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TEACHERS' NEGOTIATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE 'CONTACT ZONE'

*Contradictions and Possibilities in the Time of
International Student Mobility*

INTRODUCTION

Globalised and international education is characterised by growing mobile student populations, the increasingly diverse boundaries surrounding teaching and learning, the broader context of global workforce mobility and the socio-political conditions shaping internationalisation. International student mobility has created both contradictions and possibilities for teachers to make changes to their professional practices. The increasing diversity in the student body, the rising student mobility and their associated changes mean that the issues of teacher identity and professionalism need to be re-examined. This chapter considers the impacts of international student mobility upon the complexities, dynamics and dimensionalities of teacher identity and professionalism. We aim to gain deeper understandings of how teachers position themselves and their responsibilities in the changing context of international education in Australian vocational education.

There has been insufficient research on the dynamic and shifting trajectories of teacher's identities in response to the demands of student mobility and international education. To fill this gap in the literature, the research reported in this chapter explores how the presence of international students has influenced not only teachers' decision-making on curriculum and pedagogy (Singh & Doherty, 2004; Smagorinsky, Zacubiak, & Moore, 2008) but also their sense of self as a teacher—their professional identity. We attempt to uncover how teachers control their identity projects and particularly, how they negotiate their professional identities within the contact zone conditioned by institutional power and constraints.

This chapter draws on Mary Louise Pratt's notion of the 'contact zone' to conceptualise how teachers' identities are shaped and re-shaped by their moving across different fields within their professional landscape in international education. Based on semi-structured interviews with teachers from a research project funded by the Australian Research Council, we examine how teachers negotiate their identity in the 'third space' when fulfilling their dual responsibilities as a teacher and an international student support officer. The research also analyses the development of teacher identity as a parent and a professional guide under the impacts of international student mobility. These different identities are conditional

and at the same time reciprocal to the evolving of the ‘pastoral pedagogy’ and the ‘inspirational pedagogy’ in international education. The process of moving across different professional fields and engaging in different professional roles has created conditions for the remaking of teacher professional identities that extend beyond the stance of being a knowledge and skills transmitter to the repositioning of themselves as a support staff and mentor who provides meaningful academic, personal, intercultural and occupational support for international students. Based on the findings of the research, we argue for a critical need to re-conceptualise teachers’ professional roles and practices in international education in line with their expanded and diversified professionalism as a result of the growth of student mobility and internationalisation of education

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Teacher identity formation is often understood as a process that involves the interrelated dimensions of personal experience, professional practice and the external environment. Specifically, the first dimension, teachers’ personal experience, is anchored in different aspects of their personal lives that may involve biography (Patrick, 2010), class, race, gender, personal interests and their own ‘extra-curricular’ activities (Mockler, 2011). Teachers’ professional practice is, in turn, framed by factors impacting teachers’ professional life such as professional learning and development practice, school’s culture and educational system’s contextual factors. Mockler (2011) sees the external environment as being related to the ‘discourses, attitudes and understandings surrounding education including the political ideology and policy affecting teachers’ work’ (p. 521). The enactment of professional identity in these three domains reflects the complex, multiple and shifting nature of teachers’ professional selves. Also, it indicates the significant role of the multi-layered and divergent aspects of the context in teachers’ professional identity formation (Beijaard et al., 2004).

In the field of identity research, the self is often conceptualised as comprising multiple identities. Teachers sustain plural identities that are interconnected with the multiple roles they play in their professional landscape (Viczeke & Wright, 2010). A person’s identity is bound to his or her personal experiences (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999). Therefore, teachers’ multiple identities encompass their ‘multiple experiences’ (Sears, 2011, p. 71) within their institutional milieu. In the context of international education, teachers may be engaged in a wide range of new personal and professional experiences as a result of their encounter with mobile international students. These new experiences can be related to their communication with this new student cohort, their intercultural interaction, and their pedagogic and curriculum work that may need transformation beyond the traditional practice. Elsewhere (Tran & Nguyen, 2013) we have demonstrated that the humanness and ethical dimensions of identity are crucial in teachers’ negotiation of the kind of teacher they are and want to become in their engagement with the increasingly mobile and diverse student population.

