

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Career Trajectories of TESOL Program Graduates

by

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ABSTRACT

The TESOL profession has experienced significant changes in the past decades, and career development in the contemporary era is becoming increasingly complex and unpredictable. This study aimed at finding the patterns and attractors that contribute to successful careers in TESOL from the perspectives of graduates. Data was collected through a comprehensive survey of international and Canadian TESOL certificate graduates at a mid-size university in British Columbia and through interviews of several of the graduates. The results were analyzed through the lens of forms of Capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and Chaos Theory (Bright & Pryor, 2005). The results indicated a significant diversity of TESOL employment and the varied effectiveness of factors in career development amongst participants. Graduates experienced challenges in terms of their TESOL skills and their job searching skills with both being impacted by the Capitals they hold in the TESOL profession. While TESOL students and early career TESOL professionals need to be more prepared for the complexity and unpredictability of TESOL careers by continuously improving their human Capitals, TESOL teacher educators, TESOL program administrators and TESOL professional organizations must take consideration of the diverse needs of students with different backgrounds and provide long-term career support to build a robust TESOL community.

Keywords: career development, TESOL, teacher education, career trajectories, complexity, employment

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother who dislikes learning English but is still trying, who is not a teacher but a teacher at heart, and who made everything in my life possible.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CND	Canadian Dollar
EAL	English as Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as Second Language
IELTS	International English Language Test System
L2	Second Language
NABA	North America, Britain, and Australia
NES	Native English Speaker/Speaking
NNES	Non-native English Speaker/Speaking
NNEST	Non-native English Speaking Teacher
TEAL	Teaching English as an Additional Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TRU	Thompson Rivers University

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since 2006, the number of second language (L2) speakers (400 million) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) speakers (600-700 million) has exceeded that of Native English speakers (NES) (360-400 million) worldwide (Crystal, 2006). By 2012, the population of China who has studied English increased to 390.16 million. Although it is debatable whether English “has been created, promoted and sustained to the benefit of Western powers, global capitalism, the developed world, the centre over the periphery, or neoliberal ideology” (Pennycook, 2007, p.90), it is undeniable that English has become a global language used in communication not only between native and non-native speakers but also among speakers of non-English languages, attracting English language learners (ELLs) from all over the world with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) has grown into a massive industry in the past two decades, followed by the establishing of TESOL programs globally, especially in English-speaking countries such as Canada.

I am a non-native English speaker (NNES) fluent in five languages with a Bachelor of Arts in English translation and interpretation. After spending some time in teaching languages and working as a translator in different educational settings, I came to Canada to further my education and career by doing a master’s degree and gaining international experience. Although I had more exposure and learning in English and the cultures of mainstream Western countries, North America, Britain, and Australia (NABA) than many international students in Canada due to my undergraduate degree in translation, I still struggled with the English language, the academic culture and the social environment at the beginning. Due to my own experience as an international student and an L2 speaker of English, I have been highly involved in the student services departments on campus, especially in providing academic support for international students. As a result, I became interested in taking the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Certificate program along with my master program in order to take the opportunity to expand my career potential.

My research topic was generated from a personal question: How can I find a job in the TESOL profession after I graduate? I have both Canadian and international experience along with my education, but I was unsure whether my education and

experience can lead to employment after I graduate with a master degree. I was trying to decide whether I should take a TESOL program by looking into the labour market of TESOL, but it was surprising to find very limited research about the workplace, employment settings, and labour market of the TESOL profession. I could not build a picture of how much of a chance I would have to find a job in TESOL after I graduate with a TESL certificate. What is it like to work in TESOL especially in British Columbia? What must I be prepared for by the time I graduate? I have to form my career in two years after graduation and change my immigration status to stay in the career I started in Canada after three years due to my post-graduation work permit.

I have always been a student who tries my best to meet the learning outcomes and requirements at school. With a specific goal in mind and knowing how to achieve the goal, I can follow a plan and make it happen. However, I was not able to form a reasonable prediction in accordance with the research and come up with an action plan for the limited time as an international person in Canada. I have a long list of questions: How long does it take to develop a career in TESOL in Canada? What do I need to do during that time? What are the risks of taking this career path? Can I afford the time and money to make a mistake during that time? When I ask these questions, the most common answer I received is to “be open; try it out; you never know” – but I want to know! The discomfort of exposing myself to unknown risks generated this topic of research. I realized that TESOL students are not well-informed about the landscape of TESOL in terms of employment and career (Farrell, 2012; Valeo & Faez 2013); there is a gap in the research that I can try to fill in order to provide critical information for prospective TESOL professionals.

