins, and meanings rooted within. The ontological questions such as who am I as a teacher? What is my reality and possibility in education? In what way is my understanding teachable and transferable? How should I live my teaching life? In what sense can I understand my true self through my teaching profession? all are emphasizing our being and becoming as educators in the world. These aspects of self-examination render Gadamerian hermeneutics distinctively ethical and can contribute to teacher self-fulfillment and professional development once studied wonderingly.

Gadamer (2004, p. 298) emphasizes that dialogue occurs once we pose a question towards the ontological reality of being to open new possibilities. Emphasizing on “the Socratic method” of inquiry, he considers questions as a leap into the dark to explore new pedagogical meanings guided by teachers and acquired by students whereby they are encouraged to become their own questioners in their educational experience. He promotes asking “open” questions which do not presuppose a “yes” or “no” response to unfold new options and possibilities which extend our horizons and reality. Pedagogical questions give us an opportunity to inquire into the possibilities of education in the present and future and support our being and becoming in our educational experience.

4.2 Gadamerian hermeneutics and questions

Questions explore the ontological reality of our unique trajectories as they inquire into our sense of purpose, meaning of life, and new possibilities of leaning. Using questions, teachers transform the level of exploration and inquiry from the horizontal plane of unlimited possibility to the vertical plane of focused inquiry and investigation. Questions determine our focus and concentration, priorities, and preferences, being, and thriving in daily life, and assume a respondent who is engaged with us in communications. Learning about the world and ourselves in it can start with asking open questions which contribute to the being of the questioners as well as to thriving of other interlocutors engaged in the conversations. Gadamer (2004, p. 360) maintains that the occurrence of questions should be genuine: “Every sudden idea has the structure of a question. But the sudden occurrence of the question is already a breach in the smooth front of popular opinion. Hence, we say that a question too “occurs” to us, that it “arises” or “presents itself” more than that we raise it or present it”.

Gadamer (2004, p. 484) confirms the arena of questioning and inquiring as a discipline that “guarantees truth”. For Gadamer, hermeneutics is a true understanding of what we are saying as well as what others are saying. Questions can facilitate this hermeneutic understanding and open up the possibility of respectful agreement and disagreement based on mutual understanding and respect. Gadamer (2004) argues that deciding the question for the teachers and students is the path to understanding:

Insofar as a question remains open, it always includes both negative and positive judgments. This is the basis of the essential relation between question and knowledge. For it is the essence of knowledge not only to judge something correctly but, at the same time and for the same reason, to exclude what is wrong. Deciding the question is the path to knowledge. What decides a question is the preponderance [predominance] of reasons for the one and against the other possibility. But this is still not full knowledge. The thing itself is known only when the counterinstances are dissolved, only when the counterarguments are seen to be incorrect. (2004, p. 358)

Teachers can have unprejudiced judgement to decide on their questions when their pre-understanding does not alter their open questions. Is it possible for teachers to know when their counterarguments are correct or incorrect? Gadamer (1992, p. 152) in his interview underscores the transformative power of hermeneutics as “To understand someone else is to see the justice, [and] the truth of their position. And this is what transforms us [as teachers and students]”. The primary question hermeneutics enquires into is the way we understand the human world, human being, and our relation to the natural world we live in. The way we interpret the reality of questions in a dialogue is pivotal as understanding involves interpretation of the meaning of the perceived ideas, thoughts, and belief systems. The meanings revealed usually transcend what is

exchanged in the conversation and can include our interpretation, analysis, and judgement as an integral part of our human condition. It is important to understand what we perceive and what is intended to be conveyed might be different as the interlocutors' realities vary based on their socio-cultural, political, economic, educational and linguistic backgrounds. Gadamerian hermeneutics provokes our understanding of conversations by questioning our perceived meanings to better understand embedded realities and our probable preconceptions intertwined. Gadamer (1977, p. 8) emphasizes the need for a "hermeneutics of trust" rather than a "hermeneutics of suspicion" - a healthy skepticism - that concentrates on understanding rather than misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the meanings conveyed. Teachers have an important role in encouraging the students to make open questions by establishing a hermeneutics of trust in their dialectic conversations using their educational experience and world knowledge. In the following, I will discuss this communicative aspect of teacher professional development in curriculum.

4.2.1 Gadamerian questions and teacher role

Teachers have a substantial role in encouraging students to form and raise their questions. Scaffolding students' learning process to construct their open questions primarily generates hermeneutics of trust on behalf of students that can be facilitated by experienced teachers who can construct the order of the questions. For instance, if the primary open question is "Why is it important to study Social Sciences and why should students know about the historical and political aspects of this academic discipline?", a secondary question can be "What should Social Sciences teach us?" and the third question might be "In what sense can Social Sciences improve our understanding of life?" Teachers can elicit the secondary and tertiary questions to guide

students towards the primary question starting with “Why?”. Learning about the use of Social Sciences and what this subject teaches the students can encourage them to find an answer for their primary question. Teachers do not provide the answer to the question, however, they encourage students’ learning and thriving through guiding their open questions. They become a navigator to remind the students where the students are heading, emphasizing the significance of the primary question and the unforeseen future possibilities along their way of learning. Understanding the students’ mood once dealing with questions can become the primary focus of the teachers. In *Heidegger and Gadamer’s Question of Being*, Heidegger understands *Dasein*’s analysis of itself and its awareness of the moods in which it meets. Regan (2016, pp. 380-81) illustrates Heidegger’s *Dasein* using a symbolic language:

Heidegger places *dasein*’s analysis of itself into a practical, everyday meaning of life where *dasein* becomes aware of the moods in which it meets and engages the world (Gadamer, 1994). Moods have a time element to them too: the young boxer who in the midst of training visualises his hero or enemy and willing him on to train harder, or the adult son holding his baby spurred on to be a good father, and to be kind, caring and considerate just like his own father or because his father had not been. This mood is evident in Heidegger’s choice of Being as a consistent career long focus for study.

Helping students to become aware of their moods as they engage with the world like how the young boxer imagines his hero or enemy to work harder is essential in teacher professional development. Gadamer understands teaching as a hermeneutic questioning of being in life and the meanings such questioning includes. He structured his lectures and teaching with a series of questions which he followed to clarify his argument. Nixon (2017) elaborates on Gadamer’s teaching method in his authoritarian era:

He was in effect modelling what it is to think. 'The student', as Nicholson (2012, 70-71) puts it, 'is invited to think because the teacher does not merely think but fosters thinking through acting out thinking in the course of a class.' There was nothing obviously charismatic or inspirational about Gadamer. He was not that kind of teacher. ... Reading one of Gadamer's lectures or addresses is much more like sitting in on an ongoing conversation than attending a formal lecture or political rally. It is not even as if Gadamer were seeking to persuade. He is more often than not simply trying to show - to exemplify or figure-forth - what it means to understand. (Nixon, p. 34)

Gadamer's approach to teaching was focused on a dialogic understanding of questions using which students explore their meaning once they are in an intersubjective dialogue with themselves, with the other students, and with the teacher with no presupposition or determined answers to the questions. During this organic dialogue, self-understanding of teachers and students can merge - the phenomenon I will discuss in the following for a hermeneutic understanding of the teacher role in the classroom.

4.2.2 The fusion of horizons and teacher role

To develop our understanding, we need a space for dialogic conversation, exchange of information, and authentic negotiation of meaning. Teachers can encourage their students to find their path towards understanding, to work through their partly-formed ideas, thoughts, and meanings, and to risk being misunderstood. Teachers' positive and inclusive attitude towards students' open questions allows their inquiry into unexplored aspects of meaning and subjective understanding of learning. Acknowledging the differing and opposing perspectives of students presupposes a disposition of open-mindedness for teachers. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer uses

the idea of “horizon” to indicate that we can transcend our perspectives, ideas, meanings, and visions to understand the differing ideas in dialogic conversations. Gadamer (2004) emphasizes the dynamic status of our horizons and insists on “the fundamental non-definitiveness of the horizon in which [teacher or student’s] understanding moves” (p. 366). He underscores the significance of understanding the meaning of horizon and everything within that horizon for educators and their attempt at mutual understanding through continuous mediation, rethinking, and readjustment of their perceptual field:

In fact the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices. An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past.... Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves. ... In a tradition [,] this process of fusion is continually going on, for there old and new are always combining into something of living value, without either being explicitly foregrounded from the other. (Gadamer, 2004, p. 305)

In this ongoing fusion, teachers are expanding their historical horizons once they are making sense of their self and teaching career. Engaged in dialogue, teachers and students’ horizons can merge. As the interlocutors’ [teachers and students] horizons expand and transform beyond their scope in dialogic conversations, they are no longer the same as prior to the dialogue. Each interpretation of dialogic conversations is unique and open to reinterpretations and the fusion of horizons is a continuous process of understanding than an achieved state and a final objective. Gadamer (2001) asserts the mobile nature of our interpretations in this process: “horizons are not rigid but mobile; they are in motion because our prejudgments are constantly

put to the test” (p. 48). Teachers’ conscious understanding of their horizons and prejudgments can provide a supportive space for their students to notice their possible prejudices and misunderstandings. By understanding the mobile horizons of students, teachers can encourage them to expand their understanding of self in dialogue and their reinterpretation of their ongoing meaning-making process which contributes to student wellbeing and teacher professional development.

4.3 Hermeneutic understanding and subjectivity

In sharp contrast to scientific ideals of objectivity, Gadamer firmly believes in the “productive power of prejudice” in hermeneutic understanding (Nixon, 2017, p. 19). He emphasises the implicit value of “the subject” and “subjectivity” and reinforces the “necessity of *trusting* to the subject and to the ‘subjectivity’ [emphasis is mine] in all understanding”. Arguing that hermeneutics cannot be confined to “a technique for avoiding misinterpretation” using inappropriate bias and prejudice, Gadamer (1977, p. 8) contends that “avoidance technique does not in itself constitute understanding”. Gaining understanding follows once we use our own prejudices properly to connect with what we are seeking to understand. Although teachers apply their own prejudices once dealing with questions, constant avoidance of inappropriate prejudice and employing the productive understanding of prejudice can provide pedagogic moments during which teachers realize that their subjective engagement in practice creates educational moments in the classroom. Gadamer (2004) uses *play* as an ontological explanation and indicates that the mode of being of the work of art is different from the subjectivity engaged in play:

When we speak of play in reference to the experience of art, this means neither the orientation nor even the state of mind of the creator or of those enjoying the work of art,

nor the freedom of a subjectivity engaged in play, but the mode of being of the work of art itself. In analyzing aesthetic consciousness, we recognized that conceiving aesthetic consciousness as something that confronts an object does not do justice to the real situation. This is why the concept of play is important in my exposition. (p. 102)

Gadamer's (2004) explanation of the work of art can clarify the role of teacher subjectivity and that it can transform during educational experience. He asserts that it is the personal experience of the person who experiences the work of art that changes not the work of art itself: "The work of art is not an object that stands over against a subject for itself. Instead the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it" (Gadamer 2004, p. 103). He continues that just as play has its own essence and individual identity independent of players, art work also has its own individual identity independent of subjective experience of people who observe the artifact. Simms (2015) elaborates on Gadamer's analogy of art and play emphasizing the aesthetic consciousness of the player: "It is the player, or the aesthetic consciousness, who changes during the course of a game or the experience of an artwork; the essence of art, or of play, is immutable" (p. 59). He continues that metaphorical examples of the word play by Gadamer (2004, p. 104) such as "the play of light, the play of the waves, the play of gears or parts of machinery, the interplay of limbs,..., even a play on words" make a non goal-directed state emphasizing aesthetic consciousness is at play: "there is a to-and-fro movement that is not intended to bring the activity to an end" (Simms, 2015, p. 60). Once we understand the significance of aesthetic consciousness, teachers and students as the primary player of the game [curriculum] become highlighted in our understanding and interpretation of the play. In understanding curriculum, teachers can continuously interpret the art of education by attuning their mode of being in

conscious and unprejudiced decisions they are making. Understanding Gadamer's teaching experience can open a dialogue to developing teacher professional identity.