Teacher identity is neither fixed nor unitary but is mostly described as being complex, multi-faceted and relational. One's identity is subject to change across time, space and boundary (Morgan, 2004) but is also at the same time stable. This is because identity is anchored in multiple relations created in response to the range of social situations that people find themselves in (Harré, 1998). Operating within these relational frames and interactions, identity is argued to be neither always stable nor constantly changing but entails both of these distinctive features. Identity construction is therefore a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' and undergoes 'constant transformation' (Hall, 2006, p. 435). Within the international vocational education and training (VET) sector on which this study focuses, teachers' identity development appears to be tied to their process of moving beyond their traditional field to their cross-boundary experience. That is, they may be placed in the position to take on extra or new responsibilities as a result of the presence of mobile international students. This process is related to the shift from 'restricted professionalism' to 'expanded professionalism' (Seddon, 2009).

The conceptualisation of identity as a core notion in the fields of sociology, philosophy and post-structural theory tends to indicate the connection between identity development and discursive positioning (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1996; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999; Ivanic, 1997; Leki, 2003; Norton, 2001). Identity formation occurs alongside with how people position themselves in social discourses. Morgan (2004) argues that 'in post-structural theory, discourses constitute rather than determine a teacher's identity' (p. 173). That is, social discourses can give rise to teachers as self-forming subjects to 'freely choose which aspects of his/her identity are of pedagogical value or to know in advance how his or her identity matches up with a particular group of students' rather than reproducing or conforming to dominant class interests through schooling' (p. 173). Working across their traditional pedagogical border and new practices due to the impacts of student mobility and internationalisation, vocational education teachers are engaged in interplay between their traditional responsibilities and new professional experiences. Their identity reformation happens within a web of 'shifting experiences, beliefs and ideological discourses' (Leki, 2003, p. 68). The ways teachers perceive themselves and their shifting experiences under the influence of internationalisation and the presence of international students are essential to their professionalism and accordingly, need to be re-conceptualised.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY AND ITS IMPACTS ON PEDAGOGIC WORK AND TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

The majority of research on the impact of student mobility on teacher professionalism and educational work appears to largely concentrate on the higher education and school sectors (Arber, 2008; Bates, 2010; Leask, 2009; Reid & Collins, 2012; Sanderson, 2011; Singh & Han, 2010). Despite the growing number of mobile international students and the demands for global skills mobility in the vocational education sector (Tran, 2013; Tran & Nguyen, 2013), there is a dearth of scholarly research on the effects of the processes and practices of

internationalisation and student mobility in vocational education on pedagogic work and teacher identities.

Teacher professionalism and professional identity in vocational education are located within the broader context of international student mobility, global workforce mobility and the demand to teach in a global education market. These demands appear to have dual implications for teacher professionalism in response to international students' needs and the development of global learners and global citizens in the time of global knowledge economy. How to prepare learners for effective engagement and navigation of skills, knowledge and attributes in not only domestic but also international workplaces requires the re-visioning of vocational education teachers' professionalism. While competency-based training, which is at the heart of the Australian vocational education, is largely concerned with developing students' competencies for the Australian workplace, efforts to internationalise teaching and learning support the enhancement of knowledge about different national vocational practices and the development of skills and attributes for effective engagement with the diverse world (Mckay, 2004). Thus, the nexus between internationalisation and competency-based training seems to create a complex context where different conflicting demands may intersect and shape the formation and re-formation of VET teacher identity and professionalism.

Research indicates that the pedagogical changes VET teachers have made in response to the growth of international students are mainly related to the delivery of the content of teaching rather than modifying the teaching and learning content itself (Nakar, 2012; Tran, 2013). At the policy level, internationalisation is mentioned but teachers are actually unfamiliar with the concept and what is involved in the process of internationalising vocational education and the VET curriculum (Tran, 2013). These pedagogic and curriculum challenges arising from the conditions of internationalisation and student mobility are intersected with the contradictions and possibilities with regards to teacher professionalism. Within the Australian VET context, teachers' professional responsibilities and identities also tend to be constructed and reconstructed by their exposure to the increase of students with differing study purposes, the changing institutional context and the social and political context in relation to how the education and migration nexus prevails.

THE 'CONTACT ZONE' AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The notion of the 'contact zone' has been used in previous research to examine the asymmetrical power relations in the (post)colonial setting, cultural clashes and the identity formation process of the participants. Within this chapter we align our analysis with the notion of the 'contact zone' proposed by Pratt (1991) in an attempt to interpret the professional identity formation of teachers under the impacts of international student mobility. We are keen to move this concept beyond the traditional postcolonial landscape by contextualising it in the terrain of international vocational education and the mobility of international students.