How can I find a job in my profession after I graduate? This question has been asked thousands of times before we invest ourselves in higher education. Doing an academic program in a post-secondary institution is an expensive investment. This investment is based on the myth that higher education brings a better chance of employment and success in a career. While post-secondary education is increasingly expensive, job searching after graduation has become a significant challenge for many graduates due to the rapid changes of the labour market in general. Instead of a linear

career path, many graduates experience complex career paths with multiple transitions throughout their career.

1.1 TESOL Profession

TESOL, with its changing nature being brought into discussion for almost 20 years, is influenced by global economics, politics, cultures, media, and technology (Warschauer, 2000). TESOL programs provide teacher accreditation in the TESOL profession and aim at preparing graduates for their TESOL careers despite the diverse work conditions and standards (Valeo & Feaz, 2013). The TESOL profession has experienced changes in the past decades. With the dramatic increase of needs for English learning globally, there is a higher demand for formal TESOL certification. Moreover, career development, not only in TESOL but in general, has become more unpredictable due to the rapid changes in the labour market: millennials on average change jobs four times in their first decade after college, while that of the Gen X is only twice (Young, 2017). The field of English teaching and learning is also becoming increasingly regulated worldwide due to the development of pedagogical and political campaigns in TESOL. This has led to an increased standardization of expectations from TESOL students, employers, and program providers. For example, countries such as China have increased the credentials required of foreign English teachers from merely the ability to speak English to university credentials in order to obtain visas. This is good timing to review TESOL programs from the perspective of graduates and alumni who are or were working in TESOL and learn from their insights into the profession, so that TESOL programs can be aware of the current trends and changes in order to better support their graduates.

1.2 Careers of TESOL Professionals

Some recent research is concerned with the challenges of an enduring career in TESOL (Farrel, 2012; Feaz & Valeo, 2012; Priddis, Tanner, Henrichsen, Warner, Anderson & Dewey, 2013; Valeo & Feaz, 2013;), teacher attrition in the TESOL profession (Farrel, 2012; Valeo & Feaz, 2013), and seeking best practices of TESOL education for teacher preparation (Farrel, 2012; Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin, Sobel, Townsend, Davis, & Kalisher, 2011). Farrel (2012) suggests that improvements in

employment stability and support in the TESOL industry could be slow with limited guarantee, and requires graduates to be adaptive and confront career challenges in the meantime. In other words, graduates who have enduring careers in the TESOL profession may be able to facilitate improvements in the profession. It is important that TESOL professionals stay in the profession in order to build a robust, continuously developing profession, which may result in a decrease of unpaid or underpaid positions.

Misconceptions towards TESOL professionals are very common. Some believe that TESOL professionals are migrant or transient workers (K. Densky, personal communication, December 11, 2017) because of a belief that they only need to speak English to teach English, which also leads to an underestimation of their expertise as well-educated, highly-skilled, and professionally-committed workers. Another misconception is that English teachers working overseas should be native English speakers, Caucasian, young and funny. This stereotype of English teachers has a significant impact on EFL hiring. An example would be the ESL Café website (<http://www.eslcafe.com/>) where many TESOL graduates look for overseas jobs. On the Job Boards for China and Korea, approximately 90% of the job posts clearly state being a native English speaker from one of the listed English-speaking countries is a qualification to apply, and seemingly there is a visa policy in both countries that facilitates this discriminatory practice in hiring EFL teachers. The misconception that TESOL professionals must be native English speakers automatically disqualifies NNES TESOL professionals in the international TESOL labour market, denying their skills, and creating insurmountable challenges in their job search. Careers in the TESOL profession, despite the instability, have become more challenging for professionals with different backgrounds due to these misconceptions.

