ESL AND CONTENT AREA TUTORS IN THE ONLINE, FOR-PROFIT SHADOW EDUCATION SETTING:

UNMASKING THE TRANSIENT EDUCATOR

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ESL AND CONTENT AREA TUTORS IN THE ONLINE, FOR-PROFIT SHADOW EDUCATION SETTING: UNMASKING THE TRANSIENT EDUCATOR

Supplementary for-profit tutoring, also known as shadow education, has grown significantly worldwide and has become a multi-billion-dollar industry (Fortune Business Insights, 2021) over the past few decades, in both the number of organizations offering tutoring and the number of participating students (Aurini & Davies, 2004; Bray, 2010/2012; Zhang & Bray, 2017; Bray, 2021, 2022). Shadow education includes the distinct characteristics of privateness, supplementation, and academic subjects. Individuals pay for tutoring outside of school hours that supplements principal academic subjects in mainstream schooling. It does not include unpaid tutoring or extra lessons, nor "domains that are learned mainly for leisure and/or personal development such as music, art, and sports" (Yung & Bray, 2017, p. 96). Due to the dearth of research about the tutors working in this industry, this qualitative study voices the lived experiences of tutors working for a company offering tutoring services for Chinese international undergraduate students studying abroad in English-speaking countries. Based in sociocultural theory, it uses the theoretical frameworks of Gee's (1989, 2002) and Fairclough's (2003) concepts of identity and discourse as a foundation for critical discourse analysis (CDA). The study reveals how the for-profit setting influences tutors' classroom practices and their professional identities as educators and creates identity conflict for them as they and their work do not match the traditional concept of who a teacher is and what a teacher does. This is identified as the t/Teacher dichotomy, which questions who a "real" teacher is, and also highlights the instability that educators working as independent contractors or who are in contingent, part-time positions face, and how this teaching context affects their livelihood.

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Curriculum Vitae: Emily L. Kerr

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

For the last sixteen years, I have been an ESL/EFL professional who has taught in a wide variety of contexts, most of them in a for-profit setting, and most of them online. In order to further my career, I started graduate school because I wanted to earn a full-time, tenure-track position teaching in TESOL or Applied Linguistics programs for pre-service teachers or for EFL/ESL teachers' professional development programs. However, I have found that most faculty positions are adjunct positions, and are not only part time, but they are also contingent as to whether or not there is work available, if there are enough students, if there is enough funding, or even if a client chooses to continue a contract. Therefore, they still do not provide me any type of guarantee that I can financially support myself as an educator. For example, at one college I worked for, the contract with the company I was placed at to teach ESL ended, leaving me with only one part-time job. Next, I was not offered a summer class to teach at the other college I am working at because there were not enough courses for all of the adjuncts to get one, and I did not get any work from them in the fall of 2023 either because I was told they were prioritizing those adjuncts who can also teach on campus and not just online. I am now applying for full-time jobs while I finish writing this dissertation in hopes that I can have a full-time faculty job. However, not being hired would mean a much more difficult time finding work for the rest of the year, and not being able to sustain myself. This experience has had a profound impact on my professional self-perception and professional identity because I must ask myself, "Why did I bother to invest in graduate school if I cannot make it as an educator?" It seems that the majority of the contexts in which I have been teaching, online, tutoring, and one-on-one teaching, mostly in the for-profit setting, do not seem to count as valid enough teaching experience. However, those are the jobs available.

Statement of the Problem

Because the vast majority of my teaching experience has been online or on a one-on-one basis in a for-profit setting, it seems I have had to fight to claim my professionalism as an EFL/ESL teacher. This is illustrated by the difficulty that exists in the profession when it comes to finding full-time employment because the vast majority of college and university jobs and other ESL/EFL teaching jobs available seem to be part-time or adjunct positions. Adjunct work is not permanent nor even guaranteed, and universities have moved towards hiring contingent faculty as according to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 2016 at all US institutions of higher education, contingent faculty made up 73% of instructional positions despite the fact that "when a faculty is transient it tends to be impersonal, less rooted in the student body, and less involved in personal relationships with students" (Reed, 2007/2009 p. 37). This is what happens when large percentages of faculty at colleges and universities are transient workers and adjunct instructors. Likewise, Sagor (2000) notes a deprofessionalization of teachers in general, and compares their positioning to that of factory workers in that they are "expected to faithfully implement the directives of more 'capable' and more highly trained supervisors in jobs such as repetitive assembly line work" (p. 29). Thus, this conflict about educator professionalism raises the question as to what the concept of being a *teacher* means.

The traditional definition of *teacher* often leads one to consider the person standing in front of the classroom or lecture hall giving instruction to a group of students. On the contrary, the concept of *tutor* connotes a subject-matter expert in a setting of one-on-one individual support for a student. Due to the context and educational setting in which I have done most of my teaching, I do not meet the traditional definition of a *teacher* (Aurini, 2004), and as such, I feel a disconnect in terms of my own professional identity. Additionally, due to the fact that as a

transient educator, it has been very difficult for me to support myself financially due to the context of my teaching as well as the field in which I teach, this makes me feel marginalized as an educator. Therefore, my teaching context itself calls into question my experience in terms of whether I get to claim the title of *teacher* as opposed to only that of *tutor* and whether my status as an educator is equal to that of a traditional classroom teacher. To further understand this struggle, I conducted a qualitative study with two of my fellow tutors at the ed-tech tutoring company that I worked for, hereby known by the pseudonym "Simple Course," about their experiences and practices, and in analyzing the data, the primary theme that came to light was that neither of the participating tutors saw themselves as "real teachers" despite that their professional activity in the classroom can be categorized as teaching (see Kerr, 2022). Therefore, it is worth exploring the experiences of online shadow education tutors in the for-profit setting.

Shadow Education

First, the issue of inconsistent ideas as to what the terms *shadow education* or *private tutoring* mean and what constitutes the boundaries of each (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014) need to be addressed. For example, Park et al. (2016) "include public learning activities outside of regular schooling" (p. 234), but many other researchers, including myself, do not. Therefore, it is necessary to explicitly define the term *shadow education* as used in relation to my research. In this context, the definition of *shadow education* is based on that of Yung and Bray (2017) and include these three distinct characteristics: *privateness*, *supplementation*, and *academic subjects*. This means tutoring is provided to individuals for a fee outside of school hours and supplements the school curriculum of principal academic subjects. Additionally, it *does not* include unpaid tutoring or extra lessons, nor does it include "domains that are learned mainly for leisure and/or personal development such as music, art, and sports" (p. 96). These tutors work either full time

or part time as independent contractors, either on their own or for companies or organizations that connect them with their students, or both. For example, I work as a tutor for Simple Course, but I am an independent contractor rather than an employee, and I also give private EFL lessons to my own students. However, those classes for my own adult students are not included in this definition of *shadow education* because they do not supplement a school curriculum. Other examples of shadow education include not only K-12 tutoring in both ESL and content areas, but also tutoring in higher education for these same subjects. Moreover, there are also online companies such as GradCoach that offer one-on-one coaching services for research projects and dissertation writing. Although many colleges and universities provide tutoring services for their students, many students seek additional support from outside of their educational institutions.

My experience in for-profit online private ESL/EFL tutoring has had an impact on the way potential employers view me as an educator regarding whether or not I am a *teacher.* Thus, it leads to the question of being able to support myself financially in the profession. Because my experience working in shadow education has been shown to be unstable employment just as working on my own as an independent EFL educator was, I sought work as an adjunct instructor of ESL at colleges. Unfortunately, I found the same situation of instability because there were not enough classes and work was never guaranteed. As such, in order to support myself as a professional educator, I need to find a full-time permanent position. However, it is difficult if potential employers do not view me as a *teacher.*

The Deprofessionalization of Educators

Deprofessionalization of educators is reflected in both their pay and the status of their positions. For example, what I have found while looking for work in Florida is that ESL tutors can only expect to work part-time and only earn $20 to $25 per teaching hour. Additionally, full-

time public-school teachers, no matter their subject seem to earn little more than $45,000 per year. Moreover, an acquaintance who works as a K-12 substitute schoolteacher in the Volusia County Public School System in Florida told me, "it's really just volunteer work when the pay is only $15 per hour" (S. Allen, personal communication Jan. 26, 2023). This issue seems to drastically change from state to state as another contact who used to work as a substitute teacher in St. Paul, MN reported pay of $145 per day in 2012, which, he indicates, is presently up to $200 per day (D. Rawlings, personal communication, Mar. 10, 2023). Even today's pay in Florida is much less than the pay over ten years ago in Minnesota. This leads me to question the political reasons behind why teachers are considered more valuable in one state than another and its effect on the quality and success of education in each state. Lowering the value of educators to that of glorified babysitters or daycare workers has to have an effect on education. This is one of the many reasons Sagor (2012) states "teaching in North America has evolved in a manner that makes it more like blue-collar work than a professional undertaking" (p. 9) and further notes that this is a basis for teachers "dropping out emotionally or becoming part of the epidemic of teacher burnout" (p. 30). The for-profit teaching context of shadow education furthers this trend of deprofessionalization worldwide in terms of the industry's tutors (Xiong, Li, & Hu, 2020).

The implication of this problem is that not only are educators overworked and underpaid, but the identities of English language tutors also remain as vulnerable and unstable as their work and pay. Additionally, the entire EFL/ESL industry has long been marginalized (Pennington, 1992), and teachers or tutors are subject to marginalization because we "exist at the edges of institutions and communities" (Johnston, 1999, p. 255). Thus, there have developed antagonisms between mainstream and shadow education, which constrain the abilities of tutors in shadow education or private tutoring to successfully construct their own professional identities (Trent,

2016), or even lead them to see their own identities as educators as being inferior to that of mainstream teachers (Xiao, 2016). That being said, the issue regarding EFL/ESL professionals and who can claim the title of *teacher* versus the title of *tutor* means that EFL/ESL tutors experience intersectionality and marginalization both in being in the ESL/EFL industry and being *tutors* as opposed to mainstream *teachers*. As a result, this impacts their professional identities and begs the question: What does professional identity mean for those educators whose work does not fit into the mold of the traditional *teacher?*

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Private supplemental tutoring, also known as shadow education tutoring, has become a rapidly growing part of the worldwide education industry. Published research indicates that this sector of the education industry has mostly been prevalent in East Asia but has spread throughout the world and has consistently undergone rapid growth (Bray, 2010, 2010/2013). For example, Bray (2010) indicates that private tutoring significantly increased in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, China, Cyprus, Egypt, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, and Vietnam, again increasingly prevalent primarily in East and Southeast Asia. Additionally, in Shanghai the percentages of students enrolled in private tutoring increased from 48.9% to 58.1% of elementary and 66.8% to 74.4% of middle school students, respectively (Zhang & Bray, 2017), and in China, from 2012 to 2014, private tutoring in Guangzhou increased from 51.7% to 73.1% of students and in Beijing from 60.5% to 58.4% (Li, 2019). The percentage of students in Hong Kong who receive private tutoring increased from 34% in 1996 to over 63% in 2012 (The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, 2013 as cited by Trent, 2016). More recently, in Egypt and South Korea, enrollment in shadow tutoring for mathematics is up to nearly 78% of students, while in Malaysia, Turkey, Morocco, and Romania, the percentages of students enrolled in shadow education for math range

from 60-66% (Bray, 2022). Finally, although Bray (2022) specifies less enrollment in shadow tutoring in the Western world, only between 14% and 23%, it is still increasing.

Growth in private tuition in the shadows has become a booming for-profit education business worldwide. According to Fortune Business Insights (2021), a global market research company, "the global private tutoring market size was USD 92.59 billion in 2020 and projected to grow from USD 98.15 billion in 2021 to USD 171.93 billion in 2028" (para. 1). This overall growth of shadow education extends beyond the U.S. and leads Jha (2021) to explain how in India, private tuition "is a multi-billion U.S. dollar (USD) market and the third major contributor of household expenses" (p. 1). The phenomenon of private for-profit tutoring and its growth in the Americas, data indicates "the number of tutoring businesses in major [Canadian] cities grew between 200% and 500% during the 1990s" (Bray, 2010, p. 64), and "the number of formal businesses that offer fuller [as opposed to only test preparation] tutoring services has grown between 200%-500% in major Canadian cities" (Aurini & Davies, 2004, p. 420). Additionally, the province of Ontario also showed a 60% increase in such tutoring businesses between 1997 and 2001 (Davies, Aurini, & Quirke, 2002). Additionally, "in the United States, the [for-profit] tutoring industry generated approximately $2.7 billion in 2001 and is an integral part of the larger $102 billion for-profit supplemental education market" (Aurini, 2004, p. 477). This continuing and consistent growth in the for-profit private shadow education industry means that research in this field must also expand as to keep literature and overall knowledge up to date.

A great dearth of research still exists that explores the shadow education phenomenon from the perspectives of the tutors. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to allow the voices of online tutors working in the for-profit, entrepreneurial, and shadow education industry to be heard as they explain their experiences, thereby joining the conversation about professional

identities of such educators. For example, although Yung and Yuan (2020) studied professional biographies that EFL tutors working at the leading online English schools in Hong Kong had posted as a way to display their professional identities, they noted that their primary purpose was for marketing themselves as teachers in order to attract students, i.e., to get more work so they could make more money. However, because their study investigates a minimal way for the voices of tutors to express how they see their own professional identities, I would like to build on these researchers' findings by exploring how the experiences and teaching contexts of tutors working in online ESL content area shadow education affect, if at all, the formation of their professional identities. I explore this in terms of how these tutors see themselves as educators as well as how others see them in terms of being a *tutor* or a *teacher*, and whether or not this has affected their careers in terms of professional identity and financial stability. If the tutors participating in my study are questioning their own professional identities as *teachers* as I have questioned mine, perhaps, based on our experiences, this phenomenon continues. Educators working as tutors need to express our voices in terms of our professional identities, how the differences in our teaching context of the for-profit sector, and our teaching practices are not congruent with the image of the traditional *teacher* has impacted us professionally, academically, and financially. Therefore, this study intends to answer the following research question:

Research Question

- What are the lived experiences of ESL content-area tutors working in the for-profit shadow education industry?

Study Overview and Context

This qualitative case study examines the professional identities of participating tutors who work as independent contractors for Simple Course, a for-profit shadow education

company. Simple Course operates out of both Toronto, Ontario and Beijing, China and offers supplemental tutoring to Chinese undergraduate international students who are studying abroad in English- speaking countries, particularly Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Tutors are subject matter experts who come from around the world and must have at least a master's degree in their area of expertise. Simple Course recruits students from Chinese high schools that have intensive English programs preparing them to be able to attend universities overseas. Simple Course offers these students additional support that helps them achieve higher grades. Simple Course's mission statement states their mission is "to help students study more effectively and graduate on time with good grades" (Simple Course, 2010). Therefore, with this as a promise to its customers, Simple Course's priorities are not only concerned with the students' academic success, but also with customer satisfaction because it affects whether or not students continue to subscribe to services, which, in turn, affects their financial bottom line. Likewise, tutors are also concerned about their own financial bottom line as they need to be able to work enough to support themselves and their families financially. As everyone has this basic concern, tutors working at Simple Course have additional issues with this as they do not have set salaries nor are given or even guaranteed a set amount of work. This leads to financial instability for tutors working for this and similar organizations.

Local Teaching Context

Simple Course offers students both asynchronous tutoring as well as synchronous live tutorials in most subjects. Asynchronous tutoring takes place via the platform where students can post questions regarding homework assignments, readings, or topics from their class lectures or discussions for tutors to answer. In responding, tutors are not to just give students the answers, but rather teach them what they need to know so they can find the answers themselves or to give

explanations or definitions in order to support students. Simple Course's pedagogical process of Assess, Instruct, Follow Up (Simple Course, 2020) is the foundation for which tutors are to assess students' needs based on their submission, provide a solution by instructing them as to what they need to know to solve their problem, and then address any questions and give the student a concept-checking question to confirm their understanding.

Additionally, asynchronous support includes language revision of students' written work not only because this is an ESL platform, but also because students are just beginning to learn the art and genre of academic writing. More specifically, the students can submit entire essays for content editing, which not only includes language revision in terms of grammar, mechanics and usage, but tutors also provide support by (a) submitting students' work to TurnItIn, a service that checks for plagiarism and using this to teach students what plagiarism means and includes; (b) indicating to students what content is missing from their essay and whether or not they have met the assignment requirements and the steps they need to take in order to do so; (c) correcting the overall structure of students' writing, including sentences structure and syntax, paragraph structure regarding topic sentences and supporting details, and overall essay structure including introduction, thesis statement, body paragraphs, and conclusion; and finally, (d) correcting the formatting of students' papers to make sure they meet required MLA, APA, or Chicago style guidelines. As such, students can learn how to develop thesis statements and arguments, topic sentences of paragraphs, use transitions, write introductions and conclusions, and to write an essay in their second language that flows logically. In this process, academic integrity of the tutor's work is of the utmost importance, and although tutors can make changes by correcting grammar and sentence or essay structure, they may not add any new ideas or sentences to the students' work, although they can make suggestions. In this way, and often over multiple drafts,

tutors help students through the writing process and learn to adapt their second language to the genre of academic writing. All asynchronous tutoring is reviewed by peer moderators who are experienced tutors who have been with Simple Course long enough to have proven their level of high-quality work and student satisfaction based on student ratings.

In addition to asynchronous tutoring, Simple Course offers synchronous live tutorials for students to have online private tutoring sessions via the Zoom audio and video interface as an online classroom. Students submit the subject matter they need help understanding and are connected to tutors who are subject matter experts. Because Simple Course contracts with many Mandarin-speaking tutors, many students request these tutors for their live tutorials because they want the opportunity to be exposed to the subject matter in their native language. However, there are also students who take their live tutorial sessions in English. Additionally, many of the live tutorials offered are supplemental ESL classes for students and given by both native-speaking or bilingual (Mandarin/English) tutors and range anywhere from grammar to speaking practice. Simple Course expects the live tutorials to be interactive, student centered, and focused on content rather than being a lecture or on how to pass an exam. Even if the student is preparing for an exam, tutors are to help students understand the content the student feels they need help with as we do not know the exact content of students' exams. Finally, management monitors live tutorials for quality control, and students can rate their tutorials and their tutor according to their level of satisfaction. However, this also means that students can request tutors based on ratings.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study was collected via recorded semi-structured online interviews with participating tutors from Simple Course using Zoom's audio and video interface. This interview data was then transcribed using an online transcription service, *Transcribe*, as it guarantees a

90% accuracy rating, and it can also distinguish among speakers. The theoretical framework of the study is based in Bourdieu's (1998) Critical Social Theory regarding power and agency and who can wield it and how, Gee's (1989) concept of identity as discourse regarding how discourse is used to mark one's ways of *being* and *doing*, and Fairclough's (2003) concept of discourse as a social practice, i.e., how discourse represents social position and how one enacts a way of *being*. In addition, the study uses the concept of funds of knowledge for teaching (Moll et al., 1992) to explain how the participating tutors draw their knowledge base for their teaching practices. This study uses critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011) to interpret data, which took place in three stages. Stage one included emergent coding based on the in vivo and gisted interpretations of the data, stage two consisted of using axial coding where I expanded my initial codes as I drew new connections among them, as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018). Finally, stage three used a priori codes as an adapted version of Saldaña's (2009) streamlined model of codes- to-theory for qualitative inquiry to determine specific themes from the data that more specifically answer the research questions.

Participants

Participating tutors all work for Simple Course as independent contractors, and as such they can be considered a specific community of practice. However, for the sake of cultural continuity, and so data are not skewed by cultural differences as Simple Course contracts tutors from around the world, this study focuses only on tutors from either Canada or the United States. Some tutors working for Simple Course rely on this work as their primary or sole source of income, while others use this work to supplement their primary sources of income. Some tutors are at earlier stages in their careers and may still be in graduate school, while others are retired. Tutors selected for this study were tutors who work for Simple Course as their primary or sole

source of income, are in the early to mid-level stages in their respective careers, and may or may not still be in graduate school. Moreover, these tutors are considered to be some of Simple Course's highest quality tutors who also work as tutor moderators and provide quality assurance by reviewing the work of other tutors. Finally, although many tutors at Simple Course are native speakers of Mandarin, the participants in this study are native or native-like speakers of North American English.

Positionality of the Researcher

As the researcher, as well as also working as an independent contractor as a tutor and a moderator for Simple Course, I am already an insider to this community of practice, and am already familiar with the work the participating tutors do for Simple Course. Therefore, I play a dual role of both researcher and participant as my own experiences and my interpretations of how the participating tutors see their professional identities play a significant role in the data collection and analysis process. As such, this brings to the surface a possible ethical issue of bias because I must be careful not to project my experiences onto the participating tutors as theirs may be different than mine. This potential bias could affect my interpretations of the professional identities participants express. As such, in order to counteract this, one of my means of data validation was participant authentication, allowing the participating tutors to review my analysis of their interview data for accuracy. Additionally, to further employ validation techniques, I also intend to leave an audit trail so my research could be duplicated by other researchers at other tutoring companies and with other tutors in order to add to overall knowledge as well as allowing for the comparison of results of similar studies. Finally, although measures were taken to account for researcher bias, based on the profound level of involvement I have as both researcher and participant, not all bias can be eliminated. Nevertheless, this study serves the purpose of further

developing and continuing the conversation regarding experiences of tutors in the online, for-profit shadow education industry, thereby allowing them to have their voices and stories heard.

CHAPTER 2: A Review of the Literature

The phenomenon of shadow education and private supplementary tutoring has continued to experience significant worldwide growth over the past few decades (Bray, 2010/2013; Bray, Kwo, & Jokić, 2015; Bray, 2017, 2021, 2022; Bray & Hajar, 2023). To make the concept of *shadow education* clear, its definition in the context of the current study is based on that of Bray (1999) and Yung and Bray (2017, p. 96) as including the following distinct characteristics: privateness, supplementation, and academic subjects. This means individuals pay for tutoring outside of school hours that supplements principal academic subjects in mainstream schooling. Additionally, it does not include unpaid tutoring or extra lessons, nor does it include "domains that are learned mainly for leisure and/or personal development such as music, art, and sports" (p. 96). Despite its continued growth, there has been a dearth of research into the shadow education industry and private tutoring, which is finally beginning to be filled after decades of very little scholarship in the area. The question is, why have researchers been so late in their examination of shadow tutoring? One of the most prominent researchers into this topic, Mark Bray, contends that this is because "(a) research agendas tend to be dominated by North America and Western Europe, where shadow education has been less prominent compared with East Asia, South Asia, Egypt, etc., and (b) Faculties/Schools/Colleges of education are dominated by [mainstream] schooling" (personal communication Jan. 15, 2023). As such, like the phenomenon itself, its research has also seemed to be part of the metaphorical shadow. However, research into shadow education that has taken place is a reaction to the "continued, and likely an intensified pattern of the cross-national use of shadow education in the contemporary world" (Byun, Chung, & Baker, 2018, p. 71). In other words, because of the vast growth and impact of the educational phenomenon, research into the industry is necessary.

Despite its necessity, a lack of research remains regarding the tutors who work in the industry, and most specifically, research based on the tutors' points of view, including who they are, why they have become tutors, and how they identify professionally. As such, there have been several calls for additional research in the area. For example, Zhang and Bray (2020) suggested that more research into "the qualities and motivations of tutors" (p. 327) is required, indicating a significant need for studies, such as the current study, that examine the issue of shadow education through the experiences of the tutors. Additionally, Bray et al. (2014) noted that qualitative data exploring the voices of stakeholders in the industry, such as tutors, among others, would benefit policy makers, and Bray and Kobakhidze (2015) also suggested that future research could explore the views of the tutors (p. 478). Moreover, due to the globalization and blurred boundaries between mainstream and supplemental education that online tutoring allows for, Bray (2010) suggested the shadow education phenomenon requires additional sophisticated analysis and greater attention from researchers in both Eastern and Western settings as well as from the North and South. Bray and Zhang (2023) also point out that this blurring has increased since 2010 due to developments in technology and the COVID-19 crisis of 2020. Therefore, answers to these calls for research would provide the literature base with more worldwide views of shadow education tutors and how they identify professionally.

Therefore, with the present study, I intend to answer these calls for research as this study helps to reduce gaps in literature regarding views and experiences of online shadow education tutors in the ESL setting by allowing the voices of tutors working at Simple Course to project their own points of view and explain how their experiences have formed their professional identities. By using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a critical sociocultural framework, and most specifically Bourdieu's (1989) concept of social capital and the power it wields, this study

contributes to not only the overall knowledge of for-profit shadow education in the ESL setting and private tutoring industry, but it also increases knowledge in the field about the experiences and professional identities of tutors who work in the industry.

Many educators, including online educators, ESL educators, and adjunct faculty, most especially those in ESL teaching, as well as substitute PK-12 teachers are often forced to be transient, low-pay workers because jobs for these educators are temporary, part-time, are given less preference than on-campus educators in terms of work assignments, and run on an *as needed* basis, which ultimately leads to their deprofessionalization. Because such educators have access to less professional social capital than their traditional mainstream PK-12 or tenured faculty counterparts, they are not seen as having the same value as traditional teachers. This, in turn, mitigates their abilities to develop their professional identities, causing identity conflict in whether or not they can claim the title of *teacher*, thus continuing the cycle of professional identity conflict. Through this research and my own experiences as an online EFL/ESL shadow education tutor, private EFL tutor, and an adjunct instructor in ESL, it is my position that because developing one's professional identity as an educator is paramount in terms of attaining the power and agency that comes with being a teacher (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnston, Pawan, & Mahan-Taylor, 2005; Cross, 2006; Kanno, & Stuart, 2011; Stickler & Emke, 2015; Elsheikh, 2016; Banegas, Pinner, & Larrondo, 2021), overcoming the lack of social capital of ESL educators, online educators, and other educators whose work does not fit in the traditional mold of *teacher* (Trent, 2016; Xiao, 2016), and the history of marginalization and deprofessionalization that exists in the EFL/ESL setting (Clayton, 1989; Pennington, 1992; Johnston, 1997, 1999; Xiong, Li, & Hu, 2020) can be made possible by allowing these educators to have full-time, permanent positions in their field in order to maintain

their professionalism, thereby providing them with the necessary social capital as a foundation on which to build their professional identities. If not, EFL/ESL teachers and other educators will continue to struggle to gain the social capital that is necessary for them to achieve equity with traditional teachers.