In her 1991 paper, *Arts of the Contact Zone*, Pratt speaks of the challenge of reconsidering the models of the community on which the teacher relies in their professional practice. Often, this community is conditioned by different relations of power that are never equal. The author terms this model as the 'contact zone', which is described as the 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other' (1991, p. 34). Pratt's notion of the 'contact zone' is critically important since it urges us to re-theorise issues associated with international student flows (Kenway & Bullen, 2003). Specifically, intensified globalisation and student mobility around the world have pushed researchers to reconceptualise teaching and learning in a new milieu. Pratt argues within the contact zone exists social spaces for different cultures to interact with and influence one another. Within this research, the contact zone notion assists in tracing the inner world of the teachers that is deeply embedded in their sense of self, their perception of professional responsibilities and how these identities are rewritten under the impacts of the commercialisation of education.

The increasing international student body would open up the possibility for educators to rethink their conventional practices and professional roles so that they can respond more effectively to this new changing environment and diverse students' needs. For example, Canagarajah (1997) and Singh and Doherty (2004, p. 10) speak of the pressing need to reconceptualise ESL (English as a Second Language), EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and preparatory foundation programs as the global education 'contact zone' which holds critical assumptions about teacher, students and identities. Singh and Doherty advocate the need for teacher-student relations to be 'renegotiated, reworked and remade in a new, contingent way' (2004, p. 11). These scholars go further, highlighting that this contact zone is endowed with spatial, temporal locations conditioned by relationalities of 'historical processes of displacement' (2004, p. 11). This echoes Pratt's analysis of the historical linkages and power conditions that contextualise teacher-student interactions and their perception of self and identity. Under the impacts of the contact zone, teachers are at the edge of redefining their professionalism. In the vocational education sector, this may be linked to the increasing demand for teachers to take into account the social, political and cultural context that conditions the teaching and learning for international students and identity reformation for both students and teachers.

Additionally, Pratt talks about transculturation which suggests neither a totalising effect of subordination of the colonised nor coercion or oppression caused by unequal distribution of power. Instead, it nurtures self-determination and agency basing on which the colonised choose what and how to adapt to and appropriate the dominant, metropolitan culture. Pratt (1991, p. 36) remarks that 'transculturation, like auto-ethnography, is a phenomenon of the contact zone'. This is further supported by Kenway and Bullen (2003) who point towards the emergence of self-reinvention of international female students apart from ambivalences in Australian and Canadian universities. Clifford (1997) shares a similar view, speaking assertively of the spaces generated within the contact zone where identity is under a constant process of making and remaking. Clifford writes

‘cultural action, the making and remaking of identities, takes place ... along the policed and transgressive intercultural frontiers of nations, peoples, locales’ (1997, p. 7). Precisely, this line of argument holds important implications for our research in re-examining teacher identities by taking into account the possibilities of strong agency and self re-invention underpinning the reshaping of their identities. Alternatively, the contact zone is navigated towards a potential space for self-formation and self-transformation of the teachers and more importantly, the shaping of new [plural] identities conditioned by the changing context of internationalisation and student mobility.

Another highlight of the contact zone is the strategies of negotiating power and identities of both parties: the colonised and the coloniser. In her study, Pratt speaks of *appropriation* and *adaption* as common strategies of people (both subordinate and dominant) involving in the contact zone to struggle for recognition, self-identification and identity construction and reconstruction (Ashley & Plesch, 2002, pp. 1–2). These two notions—appropriation and adaptation—offer, we argue, useful conceptual tools to unpack teachers’ identity negotiation and their strategies to mediate amid this contact zone.

One limitation of the ‘contact zone’ is that Pratt did not move her analysis far enough to uncover the complexities of the negotiation process since she offers limited explanation on the in-betweenness/hybridity of identities with insufficient accounts of resistance and paradoxes that accompany the subject’s negotiation. Kenway and Bullen (2003) advance Pratt’s research by critically examining the formation of the secret structure of feelings of female international students in Australia and Canada. Our research is in agreement with Kenway and Bullen and expands the notion of the contact zone to the terrain of internationalisation in vocational education. We do so by exploring the shaping and re-shaping of teachers’ identities in parallel with their appropriation and negotiation of their own professional responsibilities.