1.3 Theoretical Lens

There are two theories applied in this study from the perspective of individuals and the labour market to assist in the understanding, conceptualizing and interpreting of the information of career development in TESOL at both an individual level and an industrial level. The framework of Human Capital developed by Bourdieu (1986) has been instrumental in analysing the impacts of factors on career development of

individuals. Human Capital provides a concrete structure without eliminating the possibilities of dynamic changes and interactions happening among the factors throughout a TESOL career.

Adding to the perspective of Human Capital related to career development, Chaos Theory (Bright, 2005) has been widely applied in the field of career counselling and serves as a conceptual lens to view the complexity and large variety of career paths of TESOL graduates. Through Chaos Theory a TESOL career can be viewed as a professional phenomenon that is chaotic and continuously changing yet possibly with order and certain patterns to learn from. Therefore, forms of Human Capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and Chaos Theory (Bright & Pryor, 2005) provide the theoretical lens for this study; these theories focus on the career experiences of graduates as a generalized phenomenon without losing the individual perspective of participants as persons creating, leading and experiencing the phenomenon. I will further explore the theories and their application in career development in TESOL in the next chapter.

1.4 The Study

This study aims at finding the patterns and factors that contribute to enduring careers in TESOL from the perspective of graduates of a TESOL certificate program and, therefore, providing information about career paths, challenges and support needed in the TESOL profession to administrators, instructors, current students, alumni, employers, and future professionals. The findings will aid future graduates with practical suggestions for how they can be self-sufficient in terms of employment in the profession, and help TESOL programs be more supportive by developing a better understanding of the needs and challenges their previous graduates have experienced. This project focuses more on successful examples of enduring careers, which can provide insight into career success in TESOL in terms of the actions graduates can take to succeed in a TESOL career in spite of all the challenges mentioned in the previous research, and the kinds of support TESOL programs can offer to facilitate successful careers for their graduates and retain them in the field. The exploration of the abovementioned aspects through this research will also develop an insight into the TESOL employment landscape that will help prospective TESOL professionals to better understand the TESOL labour market and better facilitate

job searching. This study could aid in the understanding of the employment and labour market of TESOL for students, instructors, employers, administrators and can open the conversation about the issue of teacher education and, thus, facilitate the construction of a robust TESOL profession.

1.5 Research Questions

To understand the TESOL labour market and the employment level of graduates, as well as respond to my curiosity about patterns of career success in TESOL, this study will explore the following research questions:

1. What is the level of employment of TESOL graduates?
2. What factors contribute to TESOL graduates finding TESOL-related positions?
3. What are the recommendations from TESOL graduates to improve TESOL-related practices?

In order to understand the complex career experiences of TESOL professionals, a mixed method study has been undertaken that involves multiple sources of evidence: quantitative and qualitative data from a survey and qualitative data from interviews. The next chapter describes in more depth the research related to employment and careers in TESOL as well as the theoretical framework used in this study. In addition, the gaps identified in the current literature will position the research questions of this study. An outline of the methodology will be followed by the analysis and discussion of the data collected through surveys and interviews from the graduates of a TESOL certificate program at a mid-size university in British Columbia. The final chapter proposes implications and recommendations for TESOL graduates, TESOL educators, administrators of TESOL programs, and TESOL professional organizations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The profession of TESOL has experienced enormous changes in the past ten years while the existing research is insufficient to provide a clear idea about how to better support TESOL professionals to have an enduring career in the profession. Thus, research is essential for TESOL programs to identify areas of possible mismatch between the current demand in the workplace and the preparation offered in TESOL programs. As a result, TESOL programs can fill the gap of limited information about careers and employment for graduates and use this information accordingly to revise and update the programs in order to prepare TESOL teachers more effectively (Baecher, 2012; Faez & Valeo, 2012). Research is also needed to inform current TESOL students and novice TESOL professionals, so that they will be more prepared to adapt into this competitive and unstable profession (Faez & Valeo, 2012). Professional organizations, including BC TEAL, TESOL International, and TESL Canada, and administrators of TESOL training programs of public and private universities and colleges also need to offer better support for TESOL professionals by improving their understanding of employment conditions in the profession (Breshears, 2017).