For-Profit Tutoring and Shadow Education

History and Timeline of the Literature

Private tutoring or shadow education can be seen as far back as the mid-19th century in Russia, where advertisements for tutors were found (Mikhaylova, 2019, as cited by Zhang & Bray, 2020; Bray, 2022), and Greece, where tutorial institutions called *frontistiria* were found (Tsiloglu, 2005, as cited by Zhang & Bray, 2020; Bray, 2022). This trend has continued to grow worldwide throughout history, which is the one thing scholars who have researched the field of private tutoring, both past and present, all seem to agree on. In modern times, students and their families have been hiring private tutors both outside their mainstream school systems as well as inside the school system, via students' own classroom teachers, to supplement the teaching of course content for many decades. Although this phenomenon has been most prevalent in East and Southeast Asia, where it has become an accepted form of educational culture, it has also continues to significantly grow and spread to not only the Middle East, Africa, Australia, Europe, but also to the Americas (Bray, 2010/2013; 2021; 2022; 2023). Although some research into the phenomenon started in the 1980s, not until the 2000s have researchers begun to truly delve into this phenomenon, and not until recently have researchers examined the industry's tutors.

Early Pioneers

Research into the phenomenon of shadow education and other for-profit private tutoring began in the early 1980s. Some of the first scholars to study tutoring and conduct research in the

area include Rohlen, (1980), who studied the phenomenon of the Japanese *juku*, supplementary tutoring schools in Japan; Hemachandra (1982), who studied the phenomenon of private tuition in Sri Lanka; Hussein, (1987) who studied what he referred to as a "hidden educational problem" (p. 91) in Kuwait; and Stevenson and Baker (1992) who identified social stratification in Japan based on who could pay for private tutoring and *juku* schools. These foundational scholars in the field opened up the literary conversation about the topic of private, for-profit tutoring and shadow education in order to promote more research in this sector of the field of education and its impact on mainstream education.

Recent Research

After Bray (1999) published the first global comparative study of shadow education, researchers began inquiring about the effectiveness of the phenomenon and its impact on learning (Baker, et al., 2001; Dang & Rogers, 2008; Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014). They continued exploring the resulting socioeconomic stratification (Bray & Kwok, 2003; Choi & Park, 2016; Park et al., 2016; Jha, 2021), regulation and governance of private supplementary tutoring, and its relationship to educational planning (Bray, 2009; Bray & Kwo, 2014). Also, because the supplementary tutoring known as *shadow education* is conducted as a for-profit business, researchers have also investigated the impacts of its entrepreneurship, consumerism, franchising, and marketing (Davies et al., 2002; Aurini, 2004; Aurini & Davies, 2004; Davies & Aurini, 2006; Garrot, George, & Prévôt, 2009; Ventura & Jang, 2010; Aurini, 2012). Finally, the dearth of research initially reported by scholars gradually began to decrease.

Today, research continues, and the amount of related literature has expanded along with the industry as researchers have continued to study many of the previous topics. These topics include the effectiveness and impact shadow education has on learning (Zhan et al., 2013; Bray

& Kobakhidze, 2014; Kwo, & Bray, 2014; Dongre & Tewary, 2015, Choi & Park, 2016; Guo et al., 2020; Yung, 2020); its regulation, policy, and governance (Bray & Lykins, 2012; Bray & Kwo, 2014; Kinyaduka, 2014; Zhang, 2019; Zhang, 2021; Jha, 2021; Zhang, 2023); business and marking strategies used in the for-profit private tutoring industry (Dooley, Liu, & Yin, 2020; Holloway, & Pimlott-Wilson, 2020); and factors of neoliberalism in the industry due to consumerism and entrepreneurship of profit-based educational organizations (Kozar, 2014, 2015; Zhang & Bray, 2017; Gupta, 2019; Yung, 2021). Additionally, recent research about shadow education has explored new topics such as antagonism with mainstream schools (Bray, 2010/ 2013; Bray & Kobakhidze, 2015); the definition and boundaries of the term *shadow education*, listing what it is as compared to what it is not (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2014; Bray, Kwo, & Jokić, 2015; Malik, 2017; Yung & Bray, 2017) reasons for the industry's expansion and why students participate (Dang & Rogers, 2008; Bray, 2010/2013, Yung & Bray, 2017; Kwo, & Bray, 2014; Yung, 2021); as well as what the shadow education phenomenon looks like locally in different countries and its global patterns (Silova, Būdienė, & Bray, 2006; Bray, 2010; Byun, Chung, & Baker, 2010; Bray, 2021; Bray & Hajar, 2023; Bray & Zhang, 2023) including digital platforms and tutoring over the internet (Bray, 2010/2013; Ventura & Jang, 2010; Xiao, 2016; Zhang & Bray, 2020). Finally, recent literature about the shadow education phenomenon also includes the overlapping boundaries between teachers and tutors, including their roles and even vocabulary used to discuss them due to mainstream classroom teachers also playing the role of tutor (Bray & Zhang, 2023).

While this research over the past two decades has significantly opened up and developed the overall knowledge base of the private tutoring and shadow education industry, there is much yet to be learned. For example, very few studies have specifically focused on tutors themselves,

voicing their professional experiences and backgrounds as educators. While researchers have begun to study tutors in the industry, literature on the topic of tutors' own professional identities is still quite scarce. For example, although Yung and Yuan (2020) studied tutors' professional identities, they examined the discourse of their biographies, written to attract potential students on the online platform of the tutoring company where they worked, rather than discussing professional identity with the tutors themselves. While this indicates their need to sell or market themselves as a means to gain unsteady work, we cannot hear their voices in terms of how their experience affects their professional identities. Additionally, though Bray (2022) focused on tutors, his purpose was to discuss classroom teachers as tutors. While this illustrates the need for educators viewed as traditional, mainstream *teachers* who have the ability to claim that title to have to take on additional work tutoring in order to survive financially, we still cannot hear their voices in terms of their experiences about their identities. Only three studies could be found that examined the shadow education and private tutoring industry from the point of view and the experiences of the tutors working for a living in the industry, allowing their voices to express their own lived experiences. This research includes studies by Trent (2016) who interviewed tutors working in Hong Kong, Saengboon (2019) interviewed tutors in Thailand, and Xiong and Hu (2020) who interviewed tutors working in China. However, although the voices of these tutors discuss similar professional experiences as the tutors in the present study, their studies do not include the experience of North American tutors teaching online in the ESL content area setting nor do they give a voice to the many North American tutors working in the Chinese context. Therefore, the current study helps fill this gap by allowing the voices and experiences of North American tutors in the context of online ESL content area tutoring to be heard so they can illustrate their own identities based on their experiences and teaching contexts.

Purpose of and Reasons behind Shadow Education

Much of the research in shadow education comes from East and Southeast Asia due to the extremely high penetration the industry has into that market (Bray, 2010/2013). One of the first purposes of research into the shadow education industry was exploring why students participate in shadow tutoring in addition to their regular mainstream schooling. The primary reason given for this is parents wanting to provide their children with as much social capital as they can (Dang & Rogers, 2008; Byun, Chung, & Baker, 2018) in terms of education. For example, Mustary's (2019) study in Bangladesh indicated that "the emergence of private tutoring was brought about by…desires of parents for the academic success of their children" (p. 64). This means parents believe that supplementary tutoring increases their children's grades, thereby giving them better opportunities in competing for college admission, and in turn, getting into the workforce. Additionally, in private tutoring of English, Islam et al. (2018) state influential factors for this tuition is "academic credentials, peer pressure, the role of English in Bangladesh and parental involvement" (p. 93). Thus, the human social capital given by being able to speak English is a significant reason for language tutoring. Additionally, because human capital is of primacy, the value of exam scores becomes higher than true understanding of content. Therefore, exam preparation and dissatisfaction with the quality of mainstream schools and teachers has also been a continuing theme throughout the literature regarding reasons why students partake in supplementary shadow tutoring. As such, Li (2019) explains that after basic universal compulsory education, the quality of education becomes the core of education competition, but when state governments attempt to decrease the education quality gap between urban and rural areas or among schools, the core of education competition changes from educational quality to shadow education.

Exam Preparation

One of the common themes researched is why students participate in shadow education or private tutoring, and one of the most common reasons is to help them pass examinations. For example, Hussein (1987) believes that students seem to think that "as long as they can pay someone who shows them how to pass their examinations, they do not need to attend school classes" (p. 92). However, rather than for the purpose of avoiding classes, many students partake in private tutoring for the purpose of exam preparation, primarily to prepare for their college entrance examinations. For example, 83.9% of Hong Kong secondary students participating in a study by Zhan et al. (2013) who took private tutoring reported it was to improve scores on their exams. As such, the number of students receiving private tutoring tends to increase the closer they get to applying for college and taking entrance exams (Hemachandra, 1982; Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Dang & Rogers, 2008). Additionally, Islam and Hoque (2019) note that reasons students take private tutoring in English in Bangladesh is also related to passing public exam results, which echoes findings in Hong Kong by Yung (2015).

The reason for such a focus on supplementary tutoring for examinations this is that the competitiveness of education pressures students to pass exams (Hussein, 1987; Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Zhan et al., 2013; Chingtham, 2015; Park et al., 2016; Jha, 2021; Yung, 2020). For example, education is so competitive in the cultures and countries of East and Southeast Asia such as China (Zhang & Bray, 2013; Zhang, 2014; Li, 2019; Zhang, 2020), Hong Kong (Zhan et. al., 2013; Yung, 2015, 2020; Yung & Bray, 2017), Japan (Stevenson & Baker, 1992), South Korea (Kim & Jung, 2019), and Thailand (Saengboon, 2019) that students and parents feel they or their child need to get the upper edge as quickly as possible. For them, this means they not only need high grades in order to apply for college, but also need to get a high score on the

college entrance exam in order to be accepted. However, this focus on exam preparation in private tutoring puts pressure on tutors in relation to their students' exam scores (Saengboon, 2019). This means that tutors are often judged based on how well students perform on the exam. As such, this type of judgment could impact tutors' professional identities if they are seen only as exam support rather than as educators in their own right.

Inadequacy of Mainstream Schooling

Another common theme in shadow education is how students and families find that mainstream schooling does not meet their needs or is not as valuable as they would like, and consider it to be inadequate, or governments are providing inadequate resources for public education. For example, as Būdienė (2006) argues, the profound growth the private tutoring industry has experienced "is controversial because this growth might indicate that…public education systems are short-changing students" (p. 8). Therefore, families feel the need to supplement mainstream education with private shadow tutoring (Hussein, 1987; Zhan et al., 2013; Kinyaduka, 2014; Chingtham, 2015; Park et al., 2016; Yahiaoui, 2020; Jha, 2021; Yung, 2020). This illustrates same supply and demand principle as economics because "the demand for private tutoring depends on the quantity and quality of public education" (Li, 2019, p. 413). As such, Li's (2019) study of shadow education in China shows that "the quality of schoolteachers significantly negatively affects the likelihood for receiving tutoring" (p. 411), meaning that the higher the quality of the teachers, the less likely students and families are to seek supplementary tutoring. Moreover, Chan and Mongkolhutthi (2017) studied 80 upper-secondary students in Thailand where participating students indicated preference for their private EFL tutors over their mainstream teachers. Their participants reported this was because "tutors have higher English language proficiency and can make them understand the lesson better than their schoolteachers"

(p. 44), are friendlier, able to make the classes fun, and create a positive learning environment, allowing them to ask questions (Chan & Mongkolhutthi, 2017). Therefore, the lack of English proficiency or teachers' inability to build relationships with the students in mainstream schools leads parents to believe that mainstream schools are lacking. Perhaps, instead of paying low-quality teachers less, these higher-quality tutors should be given full-time work at pay rates higher than what the low-quality teachers are given and what individual families can afford to pay for the education they are not receiving.

As an additional example of this trend, a 2018 study by Hallsén and Karlsson in Sweden using positioning analysis of three narratives by customers of a private supplementary tutoring company indicated that "private tutors appear…as compensating for shortcomings in schools and families as well as complementing the support that parents and teachers can offer children" (p. 631). For example, the authors indicate that families come to see the private tutor as a friend of the family because "the private tutor is positioned as a *bringer of positive change*" (p. 639, original emphasis). This coincides with my own experience as a private EFL tutor for families in Mexico as I became a friend of a family who brought positive changes in the children's English language education, as it was a shortcoming at their school since they were not becoming fluent without my help. Finally, Kwo and Bray (2014) report that students described mainstream schooling as being based on structure and routine, while tutoring is based on space and personal relationships (Kwo & Bray, 2014). As building student-teacher relationships is important in all education settings, perhaps it is time to look at moving away from structure and routine in the traditional classroom and focus on space and relationship. Allowing tutors who are used to teaching in this manner to work in full-time positions that can give them the professional social capital they need for professional equality also has the opportunity to benefit learners.

In contrast, results from a mixed methods study of Hong Kong secondary students that Kwo and Bray (2014) conducted indicate significant differences in the purposes of mainstream schoolteachers and private tutors. Their study used qualitative questionnaires and interviews to get students' views on private tutoring. Some participants had tutors, and some did not. Students with private tutors compared their teachers and tutors and indicated how their tutors provided them with what was lacking from mainstream schooling. "Especially pertinent were statements about learning gaps and ways in which tutoring was perceived to help" because, they stated, "students' learning objectives may differ from those of their teachers" (p. 403). As such, tutors can be more student-centered in their teaching due to the lack of top-down impositions of policy and curricula that cannot meet the personal objectives of learners. Additionally, Kwo and Bray (2014) noted that in comparing their teachers and tutors, their student participants reported that their teachers focused more on course content while tutors focused more on exam skills, and while their teachers provided holistic attention, their tutors could provide a more selective focus on the individual student's needs. Furthermore, in terms of learning orientation, participants noted how teachers focus on getting through all the required material comprehensively and focus on deeper learning, whereas tutors could focus on specific parts of content or details of the material remedially and focus on superficial learning of concepts students did not understand (Kwo & Bray, 2014). As such, the authors concluded that private tutoring can be complementary to mainstream education. Unfortunately, this does not solve the problem of deprofessionalization that tutors face.

Insufficient Pay for Teachers

Additionally, another of the most frequently listed reasons for perceptions of inadequacy in mainstream education is that mainstream schoolteachers are not paid enough, and therefore

they often supplement their incomes by tutoring or are forced to leave mainstream education for more money (Hussein, 1987; Kinyaduka, 2014; Kobakhidze, 2014; Symeonides, 2015; Park et al., 2016; Yahiaoui, 2020; Jha, 2021). This seems to be a worldwide issue as teachers are often forced to get summer jobs and why many teachers do tutoring on the side in all parts of the world just to be able to survive. To illustrate, 100% of participants in Mustary's (2019) study in Bangladesh believed that "the emergence of private tutoring was brought about by the low salary of teachers'' (p. 64). An additional example is presented by Symeonides (2015), whose report indicated that one of the foundations for private tutoring is the need of mainstream teachers to supplement their relatively low salaries, even to the point of pressuring families to pay for private tutoring so students can pass their courses (Sobhy, 2012). As such, teachers are putting their efforts into their private tutoring because those efforts provide a more significant reward as compared to the mainstream school. Additionally, Bray (2022) argues that mainstream teachers moonlighting as tutors is a reason why professional boundaries between and definitions and roles of teachers and tutors have been overlapped, and he concludes that "most of the overlap arises from serving teachers working in the [tutoring] centres" (p. 67). Overall, as Symeonides states, "teachers having to supplement their incomes with private tutoring undermines…the status of teachers" (p. 22), which can then domino into further reduced status of tutors. The global issue of low pay due to undervaluing education and educators seems to be a root cause of many problems in education. However, countering this with private tutoring is not a solution because transient workers without permanent positions and salaries are in the same position. Because this trend is ongoing and has affected mainstream education and public schooling services, it signals the need to improve mainstream education and teachers' salaries. Indeed, this seems to be a recurring theme in the issue of shadow education.

Effectiveness of Shadow Education

Research into the effectiveness of shadow education can be based on either perceptions or on measurable differences. For example, based on student perceptions, Zhan et al. (2013) found that students perceive shadow education and their tutors to be "more effective in the provision of examination support compared with mainstream schooling and teachers" (p. 495). Likewise, data based on Yung's (2020) mixed-methods study, an online survey of 477 senior secondary students in Hong Kong, indicated that students believed their EFL tutors were "more effective in all identified aspects of teaching" (p. 1). In contrast, Kwo and Bray (2014) found that "private tutoring offers to bridge at least some gaps, though it does not always do so effectively" (p. 413) and suggest that for support to be effective, tutors must be dedicated to understanding and meeting learners' needs based on learner motivation. As such, in many cases, determining tutor effectiveness is based on student and parent satisfaction, which could relate to tutoring in terms of building personal relationships as mentioned by Kwo and Bray (2014).

In terms of effectiveness of private tutoring in English, insights regarding how student motivation and building personal relationships impact the effectiveness of tutoring support the findings from a study by Yung and Chiu (2020). For example, their study indicates that survey responses of 543 high school seniors in Hong Kong who take private English tutoring at cram schools, a common name for test preparation schools in Korea and other parts of East and Southeast Asia, reveal that although most of these students like this form of tutoring, they are more likely to prefer English private tutoring (EPT) if they:

> (a) are in families perceived to have superior financial resources, (b) are not influenced by advertisements or other people to join EPT lessons, (c) attend face-to-face tutoring, (d)

> have a specific tutor…, (e) like the tutor more than their teachers, (f) are interested in English, or (g) have greater English self-concept (Yung & Chiu, 2020 p. 515).

Additionally, Chan and Mongkolhutthi (2017) noted that students believe their private EFL tutors have a stronger command of the English language, and in Thailand, Saengboon (2019) noted that tutors expressed the idea that "qualified teachers—whether native or non-native—must be a top priority" (p. 45). The idea of private face-to-face tutoring with a specific tutor, as opposed to video tutorials or cram schools, increases enjoyment and, in turn, motivation as a way to increase effectiveness of tutoring. The context of this study more closely matches the tutoring context of the current study as compared to other studies that have taken place in the context of the cram school setting. Moreover, the findings from Saengboon's (2019) study also support the idea that training and professional development is essential for tutors who work in the setting of English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL) setting. Therefore, this type of training professional development has the potential to provide tutors these skills, which in turn, can help develop their professional identities as educators.

However, research into the effectiveness of shadow tutoring has not always been reliable because its effectiveness is difficult to measure due to the confounding effects of unobservable and unmeasurable factors (Dang & Rogers, 2008). For example, parental concern and student motivation can vary among students who take part in shadow education tutoring versus those who do not because these factors can affect investment in tutoring and students' performance in school (Dang & Rogers, 2008). Studies do not or cannot always take endogeneity into account, skewing results. However, Choi and Park (2016) found that "by applying two different propensity models – stratification-multilevel and smoothing-differencing methods" (p. 22) they were able to determine that shadow tutoring is more effective for students who are less likely to

use it due to financially disadvantaged backgrounds. Likewise, Dongre and Tewary (2015) conducted a large household survey in rural India that employed fixed-effect estimation as a control for unobserved variables. Results indicated a significantly positive effect of private tutoring on the learning outcomes for students in primary school, which was even stronger for disadvantaged students, i.e., students who are less wealthy and whose parents are relatively less educated. These results indicate one of the most positive sides and benefits of supplementary shadow education, especially for those less privileged students, who may be those most in need. Unfortunately, due to financial reasons, they are often the least likely to receive it (Choi & Park, 2016), which is the foundation of the social stratification issue of shadow education. This is discussed below.

Culture and Geography

Much of the literature regarding shadow education is based on local areas such as specific cities or countries, and this shows how the phenomenon of "takes different forms in different cultures" (Bray, 2010, p. 62). Although many of the trends and impacts of shadow education and private tutoring and the reason why students and parents choose to partake in private tutoring services are similar worldwide, it is important to note how the contexts of this tutoring differ geographically and culturally. As such, this literature review addresses the research from different areas of the world that represent what the private tutoring phenomenon looks like around the globe, particularly the differences in Eastern versus Western cultures and contexts.

East Asia

Bray (2010/2013) describes the cultural foundation for the practice of private or shadow tutoring, and explains how it has "long been ingrained in the cultures of East Asia" (p. 412). One of the reasons for this is Asia's deep cultural roots of Confucianism, which highly values

education and the work ethic of children, and is often seen as what drives motivation for private tutoring (Zhang, 2014; Zhu, 2013). As such, education in the areas of East and Southeast Asia has culturally become highly competitive. “Education expectation can significantly positively predict the probability of receiving science and mathematics tutoring” (Li, 2019, p. 419). As mentioned above, the cultural component that drives these expectations results in the heavy educational competition existing in East and Southeast Asia. Additionally, education competition is so prominent in East and Southeast Asia that these students “are more likely to pursue shadow education than their counterparts in many other regions” (Byun, Chung & Baker, 2018, p. 71). Moreover, like other researchers, Trent (2016) also addresses the system of rote learning and memorization in the East Asian educational culture that promotes teaching towards exams. Therefore, for this reason, much of the research about shadow education and private tutoring has come out of East and Southeast Asia.

Mainland China. Chinese culture is known for the concept of *tiger parenting*, which comes from Amy Chua’s (2011) memoir *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Zhang, 2020). In the context of education, Zhang (2020) defines tiger parenting as a form of “intensive parenting…in which parents strategically plan and closely monitor almost every aspect of their children’s academic careers, with a view to future life chances” (p. 389). Following this concept, private supplementary tutoring in China, is highly focused on exam preparation, most specifically, both the high school entrance exam, *Zhongkao*, and the college entrance exam, *Gaokao*. These, along with economic growth, the Confucianist culture, school leadership, and income, have been the driving forces for shadow tutoring in China (Zhang, 2014, 2020). For example, using a mixed-methods study of ninth grade students in Chongqing, Zhang (2014) found that almost half of these students engage in private tutoring, and mostly use mainstream teachers as their tutors. In

addition, in studying the relationship between shadow and mainstream education, Li (2019) used a two-level Bernoulli Model to explain what determines whether or not students participate in private supplementary tutoring. For this study, Li analyzed data from the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) from the Chinese cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Guangdong and determined the following:

> (1) the four regions have large scale of private tutoring ranging from 58.7% to 74.0% for science, mathematics, and reading; (2) the participation rate of private tutoring in villages is much higher than that in cities; [and] (3) the quality of schoolteachers significantly negatively affects the likelihood for receiving tutoring (p. 411).

Based on these results, Li (2019) concludes that "increasing teacher quality will reduce the participation probability of private tutoring" (p. 411). Once again, this indicates that problems with the quality of mainstream education is an issue that has provoked the expansion of private, shadow tutoring.

However, in Mainland China, one ongoing issue regarding the private tutoring industry has been policy about its regulation. For example, in a study of the responses of stakeholders of the private tutoring industry to such government regulations, Zhang (2019) collected qualitative data from "semi-structured and informal interviews with 11 tutors, 15 managers of tutoring enterprises, 5 members and managers of professional organizations, 5 government officials, 5 school managers, 5 teachers, and 20 parents" (p. 25). Findings indicated that "Policy enactment in the tutoring sector is even more complex than that for schooling" and "standardized policies do not necessarily achieve the aspired goals" (p. 25). Zhang (2019) concludes that results imply that it is necessary to balance standardization and diversity, meaning different regulations for different categories of providers, citing the experience of Japan that "self-employed tutors can be

valuable members of the education ecosystem through catering for [students'] individualized needs" (p. 40). Since that time, in July of 2021, China has enacted its Double Reduction Policy, which "aims to reduce the pressure of schoolwork and after-school tutoring for students" (Kang et al., 2022, p. 76). It is worth noting that according to the China Global Television Network (CGTN), a state-run English-language news channel based in Beijing, China, "off-campus academic training institutions have decreased by 90 percent" (para. 1). However, implications and effects of this policy are outside the scope of the current study.

Hong Kong. The expansion of shadow education has significantly increased in Hong Kong since 1997 when it became a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Yung & Bray, 2017). For example, the authors list additional reasons for the expansion of shadow education in Hong Kong that include employment for tutors and after school domestic support for families. In addition, Yung (2021) discusses that shadow education in Hong Kong is an "unintended outcome of high stakes testing" and there is a "growing need of performativity and accountability in public education" (p. 115). He even goes far enough as to describe the educational system in Hong Kong as being "oppressive" (p. 9) because it focuses on the high-stakes standardized testing of students as a means to select students for admission to universities. Yung (2021) uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis based on Freire's 1972 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to interpret the reflections of eighteen grade-twelve Hong Kong students on their experiences in private tutoring. Yung (2021) concludes that shadow education oppresses students in the manners described by Freire (1972) because it is "(1) intensifying the 'banking' concept of education, (2) teaching as the 'authority', (3) emphasizing performativity and (4) offering 'false generosity'" (p. 115, original seriation). These findings support Bray and Kobakhidze's (2015) description of tutors in Hong Kong being seen as an "invasive species" (p.

478) intruding on mainstream education. Comparatively, as discussed above, this invasion seems to have emanated from lack of quality or confidence in mainstream education.