4.4 Gadamerian hermeneutics and teaching

As a teacher Gadamer (1992) asserts that his writing, lectures, seminars, and symposia are his secondary forms of self-manifestation:

My work comes from my teaching ... Writing is my secondary form of self-presentation, as Plato thought it should be ... I am a dialogical being. When teaching, I was very shy at first, I never looked at the students. This was the case in lectures. But when I held seminars, I myself was present from the first day: I had a real talent for listening and replying and believe that that remains my talent; to listen even to the silent voice of an audience. (Gadamer, 1992, pp. 65-6)

To me, Gadamer's power of listening is the foundation of his hermeneutic philosophy as he can listen to silent moments of an audience which reminds me of bracketing instances in phenomenology. He premised teaching on the possibility of mutual understanding and mutual trust. Acknowledging human differences, Gadamer believes in the commonality of understanding and recognizes human beings as ethical beings who are morally responsible for each other. Apple (2004) emphasizes in what sense educational institutions provide legitimate knowledge; the main objective of education for Gadamer, however, is to provide an emancipatory and liberating opportunity for the students to ensure that they are freed from educational constraints imposed by institutions which "implement assessment regimes that focus on selective differentiation and that fail to provide positive and formative feedback to students regarding their achievements and their potential" (Nixon, 2017, pp. 24-5). In teaching

environment, this purpose is only achieved through a subjective understanding of students' individual and unique possibilities emphasized in democratic education which concentrates on providing a medium for flourishing and fulfilling these potentials. Gadamer (1992) regards teaching as *mediation* during which teachers enter history as participants in a dialogic conversation that constitutes what he termed as hermeneutic *tradition*. Education provides an opportunity for students who enter the historical moment to ensure this dialectic conversation with *tradition*, thinking of teachers as an interpreter and mediator of it. From hermeneutical perspective, therefore, education is considered as a truly “transcultural practice, at the core of communication across difference” between the teacher and students (Grau, 2014, p. 79). Understanding the nature of this dialectic and communicative aspect of education is an important aspect of teacher professional development.

4.5 Dialectic nature of knowledge

Knowledge is a dialectic phenomenon which always includes opposites. The dialectic nature of knowledge is manifested in questions and answers so both the person who has a question and the one who attempts to provide an answer to the question manifest knowledge. Gadamer (2004) confirms the dialectical nature of knowledge: “Knowledge is dialectical from the ground up. Only a person who has questions can have knowledge, but questions include the antithesis of yes and no, of being like this and being like that” (p. 359). For Plato and Aristotle, knowledge shares a common meaning. Gadamer (1986a, p. 34) notes his task as “to make comprehensible what Aristotle shares with Plato even when he critically separates himself from him”. Simms (2015, p. 47) notes that Plato uses the word *phronesis* more loosely than does Aristotle as it can at times be interchangeable with either *techne* (skill, art) or *episteme* (scientific

knowledge). There still exists a noticeable difference in Plato between *technical-theoretical* reasonableness and *practical* reasonableness. As Gadamer (1986a) indicates in the exercise of practical reason, Plato contends:

One cannot rely on previously acquired general knowledge, and yet one still claims to reach a judgement by one's own weighing of the pros and cons and to decide reasonably in each case. Whoever deliberates with himself and with others about what would be the right thing to do in a particular practical situation is plainly prepared to support his decision with nothing other than good reasons. (pp. 35-6)

Plato underscores the significance of subjective understanding of knowledge which is first-hand and argues that previously acquired knowledge [objective understanding] cannot always be helpful. For their professional development, teachers can inquire into their subjectivity using hermeneutic understanding and reasoning - which transcends an objective understanding of knowledge. Gadamer (2004) relates Aristotle's analysis of moral knowledge to hermeneutical problem of the human sciences:

Admittedly, hermeneutical consciousness is involved neither with technical nor moral knowledge, but these two types of knowledge still include the same task of application that we have recognized as the central problem of hermeneutics. Certainly, application does not mean the same thing in each case. There is a curious tension between a *techne* that can be taught and one acquired through experience. The prior knowledge that a person has who has been taught a craft is not, in practice, necessarily superior to the kind of knowledge that someone has who is untrained but has had extensive experience. (p. 313)

Although Aristotle distinguishes between knowledge [*techne*] gained through practice and knowledge gained through extensive experience, he considers no superiority between the two. Lived experience can contain *techne* and for teacher development, teacher educators rely on their extensive experience than merely on their skills. Perhaps, for Aristotle a true mastery of knowledge is acquired in the *techne* nurtured with life-world which can provide a model for moral knowledge, so *techne* or extensive experience on their own can never be sufficient for making right moral decisions and they can open hermeneutic dialogue to achieve a deeper understanding. Simms (2015, p. 48) emphasizes that Plato at times uses dialectic “*phronesis*” that is neither general nor teachable knowledge: “Dialectic is not something that one can simply learn. It is more than that. It is ‘reasonableness’” (Gadamer 1986a, p. 37). I personally understand dialectical knowledge as an inborn [latent] talent or wisdom in the way that Gadamer uses the term *disposition*. For Plato dialectic is not a *techne* but a “way of being” [and becoming] as Gadamer contends (1986a, p. 39). According to Gadamer’s (1986a) understanding of Plato, self-knowledge is dialectic:

Plato gives self-understanding a more general meaning: wherever the concern is knowledge that cannot be acquired by any learning, but instead through examination of oneself and of the knowledge one believes one has, we are dealing with dialectic. Only in dialogue – with oneself or with others – can one get beyond the mere prejudices [and preconceptions] of prevailing conventions. (Gadamer 1986a, p. 43)

Gadamer understands dialectics in Platonic sense like hermeneutics as they are both a form of dialogue, self-reflexive, and a philosophy in themselves. Aristotle, in contrast, considers understanding as applying something universal to a specific situation. The reason and knowledge Aristotle discusses determine and are determined by Dasein, so they are concrete knowledge

attached to one's being [self]. Gadamer (2004) approves of Aristotle and considers him as "the founder of ethics as a discipline independent of metaphysics" (310), while Heidegger was suspicious of Aristotle as "metaphysical" (cited in Simms, 2015, p. 50). Considering these perspectives, teacher dialectic knowledge is an ongoing hermeneutic understanding which can be self-reflective, self-explorative, unprejudiced, and ethical. Teachers can enrich and broaden a hermeneutic understanding of their professional identity using the art of dialogue in concert with other stakeholders in education.

4.6 The art of conversation

Gadamer's (1986b, p. 114) contribution to hermeneutics shifts its concentration from a traditional linguistic understanding of language to its social, cultural, and communicational aspect which facilitates "our understanding of the world". Language as a dialogic means of communication presupposes an addressee and an addressor engaged in a conversation. Nixon (2017, p. 29) notes that neither addressee nor addressor is definable:

For example, the kinds of founding religious texts with which hermeneutics had traditionally been concerned are shrouded in obscurity regarding their authorship and likely readership. Indeed, one of the prime tasks of hermeneutics had been to provide a philologically grounded interpretation of specific texts that would offer more general insights into questions of textual transmission and reception. Gadamer built on this legacy of philological hermeneutics to focus on what he saw as the dialogical and conversational nature of all human understanding.

This dialogic understanding of hermeneutics reflects Bakhtin's conception of dialogism as human beings are in ongoing dialogue with other works of literature and authors to make their

own meaning. Our existential experience is informed by preceding work of literature so our dialogic experience extends to the past and future. The previous works of literature are informed by dialogue as the present work is and future literary texts will be a dialogic understanding of self, existence, place, and time. Past and future are extensions of human beings, and the previous as well as the future literature are informed by our extended experience of lifeworld. The idea of conversation brings into mind the open-ended nature of knowledge and understanding. It is essential to keep the conversation going by ensuring that it stays open. None of the interlocutors knows and predicts the direction of the conversation. There is no competition for *succeeding in* the conversation as the flow of exchanges would cease then. Gadamer (2004, p. 360) underscores the art of questioning in the Socratic-Platonic dialectic:

the Socratic-Platonic dialectic raises the art of questioning to a conscious art; but there is something peculiar about this art. We have seen that it is reserved to the person who wants to know - i.e., who already has questions. The art of questioning is not the art of resisting the pressure of opinion; it already presupposes this freedom. It is not an art in the sense that the Greeks speak of *techne*, not a craft that can be taught or by means of which we could master the discovery of truth.

Gadamer views the art of questioning in a dialectic conversation as the art of thinking and conducting intense dialogue which typically occurs between two people as he draws on the nature of dialogue in Plato and of dialectic in Hegel compared to conversation: “For Gadamer, dialogue was not just a means of passing the time in pleasant but aimless conversation; it was an intense, restless, and unending quest for truth” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 10). Gadamer writes in a conversation “one does not know beforehand what will come out of it, and one usually does not break it off unless forced to do so, because there is always something more you want to say”

(2001, p. 59), so conversations occur genuinely with no forced control of human factors.

Terminating a conversation includes a respectful agreement in which all interlocutors acknowledge the pause. Gadamer (2004) notes that real conversations encompass disagreements and differences in which interlocutors explore new realities, and writes “The first condition in the art of conversations is ensuring that the other person is with us” (2004, p. 360). Among the participants of the conversation, there is a tacit agreement about the subject and an enthusiasm to value the opinions of the other interlocutors: “To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented. It requires that one does not try to argue the other person down but that one really considers the weight of the other’s opinion” (pp. 360-61). Once the interlocutors respond to the differing opinions, the art of questioning can encourage deeper understanding of personal opinions and possibilities. Gadamer (2004) encourages the discussants to bring out the real strength of ideas and opinions in dialectic exchanges by understanding the art of questioning:

But the art of testing is the art of questioning. For we have seen that to question means to lay open, to place in the open. As against the fixity of opinions, questioning makes the object and all its possibilities fluid. A person skilled in the "art" of questioning is a person who can prevent questions from being suppressed by the dominant opinion.... Dialectic consists not in trying to discover the weakness of what is said, but in bringing out its real strength. It is not the art of arguing (which can make a strong case out of a weak one) but the art of thinking (which can strengthen objections by referring to the subject matter).
(Gadamer, 2004, p. 361)

Although the art of questioning is rooted in a subjective intervention in dialogic exchanges, Gadamer provides a sympathetic understanding of questioning to protect it from

being suppressed by the dominant opinion. What teachers can understand within the context of their practice for professional development is the fact that their personal judgement and understanding play an important role in preventing questions from being suppressed that can weaken the power of questioning and the quality of dialectic understanding. Hermeneutics and language are closely inter-connected as meaning is conveyed through the language of discussants which is an essential aspect for understanding Gadamerian dialogue in teacher professional development.

4.7 Gadamerian hermeneutics and language

As a follower of Heidegger, Gadamer (2007) manifests his sensitivity to the question of Being as a feature of his thought in different phenomena including language:

When I wrote the sentence ‘Being that can be understood is language’, what was implied by this was that what is can never be completely understood. This is implied insofar as everything that goes under the name of language always goes beyond whatever achieves the status of a proposition. That which is to be understood is that which comes into language, but of course it is always that which is taken as something, taken as something true. This is the hermeneutical dimension - a dimension in which Being ‘shows itself’.