THE STUDY

This chapter derives from reflections on four years of research into international student mobility in vocational education (Tran & Nyland, 2011; Tran, 2010) and its impacts on teachers’ pedagogic work and identity (Tran, 2013, 2013a; Tran & Nyland, 2013; Tran & Nguyen, 2013). This is part of a Discovery project funded by the Australian Research Council. The primary aim of the investigation reported in this chapter was to examine how international student mobility affects the professional identity and professionalism of teachers in the VET sector. Thus the methodology has been selected to suit the aim and nature of this investigation. A qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews with 50 teachers and program managers was chosen to understand how the teachers negotiate their identities and adapt their pedagogies, from an insider, or emic perspective. Listening to teachers as the ‘insiders’ talking about their own views and experiences has enabled us to have insights into the underlying factors influencing their identity development. Such inside stories help us to uncover the ‘hidden logic’ (Flower, 1994, cited in

Lillis, 2001) of their professionalism under the impacts of student mobility. The open-ended interviews with these teachers are suitable for the nature of this research because they are viewed as the process where teachers unfold their professional stories and make connection with the contextual factors shaping their professional identity and responsibilities.

The first-named author, who is the chief investigator of this project, contacted the Directors of International Programs from various VET institutes in Australia and asked them to help circulate the invitation to participate in the study to staff who are involved in teaching and working with international students. The interview respondents are from a range of industries including cookery, hairdressing, hospitality management, community welfare, law, finance, accounting, automotive, building and carpentry.

The face to face interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Interviews took between 30 to 60 minutes. The researchers read the interview transcripts several times and coded interview data using the NVivo software. Ethics approval was sought prior to data collection from the University Human Research Ethics Committee where the first-named author was based. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, their names and institutes are kept anonymous. A short report that focuses on preliminary analysis of selected quotes under specific themes was then sent to teacher participants for further comments and reader-check. The teachers' perspectives and experiences revealed through the interviews were analysed drawing on the 'contact zone' concept as discussed above.

TEACHER AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER

As discussed in the previous section, the contact zone determined by the unequal distribution of power creates social spaces for different cultures to interact with and influence one another (Pratt, 1991). Viewed in this way, the contact zone in the international education context provides necessary conditions for teachers to engage with various ethnic cultures and accommodate different teaching and learning expectations. The teachers operating in this contact zone are under an increasing demand to cross their disciplinary field and undertake multiple professional responsibilities. Primarily, the co-presence of international students and the commercialisation of the Australian vocational education sector have dramatically shifted in the ways teachers see themselves and their professional identities.

Findings of our research show that cases of VET teachers wearing 'multiple identity hats' are far from unpopular. Unlike HE lecturers and school teachers, many VET teachers also formally work as international student support officers. For example, a teacher recalls his experience of taking on the dual professional roles of being a teacher and an international student support staff as followed:

I work three days a week and that includes both my coordination for international students and my teaching in child studies ... That's why I have a time table on the door so they know where to find me because I'm *all over*

the place ... I'm the contact person for that sort of support. (Teacher & international student support officer, Early Childhood Education, TAFE, NSW, emphasis added)

Interestingly, as revealed in the above excerpt, managing these complex dual professional roles—as teachers and support officers—is linked to being both professionally and physically mobile in their professional landscape. Taking on the role of international student support officer, the teachers reveal they are on the move to provide fundamental, regular and day-to-day services for international students. This explains why some of them find themselves being split between their duties as being here and there such as being ‘around everywhere’ or ‘all over the place’ (to cite the participants’ comments as an example). Working beyond their traditional professional boundaries and across various ethnic cultures, it becomes paramount that teachers, upon adopting this new identity, are mobile, flexible and committed their time to cater for students’ needs. These commitments may even exceed the institution’s allocated amount of time, indicating teacher-student relations that have been ‘reworked, renegotiated and remade’ in the contact zone of international education (Singh & Doherty, 2004, p. 11). Clearly, these teacher agents are proactive in facilitating these relations and appropriating their professional duties correspondingly.

Specifically, some teachers admit that they are juggling amongst these multiple roles so that they can fit their busy schedule to individualise student support. The following voice illustrates the point clearly.

They [international students] will find me and ring me and email me whenever. They don't limit it to those three hours. They do know they can find me here but they don't limit it to that. They email me, they ring me, they do everything any time. So I try and fit in as best I can with their studies and their classes and things and arrange times for them to see me. (Teacher and support staff, Hospitality, private college, Victoria)

As the interview script above suggests, the novel identity of a support staff traces an image of the one who juggles between the multiple roles of a teacher and a student support staff. Such an appropriation of these multiple roles is connected to their flexibility and openness to various means of teacher–student communication including email, telephoning and face-to-face meetings.