However, these studies do not take into account differences in the tutoring contexts. For example, the shadow education context Yung (2021) describes only consists of lecture-oriented tutorial centers that focus on teaching students how to pass college entrance exams. Additionally, Furthermore, Yung's (2021) findings also likely explain why Zhan et al. (2013) found that students believed their supplementary tutoring was overall more effective than their mainstream schooling for exam preparation. Furthermore, in Yung's (2015) study of the lecture-oriented tutorial centers for EFL, which also focus on passing exams, out of the fourteen participating secondary students who had received private tutoring in English, one reported an "atypical" experience with private tutoring in English as "the only one participating in small-group tutoring and tutored by a native English speaker in TESOL. He believed that a NEST could provide a monolingual environment for him to have more exposure to conversational English" (p. 716). This finding is worth pointing out because it not only shows the comparison between communicative tutoring and exam-based tutoring in ESL, but it also indicates the importance of the cultural differences involved between native-speaking and Hong Kong ESL tutors. As the current study involves North American native English-speaking tutors in the ESL setting, it is an example of what these tutors expect culturally as opposed to their bilingual (Mandarin-English) counterparts.

Finally, one specific difference in Hong Kong as opposed to other regions of East and Southeast Asia is that it is not necessary for teachers to supplement their incomes working as tutors because they are well paid and guided by the *Code for the Education Profession* (Yung & Bray, 2017). This code states that teachers "shall not take advantage of his/her professional

relationships with students for private gain" (Hong Kong Council on Professional Conduct in Education, 1995, Section 2.22, as cited by Yung & Bray, 2017, p. 106). Although this does not seem to make a difference as to how tutors are viewed by teachers or students, it focuses the reasons why Hong Kong students make use of supplementary tutoring for exam preparation as opposed to having perceptions of poor quality of mainstream schooling, which is included in the reasons of students and parents in other areas.

Japan. Japanese tutoring schools, known as *juku*, are central to the Japanese education system, and although *juku* advocates claim "the pedagogy employed in these schools leads to superior results compared to teaching methods used in conventional schools," concrete evidence suggesting this is lacking, implying that the claim has been left untested (Dierkes, 2010, p. 25). The *juku* schools started becoming commonplace in the 1970s; they teach 100-200 students and have a teaching staff of about ten part-time or full-time teachers (Dierkes, 2010). Early on, Stevenson and Baker (1992) conducted a longitudinal study of high schools seniors in Japan and found that those who attended *juku* schools were more likely to be of higher socioeconomic backgrounds, and that those participating in tutoring for university entrance examinations were more likely to be accepted into the university of their choice. This is because *juku* schools focus primarily on subjects assessed in college entrance exams, such as mathematics, English, and Japanese being the most commonly studied subjects (Dierkes, 2010). Additionally, in studying the *juku* schools in Japan, Dierkes (2010) interviewed the owner-operators of these schools in order to examine their backgrounds and their challenges in hiring teaching staff. He found that "almost no operators or employees come to the shadow education business by design. Instead, owner– operators 'slide into' their role for lack of alternative options, or through early success, or through frustration with previous careers," and in hiring, "owner–operators circumvent the

larger employment market by hiring their own 'graduates'" (p. 25). These reasons are congruent with my own experience in the tutoring industry as I never sought to become a shadow education tutor, but rather found it fit my needs. Therefore, this is an aspect of tutors' experiences working in shadow education that needs to be explored.

The Western World

Like in the East, the Western world has also been impacted by the growth of private, for-profit tutoring services, and the reasons for and the impacts of this phenomenon are similar. However, as it has been less significant for a shorter amount of time in the West, there is less literature focusing on this context. For example, there are North American companies such as Princeton Review and Kaplan that offer test preparation services, and other companies such as Pearson that offer tutoring in academic writing. There are also online tutoring services such as study.com, tutor.com and Chegg, among others. However, most cater to native-speaking English students rather than the ESL setting. Additionally, many universities provide tutoring in on-campus writing centers. For example, looking into university writing centers, Denny (2010) discusses such identity politics as the tutors most being often from privileged backgrounds, and the students being "other" in terms of race and ethnicity, class, sex and gender, and nationality. Denny (2010) states, "identity politics are real and uncharted in writing centers" and "the pattern has held up over the years" (p. 4). However, based on the definition of shadow education by Yung and Bray (2017), this type of university tutoring is not considered, and is thus outside the scope of this study because it is included with students' tuition rather than services that students pay extra for.

Australia. The growth of private tuition in Australia may be affected by the large number of immigrants from East and Southeast Asia (Dooley, Liu, & Lin, 2020). However, these authors

also note there is still a paucity of research in Australia regarding the area of shadow education and for-profit private tutoring. For example, their study in supplementary literacy tutoring of primary-school students in Brisbane, Queensland used qualitative field analysis and identified three types of supplementary educational products, "schoolwork help, school-like programmes, [and] school-relevant courses" (p. 98). Much of these programs were also marketed to the Asian communities as they were often either advertised in Chinese or non-Chinese tutors would indicate that they could speak or understand Chinese, or had a working ability to communicate in Chinese. Additionally, the study noted that tutors used either teaching experience or educational experience as a way to give themselves credibility in marketing their services. Therefore, the phenomenon in Australia seems to mostly include overflow from China and other East and Southeast Asian countries.

Canada. For-profit private tutoring in Canada comes in two forms, shadow education and learning centers, which differ in the short-term goals of passing courses or exams in the shadow education setting, versus the long-term goals of learning centers such as skill building (Davies & Aurini, 2006). Like in Asia, exam preparation is also a significant reason for North American students to take part in private tutoring, and in Canada this preparation includes such services from companies such as Kaplan and Princeton Review (Aurini, 2004). In investigating the nature and organizational logic of these two forms of supplementary education in Canada and how it relates to Canadian public schools, Aurini and Davies (2013) found three specific themes. They note that supplementary education "exhibits tremendous variety in its use value to parents, instructional content, and organizational form…is popular among Canadian parents…[but] has failed to fundamentally alter…Canadian schooling, processes that stratify students, and child and family usage of their time or income" (p. 155). Therefore, like in most other parts of the world,

this research shows similar advantages and disadvantages of shadow education as shown in other parts of the world.

The United States. Tutoring in the U.S. has also focused highly on exam preparation. For example, Buchmann, Condron, and Roscigno (2010a) found that hiring private tutors for SAT preparation was common and noted that in the U.S. "SAT preparation services have developed into a lucrative multi-million-dollar industry" (p. 435). Additionally, Buchmann et al. (2010b) also note the issue of stratification in the U.S., and explain how "students from the most advantaged families are significantly more likely to enroll in private courses, such as those offered by Princeton Review and Kaplan—a strategy that corresponds to significant SAT score gains" (p. 483). However, this type of tutoring does not fall under the same definition of *shadow education* being used in terms of the current study because it does not supplement mainstream school curricula by offering support for students in their current school classes, but instead it has the purpose of preparing students for a standardized test. Although some private EFL/ESL tutors do this type of tutoring for the TOEFL, IELTS, and TOEIC exams, among others, and may do so online, this is outside the scope of comparison to the current study.

Online Learning

The phenomenon of shadow education and private tutoring has also grown and become more visible due to the internet, which has the ability to bring students and tutors together from around the world at any time of day. This has also vastly contributed to the continued growth of the shadow education industry (Bray 2010; Ventura & Jang, 2010). Thus, the equity of online platforms is another reason students participate in shadow education (Bray, 2010; Bray, 2010/2013; Ventura & Jang, 2010). Bray (2010) argues that online tutoring has blurred the lines between public and private education, blurred geographical and cultural boundaries, and has

impacted the trend of globalization. Bray and Zhang (2023) further note this has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Ventura and Jang (2010) discuss such boundary blurring and globalization in terms of outsourcing and offshoring allows "many of the traditional barriers to private tutoring with high quality standards [to] be erased" (p. 67) due to equity of digital platforms and the ability online tutoring must match students with tutors from around the world who can meet their needs. Bray and Zhang (2023) echo this idea as they discuss the cross-nationalization of private tutoring in the global education arena. Therefore, because online tutors come with a variety of national and cultural identities, investigating their professional identities as educators is more important than ever due to continued growth of online tutoring platforms, especially cross-nationally.

Negative Impacts of Shadow Education

Despite research showing mild to substantial effectiveness of private shadow tutoring (Zhan et al. 2013; Choi & Park, 2016; Dongre & Tewary, 2015) or that it helps to bridge gaps in student learning (Kwo & Bray, 2014), arguments that show its negative impact are prominent. As an example, the most notable of these arguments is the social stratification that for-profit paid tutoring services fosters due to unequal access students have to tutoring services due to their socioeconomic status (Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Choi & Park, 2016; Park et al., 2016; Jha, 2021). Additionally, the research notes that private, for-profit shadow tutoring provokes antagonism with mainstream education (Bray & Kobakhidze, 2015; Trent, 2016; Yung, 2020), including corruption (Bray & Lykins, 2012; Kobakhidze, 2014; Zhang, 2014) as well as negative impacts based on consumerism and entrepreneurship in education due to the factors of business and marketing that connected to for-profit private tutoring. These factors include the arguments of neoliberalism (Kozar, 2014, 2015; Yung, 2021) and oppression (Yung, 2021) that

are present in society and fostered due to the for-profit nature of the shadow education and supplementary tutoring industries.

However, despite these negative aspects, the diversity and flexibility of shadow tutoring can allow for innovations in education, social support of students, and support of schools (Zhang & Bray, 2018; Zhang & Yamato, 2018), and self-employed private tutors can offer individual support to students as value to the educational ecosystem so much so that Zhang (2019) argues that their elimination "might raise dangers of monopoly and market concentration" (p. 40). Moreover, despite the dissatisfaction parents and students have expressed with mainstream education as discussed above, many negative impacts or disadvantages of shadow education assume that mainstream schooling is beneficial. For example, based on Bray's (2007) argument that higher education must be focused on employment, tutoring centers can complement current mainstream education, and Kinyaduka (2014) questions whether the foundation for this argument is based on "the formal system of education [as] an impaired education; it needs a supplementary system of education to make it complete" (p. 136). Finally, in terms of the current study, it seems the majority of the negative effects of for-profit tutoring come from tutorial institutions such as cram schools rather than self-employed tutors or those organizations working to support students who are learning in the ESL setting, such as Simple Course.

Social Stratification

Research themes into shadow education include the resulting social stratification of the phenomenon as being one of its most negative effects. For instance, because acquiring human capital is seen as the primary foundation of reasoning behind shadow tutoring (Dang & Rogers, 2008; Byun, Chung, & Baker, 2018), this assumes that the desire to invest in human capital would be equal among students and families. However, as not all students have this opportunity

due to socioeconomic status (Stevenson & Baker, 1992; Bray & Kwok, 2003; de Castro & de Guzman, 2010, 2014; Choi & Park, 2016; Park et al., 2016; Zhang, 2020; Islam, Hoque & Hoque, 2021; Jha, 2021) because just as with economic capital, as the old adage goes, "it takes money to make money," meaning that investment in human capital can hardly be done if there is little human capital to begin with. Therefore, due to systemic issues of classism, private shadow tutoring is not an equal-opportunity service. For example, data from the Hong Kong study of secondary students by Zhan et al. (2013) found that over half of participating students listed financial reasons for not taking private tutoring, 27.7% saying it is not worth the money, and 23.7% saying they cannot afford it. According to Zhang's (2020) study, in societies where parenting is "externalised in a growing market of shadow education…the correlation between family cultural capital and academic achievement cannot be precise if tutoring is not considered as a possible and sometimes crucial form of family cultural capital" (pp. 400-401). Thus, those families in such competitive societies who cannot partake in private tutoring are left with less social capital.

Additionally, Islam, Hoque, and Hoque (2021) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study in Bangladesh with higher-level secondary students regarding their impressions on private tutoring of English. The authors note that data from their study illustrates "unequal practice [and] discrimination due to financial capability, and social psyche…that influences students to widen the negative impacts of [private tutoring in English] between students," most specifically those less privileged students lacking access (p. 734). For example, students noted that mainstream schooling is not enough to become proficient in English, and there is a barrier to opportunity for those students who do not have the financial means to engage in private tutoring of English and thus experience psychological detriment due to pressure to learn English (Islam et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, this perpetuates the cycle that allows the *haves* to move ahead while the *have-nots* are left behind, especially when the *have-nots* are often those students who are most in need of and are most likely to benefit from private supplementary shadow tutoring (Choi & Park, 2016; Dongre & Tewary, 2015). As such, the independent ESL tutor has a very limited potential for earning if they want to help these students acquire English in order to get ahead.

However, as a counterargument to the stratification issue, researchers Byun, Chung, and Baker (2018), based on global data from the 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), concluded that "shadow education…in less-developed nations becomes a popular market supplement to lower school access and perhaps lower quality" (p. 93). This finding supports the argument from literature discussing how online shadow education can offer equity to education access (Bray, 2010/2013; Ventura & Jang, 2010) and can mitigate the issue of dissatisfaction with mainstream schooling and teacher quality (Zhan et al., 2013; Kinyaduka, 2014; Chingtham, 2015; Park et al., 2016; Yahiaoui, 2020; Jha, 2021; Yung, 2020) as reasons students participate in private shadow tutoring. Moreover, Byun, Chung, and Baker (2018) also concluded that data from PISA indicates "the fact that students in poorer nations are using [shadow education] in great numbers points to a future where shadow education becomes not just a specialized supplement to address academic problems, but becomes schooling itself" (pp. 96-97). This is worth noting as homeschooling has become a trend in the U.S. over the last few decades, which is also a reason that addressing the professional identities of North American shadow education tutors from their points of view is imperative.

What the literature regarding social stratification does not discuss is that of the educators. Educators who work in shadow education as tutors, those who work in ESL, those who work online, and other educators such as adjunct instructors who experience stratification based on

conflict with their own professional identities and how they are viewed professionally by others due to the lack of professional social capital due to being transient workers and not have steady, full-time positions. The lack of discussion about this social stratification means that differences in the professional experiences of these educators has been overlooked, which is yet another reason to further explore the professional identities of such educators and how they are formed.

Antagonisms with Mainstream Education

There are diverging or conflicting discourses about private or shadow tutoring between that of parents and students and that of governments and mainstream schooling (Manzon & Areepattamannil, 2014). Due to a formidable reason that students and parents choose shadow education being their dissatisfaction with the mainstream schooling, these antagonisms are not surprising. For example, such antagonisms can be seen in focus group data from 64 participants in Yung's (2020) study with secondary students in Hong Kong, which indicated three relevant themes: "(1) students' utilitarian learning orientations in an examination-oriented system, (2) the commodification of education in a consumer culture, and (3) students' immediate psychological needs in the process of learning" (p. 1, original seriation). Yung (2020) thus concluded that these findings are evidence for Bray and Kobakhidze's (2015) description of tutors as an "invasive species" (p. 478) in the ecosystem of mainstream education because they are "creating a competing discourse between the public and private sectors" (Yung, 2020, p. 8). This example of discourse about private tutoring is central to the professional identity conflict tutors experience, and thus positions tutors as somehow being *lesser* of an educator and their deprofessionalization. Thus, tutors are inadvertently blamed for these issues of disrupting traditional education.

Additionally, findings by Trent (2016) illustrate the competing discourses that have established a strong divide between educators in the mainstream school system and those in

private tutoring. As such, Trent (2016) argues that educational authorities need to take action to reduce antagonisms between tutors and mainstream education in terms of professional relations. However, Bray (2022) notes the impact of the tutoring industry on mainstream teachers due to "the expansion of shadow education, and the blurring of boundaries between teaching and tutoring, [which] threatens professionalising efforts by governments, teachers' unions and others" (p. 72). Therefore, understanding the professional identities of shadow education tutors may be a way to begin to mitigate such antagonisms. Without this divide, and if tutors as well as other non-mainstream educators such as adjunct instructors were not seen as transient invaders, but rather full-time education professionals and paid salaries that reflected their professionalism, the antagonisms that these researchers discuss could likely be mitigated.

Corruption

In countries where mainstream teachers are able to supplement their incomes as private tutors, there have been cases of teachers using power and position to force students into signing up for shadow education from them (Bray & Lykins, 2012; Kobakhidze, 2014; Zhang, 2014). For example, Bray and Lykins (2012) note that in Vietnam this has led to teachers disclosing examination questions and distortion of fair and accurate student assessment. This problem stems from the social power teachers have in relation to students and their learning, their monopoly over education, and their discretion in terms of assessment (Zhang, 2014). Bray (2003) explains that because teachers are not held accountable for the consequences of their actions, when this lack of accountability exists in conjunction with that monopoly and discretion, it creates the formula for corruption. As noted above, these are the same education systems that do not pay their teachers well enough that they earn a living wage, forcing them to do additional tutoring in order to meet their income needs.

Overall, the trend seems to be that the education systems in which teachers are the least appreciated and are compensated the least are the same systems without effective accountability measures in place, and as such, are at risk for this type of corruption. This can be seen in the country of Georgia, where Kobakhidze (2014) notes that although the practice is seen as commonplace, there is risk of corruption due to a "thin line existing between teacher professional ethics and misconduct" (p. 455). On the contrary, in countries such as Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore, this type of corruption is seldom seen (Bray & Lykins, 2012). To illustrate this on a more personal level, in not being able to obtain a sufficient amount of reliable work as an adjunct instructor, I have had to offer my own tutoring services to students registered for a course that the college may decide to cancel due to insufficient enrollment in order to earn a living during the semester, or to do so during summer when there were not enough courses offered for each adjunct to teach one. It is no secret that even PK-12 public school teachers have a history of having to get summer jobs in order to pay the bills. Elevating all educators to a point where they are appreciated and offering sufficient pay is not a way to mitigate such corruption and ethical issues, but it can also improve the quality of the educators.

Social Capital of Educators

One of the biggest differences between for-profit tutoring providers and mainstream education is marketing. For example, a multiple-case study conducted by Davis (2013) in Perth, Western Australia indicates that tutoring suppliers in the for-profit sector have the need to claim legitimacy in terms of *pedagogic authority* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) while mainstream public educational institutions did not (as cited in Dooley et al. 2020). In order to claim social capital in terms of *pedagogic authority* as a means to define their professional identities, tutors must market themselves as being pedagogues in addition to being subject matter experts in the

for-profit sector. Because their work is outside of mainstream education, *pedagogic authority* attributed to the mainstream sector does not apply in the for-profit sector. For example, a study by Dooley et al. (2020) conducted in Brisbane, Queensland that articulated the "sociological understandings of pedagogy with principles of economic sociology…and differences in the ways personal tutors and tuition organisations marshalled and mobilised capital in pursuit of profit" (p. 98), thus illustrating that the golden rule of capitalism, as the old adage goes, "he who has the gold makes the rules," is not limited to only economic capital, but rather includes social capital. In other words, just as Bourdieu (1989) discusses, it can be said that he who has the social capital in education has the power. This means that tutors in the for-profit sector must acquire social capital in terms of marketing themselves as educators and subject matter experts in order to attain the necessary *pedagogic authority.* Moreover, although Dooley et al. (2020) found that *pedagogic authority* tutors use to project their professional identities comes in the form of professional or educational credentials that they have already earned, they also noted that when tutoring agencies partner with mainstream schools in terms of advertising in school newsletters, it comes with a suggested "endorsement by the schools" (p. 103), allowing some tutoring agencies and their tutors to gain this social capital by proxy. Therefore, if their organization provides tutors with this social capital of legitimacy and *pedagogic authority*, working for a tutoring agency or other organization can make it easier for tutors in terms of marketing if they can draw from existing social capital extended to them by that organization (Dooley, et al., 2020) as they claim their own *pedagogic authority*. However, although this can be helpful, a tutor's professional identity as an educator then becomes attached to the organization instead of being an educator in their own right, which can lead to a conflict in tutors' professional self-perception and professional identity if they cannot claim pedagogic authority.

However, marketing in shadow education can exacerbate problems because in order to maximize profit, some commercial operators seek to use marketing to instill students with a sense of dependence on their services (Kwo & Bray, 2014). For an example, in her study using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Kozar (2014) illustrates how the phrase *language barrier* has been a term used in marketing by for-profit private online EFL tutoring providers in Russia in order to promote the "negative phenomenon that occurs with language learners as a result of 'incorrect' methodology allegedly employed by public schools" (p. 74). In other words, private for-profit online tutoring organizations are marketed as being able to help their EFL students break this *language barrier* they are assumed to have faced. On the other hand, as discussed above in terms of English language learning, many reasons parents and students choose private tutoring in EFL is because EFL learning available in mainstream education forces educators to teach towards an exam, which often does not produce the fluency learners seek. Contrariwise, private tutors have the ability to focus on their learners' language performance, i.e., their fluency and ability to use the language in practical situations (Chan & Mongkolhutthi, 2017; Yung & Chiu, 2020). Just because tutors can focus on the practical and do not have to report assessment by means of examinations which are measured against standards and can work at the pace of their individual students does not make us any less of an educator or *teacher*. Instead of being held accountable to set standards, private tutors are held accountable directly to our clients' needs and goals in their individual learning. However, due to not having the same amount of *pedagogic authority* as social capital, we tutors as educators are forced to constantly sell or market ourselves in order to gain enough work as a means to attain financial solvency. Therefore, there is neither equality nor equity among these different types of educators and the specific type of education that tutors can provide.

Neoliberalism

Chun (2016) uses the term *neoliberalism* "to name the complex and dynamic changes that have occurred in many countries since the 1970s that have led to political and economic rearrangements and redistributions of power in favour of capital and governance over labour" (p. 558), which include growing market-based competition and commodification of previously shielded dimensions of political and economic life. Moreover, Yung (2021) argues that the need for accountability in public education has led to oppression of students due to the environment of high-stakes testing, which has resulted in the neoliberal ideology of education shown by the private tutoring phenomenon. For example, Chun (2016) refers to how "students have become semantically reframed as 'customers'" (p. 560), and in terms of private supplementary tutoring, that is exactly what students are. As such, for-profit educational organizations see the need to market their services to potential students, just as Kozar (2014) explains based on the use of the term *language barrier* as an example of that marketing. Kozar (2015) examined seventeen websites of private tutors in Russia and determined they align with neoliberal ideology in that their promotional discourse discusses their effectiveness and affordability. Once again, this is marketing for the purpose of selling for-profit education.

Therefore, educational entrepreneurship as a development of edubusinesses is an example of how neoliberal discourse has entered into the field of education. As such, it is informed by market logic as a reaction to the monopoly status of public schools, their bureaucracy, and the mediocre status allowed by teachers' organizations "to the detriment of education consumers" (Aurini, 2004, p. 476). As examples of the issue how neoliberalism in shadow education affects the school choice debate, Dierkes (2008) points out that shadow education in Japan, which has been ingrained into their educational culture for more than four decades, "suggests that school

choice is more conducive to producing a variety of educational forms within an education market than to producing curricular diversity" (p. 231). Likewise, Davies (2004) argues that in Canada, "private tutoring represents a 'school choice by default,' an affordable alternative to private schools" (p. 233). Clearly, shadow tutoring and other for-profit forms of education are meeting needs that mainstream schooling is not, and as discussed above, leads to the dissatisfaction of parents and students that turns them toward private shadow tutoring. If public education met the needs of students and parents, built policy from the bottom-up instead of from the top-down, paid educators appropriately in order to maintain quality teachers, eliminated the debilitating competition stemming from high-stakes testing, and focused more on the learning needs and pace of the individual students as opposed to broad standards and teaching to the *average* ability, it is conceivable that the satisfaction and quality of education could mitigate the neoliberal issues, thereby increasing the social capital of educators.

Shadow Education Tutors

In defining educators in shadow education, Bray (2022) identifies two specific groups: "instructors who are called (and perhaps call themselves) *tutors* and another group who are called (and definitely call themselves) *teachers*" (p. 64, my emphasis). However, conflict arises between these groups because those called *tutors* also do what is called *teaching*. Slay and Smith (2011) cite Arthur et al. (1999) and Hall et al. (2002) in that "career success is often associated with successful professional identity construction" (p. 86). Moreover, by definition, as opposed to an amateur, a professional is paid for their work. While many traditional teachers are not paid sufficiently, they still have the privilege of enjoying a sense of professionalism that comes with full-time, steady work. Non-traditional educators, on the other hand, such as tutors and adjunct instructors among other transient educators experience unsteady work and unsteady income and

often do the tutoring or adjunct work as a means to supplement the low but steady pay. Due to this, such work has been deprofessionalized, making it seem amateur despite the pay. Thus, one can argue that it is difficult to build one's professional identity as an amateur.

Tutor Professional Identity

Tutor identity seems largely affected by both discourse and context in terms of how tutors are viewed and in terms of what they do. The understanding and awareness of "contexts within which [educators] are positioned as language teachers…plays perhaps the most significant role in constructing what they then 'do' in that role" (Cross, 2006, p. 7). In other words, the teaching context informs a teacher's, or in this case a tutor's *identity-in-practice.* Teachers and tutors teach in different contexts and play different roles, which falls in line with the findings of Kwo and Bray (2014). However, as Bray (2021; 2022) notes, these boundaries and roles are becoming blurred. For example, "many tutors see themselves as teachers" (p. 10), and some languages do not even distinguish between the two, such as Chinese where both are referred to as *laoshi.* Trent, (2016) notes that existing discourses rigidly divide tutors and mainstream educators and "constrain the capacity of the former to construct their preferred professional identities" (p. 115). Due to this division, or ostracization, tutors have difficulty seeing themselves as educational professionals. Additionally, because "with less power to shape the environment in which they work, they are more constrained by contextual factors" (Stickler & Emke, 2015, p. 31). In other words, the environment in which language tutors work can affect their social capital (Bourdieu, 1989). Accordingly, Bray (2021) notes how "actors in the tutoring sector are keen to enhance and protect their image, including through professional bodies" (p. 11). As an example, he lists the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA), which describes itself as "a peak body for self-regulating" (ATA, 2015, p. 2) and states that the existence of such bodies "is a reflection of the

changing composition of educational spaces and the actors that operate in these spaces" (Bray, 2021, p. 11). As the tutors operate in these shadow education spaces, they have the image of the organization they work for supporting them as a means for them to teach.