(Gadamer 2007, p. 162)

As being is manifested in language, its attributes are translated and transferred into language as discussed by Gadamer. Gadamer’s final chapter of *Truth and Method* is on language as the medium of hermeneutic experience. His understanding of language is centered on a compelling philosophy rather than Heidegger as Gadamer centers on hermeneutics rather than philosophy while “Heidegger’s purpose is to propose a corrective to philosophy itself, to replace

‘metaphysics’ by a fundamental ontology (the enquiry into being as such). The difference between Heidegger and Gadamer here is that Gadamer is less radical, less keen to ‘destroy’ metaphysics” (Simms, 2015, p. 36). For Gadamer, hermeneutics is fundamental to philosophy as it is to any other mode of being. Philosophy is a phenomenon orchestrated through language which is essential for hermeneutics:

In fact, historical consciousness too involves mediation between past and present. By seeing that language is the universal medium of this meditation, we were able to expand our enquiry from its starting point, the critiques of aesthetic and historical consciousness and the hermeneutics that would replace them, to universal dimensions. For man’s relation to the world is absolutely and fundamentally verbal in nature, and hence intelligible. Thus, hermeneutics is, as we have seen, *a universal aspect of philosophy*, and not just the methodological basis of the human sciences. (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 470-71)

So, hermeneutics is embodied in language as a universal medium of mediation between past, present and future. Teachers can learn to interpret students’ language as it is a verbal window opening towards their reality, being, and intellect. Students’ language can contain conveyed and intended messages that mindful and attentive teachers can be able to interpret using hermeneutic understanding. Literature and hermeneutics are in a symbiotic relationship:

It is universally true of texts that only in the process of understanding them is the dead trace of meaning transformed back into living meaning. We must ask whether what we found to be true of the experience of art is also true of texts as a whole, including those that are not works of art. We saw that the work of art is actualized only when it is "presented," and we were drawn to the conclusion that all literary works of art are actualized only when they are read. Is this true also of the understanding of any text? Is

the meaning of all texts actualized only when they are understood? (Gadamer, 2004, pp.156-57)

Gadamer's hermeneutic understanding of artwork and literature can be reflected in human lived experience. Both literary work and art work are only actualized when they become human experience and understanding. Teachers can understand their students only once they can trace back the meaning of their language as students "present" themselves which takes teachers' mindful decisions to facilitate this opportunity. When referring to literature, Gadamer (2004, p. 156) contends written word is so strange as well as demanding that raises a particular problem of translation to human understanding:

Nothing is so strange, and at the same time so demanding, as the written word [or oral discourse].... The written word and what partakes of it - literature - is the intelligibility of mind transferred to the most alien medium. Nothing is so purely the trace of the mind as writing, but nothing is so dependent on the understanding mind either.

Understanding students' written and oral discourse is only possible once teachers can trace it to their intellect. Understanding students' intellectual meaning that appears in their verbal or non-verbal discourse using hermeneutics becomes possible once teachers understand their presence and accomplish historical consciousness as discussed earlier. Gadamer continues hermeneutic interpretation requires transformation:

The remnants of past life - what is left of buildings, tools, the contents of graves - are weather-beaten by the storms of time that have swept over them, whereas a written tradition, once deciphered and read, is to such an extent pure mind that it speaks to us as if in the present. That is why the capacity to read, to understand what is written, is like a

secret art, even a magic that frees and binds us. In it time and space seem to be superseded. (Gadamer, 2004, p. 156)

Reading literature for Gadamer is understanding the lived experience of the people in the past who present themselves through the artwork of words and letters. Deciphering and interpreting their written tradition is living in the past and understanding their reality and possibility. Gadamer considers hermeneutic understanding of language as a miracle of human being and is an enthusiastic supporter of literary work as a means to understand the human condition. Simms (2015, p. 69) writes “being literate is also, and thereby, a precondition of hermeneutics, of being the hermeneutic being who understands others and, through that understanding, also understands himself”. Simms’s understanding of hermeneutics is dialogic and provides an organic understanding of human conditions and circumstances. Understanding this organic and dialogic aspect of literature embedded in the complexity and novelty of language can help teachers and teacher educators to connect with new horizons of their being and to bridge this understanding to their student life-world.

4.7.1 Language and prejudice

When interpreting a language, one can overcome one’s fore-meanings and misinterpretations of the discourse encountered. Hermeneutic understanding of reading the text involves an understanding of the linguistic usage of the time of the author. Gadamer (2004, p. 270) writes when reading, we are “pulled up short by the text. Either it does not yield any meaning at all or its meaning is not compatible with what we had expected. This is what brings us up short and alerts us to a possible difference in usage”. Our preconceived understanding of meanings of the words and phrases or misunderstanding of a text is partly rooted in the fact that

the text was written by an author with different accepted meaning of life at the time of writing. Staying open to the meaning to unfold itself in time can perhaps facilitate understanding the language. Gadamer (2004, p. 294) notes hermeneutics can help us to become conscious of our fore-understanding: “understanding means, primarily, to understand the content of what is said, and only secondarily to isolate and understand another's meaning as such. Hence the most basic of all hermeneutic preconditions remains one's own fore-understanding, which comes from being concerned with the same subject”. There is a continuous dialogue between the content of the text and the reader. Acknowledging fore-understandings of the creator of the content and receiver of the message resemble peeling off the skin to understand the content of life-world. Regarding the meanings of our fore-understanding, Simms (2015) asserts:

The task of understanding - hermeneutics - is to get from the meanings of our fore-understandings to the meaning of the text, and then to incorporate this recovered meaning into our own meaning (so that, ultimately, our own meaningfulness is enhanced and we have a greater understanding of ourselves). How is this achieved? (p. 69)

Engaged with pre-understanding, receivers of textual or verbal messages might have a biased understanding. Hermeneutics provokes our initial understanding [fore-understanding] of the text for a greater understanding. Knowing that prejudice can disturb our true understanding, teachers and educators can focus on a conscious interpretation of students’ language to understand it impartially. Gadamer (2004) highlights the significance of being open to our relational understanding of the text:

All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text. But this openness always includes our situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it. Now, the fact is that meanings represent a

fluid multiplicity of possibilities (in comparison to the agreement presented by a language and a vocabulary), but within this multiplicity of what can be thought - i.e., of what a reader can find meaningful and hence expect to find - not everything is possible; and if a person fails to hear what the other person is really saying, he will not be able to fit what he has misunderstood into the range of his own various expectations of meaning (p. 271).

In relational understanding of the text, the reader situates the meaning driven from the text vis-à-vis pre-understanding of meaning. In hermeneutics, the openness to the message conveyed [bottom-up processing] and the fore-meanings of the text [top-down processing] both interact to make sense of the text. For hermeneutic understanding, teachers can use their parallel processing of meaning-making during which both the intended message of the text and fore-understanding collaborate to make an understanding of the text or verbal language of the students. Gadamer (2004) underscores this parallel processing of discourse as being aware of our own biases once reading and interpreting messages:

a person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither "neutrality" with respect to content nor the extinction of one's self [fore-understanding], but the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings. (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 271-72)

Being aware of our prejudices is the point of entry into understanding the text as our biases obstruct our hermeneutic understanding of the text. Gadamer (2004) contends that the hermeneutic task is not necessarily to get rid of our biases but rather to recognize them in our

open encounter with the discourse so that they do not occlude or obstruct our genuine understanding of the text:

It is not at all a matter of securing ourselves against the tradition that speaks out of the text then, but, on the contrary, of excluding everything that could hinder us from understanding it in terms of the subject matter. It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition. (p. 272)

In what way is it possible for teachers to know that their understanding of the text is prejudiced and biased? In what sense can an understanding of their hidden prejudice contribute to teacher self and professional development? Responding to these self-reflective questions can render an in-depth hermeneutic understanding for teachers and contribute to their continuous self-education and professional development.

4.7.2 Prejudice and the Enlightenment

Gadamer (2004, p. 273) reinforces a hermeneutical problem of prejudice and the Enlightenment to bring conscious understanding of our prejudice, “the fundamental prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power”. He considers prejudice as a neutral perspective and notes that “The history of ideas shows that not until the Enlightenment does the concept of prejudice acquire the negative connotation familiar today”. To provide a more impartial understanding of prejudice, Gadamer (2004, p. 273) recovers a pre-Enlightenment conception of prejudice as “a judgement that is rendered before all elements that determine a situation have been fully examined” and writes prejudice does not necessarily mean an erroneous judgement but it can have either a positive or negative value. In the Enlightenment, the idea that prejudice was irrational and illogical became prevalent and

rationalism confirmed the idea that prejudice should actually be corrected to have grounding in an argument and as prejudice lacked this rational grounding was therefore irrational:

The only thing that gives a judgment dignity is its having a basis, a methodological justification (and not the fact that it may actually be correct). For the Enlightenment, the absence of such a basis does not mean that there might be other kinds of certainty, but rather that the judgment has no foundation in the things themselves - i.e., that it is "unfounded." This conclusion follows only in the spirit of rationalism. It is the reason for discrediting prejudices and the reason scientific knowledge claims to exclude them completely. (Gadamer, 2004, p. 273)

Being unfounded does not necessarily mean being baseless and unscientific, and teachers' journey from scientific knowledge to subjective understanding of their prejudice can be the point of entry into enlightened decisions, and personal and professional development. Understanding that we might have bias or prejudice due to our human conditions and circumstances is crucially important. More significantly, humans are able to use the influencing and rational power of their prejudice. Gadamer (2004) strives to turn those concepts that the Enlightenment and modern science assign negative values into positive concepts and starts with the concept of prejudice:

Reversing the Enlightenment's presupposition results in the paradoxical tendency toward restoration - i.e., the tendency to reconstruct the old because it is old, the conscious return to the unconscious, culminating in the recognition of the superior wisdom of the primeval age of myth. But the romantic reversal of the Enlightenment's criteria of value actually perpetuates the abstract contrast between myth and reason. All criticism of the Enlightenment now proceeds via this romantic mirror image of the Enlightenment. (2004, p. 275)

Gadamer does not intend to use a Romantic view as Romanticism hardly attempted to restore an undetermined past of earlier times. Gadamer (2004, p. 276) continues that it is as opinionated and abstract to accept there was a “mysterious darkness” in which there was a mythological consciousness coming before all thought as that of “a state of perfect enlightenment or of absolute knowledge”. Hence understanding hermeneutics to overcome the Enlightenment prejudice implies mastering all other prejudices, one can be conscious of not falling into romanticizing past of mythology. A conscious return to the unconscious, however, can help teachers critique their previous knowledge and reconstruct their understanding of prejudice and bias that can have a positive and empowering influence on their informed decisions in teaching pedagogy and practice.

4.7.3 Prejudice, authority, and tradition

Humans are historical beings that are situated within traditions as an inescapable part of that being. Gadamer (2004, p. 278) notes that considering the historical dimension of our being, we belong to history rather than to ourselves:

Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being.