Education has been experiencing changes in the international context since the early 21st century (Altbach & Knight, 2007), and TESOL as a profession is highly impacted by the result of globalization. The level of globalization has increased in education since the first boost of computer technology and telecommunications in the 1970s, resulting in changes and the further worldwide spread of English (Warschauer, 2000). English is used not only between NES and NNES but also between NNES for communication internationally. Although English as a dominant language for international communication might be viewed as a type of colonialism (Pennycook, 2006), it is undeniable that the rapid increase of the need for learning English has created both opportunities and challenges for TESOL as a profession.

TESOL, as a part of the education industry, is highly internationalized in Canada as one of the NABA countries, and the trend of internationalization tends to continue (Anderson, 2015), which means that education has become an international business. However, “the free-market international context of the field is pressuring TESL to function as an industry, a role that can be in conflict with its goals as a profession”

(MacPherson, Kouritzin & Kim, 2005, p. 1). On the organizational level, the conflict is reflected as TESOL organizations (such as language schools) operate a public-sector activity (education) while making profit and being self-sufficient as economic entities with mostly private stakeholders (MacPherson, Kouritzin & Kim, 2005). A profession should require specialized education and induction with a high standard so that qualified professionals can seek stable and well-paid employment; meanwhile, the profit interest of TESOL presents to be at odds (MacPherson, Kouritzin & Kim, 2005). On the other hand, if professional workers in TESOL are not well-supported when they face challenges in the workplace, the reduction of their enthusiasm and demotivation caused by the lack of support can lead to attrition of TESOL teachers (Faez & Valeo, 2012), which is a great loss to the profession. However, little is known about the career path and employment conditions of TESOL professionals especially in the provincial context of British Columbia.

It is important to understand the employment landscape in the TESOL profession through the existing research with a particular focus on challenges in a TESOL career resulting from different factors including diverse work conditions (Breshears, 2017; Priddis et al., 2013), instability in the profession (Breshears, 2017; Valeo & Faez, 2013), political issues (Akcan, 2016; MacPherson et al., 2005; Marshall & Lee, 2017; Moussu, 2015; Moussu & Llurla, 2008; Park, 2012; Warschauer, 2000) and policies (Anderson, 2015; Faez, 2012; Guo, 2013; McGivern & Eddy, 1999). These challenges will be elaborated on in the following sections of this chapter. While there is limited research demonstrating the challenges of employment and careers in TESOL, only a small amount of research has been concerned with factors contributing to success in the TESOL profession and support needed for career development.

2.1 Acronyms and Terminology

The term adopted in this study to describe the profession is Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) as it is the politically correct term that includes different situations of English learning for speakers with different linguistic backgrounds with respect to the native languages and cultures of ELLs. Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) is used when describing the TESL program of Thompson Rivers

University (TRU), as the term was adopted as part of the name of the program in 2005 when the certificate program started.

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) is applied in the survey as a tool for participants to self-determine their levels of language proficiency. The “CLB Can-Do Statements” (Centre of Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2013) provide a guideline for participants based on their self-knowledge, and participants have learned about the CLB system in the TESL program at Thompson Rivers University.

2.2 Diverse Employment Conditions

There are different kinds of employment in TESOL in various educational settings, including university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs, short-term English programs, language programs for immigrants and newcomers, refugee support programs, community English programs, English programs in private language training organizations, K-12 school programs for ELL students, private and public school programs overseas, English learning programs in private international organizations, English training programs for staff of business organizations, TESOL teacher training programs, and private tutoring. Levels of pay and responsibilities vary depending on many factors including location, funding, previous work experience in related positions, education level, part-time/full-time status, temporary/permanent status, and position in organizations.

2.2.1 Types of Employment

Rates of employment in TESOL have shown a dramatic change according to research from different eras. *Figure 1. Rates of Employment* illustrates that the percentage of long-term positions in TESOL has decreased in the past three decades while that of temporary employment overall increased significantly (Ochsner, 1980; Day, 1982; Sanaoui, 1997; Valeo & Faez, 2013).