Tutor Identity in the EFL/EFL Context

In work environments where tutors have the ability to express their own professional identities, it seems they have more social capital. For example, in using critical discourse analysis to examine profiles of online tutors in Russia, Kozar (2013) found that EFL tutors presented themselves differently and marketed to different groups of students than those tutoring academic subjects which required examinations. Rhetoric in online profiles of tutors teaching exam-focused subjects used results-oriented language about surpassing academic challenges while their EFL counterparts used linguistic devices that implied rapport-building devices and emotionally positive language empathetic to students' difficulties, resulting in profiles that "appear[ed] more interpersonal and warm" (p. 83). Although each type of rhetoric has a way of building social capital in terms of professional identity, it is interesting to note the difference in that of EFL tutors. This difference is an example of the argument made by Kwo & Bray (2014) and Yung and Chiu (2020) that students tend to form more positive interpersonal relationships with their EFL tutors as opposed to their teachers. Therefore, this shows the impact of discourse and social capital on tutors and tutoring, and as such is an important means of examining the professional identities of online ESL tutors through the lens of Bourdieu's (1989) concept of social capital and the resulting power. This is exemplified by tutors at Simple Course because although we do have profiles on the platform, we have little social capital or power in shaping our work environment or attracting students, and as such, have difficulty in expressing our professional identities through the platform. Instead, this is the responsibility of Simple Course

as it helps us as tutors acquire students, but at the same time it also makes us dependent on the organization for getting work. In other words, although we are free to work for additional organizations, it is much more difficult and unlikely for us to get sufficient work without them.

Situated Identities in the Habitus of Tutoring

As the current study is about the professional identity of shadow education tutors in an ESL setting, it is important to discuss how the tutors are perceived not only by themselves, but also by others. As discussed above, discourses regarding tutors within the education industry establish division between mainstream educators and tutors (Trent, 2016), and the perceptions established by these discourses not only cause antagonisms between tutoring and mainstream schools and tutoring. Bray (2021) states that "schoolteachers are less likely to accept that personnel in tutorial centres or tutors operating informally should call themselves teachers, especially if the tutors have never taught in schools or received formal teacher training" (p. 10). These are the very discourses that are responsible for the disconnect that tutors find between their professional identities and what they do and the feeling of inferiority that stems from it (Xiao, 2016). As an example, Chun (2015) expresses his experience working at an English-language school in Los Angeles in the 1990s and being positioned by his more affluent international students as "a type of hired help – an educational caregiver, essentially" (Kindle location 404). While Chun's (2015) use of the word *caregiver* may illustrate positive rapport building, it seems to professionally equate the ESL teacher to a nanny, which goes back to the idea of certain less-valued educators being seen as glorified babysitters who do not deserve the title, nor the social capital associated with that of a *teacher.* This reflects the idea of ESL teachers as temporary workers in the gig economy, which is seen as colleges and universities primarily recruit such educators only on a part-time or temporary basis.

The tendency of tutoring to focus on exam preparation can lead to challenges for tutors in terms of how parents perceive them. This is often due to the misconception that the tutor's job is to make sure the students obtain high scores on their exams, "as if they could wave a magic wand" (Saengboon, 2019, p. 47). This perception of tutors bases their professional identities on things that are beyond their control, thus compromising those identities. This is in line with what tutors experience at Simple Course when students put off rating them until they receive a grade. As such, the student rates the tutor based on their grade, which some students have specifically expressed they do in their comments about the rating. Not only does this deprofessionalize the tutors, but it also gives students and parents a scapegoat when the only one truly responsible for the student's grade is the student themselves. Additionally, these complaints impact the tutors and their professional identities at Simple Course because Simple Course's mission statement states their goal is to help students "graduate on time with good grades" (2010). As such, this discourse puts the onus of students' grades directly onto the tutors.

Chapter Summary

Not all educators are positioned with equality, nor do they all have equity when it comes to building their professional identities as educators and, more specifically, as teachers. This is because many educators such as ESL teachers, online instructors, tutors, adjunct faculty, and substitute teachers have been positioned as gig-workers, transients with part-time contracts who have no permanent home in terms of full-time employment. While this issue is separate from that of the impact of the for-profit shadow education industry, that industry maintains their educators in the lesser, part-time positions, and by doing so, this gives traditional teachers and other non-traditional educators such as adjunct faculty and substitute K-12 teachers an additional means of acquiring more work in order to help support themselves financially. As such, the shadow

education industry indirectly promotes the continued trend of educators being transient rather than full-time, permanent professionals and not paying them a living wage.

Overall, the effects their positioning has on such transient educators including the impact of for-profit online shadow ESL education and other transient educator jobs has had very little discussion in the research. This includes the impact on their abilities to not only understand but to also develop their own professional identities as educators due to conflict with the image of the traditional *teacher*. As such, the professional identities of transient educators are called into question based on their teaching contexts, thereby deprofessionalizing them. Thus, the study presented here carries its importance in that it examines what it means to be a *teacher* and which type of educator can claim that title as part of their professional identity based on non-traditional educational settings such as the online and for-profit settings. It also examines the roles these settings play and the effects such teaching contexts have on educators' development of their professional identities. In order to examine this, the qualitative study presented here uses critical discourse analysis to allow the voices of individual educators who are working in the for-profit ESL shadow education tutoring industry to be heard as they create texts based on interviews and reflective teaching discussions about their professional identities and their teaching practices.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

Shadow education is rapidly growing worldwide, and although it has been the most prevalent in East Asia, the phenomenon has continued to grow and spread throughout the world (Bray, 2010, 2010/2013). The number of students participating in private tutoring and shadow education has increased (Bray, 2022; Li, 2019; Zhang & Bray, 2017; Trent, 2016). This is now a booming for-profit education business worldwide, and is projected to continue to grow in profit as a multi-billion-dollar market (Fortune Business Insights, 2021) contributing to an increasing segment of household expenses (Jha, 2021). Therefore, the continuing and consistent growth in the for-profit private shadow education industry means that research into the phenomenon must also expand accordingly and maintain up-to-date literature and overall knowledge. However, a significant absence of research meant to explore the shadow education phenomenon from the perspectives of the tutors still exists. Therefore, as a means to allow the voices of online tutors working in the for-profit, shadow education industry to be heard as they discuss their experiences working in the industry, this study joins the conversation. As such, this study builds on findings of previous studies by exploring the experiences and teaching contexts of tutors working in online ESL content area shadow education and any effects it may have on their professional identities as educators in terms of being a *tutor* versus a *teacher*, and whether or not this has affected their careers in terms of financial stability, seeing that our work not being congruent with the image of the traditional *teacher*. Therefore, this research study intends to answer the following research question:

- What are the lived experiences of ESL content-area tutors working in the for-profit shadow education industry?

Rationale: Method of CDA for the Current Study

As a methodological approach, this study uses CDA (Fairclough, 2003, 2016) as situated in the work of critical social theory (Bourdieu, 1989), thus focusing on what power is, where it comes from, and who wields it, on agency and what one can do with it, and on the competition for positions of power and legitimacy based on boundaries of identity. Bourdieu (1989) defines *capital* as economic, cultural, social, and symbolic, the latter being "the form of capital that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (p. 17). As such, the higher the position of power one has, the more capital they obtain, giving them more agency. Additionally, this study uses the conceptual framework of identity based on Gee's (1989, 2002) concept of identity as Discourse (capital D), which are "distinctive ways of 'being and doing' that allow people to enact and/or recognize a specific and distinctive socially-situated identity" (2002, p. 160) and Fairclough's (2003) concept of identity, seeing discourse "as part of social practice—ways of ways of acting, ways of representing, ways of being" (p. 27). Therefore, to identify how the discourse of online, content-area shadow education tutors in an ESL setting in the for-profit tutoring industry represents their socially-situated, professional ways of *being and doing* in terms of social practice, CDA of interview data from participating tutors about their work as educators thus indicates their own perceptions of the power they wield and its legitimacy in terms of social capital.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analysis based on using a *critical* frame of mind or having such an attitude, the methodology involved is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is concerned with the dimensions of naturally occurring language use by real language users and focuses on larger units of text such as conversations, speech acts, communications, actions and interactions, extending to non-verbal communication as opposed to such linguistic

units as words or phrases (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). CDA was originally founded in Halliday's (1978; 2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics as a foundational methodological approach and has since evolved to include intertextuality as well as both multimodal discourse analysis and mediated discourse analysis, among others. However, "Halliday did not explicitly address the issue of the ideological in language and discourse" (Chun, 2019, p. 201). As such, Chun (2019) explains that a *critical* means of analyzing discourse is thus an attempt to unearth the layers of simultaneous operational hegemonic ideologies.

Likewise, CDA is also committed to "going beyond linguistic description to attempt explanation, to showing how social inequalities are reflected and created in language, and to finding ways through their work to change the conditions of inequality that their work uncovers" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 121). Thus, it illustrates how language use can contribute to social inequality, and it brings to the surface an agent of change that can have the ability to reduce social inequality. Therefore, in order to understand CDA, it is important to first understand the idea of *discourse*. Fairclough's (2016) definition of *discourse* is defined as being "commonly used in various senses including (a) meaning-making as an element of the social process, (b) the language associated with a particular social field or practice…, [and] (c) a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective" (p. 86). Based on the definitions of Chun (2019) and Fairclough (2016), it can thus be said that CDA aims to bring to light simultaneous operational hegemonic ideologies apparent by interpretation of how language makes meaning based on social perspective.

CDA is both a feasible and appropriate tool for examination of shadow education in the context of this study and answering the above research question. Firstly, this method allows participants to share their experiences and discuss their classroom practices in an open dialogue,

giving them a voice. Their voices paint the picture of their *doing and being* as educators in that teaching context. As such, they are able to express their attitudes and ideologies through their discourse, which gives the listener, reader, and myself as a researcher the ability to vicariously understand their experiences. Furthermore, in doing so, these tutors indicate through their word choice the power and agency as educators, or lack thereof, they feel their teaching context gives them or takes away from them. Finally, through this discourse, the tutors' own perceptions of their social status as educators can be derived. This sheds light on why differences seem to exist in social status between online shadow-education tutors in ESL and those educators who fall in line with the traditional image of a teacher.

Role of the Researcher

For this study, I am taking on the roles of both researcher and participant as I, myself, fit the criteria for participating in this study as I am a North American English-speaking tutor for Simple Course. This is not only appropriate for the study's purposes of presenting the voices of these tutors, but it is also appropriate for the research approach as I engage in dialogue with the other participating tutors. Because I am an insider to the teaching context in which the study takes place, the participating tutors are more likely to feel freer in sharing their experiences with me as I can not only relate, but also corroborate their stories with my own experiences. This enriches the discourse produced in the data collection and allows for more detailed data for answering the research question. Through the data collection process, I interview the two participants about certain aspects of their work, and the three of us discuss our experiences working in the context of Simple Course, our own professional identities as educators, our classroom practices, and the power and agency of the terms *teacher* and *tutor* as they relate to us and our lived experiences.

Context and Setting of the Study

Simple Course is an online shadow education tutoring company that offers Chinese international ESL students both asynchronous tutoring as well as synchronous live tutorials in most subjects they are taking in their university programs as well as ESL. Students can either post questions regarding homework assignments, readings, or topics from their classes for tutors to answer, or they can schedule synchronous live tutorials as online private tutoring sessions via the Zoom audio and video interface as an online classroom. Simple Course expects the live tutorials to be interactive, student centered, and focused on content rather than being a lecture or on how to pass an exam.

Additionally, asynchronous support includes language revision of students' written work as students are just beginning to learn academic writing in their second language. Students can submit entire essays for content and style editing, which includes language revision in terms of grammar, mechanics, and usage, as well as plagiarism checking and whether or not they have met the assignment requirements. Additionally, tutors correct the formatting of students' papers to make sure they meet required MLA, APA, or Chicago style guidelines. This editing is done over multiple drafts as tutors help students through the writing process and learn to adapt their second language to the genre of academic writing.

This setting is appropriate for this study's purposes and research questions primarily because it fits the definition of *shadow education* the study is following, i.e. , it includes the three distinct characteristics of *privateness*, *supplementation*, and *academic subjects* provided to individuals for a fee outside of school hours and supplements the principal academic subjects students are studying at school. It *does not* include unpaid tutoring nor lessons in extracurricular or personal development activities such as music, art, and sports (Yung & Bray, 2017). The

tutoring Simple Course provides fits exactly into this definition of *shadow education,* and they provide this online for ESL students. Therefore, the experiences of the tutors working there who provide this tutoring are those of whom the study is meant to investigate. As such, the selected participants are exactly those whose voices should be included in answering the above research question.

Study Participants

Due to the education and experience of these participants, the teaching context in which they work, and the length of time they have been teaching in said context, they are in the unique position to be able to provide data that answer this study's research question. Tutors selected for this study are tutors who have been working for Simple Course as their primary or sole source of income for about three years, are in the early to mid-level stages in their respective careers, hold master's degrees in the subjects they teach, and may or may not still be in graduate school. Moreover, these tutors that Simple Course management consider to be some of their highest quality tutors. This is evident as these tutors also provide educational quality assurance by reviewing the work of other tutors in their roles as tutor moderators. Additionally, they have worked at Simple Course longer than the vast majority of other tutors. Although the participating tutors have never worked as traditional teachers in a public PK-12 school setting, they have worked as graduate student teaching assistants. I, as the researcher and a participant, am the only one who has had specific training in ESL/EFL teaching. Finally, though many tutors at Simple Course are native speakers of Mandarin, the participants are either native-speakers of English or have North American English as their first or primary language.

The participating tutors have been given the pseudonyms "Tony" and "Clint." Tony is an American of Chinese heritage from California. He has a master's degree in English literature and

then started a PhD program in the same at UCLA, but he left ABD. He spoke Mandarin as a very young child because that is what his parents spoke, but his native language is now English. He never learned to read and write Chinese, and after leaving home he had very little opportunity to speak it, thus indicating that he now “speaks Chinese like a fourth grader,” and his Mandarin is “serviceable.” Clint, however, is a Canadian from Ontario and has a master’s degree in sociology from the University of Western Ontario. His native language is English, but he is also semi-fluent in French, and he has always had strong language skills in English and academic writing and in both high school and college he would tutor his classmates to help them improve their papers. Neither of these participants had been planning on going into teaching as a career and may or may not continue teaching or even in the field of education, but for now, teaching as tutors in the for-profit shadow education industry has been a way to put their own degrees to use and scrape out a living.

Data Sources

Data for this study was collected over a two-month period via a series of interviews via the online platform Zoom in the form of audio and video recordings. The interviews consisted of three parts in the series. The first was an initial semi-structured interview of approximately an hour and a half with each tutor (see Appendix A) that allowed them to share their stories and histories. This was the primary means of answering the research question because this is when the participating tutors shared their personal stories and experiences as professionals. It also allowed the tutors to discuss what it means to them to be teachers and to express their own professional identities while relating them to this experience, which, in turn, also led to the tutors comparing themselves with their perceptions of who traditional teachers are when discussing their own professional identities.

The second part was an hour-long interview with each tutor based on the concept of reflective teaching practices. This included data sources of two hour-long recordings of two live tutorials each of the participants conducted. During this second stage of interviewing, each of the participants had the opportunity to view clips from these video recordings of their live online classrooms, reflect on their actions and choices in their live tutorials, and relate this to who they were and as teachers and to their teaching context. This stage of interviewing not only answered the research question in that the participants could discuss their teaching context in relation to what they do in the classroom and how what they do contributes to their professional identities, but it also provided additional data about the tutors as they discussed what they do based on their own experiences as both teachers and students.

Finally, I conducted two more hour-long interviews about reflective teaching practices with both of the tutors together allowing them to discuss their teaching practices and teaching context with me and their other fellow tutor. This allowed for discussion about what they interpreted as happening in their own and their colleague's respective classrooms as a means of collaborative reflective practice (see Appendix B). Other data sources for this study included artifacts from each of the participating tutors' classrooms such as examples of materials they used for scaffolding purposes. These prompted discussion about what the participating tutors did in their classrooms and why. Stage three of data collection answered the research question in that the tutors discussed who they are professionally in terms of the for-profit teaching context and how they felt about the status of their own power, agency, and identities in that context.

Data Analysis

This study uses both thematic analysis as well as dialectical analysis in the data analysis process. While the categorical analysis uses an adapted version of Saldana's (2009) streamlined

model of codes-to-theory for qualitative inquiry, the dialectical analysis is based on Fairclough's (2016) dialectical-relational approach to CDA. Findings are later summarized in Chapter 5 in terms of both analyses.

The Dialectical-Relational Approach to CDA

Fairclough's (2016) Dialectical-Relational Approach sees CDA as trans- or multi- or inter- disciplinary as it combines disciplines and theories in order to research the dialogues among issues in terms of both their theoretical and their methodological development. As an example of this, Fairclough (2016) uses the term *recontextualization* to describe how issues, in the case of critical discourses, can be recontextualized in terms of other disciplines. Fairclough (2016) explains that discourse (a) is used for social meaning-making; (b) is language related to particular social fields or practices; and (c) puts aspects of the world into a particular social perspective (p. 86). Fairclough's (2016) preference here is for the term *semiosis* because it "has the further advantage of suggesting that discourse analysis is concerned with various 'semiotic modalities' of which language is only one" (p. 87), meaning modalities of expression such as body language, gesture, and facial expression, among others should be included in interpretation of discourse. In the context of CDA, Fairclough views *semiosis* "as an element of the social process which is dialectically related to others" (p. 87). Thus, dialectical thinking plays a significant role in the dialectical-relational approach to CDA. For example, Fairclough (2016) states:

> Relations between elements are dialectical in the sense of being different but not 'discrete', i.e., not fully separate…each 'internalizes' the others without being reducible to them…social relations, power, institutions, beliefs and cultural values are in part semiotic, they 'internalize' semiosis without being reducible to it (p. 87).

Fairclough (2016) means to emphasize that the Dialectical-Relational Approach to CDA focuses not just upon social relations, but rather on relations among the semiotic and additional social elements and seeing these relationships from multiple perspectives rather than just in terms of black and white. He also points out that these social relationships vary based on institution or organization or time and place as established in analysis.

The Principles behind this Approach

The Dialectical-Relational Approach to CDA sees the social process as the interplay among social structures, social practices, and social events. "Social practices 'mediate' the relationship between general and abstract social structures and particular and concrete social events; social fields, institutions and organizations are constituted as networks of social practices" (Fairclough, 2016, p. 88). He goes on to explain that CDA oscillates between structures of social practices and strategies of social agents, and that *semiosis* relates to other elements of social practices and events in action, as seen in both constructed representations of the world and in identity construction. Fairclough (2016) identifies *semiosis* in terms of (a) genres, which are semiotic ways of acting or interacting; (b) discourses, which are semiotic ways of constructing perceptions of the world in terms of position; and (c) styles, which are semiotic identities or "ways of being" (p. 88). Therefore, based on this construct of *semiosis*, this approach has the researcher constructing the object of research via the genre, discourse, and styles used to present itself.

As an example, explaining CDA of conversation, Locke (2004) uses Fairclough's (1992) nine properties: (a) interactional control such as turn taking, power balance and positionality in conversation; (b) modality, usually seen by use of modal auxiliaries, ie. may, might, can, could, etc.; (c) politeness, in terms of "property of force" (p. 83) as related to the nature of particular

speech acts as based on Austin's (1962) speech act theory – locution, illocution, and perlocution; (d) ethos, the identities projected by participants both verbally and non-verbally; (e) connectives and argumentation – cohesion and relatedness of clauses to one another, in their respective lines or stanzas, the use of conjunctions, etc.; (f) transitivity and theme – this is based on linguistic analysis of verb and object types; (g) word meaning; (h) wording; and (i) metaphor. These properties suggested by Fairclough (1992) are akin to systemic functional linguistics, (Halliday; 1978, 2014) as suggested by Chun (2019).

Methodology of the Dialectical-Relational Approach

Fairclough (2016) sees this approach as being theoretically constructed rather than as a way to apply method because "the specific methods used for a particular piece of research arise from the theoretical process of constructing its object" (p. 91), and in that sense, theory and method cannot be simply separated. However, Fairclough (2016) identifies a *general* method including stages and steps within those stages, but he argues that these can be identified "only on condition that these are not interpreted in a mechanical way" (p. 91), meaning that they are not necessarily a procedural or sequential order. This is because although some steps may initially have to come before others, they are maintained throughout the analysis process, such as that of constructing the study as an object of research. With that concept in mind, Fairclough (2016, pp. 91-94) presents the following four methodological stages of the dialectical-relational approach, each having its own separate steps:

Stage 1: Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspects.

Step 1: Select a research topic which relates or points to a social wrong and which can productively be approached in a transdisciplinary way with a focus on dialectical relations between semiotic and other 'moments'.

Step 2: Construct objects of research for initially identified research topics by theorizing them in a transdisciplinary way using theories of semiosis and discourse and engaging with the literature. It is a matter of researcher judgment as to the perspectives that define an object of research.

Stage 2: Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong.

Step 1: Analyze the social order by examining dialectical relations between semiosis and other social elements, i.e., relationships among elements of discourse, social practice, and social events.

Step 2: Select texts, focuses, and categories for their analysis, in the light of and appropriate to the constitution of the object of research.

Step 3: Carry out both interdiscursive and linguistic/semiotic analysis of texts.

At this point, Fairclough (2016) notes that the steps in this stage are a specific aspect of the Dialectical-Relational Approach to CDA meant to allow the researcher to develop a "semiotic point of entry" into the research object. "Textual analysis is only a part of semiotic analysis (discourse analysis), and the former must be adequately framed within the latter" (p. 93). In other words, CDA is the larger picture when constructing the object of research, and the texts are just facets of that larger picture that allow the researcher the "point of entry" that Fairclough (2016) refers to. The researcher then uses dialectical thinking to use interdiscursive analysis to build the entire picture based on semiosis of social practices, strategies of social agents, and social events in terms of their genre, discourse, and styles. "Interdiscursive analysis has the crucial effect of constituting a mediating 'interlevel' which connects both linguistic analysis with relevant forms of social analysis, and analysis of the text as part of an event with analysis of social practices" (p. 94). In other words, the researcher must dialectically compare how genre, style, and discourse

function together in texts, events, and practices to constitute the object of research. Fairclough (2016, p. 94) then goes on to explain the last two stages:

Stage 3: Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong.

Step 1: Questions: In what sense might the social order 'need' this? Does the social order function based on this wrong?

Step 2: Consider whether the social wrong in focus is inherent to the social order, whether it can be addressed within it, or only by changing it. Can the social order function in the same way without this wrong? Discourse is ideological in so far as it contributes to sustaining particular relations of power and domination.

Stage 4: Identify possible ways past the obstacles.

Step 1: Move the analysis from negative to a positive critique by identifying dialectical relationships and other elements to identify how the social process can overcome obstacles to correcting the social wrong.

Step 2: Develop a semiotic 'point of entry' into research on the ways in which these obstacles are actually tested, challenged, and resisted by groups or people. Include ways in which dominant discourse is reacted to, contested, criticized and opposed.

Finally, Fairclough (2016) lists the following core analytical categories: "(a) semiosis (and other social elements); (b) discourse/genre/style, order of discourse (and social practices); (c) text (and social event); (d) interdiscursivity (and interdiscursive analysis); (e) recontextualization and (f) operationalization (enactment, inculcation, materialization)" (p. 95, my seriation). Using these categories, the researcher can then use categorical analysis within the various stages and steps to

organize data before engaging in dialectical thinking as well as oscillate between the two in terms of structures of social practices and strategies of social agents.

The Current Study's Data Analysis Process

The first step in the data analysis process was transcription of the interview data, which was done via *Transcribe* (transcribe.wreally.com), which claims a 90% accuracy rating and can also distinguish among speakers. Arguing this is an important first step in CDA, Locke (2004) emphasizes transcription itself as being an act of interpretation, both selective and interpretive, and suggests dividing the transcription of oral text into stanzas and lines as per Gee's (1996) procedure. As a means to begin the process of analysis, this interpretation can assist with thematic and content analysis (Locke, 2004), and according to Wodak and Meyer (2016), the transcription-based interpretation can indicate how the themes explain social phenomena.

As discussed in chapter 1, coding of the data for this study took place in three stages, emergent coding based on in vivo and gisted data, axial coding to expand initial codes and draw new connections among them (Creswell and Poth, 2018), and a priori coding for qualitative inquiry to determine specific themes from the data that more specifically answer the research questions. This process yielded the study's initial findings regarding the participating tutors' experiences. In order to dig deeper using CDA, I identified and categorized the main ideas from the participants' discussions, including their professional self-perceptions, their professional activities, their experience with Simple Course, and their actual discussions about how they describe their own experiences. The first stage of coding determined three primary categories into which I broke down the data: (a) *identity*, (b) *relationship with Simple Course*, and (c) *profit* (see Fig. 1). I identified these by color-coding the transcripts. The first category, *identity*, includes participants' discussing their own professional identities and how they saw themselves

CATEGORIES:

- CODE GREEN – IDENTITIES

  SUBCATEGORIES:
  - CODE AQUA – Identity in Practice
  - CODE DARK GREEN – Identity from Relationships with Students
    - CODE GREY – Identity in Student Perceptions
  - CODE LIGHT GREEN – Identity in Context
  - CODE OCHRE – Identity from Training
  - CODE PURPLE – Teacher vs. Tutor
    - CODE LIGHT BLUE – Identity in Self-Perception
- CODE BLUE – RELATIONSHIP WITH SIMPLE COURSE

  SUBCATEGORIES:
  - CODE LIGHT BLUE – Expectations of Clients
  - CODE DARK BLUE – Relationships with Management
    - CODE DARK PURPLE - Tutors as Commodities
  - CODE LIGHT GREY – Sales and Customer Service
    - CODE DARK GREY - Customer Service
    - CODE LIGHT PURPLE - Tutors as Salespeople
- CODE RED – PROFIT

  SUBCATEGORIES:
  - CODE DARK RED Tutors Earning a Living
    - CODE DARK RED – "Gig" work
    - CODE LIGHT YELLOW – Pay-per-pop
  - CODE OCHRE – Consumer Based Education
    - CODE AQUA – Balancing along "The Line"

Fig. 1: *Coding scheme*

and others as well as their activities in their respective classrooms that contributed to who they were professionally. The second category of *relationship with Simple Course* included how they saw management, how Simple Course operates, their working context, and the expectations put upon them by Simple Course and its clients, i.e., students. The final category, *profit,* includes the specific for-profit context of their work and how it affects them and their classroom activities. The second stage of coding was indicative and revealed subcategories within each category. Once again, I used color-coding of the text within each of the three main categories to identify these subcategories. Figure 2 shows an example from my codebook as to how the sub-subcategory *Tutors as Salespeople* was coded within the subcategory of *Sales and Customer Service* under the main category of *Relationship with Simple Course*. The memos listed correspond to the balloon icons on the right side of the image. The purple is related to *Tutors as*

Salespeople, while the red is related to the idea of profit. The grey color simple relates the text to the memos listed below. Figure 3 shows an additional example from my codebook, the

Tutors as Salespeople

I've been sort of pushing this point that what we do is not quite completely a hundred percent pedagogical. We're sort of part of what we're doing is we're selling it to them that they're learning something, and I think with that kind of mercantile aspect in mind... I phrase it so that like next time it was we didn't have time to cover these today.
I'm grading these papers and I think the first ones I graded. I probably didn't give a mark over 65 and, and I was approached by the person overseeing the classes and they said hey, you gotta you gotta give them a little bit more of a bone here...if the grades were too low management was saying you got to give them a higher grade for sales
they're trying to sell this lesson to students. And so, you know, if they're you've got to make them feel you gotta sell it to them that they're learning
maybe part of me hopes that it's going to lead them to to sign up for another hour, but, you know, it doesn't always happen.