Thus, our historical understanding of being-in-the-world (family, society, state) precedes our understanding of subjectivity which is derived from Heideggerian understanding of Dasein and by extension, history precedes autobiography as history is public and autobiography is

history made private, therefore “history does not belong to us; we belong to it”. Gadamer (2004, p. 278) formulates two fundamental epistemological questions for historical hermeneutics to rehabilitate the concept of prejudice: “What is the ground of the legitimacy of prejudices? What distinguishes legitimate prejudices from the countless others which it is the undeniable task of critical reason to overcome?”. Since Gadamer considers prejudices as “conditions of understanding”, he acknowledges that there are legitimate prejudices. In the light of Gadamerian understanding of subjectivity vis-à-vis historical life, can teachers distinguish their legitimate prejudices? This question invites teachers and teacher educators to reflect on their teaching philosophy and practice as prejudice, subjectivity, and history all influence teacher philosophy. Gadamer (2004, p. 280) differentiates two types of prejudice:

that of ‘authority’ and that of ‘overhastiness’. In each case, it is the task of reason to overcome them: overhastiness is the incorrect deployment of reason, whereas authority is the result of not using one’s reason at all.... ‘The Enlightenment’s distinction between faith in authority and using one’s own reason is, in itself, legitimate’, Gadamer says, since ‘if the prestige of authority displaces one’s own judgement then authority is in fact a source of prejudices’. (cited in Simms, 2015, p. 72)

Gadamer highlights that the Enlightenment overlooked the fact that authority is based on the recognition of knowledge: “the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment takes precedence - i.e., it has priority over one's own” (2004, p. 281). Basing authority on knowledge, Gadamer highlights that acknowledging authority is not blind obedience:

acknowledging authority is always connected with the idea that what the authority says is not irrational and arbitrary but can, in principle, be discovered to be true. This is the

essence of the authority claimed by the teacher, the superior, the expert. The prejudices that they implant are legitimized by the person who presents. (2004, p. 281)

This apparently paradoxical understanding of authority sounds legitimate in teacher education as those teachers who assume authority, have achieved this distinguishing power because of their knowledge and experience, so it is not an arbitrary practice, and to some degree it is embedded in tradition. To overcome the prejudice of tradition, Gadamer (2004, p. 282) writes:

Even the most genuine and pure tradition does not persist because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed, embraced, [and] cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation, and it is active in all historical change. But preservation is an act of reason, though an inconspicuous one.

Once we understand subjectivity by Gadamer as a mere flickering in the circuit of historical life, understanding tradition and our subjectivity in relation to that becomes tradition. This understanding can make teachers more committed to confirming their own and others' traditions and view their subjectivity in continuous dialogue with those traditions and historical meanings.

4.8 Concluding notes

Understanding Gadamerian hermeneutics provokes my previous learnings about concepts such as dialectic knowledge, art of conversation, language, prejudice, the Enlightenment, tradition, and authority in teacher professional development. Learning about the dialectic nature of knowledge encourages educators to invite their students to ask their open questions. Mastering the art of questioning and respectful termination of conversations by overcoming the pressure of

opinion contributes to teacher dialectic. In their hermeneutic understanding of literature, teachers live in the past and interpret such reality and possibility using language as a miracle of human beings to understand the human condition. Acknowledging fore-meanings and fore-understanding will enable teachers and educators to interpret textual and non-textual discourses neutrally and to engage with unprejudiced meaning of text. Recovering the meaning of prejudice not necessarily as an erroneous judgement but as having a negative or positive value can both support teachers' confidence in subjective understanding of their belief systems and encourage legitimate prejudices. Understanding historical dimension of being can complement teachers' knowledge of self and subjectivity in the community, society, and state in which they live in and can constitute the historical reality of their being. Acknowledging that authority is not always irrational and arbitrary, but can in principle be legitimate specifically when claimed by teachers, supervisors, and experts supports teacher confidence in practicing their pedagogy. Understanding the nature of Gadamerian dialogue can contribute to teacher personal wellbeing and professional development. In Chapter 1, I explored the autobiographical method of *currere* to understand my educational experience. My learning encouraged me to study the way autobiographical research could contribute to teacher development in Chapter 2. I expanded my learning on dialogue and the way it nurtures teacher professional development in Chapter 3. My autobiographic learnings from the first three chapters encouraged me to study Gadamerian dialogue and hermeneutic understanding of knowledge which provoked my previous knowledge by adding hermeneutic understanding of dialogue to self-education for teacher professional development in chapter 4. In the following chapter, I will inquire into the way Gadamerian dialogue can encourage teachers to include student voice in their teaching philosophy, pedagogy, and practice.

Chapter 5: Gadamerian dialogue and student voice

[Good will] has nothing to do with an “appeal”, and nothing at all to do with ethics. Even immoral beings try to understand one another.

Gadamer (1989, p. 55)

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter four, I studied the Gadamerian hermeneutics for teacher professional development using dialogue. I discussed that in their ethical understanding of hermeneutics, teachers can realize their full personal and professional potentials, understand their fore-meanings and prejudices, and inquire into their development as educators by forming self-reflective questions to study their academic, historical, and traditional life. Understanding questions in hermeneutics allows on to enquire into the truth and justice of the questioners. Teachers have an essential role in scaffolding students’ learning process to construct their questions as they engage in their intersubjective dialogue. Students’ horizon of the present is continuously being formed as they test their prejudices and pre-conceptions in classroom dialectics, and as these merge into other horizons, either personal or textual. In this chapter, I will inquire into the way Gadamerian dialogue can encourage teachers to value students’ voice in their teaching pedagogy and practice. My research question here is: Could Gadamerian dialogue encourage teachers to value student voice? In the following, I will start with a background on

Gadamer's response to Derrida's questions addressed to him regarding *good will* to value and strengthen student voice as understanding good will as the point of entry will help with bracketing teacher fore-understanding in the classroom.

5.2 Background

In his response to Derrida, Gadamer (1989, p. 55) writes *good will* has nothing to do with the metaphysical conception of *will*, however good will means that one does not typically focus on "identifying the weaknesses of what another person says in order to prove that one is always right, but one seeks instead as far as possible to strengthen the other's viewpoint so that what the other person has to say becomes illuminating." Gadamer's positioning is my point of entry into understanding student voice in dialogic conversations. Gadamer continues that good will has nothing to do with ethics since "even immoral beings try to understand one another". Gadamer complains that Derrida understands the concept of "living dialogue" as metaphysical while Gadamer (1989) considers understanding each other as a natural aspect of human condition and writes with acerbic frustration:

Is [Derrida] really disappointed that we cannot understand each other? Indeed not, for in his view that would be a relapse into metaphysics. He will, in fact, be pleased, because he takes this private experience of disillusionment to confirm his own metaphysics. But I cannot see here how he can be right only with himself, be in agreement only with himself. (Gadamer 1989, pp. 56-7)

Gadamer understands dialogue as a down to the earth aspect of human beings rather than a metaphysical phenomenon - understanding which can encourage teachers to understand students - and asserts that the solidarities that bind human beings together and make them

partners in a genuine dialogue do not always achieve mutual agreement and understanding.

Gadamerian dialogue encompasses both inner and social circles intermingling one another:

Just between two people this [establishing solidarity] would require a never-ending dialogue. And the same would apply with regard to the inner dialogue the soul [self] has with itself. Of course, we encounter limits again and again; we speak past each other and are even at cross-purposes with ourselves. But in my opinion we could not do this at all if we had not traveled a long way together, perhaps without even acknowledging it to ourselves. (Gadamer 1989, p. 56)

Gadamer's understanding of dialogue - inner or otherwise - assumes a never-ending exchange of ideas, thoughts, and viewpoints which will not necessarily achieve mutual agreement. Acknowledging their dialogic circles, teachers can enter students' personal space - caringly and wonderingly - to understand student circumstances as an initial step to take care of their education and personal fulfillment. Simms (2015) confirms that this never-ending aspect of dialogue entails an incomplete understanding of self-presence as acknowledged by Heidegger and Gadamer:

When Heidegger and, following him, Gadamer speak of self-presence, self-understanding or self-consciousness, it is already understood that these terms do not denote a self-assurance, a presence to oneself that is complete, and that the self smugly knows itself in a totality. The presence to oneself that self-consciousness or self-understanding entails is always incomplete; the search for understanding is a continuous process. That we are thus limited is itself a universal phenomenon. (Simms, 2015, p. 132)

This dialogic aspect of self can fulfill teachers' understanding of self/other by providing doubt, suspension, and incompleteness. Teachers can always practice good will by identifying

the strength of students in school dialectics, and by encouraging students to know their capabilities and to value their self-presence in open conversations in the classroom.

5.3 Language and openmindedness

Once elaborating on “fusion” Gadamer (2004, p. 370) contends that “the fusion of horizons” taking place in our understanding of dialectics is “the achievement of language”. In all communications, we attempt to find “a common ground”. This fact might be more noticeable when we are communicating across languages, however, once communicating within a shared mother tongue this is also true as we normally are speaking across our distinctive idiolects reflecting different cultures and world experiences. Gadamer (2004) notes that when we examine the hermeneutical reality using the model of conversation between two people, we try to make sense of the “subject matter” before us either in its textual or oral form. As teachers and students attempt to reach an agreement on the meaning of the discourse, they are engaged with their individual interpretation of the discourse. Gadamer (2004) writes this understanding of the subject matter takes the form of language:

It is not that the understanding is subsequently put into words; rather, the way understanding occurs - whether in the case of a text or a dialogue with another person who raises an issue with us - is the coming-into-language of the thing itself.... Whereas up to now we have framed the constitutive significance of the question for the hermeneutical phenomenon in terms of conversation, we must now demonstrate the linguisticity of dialogue, which is the basis of the question, as an element of hermeneutics. (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 370-71)

Language in Gadamer's hermeneutics is what constitutes dialectic knowledge and understanding. Finding a common language coincides with understanding and reaching an agreement using dialogic knowledge. Language provides a common space for discussion, creation, collaboration, and dialogic exchange between teachers and students. Gadamer (2004) continues that:

Our first point is that the language in which something comes to speak is not a possession at the disposal of one or the other of the interlocutors. Every conversation presupposes a common language, or better, creates a common language. Something is placed in the center, as the Greeks say, which the partners in dialogue both share, and concerning which they can exchange ideas with one another. (p. 371)

Language is not a possession at the disposal of the teacher or students, but it should be placed in the center of dialogic exchanges so that all interlocutors can have an equal chance to participate through it. Students can use their language in collaborative conversations in school freely and teachers' open-minded attitude can facilitate this process. Nixon (2017) asserts that openmindedness can transfer knowledge in educational institutions using student faulty language and half-formed arguments which can be partially understood:

We need to be able to feel our way towards understanding, to be allowed to work through half-formed ideas and arguments, to risk being misunderstood or only partially understood. If such spaces of open-mindedness are disallowed - through, for example, a pedantic over-insistence on 'correctness' or an all-too-familiar obsession with outcomes - then education stalls. (p. 31)

Understanding students' mistakes and erroneous language as a positive aspect of learning experience can ensure their participation to construct a fulfilling learning experience as they feel

supported and cared for. This empathetic gesture can reflect teacher authority and powerful decision making once they value the student *human condition* and put it before their learning experience. Nixon (2017) contends that openmindedness is the most essential condition of successful learning experience: “Educational success ... cannot be read off against ‘what one knows’, but has to be understood in terms of a disposition to open-mindedness: a willingness to acknowledge the differing perspectives that inform and enlarge the open mind” (p. 32). Teacher dialectics can be based on openmindedness because without a tendency to understand and value the opposing ideas, thoughts, and belief systems, teacher intersubjective dialogue would cease to progress and understanding common language will vanish. Throughout my educational experience, I largely remember those teachers who were open to mistakes and could hear my voice intertwined with an erroneous and accented language. They were my encouragement throughout my learning experience from primary school to doctoral studies. What is teaching if devoid of sympathy, passion, tolerance, and encouragement?