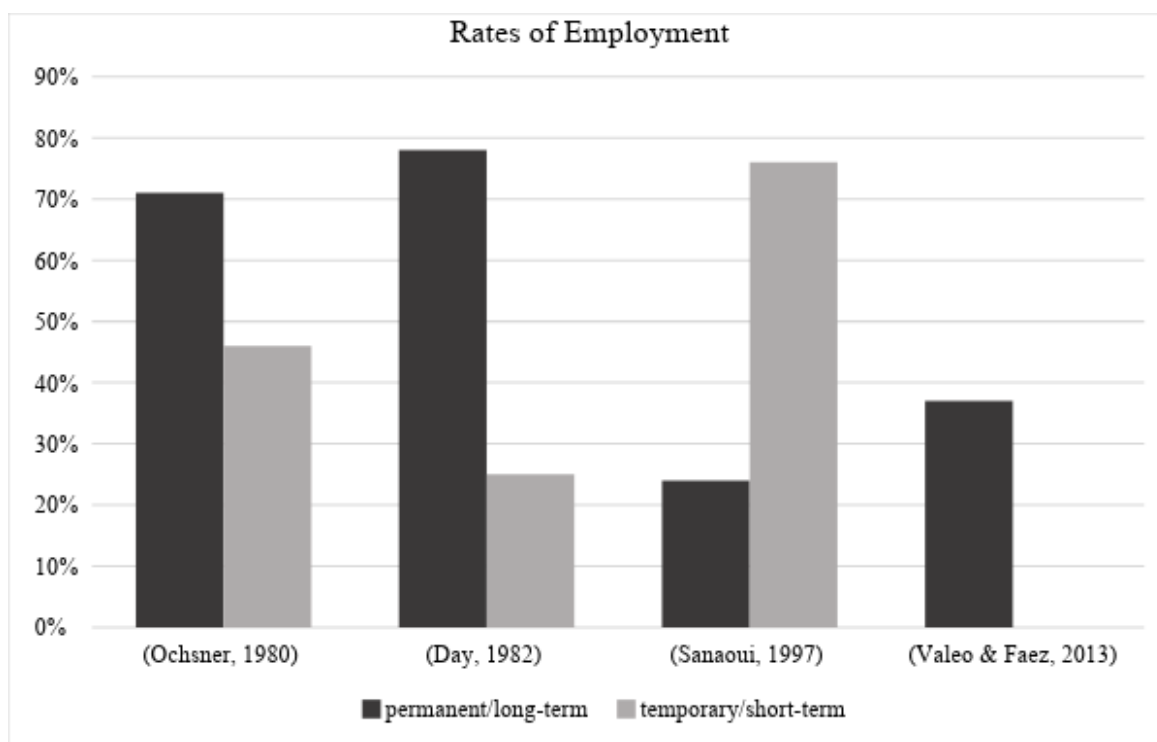


Figure 1. Rates of Employment

In the 1980s, over 70% of the employment reported by graduates is long-term although 18% are part-time positions (Ochsner, 1980; Day, 1982) while that of temporary employment is as low as 25% (Day, 1982). This shows a high level of job stability, and some graduates had opportunities to have more than one job at the same time. However, the proportion of permanent employment declined dramatically to 24% in the late 1990s (Sanaoui, 1997) and slightly recovered to 37% in 2013 (Valeo & Faez, 2013).

The overall trend of permanent long-term employment is decreasing, although the exact amount of the decrease cannot be verified because of the variation in the contexts of the research. In addition, participants reported more challenges according to the research of Valeo & Faez (2013) and Priddis et al. (2013) than that of Ochsner (1980) and Day (1982). Instead of challenges focusing on pedagogy and curricula (Ochsner, 1980; Day, 1982; Baecher, 2012), such as unpreparedness to teach youth and young children (as most TESOL programs prepare students to teach adults) with low English proficiency (Baecher, 2012), common challenges have become more concerned about career development and working conditions as TESOL professionals. These

challenges include the insecurity of employment caused by unstable funding (Valeo & Faez, 2013; Priddis et al., 2013) and recruitment of students, work in isolation (Valeo & Faez, 2013), and conflicts with administration in terms of student needs (Baecher, 2012). Lastly, only the research of Sanaoui (1997) mentioned the various rates of pay and hours of work as a challenge of working in the field.