Hawke (2008) remarks that the changing operational climate of the vocational education system and the commercialisation of vocational education have necessitated VET practitioners to take on changing responsibilities and navigate new sets of skills beyond their traditional expertise. While echoing Hawke's argument, our research portrays the subtle identity movements of teachers by uncovering dilemmas and paradoxes embedded within this contact zone. There are a considerable proportion of teachers speaking consistently of the challenges they face to fulfil the requirements of their dual roles. The common challenge is that their provision of support for international students sometimes goes beyond academic skills and language support to providing administrative and emotional

support. This requires teachers to acquire new professional skills in order to fulfil their multiple roles and responsibilities.

For other teachers, their formal role is separated from that of an international student support officer. Yet in many cases, they have to take on the latter role as well. Within this contact zone, it is, however, not always the case that VET teachers appropriate and conform to the power structure. There are paradoxes between the prescribed professional roles defined by the institution and teachers' ethical awareness of the limits of the institutional code of conducts. Such a conflict between plural identities places the teachers under ambivalence and contradiction. One teacher recalls her experience of confronting with ethical dilemma:

We're told it's not our role. It's not in our position description. We don't have the authority. We don't have the expertise, even though a lot of us are counsellors. And we don't have, it, yeah. Teachers still do it because they realise that they can't deny a student in trouble. But it's against our laws. It's against our regulations. Our policies and procedures state quite plainly that a student who approaches must be referred to student services. (Community of Welfare, TAFE, Victoria, emphasis added)

The teacher struggles herself between the institutional policy which outlines the limits of teacher's duties and her ethical identity that discomfords her if she ignores the students in need. According to the teacher's observation, not only she but also a number of her colleagues informally and voluntarily take on the responsibilities of counsellors, career advisors and international students support officers even though these roles are beyond their professional expertise and duties. Singh and Doherty (2004) maintain that the contact zone manifests the spatial, temporal locations conditioned by relationalities of 'historical processes of displacement'. Nevertheless, they point out that this zone poses a number of challenges for teachers such as risks and moral dilemmas on behalf of the institution and the end-users. The researchers remark 'They [the teachers] have to live through the awkward moments of discomfort, offence, or distrust with students when sensitive topics are broached, and sensitivities are breached' (*ibid.*, p. 34). In light of this argument, the inner world of paradoxical feelings such as discomfort and willingness to help within the contact zone shapes and reshapes teacher professional identities.

Supporting Smagorinsky, Zacubiak and Moore's study (2008), this research highlights the dynamics and complexities of the contact zone. It reconfirms that tensions are increasingly presented by the system concerning the prescribed power, standardised values and the conventional curriculum and how teachers negotiate and compromise their professional roles. That said, teachers' ethical identity is paradoxical and contradicted in the contact zone. Being an international student support staff nurtures teacher's agency to bravely bend down the barriers of institutional regulations and extend additional help to students in need. Clearly, embarking on this additional identity accompanies dilemmas of following the institution's code of conduct and fulfilling what they see as necessary ethical responsibilities towards international students' wellbeing. Here, the complexities

and dimensionalities of teachers' identities append substantial meanings to teachers' professional identity.

Identity formation, especially when new identity is taken shape, seems hardly smooth and unified in the contact zone. Stuart Hall (1996) argues that identity formation is always fragmented, contradictory and hybrid. New identity sometimes puts the others under conflict and even erasure. The case of forming sub-identities in our research is in agreement with Hall's observation of identity. Hall critically notes:

Identity is never unified, and, in the late modern times, increasingly fragmented fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (Hall, 1996, p. 14)

Being a teacher of international students in VET can sometimes be extended to undertaking the stance of being a work placement helper. One of the teachers enthusiastically shares that he takes on the task of recommending jobs or finding work placements for international students. He does this on a voluntary basis. For many of them, this voluntary task can make a difference not only to the institution's support service, but also to the life of international students in Australia. The teacher mentioned:

I take responsibility for finding work place for them. I go with them. I go and knock on the doors before them and when they go, I go with them, introduce them, have a chat ... what I'm trying to do is trying to work a system where my boys actually rotate to different companies. (Cabinet Making, TAFE, Queensland)

The above excerpt illustrates how the flow of international students into vocational education has motivated the teacher to move beyond their conventional professional boundaries, appropriate their professional roles and adopt new identity, international student support staff. This finding of the research appears to be unique in vocational education. This is because the higher education sector tends to define a more clear-cut boundary between the role of an academic and a student support officer. Often, catering for international students' wellbeing lies in the hands of the 'official' student support staff from the support service division within the University. Because of such mixed roles and duties, many teachers are caught in the moral dilemmas. More remarkably, international student support is postulated by the ethical awareness of their professional and social identities as a teacher. The plurality of teacher identities (i.e. as a teacher and an international student support staff) could into existence as a result of either the institutional arrangement or teacher's appropriation of professional responsibilities.