5.4 Teacher intervention

Gadamer concentrated on what he called applied hermeneutics following his first publication of *Truth and Method* in 1960. Nixon (2017, p. 53) asserts that the phrase is a “tautology” as Gadamer points out “application is never an add-on to that which has already been understood”. Gadamer, however, in developing the idea of applied hermeneutics, concentrates on particular domains of professional and institutional practice. Application is pivotal to understanding as we only learn something once we have found a way of applying it to our own circumstances and have tested it against our own preconceptions. Gadamer specifically concentrated on “how understanding informs professional values and practices and the

institutional conditions necessary for those values and practices to be encouraged and sustained (Gadamer 1992, 1996)”. For true interpretation of the traditions, teachers can be conscious about their educational experience and their own biases and prejudices acquired as a product of such an experience. Once teachers overcome their illegitimate prejudice, they can mediate to help students with their educational transformation. Gadamer (1992) regards education as a process of intervention and mediation between the strange and the familiar than a process of knowledge transfer, and views education as:

a ‘free space’ within which we make sense of things, learn how to communicate with one another, gain the confidence to move from the familiar to the strange, and become at home in the world. His work presents a major challenge to current orthodoxies: the belief, for example, that a combination of standardised testing, target-setting, and pre-specified learning outcomes constitutes some kind of educational panacea. (Nixon, 2017, pp. 53-4)

Gadamer’s understanding can pave the path for supportive education with empathy and love for the students in the classroom and kindle curiosity after they trust their educational experience. Students will move voluntarily to the strange once they feel at home in this lifeworld experience, and teachers can intervene by providing a free and nonjudgmental space to facilitate a voluntary learning experience. Gadamer considers pre-structured learning as the problem of education as it imposes a mode of rationality that overlooks the complexity of the educational process since it assumes a product-oriented understanding of education as Pinar (2004) confirms. Education, as Gadamer notes in his hermeneutical philosophy, should not be governed by such restrictions as it is an open-ended process of learning, thriving, becoming, and engaging with the world we inhabit. Therefore, the fact that education contributes to economic growth as it develops a skilled work force or it provides the accreditation needed for the employment market

is not considered as the goal of education and the basis of teacher intervention. Although these goals are also attainable, Gadamer's writings and speeches confirm that ethical formation is the prime purpose of education:

What we take from Gadamer's scattered writings and speeches on education - and from his philosophical writings as a whole - is that education is a process of ethical formation.... It is an attempt to square up to our 'sovereign ethical responsibility to make something of our own lives, as a painter makes something valuable of his canvas' (Dworkin 2011, 13). (cited in Nixon, 2017, p. 54)

Teachers can intervene to encourage students to make something valuable and meaningful of their own canvas and to create their unique masterpiece by understanding their ethics, their meaning of life, and their possibility of education by providing a *free space* in which students can understand the true meaning of transformative, creative, aesthetic, emancipatory, individualistic, and collective educational experience.

5.5 Becoming attentive

To understand our students' reality and meaning of life, we need to attend to their personal differences and their individual distances from us. Understanding their meaning of life demands initially the recognition of such differences and distinctions once interacting with students in the educational contexts we are teaching. Nixon (2017) writes it is essential to understand the whole strangeness of the object/person we experience:

We have to receive the object of understanding in all its strangeness in order to render it familiar. This insight is as relevant to texts and works of art as it is to people and the social groupings they comprise. It has relevance, in other words, across the human

sciences: anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, etc. But it also pertains to the natural sciences, which are increasingly located within a broader epistemological frame that includes the humanistic.... As human creatures, we live in symbiotic relation with nature. (Nixon, 2017, p. 35)

In their symbiotic relation, teachers enter a dialogue with students and the natural world they are interacting with and their attentive and perceptive awareness makes the true meaning of their dialectic come out. Gadamer (1992, p. 66) writes he found his voice as a teacher who learned how to listen than how to speak. He asserts that the dialectic nature of teaching requires the true nature of attentive listening prior to learning what we should say and in what way we should say it. Gadamer (1992) maintains truth is achieved through mutual understanding not through what the teacher believes to be true: “It is more important to find the words which convince the other than those which can be demonstrated in their truth, once and for all” (p. 71). Dialogue provides the disciplinary framework within which students and teachers become attentive to each other. Nixon (2017) writes Gadamer (1986) viewed the process of becoming attentive as getting involved in a particular experience of time:

There are, he argued, ‘two fundamental ways of experiencing time’. The first may take the form of either boredom or bustle.... Both these extreme cases are instances of ‘empty’ time, in which ‘time is not experienced in its own right, but as something that has to be ‘spent’.... There is, however, a totally different experience of time, which Gadamer terms ‘fulfilled’ or ‘autonomous’ time. ‘This fulfilment’, he states, ‘does not come about because someone has empty time to fill.... This is the experience of time within which we achieve autonomy. (Nixon, 2017, p. 36)

Students can achieve autonomy in their educational experience by favoring their fulfilled time scheduled by informed educators to allow students to experience a more conscious and attentive educational journey which can then open new horizons toward their subjective understanding of lifeworld(s). Attentive teaching needs an inquiry into students' world meaning along with an ability to interpret their reality.

5.6 Interpreting students' world meaning

In our hermeneutical understanding of students' pedagogical meaning, we can learn to interpret the discourse embedded in their common language. Gadamer coincides interpretation and understanding and writes that interpretation is the act of understanding:

Interpretation is not something pedagogical for us either; it is the act of understanding itself, which is realized - not just for the one for whom one is interpreting but also for the interpreter himself - in the explicitness of verbal interpretation. Thanks to the verbal nature of all interpretation, every interpretation includes the possibility of a relationship with others. There can be no speaking that does not bind the speaker and the person spoken to. This is true of the hermeneutic process as well. (Gadamer, 2004, p. 399)

In our hermeneutic understanding of students' discourse, teachers are making a strong bond with them which can contribute to our mutual understanding and trust. Our relationship with the students does not dictate the interpretive process of understanding since interpretation as a fusion of meaning is not consciously adapted to our teaching situation. To understand students, we always apply their discussion to our own world meaning the same as the time when we understand a text by applying it to our conditions and circumstances. Gadamer (2004) notes that

our verbal understanding of our interpretation fades away naturally and does not generate a second meaning other than the one which is interpreted by the interlocutor:

The verbal explicitness that understanding achieves through interpretation does not create a second sense apart from that which is understood and interpreted. The interpretive concepts are not, as such, thematic in understanding. Rather, it is their nature to disappear behind what they bring to speech in interpretation.... The possibility of understanding is dependent on the possibility of this kind of mediating interpretation. (Gadamer, 2004, p. 399)

The evanescent and instantaneous nature of interpretation of students' speech is contained within the understanding of their life-world and lived experience. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1962, p. 189) discusses the relationship between understanding and interpretation indicating that Dasein deals with what is ready-to-hand [familiar] circumspectively: "We 'see' it as a table, a door, a carriage, or a bridge". For Heidegger, we always see things specifically as they are, and never just see things in the abstract. He continues that the relationship between interpretation and understanding is that in interpretation understanding "becomes itself" (p. 188). As an interpreting animal, human beings understand phenomena through interpretation which is already the interpretation of others. Simms (2015) highlights that in our interpretive understanding of something in the world, we see it as something and understand it in this relationship. The only change in our understanding of something in the world is that what was implicit now becomes explicit:

I implicitly understand the world always already, and my encounters with aspects of it make that understanding explicit. But this circularity is precisely Heidegger's point. For him, 'circumspective interpretation' is grounded in something we have in advance,

something we see in advance, and something we grasp in advance: fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception. It is this structure of the 'fore' that is essential to understanding for Heidegger. (Simms, 2015, p. 33)

In our circumspective interpretation, it is important to be conscious of our fore-concepts once communicating with students and to overcome our illegitimate prejudice in order to let the true pedagogical meaning and understanding of students come out. In their bracketing space, teachers can be conscious of their fore-sight to interpret student meaning - understanding which presupposes knowledge of students' common language.

5.6.1 Understanding students' language

As discussed earlier, to reach a horizon of understanding and interpretation, we need to primarily acquire a fusion either in our textual or oral interpretation of discourse. Gadamer (2004) confirms that this fusion occurs in the verbal aspect of interpretation

The text is made to speak through interpretation. But no text and no book speaks if it does not speak a language that reaches the other person. Thus, interpretation must find the right language if it really wants to make the text speak.... The historical life of a tradition depends on being constantly assimilated and interpreted. An interpretation that was correct in itself would be a foolish ideal that mistook the nature of tradition. Every interpretation has to adapt itself to the hermeneutical situation to which it belongs. (Gadamer, 2004, p. 398)

Like the way in which interpretation finds the 'right' language, teachers can communicate with a language that is interpretable for the students to encourage them to generate their own individual language. Teachers' legitimate and unprejudiced "authority" which is based on the

recognition of knowledge (Simms, 2015, p. 72) than on blind obedience can nurture students' open and candid linguistic exchanges in the classroom. Students can learn the hermeneutical situation they belong to in their interpretation of common language with their teachers and other students. Gadamer (2004) notes that understanding a text entails applying it to ourselves, and asserts that the same text may present itself in different ways that are changed once they are activated. In their verbal understanding of students' discourse, teachers can pay attention to the instant understanding of messages as they are not going to have a second sense except for what is primarily understood, and can act as mediators who use their legitimate prejudice and appropriate authority to interpret students' language:

When we are concerned with understanding and interpreting verbal texts, interpretation in the medium of language itself shows what understanding always is: assimilating what is said to the point that it becomes one's own. Verbal interpretation is the form of all interpretation, even when what is to be interpreted is not linguistic in nature - i.e., is not a text but a statue or a musical composition. We must not let ourselves be confused by forms of interpretation that are not verbal but in fact presuppose language. (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 399-40)

Assimilating students' language - even once it is not linguistic in nature - to the point that it becomes our own is a process of hermeneutic understanding which can be acknowledged as the main linguistic achievement of educators in their communication with students. For interpreting students' language, teachers can also recognize the individuality of students and their unique conditions and circumstances.

5.6.2 Acknowledging students' individuality

Understanding unique differences of students is essential to Gadamerian philosophical and applied hermeneutics. This understanding is rooted in each individual student's idiosyncratic circumstances and histories which needs a quality of education attuned to such differences. Nixon (2017) critiques that in the past students were categorized within broad *bands* or *sets* for specific subjects as a means of distinction:

One of the favoured means of differentiation in the past has been to categorise students within broad ability 'bands' and/or into ability 'sets' for specific subjects or groups of subjects. The system of 'setting' is clearly a more sophisticated system of differentiation, since it acknowledges that students may perform differently in different subjects. But neither system acknowledges the full range and complexity of difference within and across categories. As a result, the unique individuality of the individuals comprising those categories falls outside the system's field of vision. (Nixon, 2017, p. 24)

Acknowledging individual differences is essential for hermeneutics as understanding begins with attending the unique circumstances and historical life of each individual student. Gadamer (2004) writes, "Hence, the hermeneutically trained mind will also include historical consciousness. It will make conscious the prejudices governing our own understanding, so that the text, as another's meaning, can be isolated and valued on its own" (p. 298). Understanding begins once a text or an idea communicates with the circumstances and historical life of the individual student. This is the "first condition of hermeneutics" as Nixon (2017, p. 24) confirms: "The prime task of the educator is to ensure that - whatever system of differentiation is in place and whatever pedagogical practices are employed - the 'first condition of hermeneutics' is met and upheld and that the student thereby becomes the agent of her or his own understanding". In

what sense is acknowledging each student's circumstances and historical life as the first condition of hermeneutics possible in the classroom? Nixon (2017) critiques the way education normalizes students and endorses Gadamer's solution for this problem:

Education fulfils various functions: it prepares people (mainly but not exclusively *young* people) for the world of work; it '*normalises*' them with regard to societal norms and expectations; it operates as a system of academic and indeed social selection. It can offer greater equality of opportunity, but also serves to reproduce existing inequalities and social hierarchies.... But Gadamer reminds us that education is also a way of becoming ourselves, of flourishing as intelligent and sentient beings, of being alive to the world. (Nixon, 2017, p. 24)

Normalizing young people by education is asserted similarly by Pinar (2004, p. xiii) once he affirms the "public sphere [as] a "shopping mall" in which citizens (and students) have been reduced to consumers" and by Apple (2004, p. xxii) who emphasizes that institutions "produce the type of knowledge (as a kind of commodity) that is needed to maintain the dominant *economic, political, and cultural* arrangements that now exist". Nixon (2017) argues that institutions of education can set the students free from the constraints that inhibit learning and "refuse to implement assessment regimes" that are unsuccessful in providing formative and constructive feedback to students:

[Educational institutions] root out not only overt discriminatory practices but hidden biases in the system and in everyday interactions between students and between students and teachers; and to discourage forms of competition that exclude or alienate particular students or groups of students. They would need to provide students with an institutional environment within which to flourish and fulfil their potential; to encourage them to form

and voice their own opinions and define their own individual ends and purposes; to help them turn mistakes and mishaps into opportunities for learning and transform problems into challenges. (Nixon 2017, p. 25)

Teacher development using self-education can result in empowering student voice as teachers can transform from within as a precursor to creating opportunities for students to thrive and flourish. Students can find confidence in themselves to see their mistakes as a developmental stage of learning experience without feeling nervous and intimidated in a competitive environment. I remember those teachers who turned my mistakes into opportunities to give me a learning chance and those who focused on my mishaps to prove I was wrong and I feel indebted to those who made ethical decisions in recognizing my mistakes as opportunities for learning. To understand students' individual voice, teachers can also be able to interpret their language rhetoric and facilitate educational opportunities during which students can express their free and open viewpoints in the classroom.

5.6.3 Understanding students' rhetoric of language

In our pedagogical engagement with students, it is imperative to maintain a sound and positive judgment of their viewpoints when interpreting their language and valuing their mistakes as a necessary stage of their learning experience. Education can play a substantial role in encouraging students to express their free and uncensored worldviews once they try out their ideas and speculate their visions. Gadamer (2006) expresses that teachers' positive endorsement of students' speculative language can create an atmosphere in which *getting it wrong* is completely acceptable. He writes a good society is based on common reasoning regarding the nature of common good and emphasizes - following Aristotle's understanding of rhetorical skills

- on participating effectively in arguing, drawing conclusion, and speaking persuasively and confirms “the art of persuading without being able to prove anything” (Gadamer, 2006, p. 55) embedded in rhetorical skills. Nixon (2017, p. 58) elaborates on Gadamer’s viewpoint:

Rhetoric has been taught in one form or another since antiquity and had a vital role to play in the curriculum of the European Latin Middle Ages (see Curtius 1990, 62-78).

However, Gadamer is concerned less with rhetorical skills than with the dispositions associated with the art of rhetoric. The question then arises as to what these dispositions are and how best to acquire them.

Understanding Gadamer’s perspective on rhetorical skills and the dispositions can help teachers create a condition which is conducive to relaxed, supportive, and safe learning atmosphere. Nixon (2017, p. 58) comments on Gadamer’s quality of the dispositions: “Rhetoric, Gadamer (2006, 56) insists, is *not* a competitive game of discourse played for the sake of winning a contest with the other”. He asserts that what is important here is to ensure that we are getting someone to understand our point of view without an intention of being able to prove it. The point of not being able to prove our opinion necessitates an unbiased and fair control of dialectic exchanges in our communication with students as Nixon (2017) confirms:

To achieve that end, [Gadamer] continues, ‘we need to put ourselves in the place of the other without desiring to wage war on him’. There is, then, a clear relation between rhetoric and ethics since rhetoric assumes a respect for the other’s point of view and aims at shared understanding based on that mutuality of respect: ‘The point of rhetoric is to teach one how to deliver or compose a speech so as to make possible a genuine understanding (*synesis*) and an authentic communication (*syggnome*), which constitute the basis for an actual consensus’ (p. 57). (Nixon, 2017, p. 58)

For Gadamer, the dispositions of rhetoric are adjacent to ethical purposes practiced by teachers in their dialectic with students to understand their human conditions and circumstances. Once teachers put themselves in the place of students, they will be able to view their life-world and understand their language rhetoric to make ethical judgements based on their hermeneutic understanding of the situation.

5.6.4 Nourishing students' individuality

Understanding students' dialogue includes a complicated process of hermeneutics. Gadamer conceives of understanding as an event in which the interlocutors apply their general understanding (insights, visions, ideas, etc.) to specific situations (human experience, texts, discourse, etc.). Gadamer (1992, p. 233) recounts understanding as an event and emphasizes the lasting unity of understanding and application:

It is through the event of understanding that we express our agency, distinguish our own life-course from that of others, and achieve individuality. Understanding, therefore, is a prerequisite for self-fulfilment: what Aristotle called *eudaimonia* or human flourishing. Since we all share this potential for self-fulfilment - and rely upon one another for its realization - individuality cannot and should not be confused with self-interest. On the contrary, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is premised on the assumption that we must all 'learn to respect others and otherness'. (cited in Nixon, 2017, p. 60)

For Gadamer, understanding and application are jointly reflected to shape our individuality. Understanding self is reflected in respecting otherness. This self-fulfilment can be observed in the mannerism of teachers who invariably respect the individuality and otherness of their students by understanding their different perspectives, worldviews, and belief systems and

applying this understanding to their decisions. Our individual understandings both distinguish our life histories and transform our entire worldview. Education can therefore transform both student's lifelong learning experience and their being. Nixon (2017) writes such education system would focus on achievement than attainment:

Any such education system would focus on achievement rather than attainment....

Attainment provides a broad categorisation, while achievement reflects the individual - and individualising - effort of the student given her or his particular circumstances. Two students may achieve the same attainment grades, but the achievement of the one may vastly outweigh that of the other. It is to achievement that we must look for an indication of the dispositions and qualities that differentiate students and that are invaluable in later life: determination, perseverance, patience, etc. (Nixon, 2017, p. 61)

To acknowledge the achievement of students, education must recognize the specific and continually changing circumstances of students. Assessment regimes are only based on attainment and overlook the value of achievement as vital to individual student's flourishing. From a Gadamerian perspective *good teachers* know the way to acknowledge the achievement of individual students and manoeuvre around assessment regimes. Good teaching entails understanding the students' circumstances and application of teacher informed knowledge to those unique circumstances. Auerbach (2014, p. 7) suggests that:

The task of humanistic scholarship is one requiring 'a passionate devotion, much patience, and something that may well be called magnanimity', then the teacher must exemplify devotion, patience and magnanimity within the teaching situation. The task - the very difficult pedagogical task - is not to posture or preach, but simply to express

these dispositions through one's commitment to the relevant subject matter and one's respect for one's students. (cited in Nixon, 2017, p. 61)

Nurturing each student's unique individuality triggers an interconnection between teachers' unprejudiced knowledge of the individual student's circumstances and skillful application of the attained knowledge to their teaching pedagogy and practice. Pring (2004, p. 81) recognizes the teacher as both an interpreter and a go-between as teaching "is essentially a transaction between, on the one hand, the "impersonal knowledge" which is publicly accessible in books and artefacts, and, on the other, the "personal ways of thinking" of the students. The art and the skill of the teacher is to make the connections between the two" (cited in Nixon, 2017, p. 62) which can be facilitated through hermeneutic understanding of teachers to flourish the individuality of students.

5.7 Concluding notes

Nourishing students' voice becomes a possibility once teachers manoeuvre around obstacles such as assessment regimes - which categorise students within 'bands' or into 'sets' - to empower students' voices by strengthening their unique viewpoints, ideas, and perspectives so that what they say becomes illuminating. When teachers practice openmindedness, students are encouraged to work through their half-formed arguments, and risk being misunderstood. Gadamer (2006) asserts that teachers' positive endorsement of students' language can create an atmosphere of trust in which *getting it wrong* can be alright. Within such *free space*, students learn to effectively communicate with one another, feel more comfortable to move from the familiar to the strange, and become at home in the world. Students through the event of understanding - as a prerequisite for self-fulfilment [what Aristotle called *eudaimonia*] - can

express their agency, distinguish their own life course, and achieve individuality. Good teachers who are devoted, patient, and humble can communicate with the circumstances and historical life of individual students as the first condition of philosophical hermeneutics, and their primary job is not to preach or impress the students, but to express such commitments and to truly respect them.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary

My doctoral research begins with recalling my educational experience using the autobiographical method of *currere* which creates “a self in relationship to others” (Ng-A-Fook, 2005, p. 55), continues with hermeneutical understanding of existential experience, and lands in teacher professional development and student fulfilment inspired by Gadamerian dialogue (Gadamer, 2004). Both *currere* and hermeneutics study our existential and educational experience wonderingly. *Currere* facilitates self-development, connects self to social sphere using existential and interpretive understanding of being. The analytic and synthetic phases of the method of *currere* are hermeneutical as we interpret autobiographical accounts to understand concealed meanings of lifeworld and selfhood. Gadamerian hermeneutics invokes our interpretative, historical, and textual understanding of our existential experience. So, Gadamerian dialogue compared to other conceptions of dialogue is rooted in history, text, and (religious) values and ethics. For teacher development, *currere* awakens teachers’ subjectivity, facilitates social interactions, and attunes self to lifeworld through existential, educational, and spiritual experience, once Gadamerian hermeneutics complements this experience with a historical, interpretive, and textual understanding of subjectivity. William F. Pinar developed the method of *currere* in 1975 for “an architecture of self” (1994b, p. 219) to reconnect to self for self-education and to the public sphere to transform education. My academic work with *currere* has provided an awakening lifeworld experience for me to mobilize my subjectivity as a student,

researcher, and teacher educator who seeks to expand his understanding of subjectivity and to help other educators and students in their educational experience. When starting my doctoral program, I was truly skeptical of my progress in this new terrain of education. Coming from a procedural curriculum and being exposed to quantitative methods of thinking, living, and being in the world, I was looking for numbers and figures in a phenomenological understanding of the world around me and of my being in the world! It took me nearly three years of rethinking and reconstructing my past educational experience prior to understanding the way to connect with my lived experience. Tolerance of ambiguity has always been a key to my academic success. I remember the time when I was getting prepared for a Master of Arts Entrance Exam [MA Konkour] in Teaching English as an Additional language in Tehran. During my Bachelor's program in English Language and Literature in Tehran University, I did not have a chance to grasp the rudimentary knowledge of Language Testing Methodology. I took an MA Entrance Exam preparation course on Teaching Methodology coordinated by professor Hossein Farhadi who was an expert in Language Testing and Assessment in Gisha Street in Tehran. Lacking the basic knowledge, it was only after seven times of reading a simple popular textbook on Language Testing called *Fajab* that I then started to understand it. Perseverance pays off. In exam session, I answered the questions including those in Testing Methodology section and passed the entrance exam with a satisfactory final score [ranked 56 among all MA candidates] to be able to choose the high-ranking University of Shiraz among others for my MA studies.