Memo 1 – The profitable vs. the pedagogical
Memo 2 – How tutors sell more classes
Memo 3 – Link between for-profit education and grade inflation
Memo 4 – Money and Entrepreneurship

Fig. 2: *Coding Example of "Tutors as Salespeople"*

coding of the sub-subcategory *Pay-per-pop Earning* within the subcategory of *Tutors Earning a Living*, which is listed under the main category of *Profit.* Again, the grey indicates the text that is related to the listed memos. In the final stage of coding, mind mapping connected ideas among

Pay-per-pop Earning

when you turn it into like an a la carte sort of menu selection because you're not paying people by the salary you're paying people per lesson. And so, with the goal therefore is just, if the more lessons you can give the more you can elongate your, your lessons, right? And so, it's like if you're doing like pay-per-pop sort of, that model, then, then that changes the nature of teaching where you're no longer concerned with teaching, you're concerned with making money.
the profit motive is clearer when you're when you're a sort of when you have this model or you're paying per you getting paid per lesson?

Memo 1 – Affects the outcome of education because the teacher has to be sure to make enough money from teaching.
Memo 2 – Running theme – effects of pay-per-pop payment scheme for tutors
Memo 3 – Profit-based teaching becomes more important than education
Memo 4 – Pay-per-pop teaching comes down to profit because you're getting paid by the lesson

Fig. 3: *Coding Example of "Pay-per-pop Earning"*

the larger categories and subcategories within the larger, a priori themes of (a) *tutors' classroom practices,* (b), *the impact of the teaching context,* and (c) *tutor efficacy* (see Appendix D). These themes are discussed in the categorical findings and analysis section of chapter 5

After the initial thematic and content analysis, analysis moved from categorical thinking to dialectical thinking. For example, when discussing what to look for in texts as a way to interpret them beyond the use of categorical thinking, Locke's (2004) example of Fairclough's (1992) properties founded in SFL, suggests the linguistic examination of modal auxiliaries, conjunctions, and verb types. Although this seems to be analysis at the word-level, doing so can bring to light specific relationships based on rhetoric such as positive and negative descriptions of the subject and the '*Us vs. Them'* attitude or mentality (van Dijk, 2016). I focused on how participants used any form of the word *teach* including *teacher*, *teaching*, and *taught*, as well as their use of any form of the word *tutor* including *tutoring* and *tutorial* in each of the categories. Each instance of usage of these words were first analyzed in terms of the participant, their position, and the context in which the word was used, including the surface of the text in terms of relationships, units of meaning, discursive entanglements as well as associated rhetoric in terms of argumentation and its strategy (Jäger & Maier, 2016). These words were next analyzed ideologically, based on how they might contribute to sustaining any relationships of power and domination (Fairclough, 2016) or based on their basic or symbolic resources, or lack thereof, of power, knowledge, and access (van Dijk, 2016) as viewed by participants.

Next, the instances of participants' usage of these words were analyzed sociocognitively, considering how cognitive factors such as memory or mental models of semantic (situational) or pragmatic (contextual) discourse processing ideologies are presented in terms of their discussion of activities, self-descriptions, and identification, as well as how participants used vocabulary

and language in context (van Dijk, 2016). This analysis considers language as indicative of identifying self and other identification and description in terms of in-groups and out-groups. For example, action verbs can indicate connection with such groups in terms of activity, possessive pronouns indicate identification or association with in-groups or out-groups, and possessive adjectives can be used to show any positive or negative polarization between in-groups and out-groups (van Dijk, 2016). This type of analysis notes where participants present an *Us vs. Them* attitude. Finally, to construct personal stories of the participants, I looked for the use of first-person references such as the personal pronouns *I* and *me* as well as the possessive adjective *my*. In doing so, I was able to construct narratives of the participants' histories and experiences in order to present them as individual people.

Establishing the Study's Validity

In order to establish validity and warrant the claims of this study, I used three specific methods of validation. First, triangulation was used as data were collected from three separate areas: personal interviews with the participating tutors, observations of the participants' teaching during a live tutorial session, and group reflexive teaching practice sessions that included both participants. Next, I developed an audit trail as mentioned above, allowing for the study to be tracked in terms of both its processes and my decision making, allowing for the ability to be reproduced in additional contexts. Finally, I used member-checking, allowing participants to review my notes and interpretations from the data analysis process as a means of establishing that they were in line with what each of the participating tutors wanted to convey during their interviews and that my interpretations of the data accurately reflected each of their professional classroom activities, the work they do as educators, and their experiences working as tutors with Simple Course.

Issues and Limitations of CDA

CDA like any other means by which to conduct qualitative data analysis comes with its own limitations. These come in the form of language, presupposition, and privilege (Chun, 2019). Regarding language, Chun (2019) addresses “the seemingly sole emphasis on linguistic bias” (p. 205) of CDA that is also described by Blommaert (2005) in that it “restricts the space of analysis to textually organized and (explicitly) linguistically encoded discourse, not to where it comes from and goes to” (p. 35). In other words, as Chun (2019) states, CDA “does not consider how everyday people actually understand and reproduce power-laden discourses” (p. 206) that frame their everyday lives and roles in society. This could mean the researcher’s interpretation of the discourse in question does not reflect that of everyday people or its intended audience. Likewise, Widdowson (1995; 1998) points out that different audiences interpret different texts in different manners. He argues that one “cannot explain how people express their ideology by assuming in advance that ideology is already fixed in the language… [and] the consequence is that the scope of description is not extended but reduced because it narrows down to a single preferred interpretation” (1995, p. 168). This reflects why Chun (2019) asks: “To what extent is any discourse ever truly representative of its intended meanings?” (p. 206). Thus, researchers must be careful of their assumptions and ideologies being present in texts and how they represent these ideologies as compared to the intention of producers of the various texts being analyzed.

Regarding the next limitation, presupposition, Chun (2019) cites Luke (2002) regarding the implications of the work of Gee and Fairclough about the dangers of having presuppositions about a text’s power, uptake, systematicity, and consequences as well as Luke’s (2002) critique of Foucault, questioning how analysts can know that discourses are not acting arbitrarily and autonomously from authors. CDA can have a tendency to disregard what is left unsaid or what is

considered as unspeakable as because it is not present in linguistic traces, can escape analysis. Chun also cites Breeze (2011), referencing Verschueren (2001), as Breeze (2011) states that CDA can have the "tendency to leave out important aspects of the text that do not fit with the interpretive framework" (p. 505 as cited by Chun, p. 206). In other words, the researcher can have bias in terms of their interpretation based on their own ideologies. As such, Verschueren (2001) concludes findings can be products of conviction instead of that of "a careful step-by-step analysis that reflexively questions its own observations and conclusions" (Verschueren, 2001, p. 65 as cited by Chun, p. 206). Furthermore, Chun quotes Machin and Mayr (2012) in pointing out that one of the greatest difficulties in CDA is "the critical analysis of texts that we agree with, which are in accord with our own ideological viewpoint" (p. 47 as cited by Chun, p. 207). This specifically addresses the irrefutable existence of researcher bias. However, "CDA does not deny but explicitly defines and defends its own socio-political position, that is CDA is biased—and proud of it" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 96).

Moreover, Chun (2019) also addresses the issue of privilege in terms of the analyst's "sole explanatory power" (p. 206) and its implications on explaining the power relationships CDA critiques, citing Blommaert (2005) in that privilege pushes the participant out of analysis and closes the process of dialogue as "the analyst becomes the ultimate arbiter of meanings" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 33 as cited by Chun, 2019 p. 206). Chun (2019) argues that the issue has methodological implications on CDA because an analyst's critique is compromised by the act of arbitration of meaning, and therefore he calls for an "ethnographic approach in which dialogues can emerge from the researcher/analyst and those who are reading or viewing the same text" (p. 206). Finally, Chun (2019) maintains that analysis must define what they mean by being critical, outline specifically why and how their analyses and methodologies count as critical and how

their analysis differs from other and opposite critical viewpoints. Chun argues that due to these limitations, researchers must address such issues and limitations regarding methodology by "acknowledging the contradictions, or the conflicting dimensions in any data being analyzed within one's interpretative framework" and that "reflexivity is needed in furthering discussion and debate on one's own analysis, rather than attempting to present it as the 'final word'" (p. 207). In other words, when conducting CDA it is essential that the researcher or analyst not only be transparent when it comes to definitions, process, and interpretation, but also in interpretation by acknowledging that interpretation comes with these limitations.

CHAPTER 4: The Participants' Stories

The purpose of this chapter is for the participants in this study to tell, in their own words, their own personal stories about who they are, how they got started working as tutors, and about their work. Taking on the role of a participant in addition to that of a researcher, I also tell my own story. This way, the actual voices of tutors working in the for-profit online ESL shadow education industry can be heard.

"Clint"

Clint is a native English-speaking Canadian tutor from Ontario who holds a master's degree in sociology from the University of Western Ontario. At Simple Course, he tutors primarily academic writing and sociology courses, but he also tutors other courses in some related subject areas such as criminology. He is also a tutor moderator, which means that he reviews the work of his fellow tutors for quality assurance.

Clint's Start in Tutoring

Here, Clint tells the story of how he got started working at Simple Course.

> *Okay, so I guess I started teaching, I started teaching, you know, as a TA while doing my masters at the University of Western Ontario, so that wasn't necessarily ESL teaching, but just kind of running tutorials for an introductory class for, I guess, an introductory Sociology class at the University level. And then, yeah, I, so, I guess that led me to or didn't really lead me to [Simple Course], but…how I came to the platform, but I, actually, I was a frequent contributor to the note sharing platform on [Simple Course]. And so, by extension of being a frequent contributor, the company reached out. I think when they were starting to grow the [Simple Course] platform, and yeah, so they reached out about, you know, online tutoring opportunities. And, and so I guess, you know,*

English has always been kind of an, an area of strength for me, and I guess just going through the application process, English and ESL were subject areas that I expressed interest in in teaching, and, and, you know, I was, I was granted access to those subjects areas and that's kind of, I guess, my beginnings of being an ESL teacher. And I guess I've been in the role for, for what, now that I think about it, yeah, like a year and a half.

Yeah, so it's-- so like I said, I-- the reason why I became a teacher was well, you know what? I always thought I would be when I was coming out of school, finishing my undergrad. I had-- something that kind of had some appeal to me was, you know, being a TA at university, and so that was actually a large motivation for why I pursued my masters, but, but, yeah, like, you know, it was just a, it was a job that accompanied being in graduate school. So, it was part of our funding package was to receive a job as a TA. So, so yeah, I just kind of immersed myself in that role and, and then I think with [Simple Course], like, a lot of the draw was just the, the appeal of working from home, working online, and, and, and working with almost complete flexibility over my schedule. So, I think I think when I kind of was able to, to say hey, you know what? I have a little bit of teaching experience. Maybe I can really run with this and kind of make a career off it. I don't know if I'm going to—if, you know, it will necessarily be my career, but, you know, in the meantime it's been, you know, I've really enjoyed it for sure. I'm not– I don't– I'm not really sure if, you know, I'm not really sure where I want to make my career, and initially coming out of my undergrad I wanted to get into law. So, law school was kind of my end game, and you know, I narrowly missed some waitlist opportunities, and, and then went forward with my master's, just to kind of, be academically involved in that, channel it into teaching. And so, so yeah, I'm not really– I guess I've not thought about it

a whole lot just because I'm, you know, I'm not really sure if education is where I want to build my career. The idea of going into teaching is all image, you know, something I've thought about, but yeah, I think after doing like six or seven years of school. I– I'm averse to the idea of, like, going back, kind of thing, unless it's going to be for law, but you know, the– as of right now, I've not really kind of prepared myself to, to go back into anything, like this is kind of, this is kind of been what I'm focused on for the last couple of years. So, yeah, I know that's kind of a non-answer, but I guess I'm just saying I've not really, you know, given it too much thought.

It is clear from his statements that Clint was just thrown into tutoring as the opportunity arose, and ESL teaching was something he had not planned to do for his career. Later, his discussion shows how this affects his professional identity as an educator.

Clint as a Language Learner

In this next excerpt, Clint discusses his experiences as a language learner from taking French immersion classes as an English-speaking Canadian to taking other classes to learn Spanish and Italian.

So, yeah, English is my native language. I, I took French immersion growing up in, in elementary school, and I think it was about the seventh grade that I switched to a like a, just an English-speaking, an English-speaking school. So, I continued in French through, or continued taking French courses through to grade twelve. At the-- in Canada, we're kind of taught like University-level high school courses, so courses that kind of prepare you for, for University. So, I took, I took university-level French through high school, and I, so I consider myself to be more or less fluent in French. I'm-- I've lost it a little bit. I applied for a job about a year ago and did the proficiency test, and, and they-- I got a

little notification that advised me to go back and brush up on my skills. But then I go on vacation. I like, meet French people and I kind of pick it back up again. And so, I don't-- I'm not fluent in Spanish, but I took courses in Spanish at University again. I, I probably couldn't speak a word of it anymore. Similarly, I took an Italian course in high school. Yeah, but, you know, it, like, it's interesting because I did very well in those courses and I think it's largely because, you know, learning French kind of thing, you know, they're, they're all kind of derivations of Latin languages. So overall they all kind of derived from Latin. So, yeah, the, you know, kind of made it easier to, to learn them at the school level, at least.

As Clint discusses languages, it can be noted that although he knows something about the relationship among the Romance languages and their derivation from Latin, but as he has not studied linguistics, he cannot discuss this further in terms of language learning. Additionally, although he claims fluency in French, he recognizes the attrition that happens when he as an L2 French speaker does not speak the language regularly. Again, he describes this phenomenon as someone who has not studied linguistics would.

Clint on Learning to Teach

Here, Clint explains how he figured out how to teach because he had not really had any type of previous pedagogical training, which has been noted to be a common circumstance in previous research in shadow education tutoring (Aurini, 2004). Below, it is shown how this affects not his classroom practice as he has developed these skills, but rather his professional identity as an educator and how he feels about himself professionally.

Like I said, I started out as a TA and, and it was very much a, you know, here's the water, now swim kind of thing. So yeah, I just threw it-- was thrown into the line of fire, but,

yeah, I guess, I guess my approach has always kind of been based on what I found useful as a student myself, and then I guess [Simple Course], you know, as much as far as that goes, [Simple Course] training, you know, training videos or training seminars, but yeah, apart from that, I don't really have any, any formal, any formal training. So, I'm trying to think back to taking my [Simple Course] training. I haven't done a lot of professional development engagements. Actually, it should make me feel a bit. Yeah, I'm trying to think back to, back to that video. But I think just generally and anything when I kind of see when I can be shown concretely. You know, what, what the process is, or kind of what steps to take. You know, that's something that I have tried to emulate, sort of thing. Well, so, I guess, another thing that I'll mention is going through school, to, like, high school. For example, I, I couldn't buy a good mark in high school. And so, I think for me, you know, as someone who was maybe not the best student when I was younger, I kind of, you know, gain a bit of a sense, I think, as to where students can make mistakes, kind of thing. I think that generally I would just say concreteness like, you know, when you can be shown concrete examples of things. So, I think that's the, you know, I think I've always had kind of an ability to sort of relate to students and understand where, you know, they might not need-- or they might not understand things where they might need more concrete guidance where certain things might need more careful or simplified explanation. And, so, yeah, I've always just kind of gone off of, you know, what I think would be personally helpful. I remember I had a gym-- a phys. ed teacher when I was in high school, and, and he said something to the effect of, you know, he used the example of math, and he said I could probably teach you math better than your math teacher. And it's because like, I'm, you know, I've, I've had to kind of struggle through that subject

and, and I'm not someone who's brilliantly smart and, you know, aced my way through, through school. I've, you know, I'm someone who's kind of had to battle through that material, and, you know, find ways to kind of internalize that knowledge. And, and that's kind of something that's always stuck out to me. And I think, you know, I very much-- I take very much the same-- have a somewhat similar idea where I, where I think that just my, my experience in education has kind of prepared me to be a good-- or I won't slaughter myself, but, you know, but perhaps an effective teacher. There's a little bit of, you know, I think it would be really cool to get a new teaching job, but I think for myself, I don't, you know, I have not gone to teachers college, so I don't have any credentialing as an educator. So, I was to apply in the public schooling system, I don't know if I'd really have a leg to stand on.

It is interesting to note how Clint's educational experiences such as having a difficult time in high school contrast with what one might think the schooling experience would have been with an educator. However, it seems that it was because his own teachers had had a positive effect on him as he indicated previously, that he became a teacher. Also, he uses this experience as an ability to put himself in his students' places in terms of understanding what they need help with, thus making him effective in the classroom. In other words, it seems he is trying to "emulate" his own teachers. Finally, the conflict Clint feels about being an educator begins to come to light.

"Tony"

Tony is an American tutor of Chinese heritage who lives in California. He was an ESL student as a young child, but has become an L1 English speaker due to neglecting his heritage language, Mandarin, when he left home to go to college. As such, he says he now speaks it "like the average fourth grader," and that he cannot read it, which embarrasses him. Tony pursued a

doctorate degree in English literature at UCLA, but he left ABD. He tutors academic writing, English literature, and ESL among other related subjects. Like Clint, he is also a tutor moderator who reviews the work of his fellow tutors for quality assurance.

Tony's Start in Tutoring

Tony describes how he went from leaving UCLA to working as a tutor since he was a TA during his time in graduate school. In describing his experiences, he describes his trials and errors and his own moments of learning about teaching.

> *Well, I didn't start out teaching ESL. My training is in literature as I taught at UCLA for a number of years where I was working on my, my own Ph.D. So, I was in, I was in UCLA's, so my degree is for English right, and, and they start us teaching in year 2. So, the first year we did coursework in the second– the first three years or so, we were doing coursework, and the second year is one, when we start our training, there at UCLA in the English Department. There were two semesters of training classes, and this was training to be a TA essentially, to be someone else's, sort of a professor's, you know, underling TA. Two semesters of training was all in the span of a year and I don't really– It's been a couple years since then. We covered a lot of, a lot of stuff, but I couldn't really exactly tell you any specifics about what they taught me about teaching other than it was pretty good because I went from having no, no idea what I was doing to some idea, enough at least to to kind of, you know, rough, rough it out the first two years, and after like, after about two years of teaching, then I would say it really then– everything kind of clicks, and then things make sense in terms of what you need to do? And before then, you know, there is a little bit of trial by fire, kind of, you know, there's no, there's only– you can only be taught so much about what to expect before you get in the classroom and do*

it yourself, an initial TA you, you are obligated to teach under a– you have to be a TA under a professor. Once you have two years of training or like tutelage or whatever you want to call it, working under a professor. Then you have then you're given like a promotion. Your title changes you become a teaching associate instead of a teaching assistant, but they give you a little feather on your cap to, you know, say that you, you're a higher level of indentured servant now, and once you're a teaching associate, they let you teach your own class, which I did for a year and a half.

I think I– my problem when I first started teaching was this, I was, I was very selfish. I was very self-centered. You know, I wasn't. And this is the kind of cliché, I wasn't putting the students first. Yeah, but I was mostly concerned with how I would appear to the students. And part of this was because I was so young, and I was just out of college myself when I first started teaching. I started grad school, I took a year off, but, you know, I was 20, 22, I think 23 when I started teaching. So, so these– the seniors in my classes were barely younger than I was. And so, I felt like I needed to impress them, you know, about— Like I was, like, I look just like you, I look younger than most of you, in fact, right? And, and so I needed to like, I need to say something smart to say something smart about literature in, like, here's a Wordsworth quote for you. Like, you know, and, and, and, so– became too much about that. It can so much be about, like, my own appearance. And so, like, I was at all times just very self-aware of, like, what am I going to say next that will be impressive? And so it, it completely sort of blinded me to the students' needs ,but it also made it much more— less organic and really anxiety-inducing for myself because it felt like I was putting on a show. And at any point, they're going to see the wizard behind the curtain, right? And he's like a scared little guy just trying to

pretend to be a college teacher. And– but once I sort of, eventually after like– I would say it took me a year to– it's a really, you know, make a switch over to, you know, to realize that I, I can't think of them as students, and I can't think of myself as a teacher, because that screws with my head; that, that makes me power trip; that makes me think that I have to do— I have to be a certain way, I have to project myself in a certain way, with authority and, and they're in this sort of the subordinate position, and I have to talk down to them, right? And so, I know that's, you know, obviously not true, and that's not the way most people or most teachers think, but that's just the way that my own mind works. And so, for me to make that effective connection with the students, I had, the one thing that I realized was I needed to treat them like a peer, I needed to treat them like I am a peer who knows more, and you they are a peer who knows less, and my job is to just fill my friends in a little bit more with the stuff that they don't know. And once I started doing that, then it A: became more enjoyable from a teaching experience, and B: just a lot more effective because, you know, you're, you're making a connection with them, personal connection with them.

Tony goes on to discuss how this realization made working as a tutor for Simple Course more rewarding in that he was better able to form connections with students as he worked with them one-on-one.

But it really fully kind of pushed me in that direction because the, the, the format, right, you're just your one-on-one with a student and they're putting their entire trust into you, especially in ESL cases where, you know, they don't understand the material, and whatever you tell them is what they know the material to be. And so, they put your– they put their entire trust in you and, and, and you feel responsible for helping them, to guide

them through it, and just my own personal kind of experience. And I remember the days, you know, as I said, in third, fourth grade where you know, I felt bad not being able to understand, being put into that remedial class because I didn't understand English. And so I do feel personally gratified, you know, helping these students navigate the challenges of their classroom, whatever classroom it may be. And so, that personal connection I think is something that I think I– so whatever the quality is that, that interaction that student interaction, I think, is one of the most important lessons I took away from my time at UCLA that, that I'm happy to, you know, be adapting [at Simple Course].

I left my program [at UCLA] after, let's see, year eight is when I left without completing my degree because I was, frankly, you know, I didn't want to be there anymore. I didn't, I didn't feel the same passion I did for, for the subject I once had, you know, when I first started and Academia was, maybe I don't need to be telling you this, but it can be a very stifling atmosphere sometimes, and so I wanted to get out, and I also wanted to explore other things. I also, you know, at this time was towards the tail end of my, my time at UCLA, and I– so I started in 2011, and I got my master's. It was like a combined master's M.A. and Ph.D. program. I got my master's after two years, and then in 2017 is when I left. So, a couple of– So, I started my dissertation. I– and then I left as ABD, as well. And, and at the same time, I started– I'd been teaching online courses. I'd been teaching both, or, or at this time, [Simple Tutor] didn't have the live tutorials so much. They had mostly the QA platform. But I was also teaching for another similar kind of online company, an online teaching company, that is based in China and they're now making forays into the U.S. [That company] is like a large sprawling conglomerate because the specific whatever you want to call it, subsidiary, that I taught for was called

[company name] and they-- so it was something that I began actually pretty early on, was like maybe 2016 even, that I started there. And I, in the courses there, essentially it was adapting my courses at UCLA. So, I was teaching intro to literature classes mostly, and it was adapting that– those syllabus, syllabi, into sort of amore ESL friendly atmosphere. So, you know, we're reading sort of more short stories and sort of, like, longer full-length novels and such, talk about it, but essentially keeping the same kind of, you know, structure of critical reading and, you know, essay responses.

After I, after I left UCLA, you know, it– I just began doing more and more ESL type work, just because of the nature of, you know, as you well know, the, the [Simple Course] platform where most of our clients are non-native speakers. And so, it becomes a necessary component of, you know, because I started out just teaching essay writing and reading, literature reading, and other subjects as needed. It got to a point where it-- while you simply, if you, if you just, you know, real comments and made suggestions in the way that you would for, like, I would for a student of mine while I was at UCLA. Then, you know, not everything is going to, you know, it's gonna hit a brick wall at some points, not everything's going to go through. So, you have to-- eventually over time, I realized, okay, to be more effective, you needed to make certain concessions like, okay, well, we're going to have to explain things more clearly, we're going to use more color coding, we're going to, you know, repeat things more, and so there are sort of little tricks that I picked up along the way to be a more effective ESL teacher, but I was never trained as an ESL teacher. I was never, I never, you know, that wasn't really what, what my own teacher training was like, and that's just something that, you know, I, by necessity, I kind of kind of picked up. So that's, that's the extent of my, my experience. I've been doing

now that-- this sort of ESL angle type, you know, approach, you know, for maybe not too-- not too long, you know, maybe two years now, especially it's been picking up more in recent months because as the [live] tutorial side of the [Simple Course] platform has gotten off its feet. Like when they integrated [live tutorials] into the website, I've been seeing more and more classes being booked.