2.3 Role of TESOL Programs

Although TESOL professionals have voiced concerns about challenges in employment, they also lack support from TESOL education programs (Valeo & Faez 2013). The goal of a TESOL teacher training program is mainly to prepare TESOL professionals to work in different educational settings teaching English to speakers of other languages and support the graduates with their success in a TESOL career. However, according to existing research (Baecher, 2012; Faez & Valeo, 2012), in spite of the variations of TESOL programs and accreditation, graduates on average showed an inadequate level of sense of readiness in teaching, especially teaching non-adult learners with low English proficiency or students with different learning needs.

2.3.1 Variations of TESOL Programs and Accreditation

TESL Canada, the previous national professional organization of TESOL in Canada, has developed a national accreditation system for TESOL certificate, diploma, and degree programs, but not all programs in all provinces in Canada adopt the accreditation system of TESL Canada. TESOL programs self-select to be accredited by TESL Canada, so accreditation can vary from program to program within British Columbia (BC). “The task of providing TESL education for teachers of adults was taken up by different institutions that independently developed and offered TESL training programs” (Valeo & Faez, 2013, p. 5). There are 30 programs in BC that are recognized by TESL Canada as TESOL training programs, yet the programs include a wide variety from certificate and diploma to bachelor degree programs (TESL Canada, 2017; BC TEAL, 2017). Interestingly, master programs with a focus on TESOL are not included in the list of recognized programs as it is not a comprehensive list of programs due to the self-selected nature of accreditation. The programs recognized by TESL Canada also

differ in entry requirements, courses and duration (MacPherson et al., 2005). While the TESOL profession is identified as being “fragmented and lacking uniformity” (Valeo & Faez, 2013, p. 4), the diverse employment conditions require flexibility from TESOL preparation programs. Thus, “it is important that as a profession TESOL takes on board the challenge of meeting diverse needs” (Kiely & Askham, 2012, p. 509).

TESL Canada tried to meet the demand of professional stature for TESOL; as a result, TESOL professionals in Canada, who are attracted by the high-quality of work in the profession, expect more stable, secure and respected employment with adequate pay (MacPherson et al., 2005). In other words, TESOL programs and accreditation have an impact on the expectations of future professionals. However, it is also noteworthy that most of the literature is from the perspective of Ontario, which means the findings about accreditation system(s) of TESOL programs might not be applicable in the BC provincial context. TESL Canada officially closed their office in November 2017, and is currently operating with limited resources to maintain a few services to the TESOL community (TESL Canada, 2018). As a result, the responsibility of assessing and recognizing TESOL programs in BC may be relocated to the main TESOL stakeholders in the profession including professional organizations such as BC TEAL, and universities and colleges. This possible change of responsibility for TESOL standards may have an impact on the development of the TESOL profession, which may in turn affect the careers of TESOL professionals.

2.3.2 Readiness of Graduates

Readiness of graduates to work in the field is one of the criteria to measure how effective a program is. Teachers are seen as role models; however, research shows that many TESOL graduates exhibit a moderate level of readiness with variations based on classroom experience, employment conditions, responsibilities of positions, and work context (Faez & Valeo 2012), which is inadequate to be in the position of role model. TESOL professionals, novice teachers in particular, express various concerns in their teaching practice. For example, although TESOL programs mostly focus on teaching adult learners, TESOL professionals teach youth and children as both ESL teachers and general school teachers. According to Baecher (2012), those who are working in

elementary schools are in need of collaborative learning models which are mainstream in the general school system but not prevalent in TESOL training, while ESL teachers working at high schools did not feel ready to meet the literacy needs of students with low English proficiency and personal issues such as poverty or undocumented immigration status (Baecher, 2012). As reported by the teachers, it is a common practice to place English language learners (ELLs) in special education classes, but teachers in special education classrooms clearly stated the incapability of meeting the needs of ELLs (Baecher, 2012). Teachers also report frustrations due to unpreparedness in jobs related to testing, assessment and placement of students (Baecher, 2012). For teachers who specifically teach English as Additional Language (EAL), major challenges are working in isolation, not having stable employment, and even not finding opportunities to start their careers in TESOL (Valeo & Faez, 2013). Other challenges also include selection and evaluation of materials, and the lack of in-depth knowledge (Kiely & Askham, 2012) which may contribute to a longer learning curve at work and during the transition to a job.