With my doctoral studies, the transition, challenges, and achievements I experienced were quite different. Memorization of prefabricated subject materials was not the issue at all. Understanding the lived experience of people in their narratives and connecting with them provoked a qualitative and psychoanalytic [*not psychometric*] approach to thinking and being in

the world. It took me almost three years of non-stop inquiry to overcome my *resistance* - as an outcome of my procedural schooling - and to become accustomed to my new ways of learning and being, and I am grateful for this accomplishment I could ultimately achieve. Still, I might be thinking in fragments and chunks at times. A broader corpus of my doctoral research contributes to teacher personal and professional development using dialogue, specifically Gadamerian dialogue. Transformed by the autobiographical method of *currere*, teachers will question their existential reality and attune these questions towards their ontological and epistemological understanding of universe using hermeneutic analysis. Putting forth allegorically, if I was an unlit candle before commencing my doctoral program in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia, inquiring into *currere* in Chapter 1 ignited me once I recollected my educational experience, envisioned new possibilities, analyzed the accounts for a hermeneutic understanding of present, and synthesized them to mobilize self. A glowing candle adding light and warmth to my circumstances and communicating with my educational and pedagogical community in Chapter 2, I studied autobiographical research in teacher development to understand the way other educators unraveled their transformative educational experience using their lifeworld as curriculum to mobilize teacher knowledge and create educational communities. This was just the beginning of an enlightening journey from within contextualized in teacher community of practice and lifeworld. Teacher development for me was simply illuminating other candles [teachers] that might have been unlit [suffocated] or half-lit due to certain circumstances such as an exposure to a procedural curriculum. Dialogue as a pluralistic condition of education opened new possibilities for teacher professional development in Chapter 3 once teachers entered into an intersubjective space of *currere* to exchange their pedagogical, professional, and spiritual experience and to mobilize their shared knowledge and understanding.

Following self-education, teacher professional development [or leadership] using Gadamerian dialogue in Chapter 4 rendered into spreading the light and warmth within ourselves as teachers to our circumstances - our existing curriculum - which could become outdated [smothered] once unattended constantly and continuously. Hermeneutic understanding of teaching profession could open an inner space of attunement as in *currere* for teachers to understand creative dimensions of self, pedagogy, and practice by overcoming fore-understanding in interpreting discourse. Once teachers understand their lifeworld using *currere* and Gadamerian hermeneutics, they can open an engaging dialogue with students to empower their voice - the focus of Chapter 5. Connecting to inner life and interpreting pedagogical meaning, teachers can create an atmosphere of trust to strengthen students' unique ideas, perspectives, and worldviews. Overall, once the autobiographical method of *currere* opened my inner life and contributed to my intersubjective and analytic understanding of lifeworld as curriculum, Gadamerian hermeneutics complemented this understanding by an interpretative approach to educational experience. Analysing and synthesizing the related literature, I have ordered answering the questions of my dissertation starting from self-education to teacher professional development and student fulfilment using Gadamerian dialogue.

6.2 Return to research questions

Question 1. In what way has the autobiographical method of *currere* encouraged an understanding of my educational experience?

In chapter 1, I studied my educational experience using the autobiographical method of *currere*. I am an Iranian-Canadian educator who has experienced two approaches to curriculum and pedagogy; a traditional curriculum which is fully loaded with “predetermined, sequential,

skills-oriented, and measurable versions” of language along with opportunities of teacher dialogue, and an innovative curriculum which has encouraged me to look “inquiringly and wonderingly on the world” (Miller, 2005, p. 46) once attuned to lifeworld through self-reflection, self-inquiry, and self-education. These two aspects or manifestations of curriculum can be considered complementary and sequential. Skills-oriented learning at an earlier stage can precede an inquiry into and wondering on one’s learning experience. Knowing that many educators and scholars (Chen, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 149-150; Day, 2012; Lo, Lai, & Chen, 2012, pp. 27-29; Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2012, p. 149; Zhang & Pinar, 2015), use autobiography to understand their positionality and voice among university and school teachers confirms a possibility for emerging scholars like myself. The scholarship encourages teachers to work from within and confirms inner freedom within structures of authority to constitute professional development as lived. *Currere* has contributed to understanding my being-in-the-world and becoming-in-the-world as an educator. Engaged more proactively with the lifeworld of an educator, I feel, think, judge, and critique the sociopolitical aspects of education for a development of self/other. My narrative has invited me to be present for self-development, teacher empowerment, and school transformation by attuning to the present non-judgementally and attending to my circumstances consciously. By disclosing my story, I create new possibilities and release tensions [test anxiety] of a traditional curriculum as the literature confirms and my transformative educational experience reveals itself. Using *currere*, my memory runs as a stream that curves back and deepens itself through an interactive dialogue I open with my context of practice to gain new pedagogical understanding and meaning, and to recognize the internal [psychoanalytical] and external [contextual] sources of feeling estranged and distant. My place - either physical or else - interacts with my subjectivity and connects it

with new boundaries as well as creative possibilities as my autobiographical experience of a cross-contextual curriculum reveals its in-betweenness. My experience with *currere* was a rebirth to distance self from the nonego [curriculum] which occurred to me as my academic and intellectual freedom. During four dimensions of *currere*; regressive, progressive, analytic and synthetic, I recollected my educational experience, envisioned new possibilities in education, analyzed the accounts for the present meaning, and synthesized the themes for a deeper understanding of lifeworld and educational experience. As self can be connected to society through our educational experience, curriculum includes both subjective and sociopolitical aspects of self which resonate with my *currere* experience. As an unassisted method of self-inquiry, *currere* has both connected me to my existing social and political spheres in teacher education, and has attuned me to my understanding-of-being-in-the-world. *Currere* has helped me to understand the psychoanalytical obstacles of *transferring* emotions I might have for one person to a different person, *projecting* my own qualities to a different person, and *resistance* to certain feelings or memories of early educational experience by removing an undesired aspect of curriculum - test anxiety. Another technique employed by *currere* that has helped me to achieve a non-judgmental understanding of lived experience is bracketing or “disconnecting” (Husserl, 1969, p. 58) as a process of phenomenological reduction that has contributed to my wellbeing in everyday routines by improving my intellectual, emotional, and spiritual capacity. I constantly bracket my mode-of-being - as far as it is possible to do so - to understand its psychoanalytical content and to remove undesired aspects of attitude towards life, being, and educational experience. I immerse myself in my existential being to understand my “lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived other” (van Manen, 1977, cited in Palmer, 2018) and I find curriculum-as-being, as-time/space, and as-consciousness. As for a part of psychoanalytical transformation

experienced in *currere*, release from tensions of the past and present [I call it constant rebirth] occurred to me following four dimensions of the method. Once my past educational experience manifested both encouraging [teacher dialogue] and challenging [test anxiety] memories for reflection, my present education fostered moments of contemplation, innovation, and creation for future possibilities. This is the art of working from within as William Blake confirms aesthetically:

To see a world in a grain of sand

And a heaven in a wild flower

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand

And eternity in an hour

Question 2: How can autobiographical research contribute to teacher development?

Autobiographical research helps teachers to examine their life-world and invites them to explore their reality. As the educational experience confirms itself in our life-world and “permeates our meaning of education” (Britzman, 2009, p. 28), it can disturb our judgement and understanding as it is present in psychoanalytic understanding of self, of psyche. Once teachers reconstruct their pedagogical meaning and reevaluate their philosophy of life in teaching, they can expand on their meaning, and become engaged in a dialogical space with others including their students to invite them to expand on their meaning. Shifting to phenomenological and cognitivist models of learning can be more instructive, constructive, and transformative for specifically those teachers who have experienced a merely behavioristic and procedural school of thought (Miller’s, 2005, p. 46). In their conscious practice, teachers experience moments of being attentive to teaching pedagogy which can contribute to their professional development as

experienced in their disconnecting moments of consciousness. Using collaborative autobiography, teachers can inquire into the development of the knowledge that they use as emancipatory and assisting in teacher development. Involved in autobiographical praxis - a combination of theory and practice - teachers can inquire into the deep meaning and understanding of both their worklife experience and professional future (Butt & Raymond, 1989). Being at the center of thinking narratively, effective working relationships play an essential role in teacher development and can contribute to teacher well-being in classrooms individually and collectively. Relationships are practiced as collaboration and cooperation in learning experience in mutual exchanges with other students, teachers, and teacher educators. Teachers can attend the details of learning process in their autobiographical development to include both the structure of subject materials and the methods of inquiry to mobilize knowledge. Listening to teachers and understanding their selfhood in their stories are emphasized in the literature for teacher development. Autobiographical research enacts a reconceptualization of teacher development as the focus is not only on teacher's practice, but on the personhood of teachers as the canvas of learning experience which allows them to work from the creative sources within teacher life-world. Biographic and autobiographic research on teachers' lived experience creates an emancipatory and transformative process resulting in teacher development as well as social and political enactment. In their self-inquiry, teachers become attuned to educational experience by being open and receptive to what is yet-to-be-established but is-not-yet-there - a world of meaning awaiting to be explored by all humans through presence and connectivity to life-world. Once attuned to life-world, teachers can overcome their misconceptions by understanding plurality through opening an intersubjective dialogue with others, as they inquire into intersubjective and collaborative meaning of life. Teachers can

emerge along with the world to a new human to realize their (auto)biographical as well as future by transcending their personhood and by entering historical existence once they work from within and develop new understanding of their possibilities, as autobiographical research can begin with self-development and land in social and historical spheres. Understanding these dimensions of teacher autobiography and self-knowledge, teachers can form their communities of practice to transcend public and political spheres to mobilize self and other knowledge and transform education (Butt & Raymond, 1987, 1988, 1992).

Question 3: In what sense can dialogue nurture teacher professional development?

Dialogue creates an understanding of teachers' personal and professional lives, and their circumstances to improve their teaching pedagogy and practice, and to develop enthusiastic students for democratic schools. Understanding the inner life of teachers - a meditative understanding of their personhood - can transform to inner work - a more pedagogically oriented practice - using conversations which connect us with the inner life as well as the pedagogical orientation of teachers and teacher educators. In the process of meaning making, the relationship of teacher-student makes sense only if one includes the other facilitated by dialogue which makes teachers and students learn from shared educational experience as it provides an opportunity for a collaborative and constructive meaning-making process. New understanding of dialogic conversations shift from rationalism to constructivism incorporating a democratic, scientific, collaborative, experiential, and transformative approach to teacher professional development. Using dialogic conversations, teachers' professional knowledge can be transformed and a deeper understanding can be acquired which demands a willingness for teachers to be influenced by other interlocutors and "an openness toward the world" (Huebner,

2008, p. 78) to overcome their inappropriate prejudices and irrational authority. Entering an intersubjective dialogue with others, teachers become ontologically engaged with their teaching pedagogy and practice to reconstruct the notions of schooling and to go beyond “immediate level of interpretation” (Aoki et al., 2004, p. 7). Using dialogue, teachers can replace “banking education” and memorization with rational and critical thinking to foster teacher and student agency for mobilizing knowledge of the oppressed to support social change. Engaging theory and practice, teachers can use friendly and mutually supportive conversations as a collective, democratic, and humanistic way of knowing and learning to achieve a deeper understanding of the object of knowledge and to transform educational experience. Resolving misunderstandings and miscommunications arising from diverse social, cultural, and political backgrounds can provide a mutual and collaborative space for teacher professional development. In the process of meaning-making, experienced teachers can give themselves to productive and spontaneous discussions by overcoming their negative attitudes in interpretations of dialogue. For teacher professional development, teachers can continue reflective and collegial dialogue using their rational process of critical thinking and reasoning to understand the sources of possible infractions, and can assert that caring is best interpreted as a quality of relation not as goodness belonging to an individual. Dialogue can assume a key concept in teacher career and life as human being’s existential experience informs and is informed by reflective dialogue. Using dialogic conversations, teachers can listen to students, a humanistic process which can give them insight into establishing a sympathetic relationship. Considering plurality as a possibility of education, professional teachers can use ongoing dialogue to maintain difference in their classrooms. Using mindful conversations, teachers can understand the specifications of the soil in which each student is planted (Jung, 2014, p. 449) to avoid the danger of conformity.