Tony seems to enjoy teaching, and wants to be an effective teacher. However, given his situation, although he had some training as a TA as opposed to Clint, Tony also had very little in terms of general pedagogical training, and none when it came to ESL. This is training both of them talked about wishing they had had.

Tony on Language Learning Experiences

Speaking Mandarin

> *[Tutoring is] also an opportunity for me to use Chinese, and my Chinese is very rusty, you know, it's language like anything else here, and we don't use it for a while it just it rusts away, and you lose words and, you know, and so right and so, you know, a couple months ago, when I first started, you know, my Chinese was really rusty and it's still pretty rusty, but it's getting a little bit, you know, I'm adding a little bit of grease to that-- to the gears in its glow, smoothing a little bit more. You know, I'm hoping that it will continue to do that. But, and I think you know, so, so I guess what I'm saying is the added-- the adding the Mandarin component to my ESL teaching is even a more recent development than even just my, you know, amateurish foray into ESL teaching. It's really only been the past three months that I've been significantly incorporating Mandarin into my life, my class. You know, I would say that actually I— So right now I would consider my, my native language to be English, but that wasn't the case at all growing up. I grew*

up speaking Chinese first. I was born in Beijing, and I immigrated when I was two. So, I was very, I was very young when I came here. But still, it was, it was, you know, because I grew up in a Chinese speaking household, you know, that was my first thought-- was my native language, and I didn't learn English until I don't know, maybe third, fourth grade, and I remember very well actually being in— I forget the name of those classes, but it was like a, it was like a-- because I, I grew up in Queens in New York, and it was a very sort of, like, an immigrant community, and so the school I went to had a lot of immigrant kids who also didn't speak English. So, what they did was they took, they took a group of us out of the main class, right? This was like kindergarten through third grade, and they would take a, you know, they take us out and it was like, it was like remedial class, right? But it was for people who didn't speak English, and I-- there was like a special name for it, just, I forget that-- I forget what it is now, and I just remember being stuck there for a couple years and just like being frustrated like, oh I can't, I can't be in the normal class with all my friends because I have to, like, learn how to speak this stupid language. And I remember being frustrated too because I wouldn't be able to communicate, express myself in school, and I would get into fights because I didn't know how else to express. I just expressed myself with my fists as a kid, right? But yeah, no, it was a struggle. And then, and then eventually, you know, by like fourth, fifth grade I was fine, and I picked it up and, you know, little kids learn languages, quick, and in depth, so it-- I would say high school. I was bilingual. And then by college I was no longer bilingual because I'd forgotten a lot of the Chinese because once I had left that environment of home, you know, because really the only place I spoke Chinese was with my family, and, and so, once I left high school, once I graduated high school and went off to college and then

beyond and, you know, my life, the opportunities to speak Chinese became fewer and fewer ,and really it was just on the phone, you know, with my family or when I see them in person. And, and so, you know, that that's why today my Chinese ,I would say, is vastly inferior to, you know, I joke about this, but it's pretty accurate that I speak like a, you know, the average fourth grader, you, like, in terms of the extent of my vocabulary the, the extent of my syntax. It's, you know, it's serviceable is what I would describe it as; it gets the job done, and people can understand what I'm saying, but it's nothing, nothing to brag about.

Tony on Other Language Learning Experiences

I had asked Tony if he were fluent in any other languages, and he knew that I had been living in Guadalajara, Mexico for quite a few years, which is why he brought up Spanish.

You know, I, for a time, and you're going to make fun of me, and I wouldn't want to speak it in front of you, but I learned, so, I, for a while, I was fluent in Spanish. I learned it throughout high school. I– it– after college I was actually backpacking for a couple months in Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and, you know, [my Spanish] was, it was good enough to, to, to survive and get around. I wouldn't say it's good and it's certainly like it's awful now, you know. I've forgotten a lot of it now. It was once a time that I could, I could get away with saying that I was semi fluent in Spanish.

Tony did not speak any Spanish in front of me, but I was able to relate to his learning Spanish based on how my own Spanish was just "survival Spanish" when I first moved to Mexico.

My Story: A Personal Narrative

I started working at an online for-profit private university in the admissions department recruiting students who were either active-duty military or veterans. This is also where I had my

first experience with online asynchronous education due to the benefit of free classes employers received. It was also at this point in my life when I first visited Guadalajara, Mexico as a tourist. Among everything I saw was an English language school, and it occurred to me that I could teach English as a foreign language (EFL). Later, I searched for more information and found a Teacher of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certification course in Guadalajara. Like many who take intensive four-week TEFL certification courses, I wanted to use the certificate as a means of being able to find employment while traveling the world (Ferguson & Donno, 2003). Thus, I upended my life and moved to Guadalajara, Mexico.

The TEFL certification program was everything that Hobbs (2013) describes, a "basic starter pack…for survival" (p. 163) in the EFL classroom. The course consisted of 120 hours of in-class training, five hours of observation, and ten hours of our own observed practice teaching. The foundations of the course focused on the practical; we learned lesson planning, classroom management, and basic knowledge of grammatical and linguistic concepts that native speakers understand subconsciously. On the third day of the program, we were in the classroom doing our first session of practice-teaching. Moreover, the course did not cover any theory as to why we do what we do in the classroom. In other words, this certification program was truly a means to be able to enter an EFL classroom as a teacher and hit the ground running in terms of practice.

My First Year on the Job

There I was in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2008, "an awkward misfit [who] ha[d] to learn new manners" (Hall, 1993, p. 350) in this completely new cultural environment. I was hired by the language school where I had done my practice-teaching during the TEFL certification course. The person who had been scheduled to train me was not available on the day I arrived, and I got only minimal training as to how the school operated. I was given a locker to store my copies of

the books as well as a CD player and CDs they provided me with so I could play the books' corresponding audio files in class. I hauled these to each class I taught, all in different rooms of the building. This was unexpected for me because in Mexican schools the burden of going from class to class is on the teachers rather than the students. The language school operated the same way, even though most students were only there for an hour or two, the length of their classes. My scheduled classes were from nine o'clock in the morning to nine o'clock at night from Monday through Friday with six classes per day, and on Saturday one class that went from eight o'clock in the morning until noon. However, despite working twelve-hour days, I was only paid, and quite minimally, for the six teaching hours, but not for planning lessons nor spending time calling students on the phone who did not show up for class. Needless to say, due to those circumstances, I left the job after four months. For the rest of that year, I worked various jobs that placed me in companies teaching the employees. Although the in-company jobs paid much better, they were far away and required me to spend more time commuting than teaching. Thus, I decided to go freelance and teach students privately.

During that first year, I had also come across some online teaching opportunities. There was one out of Russia and another out of Taiwan that ended up becoming my bread and butter in terms of work and income. Both companies catered to adults, each had their own platforms, and each paid in U.S. dollars. While the Russian company focused on general conversation without lesson plans for individual students, the company from Taiwan had a platform that provided lesson plans and used video chat with a number of students in the class. Overall, this meant more pay for less work and less of my time. However, the only training either of these companies provided was how to use their respective systems. They did not provide their teachers with any pedagogical training, and the only hiring requirements for their EFL teachers was being native

speakers, although having a TEFL certification was a plus. It eventually occurred to me that if these companies could have online EFL schools, then I could start my own.

EstudiaInglesOnline.com

On February 7, 2009, my website for my online EFL school, EstudiaInglesOnline.com, went live. Despite the name of my website obviously targeting Spanish speakers, my first few students were students who had come with me from the Russian-based company I had been working for. Due to word-of-mouth, I began to accumulate more students from Russia, and I also had some students from other parts of the world as well. However, the vast majority were always from Russia. Eventually, I got to the point where I had to hire other teachers to work for me as independent contractors. Like the companies I had worked for, I did not offer any pedagogical training, but just explained operations. I did, however, require some form of TEFL certification. Teachers and students came and went, which meant my income was never consistent. I never knew if I was going to be able to pay my bills on time because I was never sure when I was going to get paid or expected pay did not come. Finally, the value of the Russian ruble crashed, causing prices for my Russian students to increase to the point where they could no longer afford my classes. I realized that one issue in EFL teaching is that for many students these classes are a luxury and one of the first things to go when money becomes tight for them, and money tight for them means no money for me. As such, because I no longer had teachers working for me or enough online students to keep me busy, I went back to taking on local private students. I focused on teaching in companies as an independent contractor, avoiding the middle-man by working for myself rather than for someone else, and thus became more profitable. I worked a few hours a week at four or five different companies and found myself spending the majority of my day driving around the city from place to place. However, due to the amount of traffic in the

city and the four rush-hours per day that Guadalajara has due to a culture where people go home for the family meal in the afternoon; commuting to multiple locations around the city every day got very old very fast.

Additionally, this is also how I discovered that the biggest difficulty in teaching adult students is that everything else in their lives such as their jobs and families take priority over English classes, even if their company is paying for them. Once again, this made my income extremely unsteady as students frequently canceled, and no teaching means no pay. Therefore, I had to find ways to earn extra money. I found an ad on an online job board for an online TEFL certification course looking for teacher trainers. I had been working in the field for quite some time, but the position required a master's degree in teaching English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL) or in applied linguistics. It then occurred to me that if I was going to advance my career in the field of TESOL and improve my personal finances, I needed to go to graduate school. Therefore, the search for online graduate schools began.

Graduate School

In February of 2015, I began a Master of Education degree in ESL and Adult Education at Northcentral University. This program connected theory to practice, and as such provided me with many of those "eureka" moments as I said to myself, "so this is why we do what we do in the classroom!" and "so that is why we learned what we learned in the TEFL certification course!" After finishing this program, I wanted to look at the topic from a linguistic point of view, so after graduation, I began an online MA program in Applied Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts – Boston. I was interested in the program not only because the job posting mentioned applied linguistics, but also because although some topics overlapped, it included additional topics that were not covered in my MEd program such as a specialization in foreign

language pedagogy, sociolinguistics, and second language acquisition (SLA) theory. Moreover, as I was studying TESOL through the lens of linguistics after having done so through a lens of education, I felt it would yield extra knowledge, theory, and ways of practice. Additionally, I was able to learn theories in SLA and psycholinguistics as well as in sociolinguistics.

I was accepted to begin the program in September of 2016, but one issue I had with the program was having to petition not to have to take the required practicum course. The rule was that if students had had a year of full-time language teaching experience, they could replace the practicum with another course. At that time, I had been teaching for eight years as my primary source of income, so I believed this should not be a problem. However, because my experience did not include a full-time position teaching in a school, but rather one-on-one tutoring online and with private students, they wanted me to take the practicum course. However, I stood my ground in order to claim that as my identity despite their assumptions. I petitioned, providing letters from both former students and employers, and eventually they waived the practicum requirement for me.

While in the Applied Linguistics program, I worked at another online English language school, this time based in Latin America. Once again, the lesson plans were pre-designed, and all they required of teachers was being a native English speaker with an American accent, as they believed this was the accent that their students from Latin America preferred. They did not have any requirements in terms of their teachers' education or experience. I enjoyed the job, but due to studying for the comprehensive exam at the end of the master's program, however, I was not able to continue the commitment. Later, in October of 2018 after finishing my MA in Applied Linguistics, I started working for an online for-profit ESL and content area tutoring company to which I have given the pseudonym "Simple Course," which is the context of this study.

After graduating with my MA, I was still unable to attain a stable, full-time teaching job with a livable salary. Therefore, there was only one thing left to do – get my doctorate degree. However, my options for programs were limited because it had to be online since I was living in Mexico, and it had to be at a university in the U.S. because I required financial aid, which does not pay for online degrees outside of the U.S. As such, my only real option for my doctorate was to enroll at Indiana University - Bloomington in the online Ed.D. program in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education. It is an excellent program, but I wondered if I would have problems meeting my career goal of tenured university professor with an Ed.D. rather than a Ph.D.

Where Am I Going?

There is more out there for me as a TESOL professional than being seen as an easily replaceable tutor. Once I can add the title of *Doctor* to my identity, I believe that the doors of opportunity will open for me and allow me to expand my career to EFL/ESL teacher training at the university level. However, I have found that in order to accomplish this, I need more direct teaching experience at the college level as the instructor of record. Therefore, I have upended my life again and have moved back to the United States to pursue opportunities teaching for colleges there. Once again, I had difficulty projecting my identity as a teacher when the majority of my teaching experience has been as a tutor. As such, I was rejected for a position teaching ESL at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. However, I did get hired as adjunct faculty for teaching academic ESL online at College of DuPage in Illinois, and I also got hired at Daytona State College in Daytona Beach, Florida in the Center for Business and Industry teaching ESL in companies like I often had done in Guadalajara, Mexico. This would work for me until graduation with my Ed.D. because as a grad student finishing my dissertation, I could not work full time.

I am now on the cusp of graduation as I write this paragraph. I am finishing up this dissertation and have applied to graduate on July 28, 2023. My jobs at Daytona State College and College of DuPage have since ended. At Daytona State, the company at which I was teaching ended their contract with the college, and College of DuPage is now focusing on providing work to adjuncts who can teach both online and on campus. It turns out that I was an emergency hire there because they needed someone to teach the course I taught that summer and the following two semesters I worked there. Therefore, as I finish my dissertation this summer, I am now left unemployed and without income, but surprisingly, I was eligible for financial aid based on taking the dissertation course this summer. This has given me time to search for a full-time, permanent teaching position starting in the fall 2023 semester. After sending out countless applications and a number of first interviews, a couple of second interviews, and a couple of campus visits, I have accepted a full-time position as EFL Professor at Arizona Western College in Yuma, Arizona. Although the school does not have tenure, and it is not a position teaching future ESL/EFL teachers, it is overall a position I believe will make me very happy, especially since I am now no longer going to be a transient educator.

CHAPTER 5: Findings and Analysis

Thematic Findings and Analysis

As discussed previously, the first stage of coding for this study was a thematic analysis, which revealed themes describing what tutors *do* and who they *are*, which reflects the notions of Gee (1989/2002) and Fairclough (2003) about identity based on *doing* and *being.* Additionally, the themes that emanate from the data illustrate how an educator's funds of knowledge (FOK) for teaching (Moll, et al.,1992) can be an underlying source of information that influences the sociocultural context in terms of the basis on which they choose their actions in a social setting. These themes include (a) the tutors' classroom practices; (b) the impact of their teaching context; and (c) the tutors' self-efficacy, and they reflect the tutors' FOK based classroom activities and strategies that tutors, such as the manner in which they incorporate scaffolding. Likewise, these tutor's teaching experiences working in the for-profit context form the foundation of their beliefs and pedagogical knowledge in both sociopolitical and sociocultural terms (Johnston, Pawan, & Mahan-Taylor, 2005), which builds their professional identities. As such, the *doing* and *being* of their experiences is the overall focus for how these tutors see themselves professionally.

The Tutors' Classroom Practices

As these tutors reported having little to no teacher education or formal training in ESL pedagogy, they have had to build their identities as teachers and develop their teaching practices, such as their uses of scaffolding, based on both their own experiences as learners and by trial and error, which is what makes up the tutors' funds of knowledge. During the first reflective-practice session, Clint and Tony were given the definition of the term *scaffolding* because they were not familiar with it in the context of teaching due to not having had specific teacher education or pedagogical training to give them a more theoretical foundation to their practices.

Tony: *"[Management]'ll say, like, 'congratulations, you used plenty of scaffolding, great job,' and I've gotten that comment before. I'm like, yes, I did it. What did I do? [laughs]"*

This example of Tony's way of thinking reflects that he is solely relying on his FOK based on experience and trial and error as opposed to theoretical background as support for his classroom practices. This also indicates that he did not know how to relate this to the practices he uses in his classroom. Additionally, these tutors indicated that they learned what to do in their respective classrooms in what they referred to as a "sink or swim" (Clint) and "trial by fire" (Tony) fashion. Although they did not have technical terms for their practices, their interviews show that they have a general understanding of and have embodied their FOK in the classroom through their actions. This can be seen in an example from the following data excerpt from Clint's interview:

Clint: *These supports are gradually removed as students develop autonomous learning strategies. Yeah, I, you know, like it's my unfamiliarity with the concept is just like it, it makes it hard to kind of to put my finger on this.*

Researcher: *Are you familiar with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development?* (ZPD)

Clint: *No, sorry.*

Researcher: *That's OK.*

Clint: *Maybe, maybe this concept is like, removing the supports, is actually like, you know, taking off the training wheels when you're learning to ride a bike… So, it's kind of trying to compliment that sort of oral explanation with a visual means.*

Clint's statement shows he understands the concept of scaffolding, though he did not know the term or theory. Likewise, Tony indicates the same understanding of constructivism during his initial interview as he discusses what he understands *scaffolding* to mean.

Tony: *"I guess I think that it's easier for the students to understand the concept when they can kind of apply it to something that's already within their range of understanding."*

Tony: *"A lot of the things that I do are similar to what is taught but not having been taught them I don't know what they're called."*

Additionally, because data generated via educators' reflections on their own teaching can give the researcher as well as the educators themselves an understanding of what they do in the classroom and how they do it (Sagor, 2000), both tutors explained their classroom practices in the interview process. Through this data, it was clear that although they had not specifically studied the concepts, both tutors had understandings of the concepts behind constructivism, reconceptualization, and the ZPD. Just as with standard teaching practices, the tutors were also able to discuss specific strategies in ESL teaching and content area teaching in the ESL setting that they had never been formally taught, but rather learned on their own through experience. They discussed this during their reflective teaching practice sessions.,

Tony: *"I should use more familiar or clear language. There are some parts [in this lesson] where I spoke very slowly, especially the parts where I need to be clear."*

Clint: *"I've learned just, just how to modify my approach for people who are not proficient in English, right? So, having to talk slow, having to be able to take academic definitions and things and kind of put them in their current knowledge"*

These strategies reveal the tutors' FOK and how they can demonstrate them in their teaching (Moll et al., 1992). This illustrates their understanding of what needs to happen in the classroom and actions they need to take as educators despite not having had formal training.

In addition to these aspects of their practice, the tutors were also able to discuss concepts

of sociocultural theory in teaching, indicating understanding. Included in their discourse were the ideas of building an environment conducive to learning, the importance of student engagement and classroom discussions, teachers being leaders and guides, building rapport, creating student- centered classrooms, and promoting autonomous learning in students, as seen in their discourse:

Tony: *"[Students] feel like they can take ownership of the lesson, it's not just the teacher volunteering facts, but they are also contributing to that building of knowledge. They feel ownership of the lesson, and they feel responsible, and…engaged."*

Clint: *"[Students]'re putting their entire trust into you…and, and you feel responsible for helping them, to guide them through…this puts me in a position where I'm more open to interaction like bi-directional teaching opposed to unidirectional."*

These tutors understand that their abilities to build relationships and rapport with students are effective teaching practices, and they want to be able to do this with their students. They want to guide these students to be successful in their learning and do what they can in the given context in order to make that happen. Being able to do this makes them effective educators.

The Impact of the For-Profit Teaching Context on Tutors' Self Efficacy

The educational context refers to the teaching environment the tutors are working in, and in the case of for-profit tutoring, data from this study indicates that the specific for-profit context of shadow education tutoring highly impacts these tutors in terms of the context having such a consumer-based nature. For example, the participating tutors discussed how the factors of money and profit being the underlying goals of Simple Course as their educational context affect their teaching in this excerpt of conversation between the two participating tutors during one of their combined reflective teaching sessions:

Tony: *"[Teaching is] no longer strictly pedagogical. It's– you're not, you're not there to teach… your teaching is, you know, sort of adulterated by other factors."*

Clint: "Y*eah, and I think with our platform, too, it's kind of like, well, you know, 'I'm paying all this money, and I paid for an hour with this teacher, and they just made me feel like an idiot the whole time' kind of thing. Hmm. And it's from that consumer-based perspective. That's not, you know, that's not– we can't really, can't really do that."*

Tony: *"It's the challenge we wrestle with every day, right, and then gets really much about our own ethics as it is anything else, sort of. I think people land differently in different places, you know, and I think you change over time. I think, as a teacher, I think I've gotten more jaded over time regarding this…I think the profit motive is clearer when you're, when you're a sort of– when you have this, this model or you're paying per– you're getting paid per lesson."*

Overall, these tutors seem to believe that the for-profit foundation of learning takes the pedagogy out of education, or at least substantially reduces it to a context of consumer and service provider as opposed to teacher and student. Additionally, they indicate that this setting reduces the professionalism of tutors and the teaching and learning transaction. The ultimate result, as Tony describes, is the educator becoming "jaded" due to the policy and practice that consumer-based education uses as its basis.

In their combined reflective teaching session, the three of us engaged in conversation as tutors for the same organization. In doing so, Tony and Clint also reported that management has indicated to them the need for coddling and placating students as customers. In having to do so, they reported how this blurs the line between academics and customer service. It puts additional

pressure on them as service workers, which they feel risks academic integrity and restricts their pedagogical practices.

> **Tony:** *"[management] said hey, you gotta, you gotta give them a little bit more of a bone here…if the grades were too low, management was saying you got to give them a higher grade for sales."*
>
> **Clint:** *"This affects what we can do in the classroom because we have to make the student feel good about progress even if they aren't doing a good job."*

Unfortunately, the definitions of customer service and academic integrity are very ambiguous in the shadow education industry due to profit being the bottom line, which, as seen, affects tutors' pedagogical practices. As a result, tutors have a difficult time being able to draw the line between academics and customer service. This issue of academic integrity is important because, although students may feel that since they are paying for the service, they can get whatever they want, the tutors cannot always give it to them without breaching the boundary of academic integrity.

> **Clint:** *"I have a really hard time kind of knowing where to draw the line with academic integrity, and I know other tutors have expressed the same ... We need to make this worth it for them. You know ... for shelling out all this money, we can't have kids going home and showing [their parents] Ds and Fs on their report cards.*
>
> **Tony:** *"Where is the line between academia and customer service? Where are the needs of the student based on what they're paying for and, I guess, rules of academia? Where do they, where do they meet? I mean, you can't go too far to one side or another; it's a fine balance."*

Both Clint and Tony feel the ambiguity of where the line of academic integrity is drawn, which leads to their conflicted identity in practice based on the consumer-based factor of the for-profit

educational context in terms of them making different choices and taking different actions in the classroom as opposed to teachers in a traditional setting. Balancing this line between customer service and academic integrity is difficult for tutors because they are stuck in the middle between the student as client, management, and their own academic ideologies. This is mostly due to not knowing where to draw the line with students. Tutors know they cannot just give students answers or rewrite or even add their own words to a student's essay. However, since students are customers, they expect results for the money in terms of their grades, and management expects tutors to satisfy their customers.

Additionally, because of the for-profit basis of their teaching context, these tutors feel that both management and students have unrealistic or inflated expectations of them and as to what can be academically accomplished in a one-hour live tutorial based on the ideals and promises Simple Course has sold to students in its marketing and that they expect the tutors to sell these as well. For example, the Simple Course website refers to tutors as "industry masters" and states that 60% of tutors are "from top 30 universities in the United States and top 10 universities in Canada" (translation by Google Translate) listing Ivy League universities such as Harvard and Yale among others. The website also states that 82% of tutors have over two years of teaching experience. The discourse of the participating tutors indicates that they do feel pressure from their interactions with students and management based on students being sold services. Tutors do not actually know what Simple Course has sold to students; they only have impressions. Just the simple fact that students have been sold these services and sold these tutors like commodities leads the tutors to assuming the impressions of students' and management's expectations of them and their classes before students even enter a virtual classroom or post a question or essay on the platform. These assumptions, in turn, then lead the tutors to doubt their

self-efficacy as shown by excerpts from the participants' discussion during their reflective practice session:

> **Clint:** *"There is kind of a real pressure to kind of feel like you've covered every base… pressure to make as much progress as I can in one hour."*
>
> **Tony:** *"The way [Simple Course] markets itself is in more grandiose terms, right? Like, 'oh, we will give you a hundred percent understanding of all the material; you'll be able to do– and you'll be an A+ student who will have gotten everything.'"*

This means that the tutors at Simple Course have perceptions of certain expectations they are required to meet. For example, according to Tony, tutors feel they are seen as "the magic bullet" that can provide a one-hour lesson that gives students everything due to the pressure from being positioned by Simple Course as subject matter experts who have educational backgrounds from prestigious universities, commodities that are sold to the students as being highly qualified educators. However, this does not mean that tutors necessarily have such pedagogical training.

> **Clint:** *"I feel real pressure not to fuck up ... If a student complains that we just got through the introduction, management would be like 'hey, what's going on here?'... Sometimes you feel compelled to kind of, like, overextend yourself because you need to walk away feeling like the students got something on paper."*

Although the participating tutors do not have specific pedagogical training, they know that this might be inferred by their students based on how Simple Course does their marketing. Therefore, tutors feel forced to manage this perceived conflict between expectations and reality based on the for-profit context. Expectations of tutors held by management and clients, i.e., students and their parents may not always be realistic in terms of what tutors can accomplish in a one-hour live tutorial. These tutors expressed their concerns about such unrealistic expectations, specifically

regarding live tutorials for essays, indicating pressure from their feelings that management and students expect measurable progress on writing an essay in a one-hour tutorial.

Also, along the line of customer service, Simple Class provides ongoing sales of services by helping students sign up for more tutorials, reassessing their needs, and selling a tutor to fit them, making consumer-based education very different from public education in terms of how the sociocultural context affects these tutors as educators. Simple Course provides students with an advisor, referred to as a Student Development Coordinator (SDC), who helps the student determine where they need help in their studies and when they should sign up for a live tutorial session or submit an essay for editing or just ask a question; as such, this SDC continues to sell the company's services as a means to both serve the students and to continue to generate profit. As the tutors discuss how Simple Course works as an organization during their combined reflective teaching session, Tony indicates his concern that the SDCs are not able to accurately gauge what the tutors can do in the given time frame of a live tutorial and only encourages students to spend money.