TEACHER AS A PARENT: THE 'PASTORAL PEDAGOGY'

Terry Seddon's (2009) study on the professional milieu of vocational education teachers addresses the challenges of teachers' expertise bounded by the changing context in Australia. The author argues that teaching responsibility must be able to direct learners toward the development of skills and knowledge. It does not, however, singularise this mission. It is necessarily complemented by pastoral care. She remarks:

Teaching goes beyond 'delivery' of externally prescribed content or enabling the simple acquisition of skills and knowledge. It involves a '*pastoral pedagogy*' in which authority and dedicated compassion frame relationships characterised by close pedagogic attention, statistical normalisation, expert analysis and *pastoral concern*. (Seddon, 2009, p. 14, emphasis added)

Our research's finding offers an interesting dialogue with Seddon's thesis. It provides detailed, vivid and insightful images of how teachers move across different professional landscapes, negotiate their identities with institutional power and thus appropriate, shift, adapt to, and even '*re-invent*' themselves in response to international students' needs. A strong theme that emerges from teachers' narrative is the emergence of teacher identity as a '*parent*'. One teacher reveals:

You're a father figure to them and you've got to look after them They've got to stand on their own feet, as it were. They don't know. You have to show them first. Then you can expect them to stand on their own feet. (Building, TAFE, Victoria)

Similar to the 'father figure', who models, encourages and supports international students to be competent in their profession so that they are able to be independent and 'stand on their own feet' (to cite from the interview script), another teacher enthusiastically shares her role as a 'mum' in relation to teaching international students. For her, teachers' ability to understand international students' needs and respond effectively to these needs is equally as meaningful as any provision of academic support. There are many teachers being conscious of and committed to creating a sense of belonging and safety for international students. Such role is further specified as following:

And my job here, I'm mum So that's the role I play. It's very nurturing. I look after them ... And I try and make it that [College A] is like their home. So when they come they've sort of made their friends and they come into class. They feel safe. It's like a little safe environment. (Hairdressing, private college, Victoria)

Another teacher agrees with this point. She emphasises that her identity has actually been multiplied such as 'mum, dad, doctor, psychologist, and psychiatrist' (quoted from the interview transcript). To many teachers, their multiple identities are meaningful because they can, to some extent, contribute to enhancing their international students' wellbeing. A sense of 'family' spirit is promoted via the use

of family-related words such as ‘dad’, ‘mum’, ‘home’, ‘safe’, ‘safe environment’, ‘understanding’, and ‘look after’ (synthesised and quoted from a number of interview transcripts). The identity of a parent involves ‘nurturing’, ‘modelling’, and then encouraging international students to stand on their own feet.

Teachers’ interesting accounts of their role as parent portray the image of student as a child who starts to explore the world and learn to be independent. The whole process of nurturing international students’ development is carried out, which is not simply described in the teacher’s general code of practice, but marks an earnest culture of care.

The contact zone tenders an identity, apart from their professional ones, as a parent figure. In their positioning of themselves and other-positioning of their students in such a pastoral pedagogic culture, teachers’ professional world is also being reconstructed through which international education is construed as a holistic process. This educational process has more to do with human values than coercion, suppression asymmetrical power relations and the superficial market-friendly identity as a result of the commercialisation of education.

However, the relationship between individuals and the context is complex, dynamic and unpredictable. Thus, the caring culture that teachers embrace also presents them with tensions and dilemmas. Another teacher recounts his paradoxical experience of providing pastoral care to international students:

I didn’t have a mobile phone at that stage. Now I’ve got one, I’m just wondering whether do I switch it off at night or what? ... Because they [international students] don’t know anybody else and they haven’t got, other than their own peers. That’s the only support they’ve got. So you tend to be the person who supports them. (Building, TAFE, Victoria)

The way teachers engage with and thus support international students is not confined to the classroom boundaries but extended to pastoral pedagogy. A number of teachers we interviewed admit they do it for the sake of these students’ wellbeing even though such responsibilities are not prescribed in the institution’s code of conducts. Another teacher shares the same idea, confirming the values of promoting a sense of belonging amongst international students, other than the mere development of knowledge and skills. Such a sense of belonging is conducive to teaching and learning. She makes explicit that ‘... *education must be teaching them about the things that there are ... to make them part of it*’ (Hairdressing, private college, Victoria).