Question 4: In what way can Gadamerian dialogue foster teacher professional development?

In teacher development, dialogue can start with posing a question towards the ontological reality of being, so teachers can begin their dialogue with an open question of “Who am I as a teacher?” as initiated in chapter two. Making a sense of the world as well as ourselves in the world provides an understanding of our full human potential as ethical beings. This understanding is facilitated through asking “smooth questions” by teachers and teacher educators to make sure that we avoid the “sudden occurrence of the question” which is a violation of the ethics of Gadamerian dialogue (Gadamer, 2004, p. 360). Questions can facilitate our hermeneutic consciousness of what teachers are saying and what other interlocutors [students] are saying. Perhaps our first step in posing a question is deciding on a question which takes on teachers’ unprejudiced judgement and a hermeneutic understanding of correct and incorrect counterarguments. As a transformative power of hermeneutics, teachers might be able to see the justice of their own position and the truth of others. Teachers can focus on a dialogical understanding of questions to encourage students to explore their meanings using intersubjective dialogue with themselves, other students, and their teachers. This dialogic understanding assumes a disposition of open-mindedness for teachers who can transcend their perspectives and visions to understand the differing and opposing ideas. Teachers can become able to transform their perspectives to understand the horizon of the students using continuous meditation, rethinking, and reflection on their perceptual field. This understanding can expand to a merging of horizons of the past, present, and future during which teachers can continuously make sense of their subjectivity as well as their own professional development. Of note, our horizons can be flexible as our prejudgements and presuppositions are incessantly put to the test to develop a

dynamic understanding of our teaching pedagogy and practice. Employing productive understanding of prejudice and overcoming inappropriate prejudice during dialogic exchanges can help teachers provide pedagogical possibilities for students through which teachers' subjective engagement creates educational moments. Teachers can improve their power of listening once in dialogue with other students as it is the foundation of hermeneutic understanding. Teachers are mediators who intervene the historical trajectory of students using dialectics that constitute what Gadamer (1992) terms as hermeneutic traditions within which teachers and students practice education. Educators can use dialectics as a form of self-reflexive and self-explorative hermeneutic understanding which helps students explore their potentials and possibilities. Teachers and teacher educators can ensure that the students are 'with them' during genuine conversation through conscious listening, valuing their differing opinions, and highlighting the strength of what is said. For their personal and professional development, educators can remain open to the meaning of the other person or text by situating that meaning in relation to their own meaning and circumstances and recognizing their biases and prejudgements using a hermeneutic understanding of the person or text. Using Gadamerian dialogue, teachers will be able to master the art of questioning, overcome their fore-understandings, control the pressure of opinion, perceive unprejudiced meanings, and practice rational authority which will foster their professional development in schools where they are teaching.

Question 5. Could Gadamerian dialogue encourage teachers to value student voice?

Understanding student voice begins with our positive attitude to identify the strength and power of their perspectives, ideas, and worldviews so that what they say shines out. Understanding self-presence and self-consciousness is always incomplete and a continuous

process. Teachers can find a common ground in their hermeneutic understanding of dialectic with students to ensure an agreement on the meaning of the written or oral discourse taking the form of language. Therefore, finding a common language and therefore shared understanding - with an equal chance for the interlocutors to contribute to - coincides with reaching an agreement in a shared space with students for discussions and exchange of meanings and thoughts. Open-minded teachers provide opportunities for the students to work through half-formed and incomplete ideas and arguments with a risk of being misunderstood or partly understood as a natural outcome of learning process. Teachers can emphasize the importance of finding convincing words in their dialogue with students so that they can establish a rapport and mutual understanding than words which unravel truth [only]. Our relationship with the students does not dictate an interpretive mode of understanding as hermeneutics as a fusion of meaning is not consciously applied to our teaching pedagogy and practice. Once students become attentive to a particular experience of *their* time, they can experience “fulfilled” or “autonomous” time than “empty” time in their educational experience to achieve autonomy (Nixon, 2017, p. 36).

Teachers can become aware of each student’s custom and culture embedded in their language in a hermeneutic understanding of their oral and textual discourse. Educators can learn not to seek to prove their opinion by assuming an unbiased control of dialectics with students, and by understanding the circumstances of the others. Through hermeneutic understanding of students, teachers can respect their agency, strengthen their voice, and help them to achieve their unique individuality. Understanding students is therefore a precondition for the students’ self-fulfilment, self-worth, self-wellbeing, and self-education. Teachers can value students’ otherness by employing their hermeneutic understanding of students’ circumstances into their applied hermeneutics to provide an opportunity for students to shape their individuality, acknowledge

their achievements, create their personal ways of thinking, and expand their life-world in their educational experience.

6.3 Research achievements and contributions

First, the autobiographical method of *currere* is not only a method but a conscious approach to professional life. As an Iranian-Canadian educator, my engagement with *currere* created new understanding of my subjectivity, time, and place. *Currere* is akin to interplay with time and place in the course of life. In my academic study, *currere* freed and liberated my subjectivity from the undesired attachments such as test and stage anxiety inculcated in me due to a traditional test-centered assessment regime and inspired me with new possibilities. *Currere* invoked a conscious and constant reconstruction of self and expanded my traditional understanding of subjectivity. My subjectivity - now released and awakened - as an infinite source of inspiration creates a transformative curriculum by connecting to unlimited sources of knowledge, meaning, and understanding *within* and outside of myself. This educational freedom is the primary achievement and contribution of my research to self-education, the field of curriculum studies, and other educators, and students.

Second, in *Sanity, Madness, and School*, Pinar (1975a) argues “we graduate, credentialized but crazed” (p. 381). The degree and depth of madness in traditional schooling is not measurable unless one *in person* takes a psychoanalytic journey within to reconstruct past educational experience and to re-educate self. Without taking an autobiographical journey, it is impossible to understand the degree and depth of this madness. In what way can other scientific fields of study provide a subjective understanding of our educational experience and the madness ingrained in our subjectivity? It is only through subjective and autobiographical research on

educational experience that we can excavate our buried subjectivity under the burden of traditional schooling, banking education, and assessment regimes. Acknowledging this madness manufactured by traditional schooling and the demand for self-study and self-education “take impressive degrees of honesty and courage” (Poole, 2012, p. 9) as another valuable achievement and contribution of my autobiographical study.

Third, understanding the way “banking education” and assessment regimes can craze and cripple our students, it is crucial that teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers to open a dialogue to remove such obstacles in self-education, one of which is the Iranian University Entrance Exam - Konkour - elimination of which is the most important step in transforming the quality of education in Iran. The Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology which establishes the Education Evaluation Organization to oversee all aspects of the test can open a dialogue with public school teachers and university scholars to examine the way they can eliminate Konkour and modify the university selection criteria using a qualitative evaluation system. Knowing that the selection method provides advantages to those candidates who belong to upper and upper-middle class favoring a higher quality of education, Konkour works as a discriminatory selection method by maintaining “the dominant economic, political, and cultural arrangements that now exist” (Apple, 2004, p. xxii). Eliminating this selection method and replacing a more efficient and humanistic approach of screening takes genuine dialogue with educational stakeholders specifically teachers to understand their knowledge as educators and researchers (see Fenstermacher, 1994), and policy makers that my study invokes on.

6.4 Limitations of the study

First, in my Master of Arts degree program in Teaching English as an Additional Language in Shiraz State University in Iran, I conducted quantitative research on Language Learning Strategies. I used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for statistical analysis of data. My statistical understanding of data during MA research coupled with traditional schooling experience endorsing Tylerian marketing concepts of “accountability, competitiveness, and performativity” (Autio, 2003, p. 302) inculcated in me a statistical and numerical understanding of knowledge. This educational experience formed a quantitative *habitus* of education (see Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) in me; therefore, acknowledging alternative, innovative, and creative methods of understanding took me a long time. It was by the middle of the third year of my doctoral studies that I could recognize a new flow of conceptual and theoretical understanding and was able to meaningfully connect with the personal stories of narrators in curriculum studies. I consider my transition from a procedural curriculum to alternative aspects of my doctoral research both as a limitation considering the challenges I encountered to reconstruct my fore-understanding of education and as an advantage as my doctoral journey opened new possibilities and horizons of knowledge towards me.

The second limitation of my study is that unlike quantitative measures using which researchers analyse and synthesize data, my autobiographical and conceptual study lacks data which I consider as its strength as well. Although data can provide information in psychometric studies, during psychoanalytical analysis and synthesis of *currere*, I retrieve my educational experience and expand on my inner world and life-world. Understanding this conceptual and theoretical approach to research might seem unfamiliar and strange for those researchers coming from quantitative fields of study such as Educational and Counselling Psychology as they belong

to different schools of thought which deals with external data as numbers and figures rather than internal accounts of their educational experience that I find closer to the meaning of being and life.

The third limitation of my study is that I did not specify professional activities to be undertaken. This study has intentionally not elaborated on the traditional concept of teacher professional development as genuine dialogue embraces the notion of teacher professional development within itself.

Another limitation of this study is perhaps the nature of autobiographical method of *currere*. Although this method connects the autobiographer to the social and political spheres, the educational journey that the autobiographer involves in takes mostly an unassisted and individualistic effort. This fact prevents generalization, as each autobiographer must follow his or her own way. Specifically, in retrieving the memories in the regressive dimension of *currere*, the autobiographer might encounter inundating currents of unpleasant accounts and an overflow of emotions. Once attuned, understanding and interpreting such accounts take the observer's reflective moments of watchfulness, carefulness, and composure. In this hermeneutic understanding, it is crucially important to be patient with such interpretive work so that the meaning of one's lifeworld unravels itself. Curving back to one's autobiographical memory and understanding one's educational experience using *currere* takes courageous and voluntary endeavour.

6.5 Further research

Understanding self is perhaps the most complicated knowledge acquired in one's academic pursuit. Before commencing my doctoral studies, I was engaged with at least two

dimensions of self - spiritual and intellectual. Using *currere* and learning about other autobiographical studies, I have now achieved a solid understanding of self. I understand self as a unified and unique embodiment of intellect, emotion, and spirit as Jung-Hoon Jung confirms: “self is a totality of intellect, emotion, and spirituality, all of which are always embodied” (2016, p. 130). Huebner (2008) contends that the false assumption that “there is something special that can be identified as moral or spiritual” can be eliminated from understanding curriculum as “Everything that is done in schools, and in preparation for school activity is already infused with the spiritual” (Huebner, 1993, p. 11, cited in Pinar et al., 1995, p. 627). Understanding the mystery of self either as spiritual, intellectual, or emotional needs more scrutiny. I recommend that educators further examine their educational experience, using the autobiographical method of *currere* so that they can experience “shattering or evaporation of the ego” (Pinar, 2004, p. 10) prior to mobilizing personal and public knowledge.

Another aspect of collective knowledge which is missing in creating a personalized and individualized curriculum in democratic education is dialogue. How much dialogue is actually included and actively practiced in school curriculum? To what extent are educational stakeholders committed to this democratic approach to transform their educational standards? Can student subjectivity be illuminated in the curriculum once democratic dialogue is missing? In what sense can our educational experience create an understanding of dialogic knowledge in students? Is it possible to design a dialogue-based curriculum? These questions can provoke our understanding of a traditional schooling system that follows a top-down processing of knowledge and understanding. Viewing *habitus* (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) as ingrained habits and dispositions constructed through years of educational experience, overcoming our traditional

understanding of knowledge is not easy; however, dialogue can create a possibility to reconstruct a new and fresh pathway for self-education, and in turn, the education of those in one's case.

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