Tony: *"[The SDC's] job is to act as ongoing salesmen, to kind of continue to check up on students, you know, ostensibly to see how they're doing, but really to say, "Okay, well, where, where are your needs? Let me find a class that I can sell you to fill them." ... That's their job, and so they're salesmen."*

Tony: *"Understanding what we are unable to teach and what the student can or can't learn in the given time and context goes against the promise made to the students as customers. So, in terms of what you're considering, it's not solely the merit of the work, but other factors creep into it, including, you know, marketing and sales, and making sure that you're not ruining someone's business model."*

In other words, it is clear Tony feels that he is under pressure to fulfill promises Simple Course made to his students based on what they were sold. For example, so they are able to prepare for a lesson, tutors may be given the information that the student wants to cover the first fourteen chapters of the textbook in order to prepare for an upcoming exam, which is unrealistic. Clint agrees with Tony and chimes in with his experiences that illustrate the same concern.

Tony: *"I have to be cognizant of [what is promised to students] and I need to manage my expectations of the student and the students' expectations of themselves."*

Clint: *"We need to be realistic. I'm not going to begin and be able to teach them all the nuances of grammar and syntax, how to structure an essay, how to do research, find appropriate evidence and master a citation guide in one hour."*

Tony: *"Management polices us… They don't want us to kind of like show that uncertainty or lack of expertise to the student."*

This makes tutors feel the pressure that students were promised this could be done in one hour when in reality it cannot. Additionally, this shows how the pressure to fulfill such promises to students reduces a tutor's feeling of self-efficacy as they focus on their jobs in terms of customer service, especially if they believe management thinks they can show "uncertainty or lack of expertise" as educators. Also, these tutors know that in addition to the importance of building relationships with students, the fact that these students are also clients who are paying for the service means that quality of service is just as important. In order to be satisfied as customers, students must feel like they have learned or progressed in order to see the tutors as effective. This importance of student satisfaction and students having trust in them to help with their needs was expressed individually by each participating tutor during their individual reflective teaching practice sessions as shown in the excerpts below:

Tony: *"I try to kind of demonstrate to [students] that, you know, that I take it seriously in that I'll…do my best to go over and above to give them quality service…making the student feel like you've really done your due diligence."*

Clint: *"I try to demonstrate to students that I'm, you know, I'm invested in helping them learn, especially…where kids are paying for the quality of their education."*

For this reason, the perceptions that students and management have about tutors are of the utmost importance to them because they want to be able to fulfill the expectations of each. The conflict occurs because these promises were not made by the tutors themselves.

Like anyone else, tutors work in order to earn a living because they have to pay their bills. However, due to the payment schemes of "gig" work and "pay-per-pop" teaching that come with being an independent contractor, there is not a regular salary. Tutors at Simple Course are paid on a monthly basis based on the credits they have accumulated for work completed during the previous month, and they are paid based on the type of work they do. Appendix E, as an example, outlines payment for essay tutoring. For live tutorials, tutors are paid an average of $40 Canadian dollars (CAD) per hour, not counting any preparation time for the class. For questions they answer on the platform, Tutors are paid $15 CAD per question, which can be increased based on subsequent questions. Tutor moderators are paid $5 CAD for reviewing other tutors' work of answering questions on the platform and $15 for reviewing the essay tutoring work other tutors have done (see Appendix E).

This model of being paid per lesson, essay, or question puts these tutors in the position of worrying about getting a sufficient amount of work in order to yield an income sufficient enough to pay their bills. They explain that they have to focus on taking the available work and even helping to create it so they can make money and how this affects their teaching:

Clint: *"Our goal as a teacher is not strictly to teach and to assess students' knowledge, but also to make money. Teachers make money, but if you're on a salary there is no sort of— you don't have an additional incentive to make a sale, right?"*

Tony: *"The profit motive is clearer when you— when you're getting paid per lesson."*

Additionally, this model puts tutors in the position to have to act as salespeople in order to get additional work from students. This does not fall in line with the traditional image of what it means to be a teacher. Therefore, this aspect of the for-profit teaching context not only creates additional pressure for tutors in terms of earning a living, but it also causes them conflicts with their professional identities as educators.

Tony: *"if I withhold information, I'm withholding it so that I could sell it to them later. I phrase it so that like next time it's what we didn't have time to cover in class today ... and so, so, I think that changes the relationship a little bit ... our, our end goal is as much profit as it is ensuring that students learn something."*

Profit being an end goal for the tutors as well as for the company affects their ability to make a living. In comparison to traditional teachers, the effects of the for-profit context in which they work dictates much of their practice as does the financial struggle they face due to the instability of the job. This instability of their jobs impacts these tutors' self-efficacy in their abilities as educators.

However, despite the negative effects the tutors experience of feeling stuck in the middle, being sold as commodities, and being put in positions of salespeople, which deprofessionalizes them, there are specific benefits the context of for-profit education offers these tutors that they would unlikely be able to have in a traditional educational context. For example, the tutors discussed their autonomy and freedom in terms of the flexibility they have over their own work

schedules as they have no requirements whatsoever as to how much, how often, or at what time they work. As long as they meet the schedules and deadlines for the work they choose to take on, there are no other requirements. Additionally, they can take time off whenever they want or need to, although without pay. In a way, it seems that the freedom they have in the for-profit context may have the ability to replenish some of the power and agency that it also takes away.

Tony: *"If I don't want to teach, I don't have to, and sometimes, honestly, I don't want to teach for weeks at a time…the appeal of working from home, working online, and, uh [laughs] and working with almost complete flexibility over my schedule."*

Clint: *"I can, you know, feel free to, you know, have, have the time to do what I want. I can go on vacation whenever I want and for how long I want."*

Overall, however, despite this freedom, the multiple conflicts that lie between academia and consumerism based on the for-profit context in which they teach has substantial effects on these tutors that affect their self-efficacy as educators as well as their abilities to make a living, thus deprofessionalizing them. While this situation may be ideal for some tutors, the lack of any stability or benefits such as healthcare put many at risk.

These tutors also indicated their effectiveness is directly related to their abilities to form relationships and rapport with their students. Their students' perceptions of them as teachers is something that both tutors explicitly expressed was important to them in terms of both customer service and their professional identities:

Tony: *"Teaching was more effective because, you know, you're, you're making a connection with [students], personal connection with them."*

Clint: *"I enjoy fostering, kind of, these, you know, maybe not entirely personal relationships with students, but, you know, having a, a rapport with them."*

These tutors believe that connecting with and developing relationships with their students makes them more effective in the classroom, thus giving them *confidence* based on their students' perceptions of them as educators. However, due to the Simple Course platform being set up in an anonymous fashion and students' questions and essays are accepted by tutors on a first-come-first-serve basis, it is only possible to maintain this rapport if students continue to request the same tutor, which can and does happen. However, this is not the norm.

Next, not only do students' perceptions affect tutors' sense of self-efficacy, but their notions of management's perceptions of them also have an effect. Although tutors can see that Simple Course markets them as highly qualified commodities to sell students, tutors also feel Simple Course sees them as being a dime-a-dozen based on tutors' impressions of management attitude as Clint and Tony discuss during their combined reflective teaching session:

Clint: *"You're not an investment for them, right? Because you're dispensable."*

Tony: *"I just sometimes find there's not a lot of understanding or benefit of the doubt."*

Another example of this attitude that the tutors discussed as having experienced is when Simple Course changed their payment system to paying tutors in Canadian dollars (CAD) rather than in U.S. dollars (USD), which, due to the exchange rate, amounted to an approximate 25% pay-cut for all the tutors living outside of Canada because CAD was valued (and still is) at 75 cents for each USD. As an example, receiving $50 CAD for an essay instead of $50 USD meant that after the currency was exchanged to USD, tutors would receive only approximately $37.50 USD. Moreover, management also changed the credit adjustment system for essay tutors to pay them less for doing more work (see Appendix E), which made tutors feel unappreciated and unhappy, breeding their lack of confidence in Simple Course as a stable employer. However, due to the nature of tutors being independent contractors, they can either take what they are given or leave,

and management does not seem to care which option tutors decide because the perception is that they can always find more tutors, like we are a dime a dozen.

However, although the for-profit setting in which the tutors work has been perceived as weakening their professional identities, according to these tutors, teaching in the online setting is something that has positively impacted their confidence in their abilities to work as educators and gain their own pedagogical knowledge of ESL teaching. However, each tutor explains in their initial interviews this is via experience rather than specific pedagogical training in TESOL:

Tony: *"The online platform…'s giving me more confidence because online teaching is—I see it as the wave of the future, and every sign is there from all of the colleges now offering online courses."*

Clint: *"[The online platform]'s really, it's what's given me an opportunity to, to carve out a career as a teacher."*

Tony discussed how it has been difficult for the former cohort members who graduated from the doctorate program he was in to find tenure-track faculty positions at universities. Despite some of the issues above that have reduced his *confidence* in terms of Simple Course, the online platform gives Tony *confidence* as he believes in the continued growth of online teaching and tutoring, whether for universities or in the for-profit shadow education sector, and its continued existence as a means of employment for him. Likewise, Clint sees the online platform as an opportunity to teach without being credentialed, giving him self-efficacy based on his ability to work doing something that he would otherwise not have been able to do professionally.

Dialectical Findings and Analysis

The dialectical analysis of this study is based on the discourse analysis methodology as discussed in Chapter 3. Overall, the discourse of the participating tutors reveals the way in which

they discussed their professional identities based on their activities as a means by which they can express themselves as educators based on what they *do* (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2002). The differences between *tutors* and *teachers* and how it conflicts with their professional identities based on what they do in the classroom and how they see themselves leads to a dichotomy in terms of the word *teacher*, what this word means, who it refers to, and who has the privilege of claiming this term as related to their professional identity, and the social capital that comes with it. As such, this inequality in social capital and power is reflected in the participants' discourse.

Discourse as Identity in Activity

When Clint and Tony talk about what they do, they say that they *teach,* or they are *teaching* and that they have *taught.* They also relate this word with themselves by use of the first-person personal pronouns *I, me,* and *my,* indicating that they believe their activities in their respective classrooms is *teaching*. This is seen during each of their initial interviews:

> **Clint:** *"…I'm teaching them in an ESL course…"*
>
> **Tony:** *"…if I'm teaching about developing a thesis, or If I'm teaching about something I consider less important…"*
>
> **Tony:** *"…my own personal teaching experience…"*
>
> **Clint:** *"…insight into my own teaching…"*
>
> **Tony:** *"…my ESL teaching…"*

The use of this verb as their working action in conjunction with the first-person subject pronoun *I* implies that they see themselves as *one who teaches*; it is what they do based on their classroom activities. As Tony indicates, his consideration and judgment of the importance of topics in a classroom, this indicates that he feels some agency within his own teaching and his own online classroom setting. In terms of Bourdieu's (1989) theory of social capital, this means that Tony

feels he should have the social capital of a *teacher*. Moreover, as both Clint and Tony discuss their work, they take ownership of their classroom activities in terms of teaching as well as their professional status as educators and their experience educating, which furthers their sense of agency (Bourdieu, 1989). The discourse of these tutors includes regular use of the possessive adjective *my*, further indicating their feeling of wielding power in their own classrooms as educators. This relates to how both tutors see themselves professionally as being teachers based on the fact they teach, and they also associate themselves with the teaching profession, which gives them power and agency in developing their professional identities with intent to achieve the associated social capital (Bourdieu, 1989).

Just as they relate to the concept of *teaching* as what they do in terms of being teachers, Clint and Tony also identify with the concept of being a *tutor* as what they do, as well as relating to the organization they work for based on their use of the first-person pronoun *I*.

Clint: *"…I had a criminology tutorial…"*

Tony: *"…I had a recent LT where the student was going over different essay topics…"*

Clint: *"…I see other tutors or people who have tutoring businesses…"*

Tony: *"…I now identify as a Mandarin-speaking tutor…"*

Once again, as seen with the participants' use of the first-person subject pronoun *I* and the first-person possessive adjective *my* Clint and Tony mark tutoring, being a tutor, and tutorials as their identities based on their work in terms of *being and doing* (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2002). One other note of interest here is their use of the term *tutorial* and more specifically *LT* (live tutorial) rather than *class* because this exemplifies their use of Simple Course's jargon as a discourse marker directly reflecting their identification with and belonging to that discourse community (Gee, 1989). Moreover, Tony stating that he identifies as a *tutor* and Clint's use of the phrase

“other tutors” in this context indicates that both participants classify themselves as members who belong to this in-group (van Dijk, 2016), which means they would benefit from any social capital that comes with belonging to Simple Course (Bourdieu, 1989). However, although participants also identify themselves as *teachers* based on their professional activities, the social capital that comes with traditional teaching contexts seems to be absent.

Teachers and Teaching vs. Tutors and Tutoring

Although teachers and tutors both teach, their roles in the classroom and their classroom activities and practices are somewhat different (Bray, 2014, 2021,2022; Cross, 2006). As both Clint and Tony discuss their work and classroom practices, they each indicate that being *tutors* is very different from being traditional, mainstream *teachers*. They talk about this difference as being primarily affected by the setting in which they teach as well as the limitations they find that come with it. Here they discuss this aspect of their work in their initial interviews:

Clint: *“…as someone who works more on the private side of education as a tutor where students are paying for, for the quality of the-- quality of their education…”*

Tony: *“…online teaching has its advantages, too…I do my teaching online now”*

Clint: *“…You know, I guess I like one-on-one in person teaching. It may not-- maybe not tutoring necessarily but just, you know, I guess helping, you know, explaining subject matter…”*

Tony: *“…test prep, I guess, is, is useful. I don’t really think of the test prep as teaching as it’s a completely different animal because you’re tutoring for a test, and it’s sort of—I feel sort of a little bit dirty doing it…it’s kind of like… you’re working for the other side….It’s like you’re, you’re a government politician and then you become a corporate lobbyist,…so I have mixed feelings about it…”*

Here, participants use comparative linguistic structures to describe how their setting and work is different from that of the traditional mainstream public-school teacher and setting. The issues they highlight are very specific in terms of their setting in online and for-profit tutoring, such as the students being paying customers, the advantages to online teaching, one-on-one teaching, the common focus on test preparation, as well as the tutor's need to focus on their own profit along with pedagogy. Additionally, this alludes to the conflict the participating tutors experience that one can only be considered a *teacher* if they are a traditional, mainstream teacher in the public education system, and that the teaching experience of *tutors* does not count toward this, and once again, Clint and Tony feel they are not "recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17). This indicates a higher level of social capital is associated with the work experience of traditional, mainstream teachers as compared to that of tutors (Bourdieu, 1989), and tutoring experience is less valuable for prospective employment in education. Moreover, Tony's explicit description of his feelings about test preparation, he compares tutoring versus teaching in terms of activity, indicating that it is not what a traditional, mainstream teacher does. In other words, this shows conflict around being able to claim the title of *teacher* based on his professional ways of *being and doing* (Fairclough, 2003). His discourse shows predication in terms of rhetoric; phrases such as *the other side*, *government politician*, and *corporate lobbyist*, evoke negative presuppositions or implicatures of the social action tutors do (Jäger & Maier, 2016; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016), but because their work also has the positive aspect of helping students, Tony's words express his mixed feelings, which further indicate the conflict of being a *tutor* rather than a *teacher*.

The t/Teacher Dichotomy

There is a difference between what these tutors do and what traditional teachers do, which impacts how they see themselves in terms of whether or not they are teachers. Critically

examining their discourse reveals how these tutors express existing social inequalities of this conflict based on the differences between what tutors and teachers do. For example, Tony's discourse as he discusses his activities as a tutor contains rhetorical predication that alludes to or evokes negative presuppositions about tutors:

> **Tony:** *"I don't really think of test prep as teaching as it's a completely different animal because you're tutoring for a test, and…I feel sort of a little bit dirty doing it…it's kind of like…you're working for the other side….It's like you're a government politician and then you become a corporate lobbyist…so I have mixed feelings about it. But it helps me pay the bills, so I can't really complain."*

Tony uses phrases such as *"completely different animal"* and doing it feels *"a little bit dirty"* as it is *"working for the other side"* like *"a government politician"* or *"a corporate lobbyist"* who has crossed over from academia to sales and profit. As such, there is also a political theme to his discourse that expresses the for-profit, capitalistic or neoliberal setting that is the direction that shadow education continues toward.

Both Clint and Tony distinguish the differences between what they do as tutors compared to what a teacher does, showing these tutors' feelings of conflict in their professional identities as seen in their discussions in their initial interviews:

> **Tony:** *"I think I do consider myself a teacher – I take pride in that…noble profession."*
>
> **Tony:** *"…The fact that I have-- I have that sort of professional identity…as a teacher, I see myself as a peer, as a more knowledgeable peer…"*
>
> **Tony:** *"…my amateurish foray into ESL teaching."*
>
> **Tony:** *"I don't think I consider myself a teacher like a normal teacher."*

Here, Tony's statements are a significant illustration of the conflict that the participating tutors feel in terms of their professional identities as *teachers.* Additionally, Clint noted during his initial interview that despite not having had specific education as a teacher, the for-profit shadow setting has positively viewed him as a subject-matter expert, allowing him to teach:

> **Clint:** *"I almost kind of don't really look at myself as the- as a teacher; I see myself as more of a consultant kind of thing…I know that it's not an entirely accurate conception. I don't really know how to explain it."*

> **Clint:** *"I've never taught in a public school for one. I think that's like a sort of like a hurdle to call yourself a true teacher. In order to call yourself a 'true teacher' you have to have experience working in the traditional public-school setting because it's like the boot camp of teaching. You have to have a few—a few years teaching public school, I think, to really like—that's the, like, the boot camp of teaching, that—it's hard to call yourself a true teacher without having done that."*

It is clear from this excerpt that Clint has a conflict as to whether or not he can claim the title of *teacher* for his professional identity, illustrating that same conflict. While he teaches in terms of his *being* and *doing*, what Clint does is not a match with the image of who a traditional teacher is in a traditional educational setting.

Being *teachers* Instead of *Teachers*

The participating tutors indicated that their lack of formal training, most specifically not having had an ESL teaching practicum has affected their self-confidence, professional identities, and, in turn, their self-efficacy in the classroom, especially initially in their careers. This was specifically based on how they might appear to their students, and whether or not students would take them seriously as educators. However, as they have attained more experience teaching

during their time at Simple Course, the tutors indicate that through their experiences they have learned about teaching.

Tony: *"...sort of little tricks that I picked up along the way to be a more effective ESL teacher,"*

What they have learned on the job makes them feel more effective in the classroom. However, both tutors indicated they believe that their pedagogical knowledge, and therefore their efficacy, could improve with additional training and professional development. Additionally, formal training, according to Johnston et al. (2005), could assist in further developing their efficacy. If training builds efficacy in the classroom, and if a lack of training leads the tutors to feel they do not have that efficacy, they cannot professionally identify as a teacher, thus creating conflicts for the tutors regarding what they do in the classroom and how they can construct their professional identities as educators. In addition to professional development, both tutors indicated that self-efficacy in terms of being teachers, especially ESL teachers, is a factor in terms of how they believe their students perceive them. In turn, if their students do not perceive them to be effective teachers, then they are not "real" teachers at all.

Clint: *"I still don't consider myself an ESL teacher; I'm just pretending to be one."*

Tony: *"They're going to see the wizard behind the curtain, right? And he's like this scared little guy just trying to pretend to be a college teacher."*

Tony: *"I don't know if I'm doing things necessarily in the correct way, I could be more effective at doing whatever it is I'm doing."*

Clint: *"I do wish I had more official ESL training"*

Tony: *"I think [professional development] would be tremendously enlightening"*

The tutors are expressing feelings of impostor syndrome, which can affect classroom practice and their self-efficacy if the tutors think they might not know what they are doing due to never having had formal pedagogical or ESL teacher training. Not having had "official" training can also affect their career potential. For example, Clint indicated in this initial interview that this would affect him if he applied for a traditional teaching position in a traditional public school:

> **Clint:** *"I don't have any credentialing as an educator, so if I was to apply in the public schooling system, I don't know if I'd really have a leg to stand on"*

Clint makes a valid point because being an ESL/EFL takes education and training in language pedagogy; just because someone speaks a language as their mother tongue does not mean they can teach that language. Although the participating tutors have experience that has given them some understanding of the practical and theoretical concepts behind language teaching, these tutors know they need some kind of professional development and they do not have the same credentials other ESL/EFL educators in more traditional settings have. These tutors have the necessary content knowledge to teach the academic subjects they tutor, but that is not the entire picture of teaching. It is important that teachers have pedagogical content knowledge, in other words the knowledge of how to teach that content (Shulman, 1986, 1987). Because this is where subject matter experts such as the participating tutors can turn their knowledge into teaching practice, without pedagogical knowledge educators have less in terms of funds of knowledge to draw from in order to do this. Overall, both tutors feel that training and professional development would give them the pedagogical knowledge base necessary to mitigate the impostor syndrome they feel as well as help them further develop their classroom practices. However, due to the for-profit context, Simple Course cannot mandate tutors to participate in professional development because they are independent contractors rather than employees. Therefore, any extra training in

pedagogy would have to be on a volunteer basis on the part of the tutors, and it would either be paid for by Simple Course or by the tutors, which would increase their respective expenditures and decrease their respective profits. As this would not result in a pay increase for tutors, it does not make financial sense for them to do this just for the sake of working for Simple Course.

> **Tony:** *"You're not an investment for [Simple Course], right? Because you're dispensable. That's the model."*

Gig workers and other part-time workers are significantly less of an investment for companies or educational institutions than full-time employees. The places where educators work not wanting to invest in the educators they employ helps deprofessionalize them and justifies Sagor's (2000) comparison of some educators to blue-collar factory workers.

Based on their discourse, the conflict in identity in regard to being *one who teaches* versus being a *teacher* is based on the professional activity of each group, i.e., their professional ways of *being and doing* (Fairclough, 2003). As such, the conflict creates a dichotomy between *teacher* (lowercase t), a seemingly marginalized group of those who teach, including tutors, versus *Teacher* (capital T), which includes traditional, mainstream K-12 public or private school *Teachers* or full-time college or university professors and instructors with all the rights and privileges they have that are associated with the social capital (Bourdieu, 1989) that this "noble profession," as Tony calls it, provides them. For example, Tony, who said he considers himself a teacher and takes pride in that, directly indicates conflict in this identity, because he says he is not a "normal teacher," which Clint also echoes in his discourse. In this case, Tony is talking about a public-school teacher with that phrase as is Clint when he talks about a "true" teacher. As such, it seems there is a certain power or social capital that comes with being a "real," "true," or "normal" *Teacher* (capital T) that these tutors as *teachers* (lowercase t) do not have based on

their identity in activity. As an example, traditional *Teachers* are only put in the situation where they have to sell their services in order to get enough work to get paid if they are underpaid in the first place and need to do tutoring for extra money. Additionally, they are not subject to the foundation of making profit affecting their classrooms. This illustrates the conflict in identity that the participating tutors feel because they view public K-12 schoolteachers as the iconic definition of what *Teacher* (capital T) means, indicating that because they are not included, the negative presupposition is that they as tutors or *teachers* (lowercase t) are *phony*, *abnormal*, *invalid*, or *lesser,* and, just like Tony says, even *amateurs* when compared to the traditional, mainstream public-school teacher. As such, Clint and Tony feel they are not "recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17) as educators. Additionally, Tony also compares *Teachers* (capital T) seen by students as being authority figures, whereas he as a *teacher* (lowercase t) is a "more knowledgeable peer" who does not have the same authority. Although each of their discourses indicate that they as *teachers* (lowercase t) *teach*, they are not *Teachers* (capital T) because what they do is not what a *Teacher* (capital T) does, just as Clint indicates that he consults with students to help them understand the material or the assignments their *Teacher* (capital T) gives them. Once again, this dichotomy is based on the conflict in professional identity based on their ways of *being and doing* (Fairclough, 2003) being different from that of *Teachers* (capital T) and affects the amount of social capital that each group has access to (Bourdieu, 1989).

Discussion

Firstly, it is important to remember that the findings from this study are based on the voices and lived experiences of these particular tutors in this particular teaching context rather than any other teachers, tutors, or transient educators. The findings from the thematic analysis reflect the findings in literature regarding how the context of consumer-based education affects

these tutors' professional identities. In other words, this for-profit context illustrates how the professional identity formation of these tutors is "in crisis" just as Xiong et al. (2020) describe, making them professionally unstable and vulnerable. Thus, findings also support the literature about how the EFL/ESL shadow education "can be an unstable, marginalized, impermanent occupation" (Johnston, 1997). For example, Yung and Yuan's (2020) study "sheds light on how implicit values and beliefs about shadow education are created and manifested in educational and social discourses" (p. 153). Additionally, because these tutors see themselves as being inferior to traditional teachers based on not having had specific pedagogical training and because of their for-profit setting, this reflects how, professionally, "their assigned identit[ies] further confirm their professional vulnerability as a disadvantaged cohort of higher education academics" (Xiao, 2016, p. 4) as well as how "distance education is still in a marginalized position in China" (p. 5). Overall, the findings from this study support those from existing literature, and they illustrate the marginalized position of these tutors and how their for-profit setting limits the amount of social capital they have access to in terms of power and agency (Bourdieu, 1989) and how that affects their abilities to build their own professional identities as educators and embrace the role of *tutor* as educator and separate it from the role of *teacher*.

Based on the dialectical discourse analysis, the participating tutors, Clint and Tony see themselves as *teachers* based on their work-related activities, and they take ownership, agency, and even pride in that, referring to what they do as *teaching*. However, they do not identify with the idea of being a traditional *Teacher* based on the online, one-to-one setting of their work, and for the profit context of Simple Tutor. However, because they do teach, this means there is an internal conflict with the way in which they see themselves professionally and their professional activities based on the disconnect they feel between themselves and the traditional *Teacher*,

which affects not only their professional identities, but also their access to social capital and power based on their recognition and legitimacy as educators (Bourdieu, 1989). The findings of this study also echo those of Trent's (2016). The findings of his study "expose and problematize discourses which establish a rigid division between educators providing private tutoring and those in mainstream schools and constrain the capacity of the former to construct their preferred professional identities" (p. 115). As such, I suggest that what I have referred to, based on the current study, as the t/Teacher dichotomy illustrates the division Trent (2016) refers to because it further explains this division by indicating that *one who teaches* can be either a *Teacher* (capital T) or a (lowercase t) *teacher* with the respective rights and responsibilities, or lack thereof, based on the social capital to which they have access.