Smagorinsky, Zacubiak and Moore (2008) scrutinise the limitation of Pratt’s discussion of the contact zone. They argue that there should be a more nuanced version of a contact zone in schools where clashes of values are likely to happen due to unequal relationship of power. Often, these relationships interact with and condition one another in a complex, unpredictable way. These scholars go further, emphasising that dissimilar conceptions of classroom’s purpose are useful for providing ‘a more subtle, less cataclysmic convergence of interests’ (Smagorinsky, Zacubiak, & Moore, 2008, p. 443). This remarkable point aligns vocational education with the essence of humanistic education driven by the nurturing of a

well-rounded person that may surpass any commonly held belief that vocational education and training is to build a set of prescribed skills and knowledge for economic benefits. This remark confirms the argument by Harré and Langenhove (1991) highlighting the importance of self-perception and morality. These scholars pen:

People can be positioned with regard to the moral orders in which they perform social actions. It is often sufficient to refer to the roles people occupy within a given moral order or to certain institutional aspects of social life to make actions intelligible and to understand the positions that people take. (Harré & Langenhove, 1991, p. 397)

Following Harré and Langenhove (1991), we add that there are sub-divisions of the moral order and the extent to which moral order is encroached depends on the perception of the agent. Certain levels of tension go underneath between the institution's code of conduct and the teacher's ethical awareness. Such a disconcert between these two parties results in identity fragmentation and conflicts.

Moral identity forms the core essence of pastoral pedagogy. What we find significant is that this pastoral care is sealed with teacher's determination to build up a 'safe house' in the contact zone—to echo Pratt's (1991) notion—for international students. It is further manifest by making their learning a composite of study, shared understanding, respect, trust, and more importantly, fostering inclusivity in a learning environment, a house in which a sense of belongingness is embraced.

I honestly believe with teaching international students you've got to have that personal interaction more so than with local students... I think you need to be more personal with international students. They need more assistance. They need help. They need you to be there more than just teaching them about hospitality. (Hospitality, TAFE, New South Wales)

It is this genuine engagement with international students that forges a friendship between the teacher and students. Viewed this way, the teacher takes up the novel identity (i.e. being a sincere friend of international student) as an important dimension to his/her identity source. The forging of this identity, as the teacher asserted, uplifts their mutual relationship to a more personalised support level.

TEACHER AS A PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

We have previously highlighted the importance of the phenomenal transculturation arisen out of the contact zone. Drawing on Pratt (1990), Willis and Yeoh (2005) remark:

Inasmuch as geography and mobility create a non-homogeneous landscape of multiple contact zones and unequal power relations, it is hoped that would-be cosmopolitans and their local counterparts would develop the 'cultural

competence' ... to navigate with a sense of their own humanity, and that of others. (p. 270)

Wills and Yeoh are correct to accentuate the need to develop a set of intercultural competences for those partaking in the contact zone, on which they are able to draw and succeed in the intercultural interactions. This point is reinforced by Rizvi (forthcoming) who make a similar statement that within the intercultural context a person can transmogrify their own perspective of others as well as behaviours towards others. We are probed to claim that the global mobility of international students and their presence in the international classrooms have motivated teachers to re-examine their traditional roles and practices. Our research also points towards an important professional identity: teacher as a professional guide.

Pratt speaks of appropriation and adaption as common strategies of people involving in the contact zone (see also Asley & Plesch, 2002). Conditioned by the contact zone, personal identities become multiple, hybrid, shifting and appropriated. Teacher identity as a professional guide is rested on a positive attitude towards teaching and learning. To many teacher participants, their professional passion cherishes and enlightens this professional identity while at the same time setting an example for international students. One teacher shares:

I mean I'm very passionate about hairdressing so if they do well in the industry, I'm very happy. If they don't do so well, and like if then it depends on whether how passionate they are. Because like I say, I can bring the horse to the water but if I can't, if it doesn't want to drink, there's nothing I can do. (Hairdressing, private institution, Victoria)

This responsibility is reinforced by the teacher's insightful analysis of inspiration and patience. Interestingly, he sees his role metaphorically as the leader in the army which leads, facilitates and inspires students to engage in learning and developing professional skills and knowledge. This teacher speaks consistently of professional identity, inspiration, patience and the positive impacts of these constituents upon enhancing students' learning outcomes:

I think inspiration. You have to really inspire. What analogy I always use is like in the army, you cannot, the leader cannot say, all right, all of us, we will charge. And then the officer stay here and then you guys go. The officer must lead the students, lead the army and then he must go first and then they will follow. So I think inspiring your students is very important So I think inspiring and being patient, it's very important. Inspiring, basically. (Hairdressing, private institution, Victoria)

Our research indicates a clear linkage between 'professional guide' and ethical identities. So teacher professional identities are stretched beyond the normalcy of a mere trainer status. It is critically remarked by one of the teachers as '... I do see a problem from a trainer perspective is that trainers are just training for the sake of training, the job' (Hospitality Management, private college, Victoria). Such a blend of professional and ethical identities enables the teachers to revisit their teaching

philosophy and the community with which their teaching is correlated. In this regard, teachers' moral perspectives are in line with Harré and colleagues' (2009) discussion of the moral landscape, and are, in many ways, complementary to Pratt's conceptualisation of the 'safe house' within the contact zone. Harré and colleagues write:

'Positions' are features of the local moral landscape. People are assigned positions or acquire or even seize positions via a variety of prior implicit and explicit acts which, in the most overtly 'rational' positioning acts, are based on personal characteristics, real or imaginary. The upshot could be positive or negative, supporting or denying a claim to a right, demanding or refusing the assignment of a duty. (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009, p. 9)

Being a professional guide is connected with ensuring teachers' ethical commitment and social responsibilities to contribute to their professional field and help shape the professional identity for international students. Other teachers reassure the importance of a professional guide, emphasising that:

Now you could be fortunate to have a really good trainer that really can be very passionate, inspire and bring out all those passions and really demonstrate that there's a genuine excitement in whatever field it may be. (Hairdressing, private college, Victoria)

In my experience, because I've owned a restaurant and I currently still have a business in the industry, so I can bring real life situations. So rather than just talking about theory I'll often relate it to an experience within my working environment. (Hospitality Management, private college, Victoria)

As shown in the above excerpts, the teachers speak assertively of a strong belief that a holistic teaching approach should be able to give international students the opportunity to foster real-world understandings and stimulating their curiosity about 'what's going on in real life' and 'what are pros and cons of their profession?' (Quoted from interview scripts). In a similar vein, many teachers enthusiastically advocate for the weight of work placement and their contribution to help international students accrue industrial exposure. Thus the teachers' self-construction as a professional guide is associated with an authentic and holistic teaching approach.

CONCLUSION

This research deciphers the trans-cultural and cross-field phenomenon in the contact zone in international education which creates a space for teachers' different identities to undergo a constant process of making and remaking (Clifford, 1997). The notion of the 'contact zone' is a useful tool to give light to our understandings of teachers' 'being' and 'becoming' (Wenger, 1998). This process is characterised by their sense of self, their perception of professional responsibilities and how their

identity is re-defined under the impacts of international student mobility. The formation of teacher identity as an international student support staff, a parent and a professional guide as shown in this research allows us to re-envision vocational education teachers' professionalism beyond a pragmatic and narrowly defined way. There is an intersection of disciplinary cultures operating in this contact zone resulting from teachers' dual roles of being a teacher and a student support staff, which also means teachers cross their disciplinary field to fulfil their professional responsibilities. Indeed, the process of moving across different professional fields has created conditions for the remaking of their professional identities. The findings of the research also show how teachers' philosophies and beliefs have evolved and continually re-constructed alongside their interaction with international students in the trans-cultural contact zone.

This research indicates that ethical identity is both conditional and reciprocal to the formation of teachers' new identities: parental role model, international student support staff and professional guide. There is a dialectical relationship amongst teachers' multiple identities. The teachers' narratives reveal that not only the identity of an international student support staff but also the ethical identity is forged through teacher's genuine engagement with international students, a space where different identities are to be negotiated, and, as a result, accommodated with one another.

The multiple dimensions of teacher identity arisen from this research are significant for the pedagogical considerations and professional development of teachers in the time of international education and increasingly mobile student populations. The multiple dimensionalities of teacher identity revealed in this research parallel with teachers' extended professionalism in international education. Therefore, teacher professionalism in international education should be conceptualised in a broader sense to accommodate the extended dimensions of professional responsibilities that teachers actually take on in their professional landscape. This has significant implications for enhancing professional development for teachers given the changing nature of their work as their professional roles have expanded and diversified.

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TEACHERS' NEGOTIATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

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