Furthermore, the lack of recognized social capital and legitimacy that the tutors in this study as *teachers* (lowercase t) expressed also echoes what Xiao (2016) found in that their assigned identities "further confirms their professional vulnerability as a disadvantaged cohort" (p. 4) as well as echoing the identity Xiong et al. (2020) found of "tutors as underdogs" (p. 1). Therefore, it is becoming clear that when those who teach are vulnerable and disadvantaged underdogs, they do not have the same type and amount of social capital and power, which can deprofessionalize or delegitimize them (Bourdieu, 1989) as *Teachers*. As such, findings from this study suggest that the unequal distribution of social capital and power these tutors have as *teachers* could be reduced with training and professional development.

This unequal distribution of social capital that participants expressed they feel between *Teachers* and *teachers*, implies that they feel marginalization. This marginalization was first noted by Johnston (1997) whose findings about the EFL/ESL teaching profession "confirm empirically…that EFL/ESL can be an unstable, marginalized, impermanent occupation" (p. 707).

This is reflected in the findings of the current study as both participants indicated they were uncertain as to whether they would continue to make teaching their career. Johnston (1999) also argues that the EFL/ESL profession exists at the periphery of education as do its teachers who occupy this margin as "an ill-defined place amidst linguistics, education, English, and a host of other disciplines" (p. 276). Additionally, Johnston, Pawan, & Mahan-Taylor (2005) believe this is because the "disjuncture between perceived and claimed identity may be seen as a prime source of the marginalization" (p. 62), which matches the findings leading to the t/Teacher dichotomy presented in the current study. Although these other studies did not specifically include online shadow education ESL/EFL tutors, it seems their findings can likely be extended to include this group. However, due to the for-profit and online contexts of the tutors in the current study being a significant part of the basis on which the participating tutors expressed their feelings, these tutors also seem to experience intersectionality in terms of their professional identities. This intersectionality is seen in the marginalization of both being in the ESL setting and being a tutor. Therefore, as ESL tutors, they are doubly marginalized. Overall, the inequality in social capital this implies and is its potential negative impact on the professional aspirations of these tutors if both they and their potential employers view their professional experience as being equivalent to or even lesser than that of *Teachers* (capital T).

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

Shadow education and other forms of private tutoring have made a significant impact on traditional education because this industry has not only continued to grow in size, but has also moved away from the sidelines or "shadows" and has become a player in the overall field of education (Aurini et al., 2013; Bray & Zhang, 2023). This phenomenon has more recently begun to be investigated in educational research, which has led to further questions and topics that require understanding. One of the most specific of these is the topic of the tutors themselves and who they are, and the current study continues in that direction answering questions where other research has left off. As such, the study explores the lived experiences of educators working in the for-profit shadow education industry as tutors at an education technology company with the pseudonym of Simple Course. Simple Course provides ESL and content area tutoring for Chinese international students studying abroad in English-speaking countries, primarily Canada, the U.S., Australia, and the U.K., this research has the aim of personifying these tutors and the development of their professional identities based on their own words as they discuss their stories, their experiences, and their teaching practices. This chapter summarizes the findings of the current study, their implications, and recommends areas for future research.

Summary of Findings

This study examines the lived experiences of two ESL content-area tutors working in the for-profit shadow education industry. Based on this study data along with my own experiences in ESL for-profit shadow education at the same organization as the participants, I contend that in order to reduce existing marginalization and deprofessionalization of educators in the EFL/ESL and online settings, especially those working in the for-profit shadow tutoring industry, can be made possible by allowing these educators to have full-time, permanent positions and providing

them with the necessary professional development to become better educators as opposed to just subject-matter experts. Due to the conflict the participants in this study indicate they experience between their professional identities as *doing* and *being* (Gee, 1989, 2002) in their classrooms and the traditional image of who a teacher is, I believe these proposed changes can help such educators maintain their professionalism. This would provide these tutors with more access to the necessary social capital as a foundation on which to build professional identities as *Teachers* (capital T) as opposed to *teachers* (lowercase t). With these changes, educators who are ESL educators, online educators, and other educators, such as adjunct instructors and even substitute K-12 teachers can gain access to the social capital and the associated power and agency afforded to those educators who fit the traditional image of *Teacher.* If educators continue to have unequal access to such social capital, they are likely to remain deprofessionalized based on the conflict between how they see themselves professionally and how they see *Teachers* and thus continue to struggle to gain equity with educators working in more traditional contexts.

A thematic analysis of the participating tutors' discussion of their lived experiences as educators in the for-profit industry reveals the three primary themes of the tutors' classroom practices, the impact of their teaching context, and tutor efficacy within that context. The first theme regarding these tutors' experiences came about as they viewed video excerpts of their online live tutorials and discussed their classroom activities. In doing so, it became clear that although these tutors have had little to no pedagogical training and no training in ESL or language pedagogy, they used effective strategies in their use of scaffolding as they presented their lessons and worked with their students. Next, their discussion of their teaching context, especially the for-profit setting, indicated that their classroom practices are specifically impacted in that the organization's management focuses on the students as customers and their satisfaction

with services as a means for justified re-enrollment and continued company profit. The tutors discussed how seeing students as customers puts certain pressures on them in their classrooms that they do not feel exist in the traditional side of education as well as how the context affects their own livelihood working on a "pay-per-pop" or gig worker status and how unstable the work can be. The last theme of efficacy explains how these factors affect the tutors' overall ability to be effective in the classroom. They discussed how this setting affects their abilities to meet what sometimes can be unrealistic expectations of students and management as well as their abilities to build relationships with their students. Overall, the participants indicated that they feel a sense of inferiority and deprofessionalization in their position in comparison to traditional teachers. Despite this, their position does come with certain benefits of choosing their own hours and not working when they do not want to, which traditional teachers do not enjoy. However, these perks may not be worth the lack of professionalism, benefits, or job stability that come with the for-profit context.

A dialectical critical discourse analysis of how these tutors discuss their lived experiences in terms of their work indicates that there is a disconnect between their own professional views of themselves as educators as compared to how they see traditional classroom teachers, which leads to what I have referred to as the t/Teacher dichotomy. This conflict about what it means to claim the title of "teacher" indicates how *Teachers* (capital T) are seen as those traditional educators in classrooms, most specifically in the K-12 setting, but can also include those full-time university professors and instructors, whereas a *teacher* (lowercase t) includes any type of non-traditional teachers such as tutors, online educators, adjunct faculty, K-12 substitute teachers, and, most of all, those educators who work in the for-profit shadow education setting. These perceptions are based on the feelings of inequality in the distribution of social capital

based on the setting(s) and purpose(s) *teachers* serve, which differ from those of *Teachers.* The social capital recognized by traditional education is not the same as that which is recognized by *teachers* because in the case of *teachers* it is gained on an individual basis. Therefore, because not all social capital is seen as equal, there still exists a gap between these two types of educators, and the concept of what a *t/Teacher* is cannot be limited to mean *one who teaches.* As such, perhaps it is time to reconsider what is meant by this term and how the connotative meanings the word holds are affecting those non-traditional educators whose work does not coincide with that image.

Implications

Results from this study indicate that the for-profit setting of shadow education can greatly impact the practices of educators working in that setting and, in turn, their professional identities and attitudes about their teaching as an educational context based on an economic foundation can deprofessionalize educators. In the for-profit shadow education sector, ed-tech companies exist to make a profit on educational services and design their business models in a way to maximize their profits. This includes how they pay workers, whether full-time, part-time, or contractors and how much they charge their customers, i.e., students, for the services, leading to some of the societal issues that have been seen in profit-based education such as neoliberalism and social inequality based on income as discussed in chapter 2. In a broader view for education in general, this implies that teaching contexts for other transient educators, such as adjunct faculty and substitute teachers, could be affected similarly as their opportunities to work also come down to economics in terms of budget. While these teaching contexts of these educators lie outside the scope of the current study, identifying this impact of economics on education and the impact of the movement of education towards the gig economy on both teaching and on the educators

themselves, the results of this study imply that there are certain areas where current policy and practice should be changed.

Suggested Changes in Practice and Policy

Because shadow education seems to be a phenomenon that is here to stay, it is important to consider integrating it into the overall industry of education as opposed to something that is foreign, intrusive or a combating force against traditional education, but rather something that can complement it. If this is going to happen successfully, educators working in the for-profit shadow education sector must be professionally valued instead of deprofessionalized. Results from this study suggest that this deprofessionalization is based on the for-profit nature of the teaching context, which makes the educators feel unstable in their work, reduces their confidence in their capabilities, and hinders the development of their professional identities as opposed to fostering them.

Moreover, because the current practices and policies regarding non-traditional educators as gig workers not only deprofessionalizes them, but based on their inconsistent workloads, being employed on a contingency basis without benefits, and oftentimes paid less than a living wage, this instability puts these educators at risk. Essentially, instead of being viewed as the educated professionals they are, this systemically forces educators into blue-collar roles (Sagor, 2000). Thus, in order to professionalize shadow education tutors and reduce the normalization of deprofessionalization, these companies should hire trained educators, including trained ESL educators for the ESL context, as opposed to hiring only subject matter experts as well as offer professional development for tutors. This can allow the tutors to improve their pedagogical practices and gain additional pedagogical content knowledge in areas such as working with ESL students.

A Revised Image of Educators

Professional identity is a foundation on which educators, both traditional teachers and non-traditional educators and tutors build their efficacy, which means their deprofessionalization could reduce their efficacy. As such, one of the issues the current research addresses is the question: What does professional identity mean for those educators whose work does not fit into the mold of the traditional teacher? In order to integrate shadow education with traditional education instead of opposing a force that is inevitable, the image of who educators are and what they do must be changed to make the concept of what it means to be a teacher more inclusive. Although educators as a group experience marginalization and deprofessionalization, evidence from this study indicates that the traditional meaning of the word *teacher*, in both denotation and connotation, is used as a blanket term for all educators. However, it holds unequal value based on the type of educator the word refers to. This means that views of what this term signifies must be expanded to include all types of educators and denote an equal amount of social capital for each. This more inclusive change in the image of what it means to be a teacher can help mitigate the deprofessionalization of not only transient educators, tutors, and non-traditional teachers, but of all educators and its impact on their working lives. As Sagor (2000) argues, educators must be re-professionalized as the educated innovators and leaders that we are. Thus, including the non-traditional educators and ESL/EFL educators who are positioned as laborers, as this issue is not necessarily the case for every educator, rather than positioning them as blue-collar workers.

Areas for Future Research

Transient Educators

There is still a dearth of research about transient educators, and research is warranted as a way to understand online ESL shadow education tutors as well as other transient educators such

as adjunct faculty and substitute K-12 teachers, and findings of this study indicate the continued need for research into the area of the shadow education industry and the deprofessionalization of those and other transient educators. Future research into how *teachers* (lowercase t) have been impacted by this t/Teacher dichotomy can be a way to learn more about how the differences between being a *Teacher* (capital T) and being a *teacher* (lowercase t) can impact not only the professional identities of educators, but also how it might impact these educators' careers and professional aspirations as well as their students. Therefore, understanding all of the *teachers* (lowercase t) out there is necessary in order to find and implement ways of legitimizing the work such educators do. Furthermore, more research is needed into the deprofessionalization of all educators and how the tables can be turned in order to change the entire education industry, both at the K-12 level and higher education and re-professionalize educators as a whole.

Adjunct Faculty

Just as tutors have to make their way through the gig economy, adjunct faculty are also transient educators with no guarantee of work, often working for multiple, even numerous, educational institutions, and although they are W2 employees, they are without benefits such as health insurance because they can only ever work in a part-time capacity. While this context may be ideal for some educators who are just looking for supplementary income due to being married, raising a family, and relying on their spouse's benefits, or for those educators who are retired, this context is far from ideal for educators who require full-time, stable employment with health insurance benefits. Research is necessary in order to make educational institutions aware of not only how these issues impact faculty who fall into the category of *teachers* (lowercase t) instead of *Teachers* (capital T) and those educators who do not find being a *teacher* (lowercase t) to be an ideal work situation, but also how it impacts colleges and universities themselves as well as

their students. Once again, this issue seems to come down to educational institutions trying to save money, even if to help keep tuition low for students. However, research into these topics can be used to find ways to mitigate the impacts of the t/Teacher dichotomy, combat the rising costs of education, and provide value to educators and students in doing so.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study about the lived experiences of some shadow education tutors working at the ed-tech company with the pseudonym Simple Course used interview data to learn the stories of the participants, their professional identities, their classroom practices, and how their teaching context affects these aspects of their professional lives. The current study builds on previous research in shadow education and the little research that has already been done regarding the tutors who work in the industry. This study indicates that the for-profit teaching context greatly impacts the professional identities and teaching practices of these tutors based on the conflict they experience between what they do as educators and what traditional teachers do. Examination of their discourse as they discuss this brings to light how this conflict makes them feel lesser or of lesser value as compared to traditional teachers, which leads to discourse indicating the *t/Teacher* dichotomy. This discourse is important to acknowledge and address in a way that allows for such educators to express their voices and promote a sense of equality and equity for transient educators and other non-traditional educators when compared to their more traditional counterparts in terms of social capital associated with the word *teacher*, including a re-imaging of what the word means both in denotation and connotation and who is included in this meaning. This impact on such educators seems to expand in a way that likely affects other transient educators, and as such, research is still needed into the effect of this dichotomy in other areas of education, such as with adjunct faculty and substitute K-12 teachers.

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Appendix A

Initial Interview Guide

(The * indicates questions asked to only the appropriate participant.)

(Probing questions will be asked as necessary.)

1. ***Background.***

Why did you start teaching and why ESL and content of courses to ESL students?

What is your native language and what other languages are you fluent in?

3. Teacher knowledge and professional development.

What types of teacher education and training have you had?

What forms of professional development have you found most useful?

To what extent did your previous training prepare you for your current job?

What have you learned since, either formally or informally?

What kind of training do you wish you had had?

What are your goals for learning and for professional development for the future?

What do you still need to learn or what do you think would help improve your teaching?

4. ***Online teaching context.***

What types of teaching contexts have you had experience in?

What do you have to say about these contexts?

How has teaching online impacted your work and your knowledge of teaching?

How is online teaching different from face-to-face teaching for you?

5. Use of Scaffolding.

How do you use scaffolding to help students understand language or content?

How is your use of scaffolding different in online vs. face-to-face classroom teaching?

In what ways do you feel you could improve your use of scaffolding in your classes?

How does your ability/inability to speak students' L1 affect your use of scaffolding?

*How could you use scaffolding more effectively although you don't speak students' L1?

*How could you use scaffolding more effectively even though you speak students' L1?

6. Identity.

How do you see yourself as a teacher?

How do you see yourself as a professional?

How does your (in)ability to speak your students' L1 impact your professional identity?

How does teaching online impact your professional identity?

How does your ability to use scaffolding impact your professional identity?

Appendix B

Reflective Teaching Practice Interview Guide

For each participant to answer about their and their fellow tutor's video clip of teaching. (Probing questions asked as necessary.)

1. What do you see happening in the classroom?
2. What are you intending to do with the student here?
3. How are you using scaffolding to help the student understand?
4. What was successful about this?
5. What was not successful about this?
6. What might you do differently next time?

Appendix C

Data Analytic Practices and Procedures

1. Pre-coding
    a. Transcription of videos via Transcribe
    b. Viewing of videos and reading along with transcriptions
        i. Correcting
        ii. Memos regarding laughter, intonation, gesture, etc.
2. Stage 1 Coding - Open Coding
    a. Color coding via broad category
        i. Deductive based on research questions and previous analysis
        ii. Memos based on my ideas and relationships
        iii. Copied and pasted color-coded text and memos onto a category sheet
    b. Color coding within each category for more specific categories
        i. Inductive based on finding categories within the data
        ii. Inductive based on finding subcategories and sub-sub-categories within some categories
        iii. Key ideas identified within sub-categories
3. Stage 2 Coding - Axial Coding
    a. Coding based on connections among categories
        i. Gisting data
        ii. Noting key ideas in categories
4. Stage 3 Coding - A priori
    a. Connecting codes to themes
        i. Mind mapping to connect key ideas
        ii. How do key ideas relate to the research question?

Appendix D

A PRIORI THEMES:

1. Tutors' Classroom Practice:

- Pedagogy is the foundation for identity in practice
- Tutors having to focus on sales and customer service affects what they do in the classroom and, in turn, their professional identities
- Changes in teaching due to the context of "gig" work or "pay-per-pop" compensation
- Online tutoring and its effects on tutors' relationships with students and their pedagogy
- Conflict with teaching ideology and students' expectations

2. Impact of the Teaching Context:

- Conflict with tutors' professional identities and ideology of what a *teacher* is
- Inflated expectations in company marketing creates pressure for tutors to meet unrealistic expectations
- Advantages of being independent contractors
- Pedagogy becomes a means for profit, and it is uncertain how to balance the line between academia and customer service
- Tutors become jaded against the ideology of teaching due to "the line" and to administrative policy

3. Tutor Efficacy:

- Tutors believe they are seen as dispensable, which negatively affects their efficacy
- Lack of training as teachers and as ESL teachers gives tutors lack of confidence in their efficacy
- Tutors do not use the discourse of the discourse community of teachers, leading them to be seen as outsiders, affecting their efficacy
- Tutor efficacy is related to their perceptions of their students' trust in them

Appendix E

A handout that "Simple Course" sent to all essay tutors on September 8, 2021. All dollar amounts are in Canadian Dollars (CAD).

["Simple Course"] Essay Editing

New Credit Adjustment Metrics for Essay Educators

1. Base compensation - $50
    a. Covers 1st draft only.
        i. **Please note that some brainstorming will be covered in Live Tutorials**.
2. Factors for adjustment:
    a. Subsequent drafts
        i. Complete revisions – $25
        ii. Partial revisions (over 30 edits) – $10
        iii. Minor revisions (less than 30 edits) - $5
    b. Short deadline
        i. 24-36 hours – No adjustment
        ii. 15-23 hours – $5 adjustment
        iii. 8-14 hours – $10 adjustment
        iv. Less than 8 hours – $15 adjustment
    c. Lengthy draft
        v. For 1st and 2nd draft ONLY
            1. Up to 2000 words – No adjustment
            2. 2000-3000 words – $10 adjustment
            3. 3000-4000 words – $15 adjustment
            4. Over 4000 words – $20 adjustment
        v. Subsequent drafts
            1. For drafts beyond the 2-draft threshold, Manager Sena will apply a discretionary adjustment of $5 to $10 per draft.
    d. Extra research
        i. Reading

1. $10 per 60 pages of skimmed through materials

ii. Watching

1. $10 per hour of skimmed through materials

e. Follow up questions

i. Up to 5 follow up questions – No adjustment

ii. 6-12 follow up questions – $5 adjustment

ii. Over 12 follow up questions – $10 adjustment

f. UK and AU/NZ clients:

i. Manager[s] will offer a discretionary adjustment of $10 to $15 to educators who go above and beyond in terms of providing support to these clients.

g. Other – Special Cases requiring discretionary adjustments

i. These will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Essay Reviews

<u>New Credit Adjustment Metrics for Essay Moderators</u>

1. Base compensation: $15

a. Covers review of 4 drafts

2. Factors for adjustment

a. Reviewing multiple drafts

i.5-8 drafts – $10 adjustment

ii.Over 8 drafts – $15 adjustment

CV - EMILY L. KERR

SUMMARY:

I have had over fifteen years of EFL/ESL teaching experience, including living and teaching in a foreign country. I have taught a wide variety of students and in a broad spectrum of contexts, including both in-person and synchronous and asynchronous online teaching. I also have five years of experience teaching ESL in higher education including course development in TESOL as a Teaching Assistant for master's-level TESOL courses and four years of experience tutoring undergraduate linguistics courses.

EDUCATION:

Degrees & Diplomas:

- **Doctor of Education – Literacy, Culture, and Language Education**
  Indiana University – Bloomington – July 2023 (GPA 4.0)
  Doctoral Minor – TESOL Teacher Education Curriculum and Instruction

Dissertation Title:

ESL and Content Area Tutors in the Online, For-Profit Shadow Education Setting: Unmasking the Transient Educator

- **Graduate Certificate – EFL/ESL Teacher Preparation (Teacher Trainer)**
  Indiana University – Bloomington - December 2022 (GPA 4.0)
- **Master of Arts Degree – Applied Linguistics: Foreign Language Pedagogy**
  University of Massachusetts – Boston - May 2019 (GPA 4.0)
  Research focus on Second Language Acquisition theory and methods and approaches in foreign language pedagogy as well as integration of culture in the language curriculum
- **Master of Education Degree – English as a Second Language/Adult Education**
  Northcentral University – August 2016 (GPA 4.0)
  Research focus on application of Adult Education theory in language teaching
- **Bachelor of Arts Degree – Art major, Theatre minor**
  University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire – May 1998

Certifications & Other Credentials

- **ACUE Microcredentials – Association of College & University Educators**
  - **Inspiring Inquiry and Lifelong Learning in Your Online Course – March 2022**
  - **Creating an Inclusive & Supportive Online Learning Environment – Oct. 2022**

    Completion of an ACUE course requires the implementation of evidence-based instructional approaches. Co-issued by the American Council on Education, this credential distinguishes faculty for their commitment to educational excellence and student success.

- **TEFL Certification - International Teacher Training Organization - 2008**
  Teacher of English as a Foreign Language certification that included 120 classroom hours and 10 hours of a monitored practice-teaching practicum.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- **Professor of ESL – Arizona Western College** (August 2023 – Present)
  - ESL for academic purposes
  - ESL for adult education

- **Adjunct Instructor – College of DuPage** (June 2022 – Present)
  - English for Academic Purposes – English Language Studies Department
  - Teaching ESL reading, writing, and grammar

- **Adjunct Instructor – Daytona State College** (June 2022 – Present)
  - Center for Business and Industry
  - English for Specific Purposes Industrial ESL

- **Teaching Assistant – Indiana University Bloomington** (Sep 2020 – May 2021)
  - EFL/ESL Instruction and Assessment Practices (master's level course)
  - EFL/ESL in Adult Education (master's level course)
  - Course development in Canvas and choosing course readings and assignments

- **Educator – "Simple Course" (pseudonym)** (October 2018 – May 2022)
  - Teaching International undergraduate students from China in the content areas of: Academic Essay Writing and Linguistics: syntax, phonetics, and sociolinguistics

- **Academic Specialist – Open Education, LLC** (Dec. 2016 – Dec. 2018)
  - Online EFL teacher for adult and university students from Latin America

- **Tutor – Pearson Education, Inc. - Smarthinking** (Feb. 2016 – Dec. 2016)
  - Tutoring Academic Essay writing for university students

- **Owner/Operator/Teacher – Estudia Inglés Online** (Feb 2008 – Feb 2016)
  - EFL teacher at language schools, companies, and for private students
  - Taught students with native cultures and languages from across the globe
  - Development of EFL courses and curricula based on students' needs

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS:

Kerr, E. L. (2020). Shadow education from the tutors' perspective: Are we real teachers? Paper presented at the *2nd International Conference on LCLE*, October 24, 2020. Indiana University – Bloomington: Bloomington, IN.

Kerr, E. L. (2022). Shadow ESL education from North American tutors' perspective: Are we real teachers? *International Journal of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education, 3*, 57-70. doi:10.14434/ijlcle.v3i.31861

Kerr, E. L. (2022). Professional identities of online ESL shadow education tutors: The t/Teacher dichotomy. Paper presented at the *3rd International Conference on LCLE*, October 14, 2022. Indiana University – Bloomington: Bloomington, IN.

OTHER RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE:

- **Admissions Rep. – Grantham University**
  - Kansas City, MO (Jan. 2006 – Feb. 2008)
  - Enrollment of students into undergraduate and graduate degree programs
  - Collection of transcripts and other sensitive documents
  - Autonomous motivation to meet university enrollment goals

- **Supervising Agent - American Income Life**
  - Madison, WI (Feb. 2003 - March 2005)
  - Sales of supplemental life and accident insurance to union members
  - Working warm leads to set appointments with potential customers
  - Supervision and training of new agents

- **Research Section Chief – Wisconsin Lottery**
  - Madison, WI (Sept. 2001 – Sept. 2002)
  - Leader of the market research section of the lottery
  - Conducted market research studies about lottery players and games

- **Manager – E. Friedman Marketing Services**
  - Chicago, IL (June 1999 – August 2001)
  - Responsible for running the company's Chicago facility
  - management of employees, financials, project management, client service
  - Management of 20+ employees and 30+ client projects at any given time
  - Communication with clients and corporate office

- **Assistant Manager – E. Friedman Marketing Services**
  - Minneapolis, MN. (May 1998 – June 1999
  - Responsible for facility, projects and employees in absence of the manager
  - Preparing to take over the position of manager

- **Supervisor – E. Friedman Marketing Services**
  - Eau Claire, WI. (Jan. 1997 – May 1998)
  - Responsible for employee production in absence of the manager and assistant manager
  - Closing the office and submitting end-of-day reports to management

OTHER SKILLS & ABILITIES

- **Classroom Technology:** Canvas, Blackboard, Zoom, Adobe Connect, WebEx, Skype, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Perusall, Kahoot

- **Additional Experience:** Education sales, Requesting research funding and writing research proposals, Conducting classroom research, Standards-based assessment, Resource management, Collaboration to develop a vision and mission

- **Soft Skills:** Organization, Communication, Collaboration, Leadership, Problem Solving, Self-Motivation, Autonomy

- **Languages:** English – Native
Spanish – C1
Russian – A1

- **Licensed Driver**