Another major reason for the low level of readiness is that most graduates lack the understanding of the TESOL labour market and employment situations before they graduate from their TESOL preparation programs (Valeo & Faez 2013, Farrell, 2012; Priddis et al., 2013). They are not prepared for the challenges and instability in the TESOL profession.

2.4 Theoretical Frameworks

To expand the understanding of the strengths and needs of TESOL graduates in career development, the following theoretical frameworks of Human Capital and Chaos Theory are used.

2.4.1 Chaos Theory of Careers

Modern careers are not linear paths anymore due to the rapid change of labour markets; instead, a career is more complex with multiple transitions influenced by both subjective and objective factors as well as the interactions of the factors (Bright & Pryor, 2005). Attractors are the influential factors that have impacts on the career trajectories

(Bright & Pryor, 2005). Traditional theories follow the linear cause-effect model that describe the ideal situations of cases, but career development in the modern era is impacted by unpredictable attractors and trends which results in the emergence of patterns during the phase shifts in careers (Bright & Pryor, 2005) with no “ideal” situations. In this sense, “the future is emerging with each action we take and each response we make to changes in the complex dynamical systems of which we are a part of or which intrude into the fractal pattern of our lives” (Pryor & Bright, 2003, p. 18). Given the complexity and changing dynamics of contemporary career development, Chaos Theory of Careers provides a conceptual framework to understand and incorporate the nonlinearity and excursiveness of career development (Bright & Pryor, 2005) instead of focusing on the traditional causal effects.

Career paths of TESOL graduates are not predictable linear results from certain causes but trajectories contributed to by the complex interactions of individual features as attractors (Bright & Pryor, 2005). As unpredictable events do have influences on career paths, the emphasis is to understand “the process and the patterns in careers rather than on defining or predicting stable variables as outcomes” (Bright & Pryor, 2005, p. 296). This theory provides a conceptual lens to view the data of this study more comprehensively than focusing on or expecting the “average” or “ideal” experience.

However, it is necessary to be aware that, instead of looking into all aspects of graduates’ lives as Chaos Theory would recommend, this study only focuses on the particular period of time from the graduation from the TESL certificate program to the current time of data collection due to the limits of time and resources.

2.4.2 Bourdieu and Human Capital

Bourdieu (1986) categorized different forms of Capital that a person can hold into Economic Capital, Social Capital, and Cultural Capital (see Figure 2).

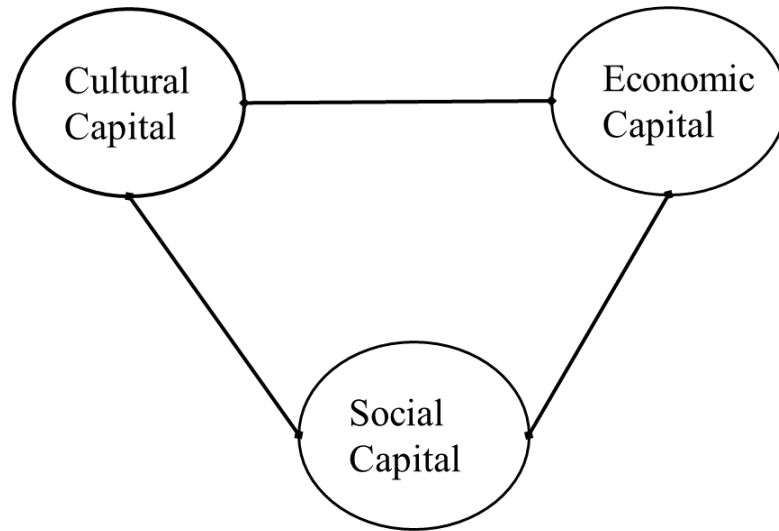


Figure 2. Forms of Capital (Bourdieu, 1986)

While Economic Capital includes ownership of property and Social Capital focuses on the effectiveness of connections, Cultural Capital emphasizes the value of what a person owns from the perspectives of the personal, societal, and institutional cultures. (Bourdieu, 1986). The three guises of Capital function differently for each person, and require different costs to transform from one to another (Bourdieu, 1986). Under Cultural Capital, there are three different states (see Figure 3).

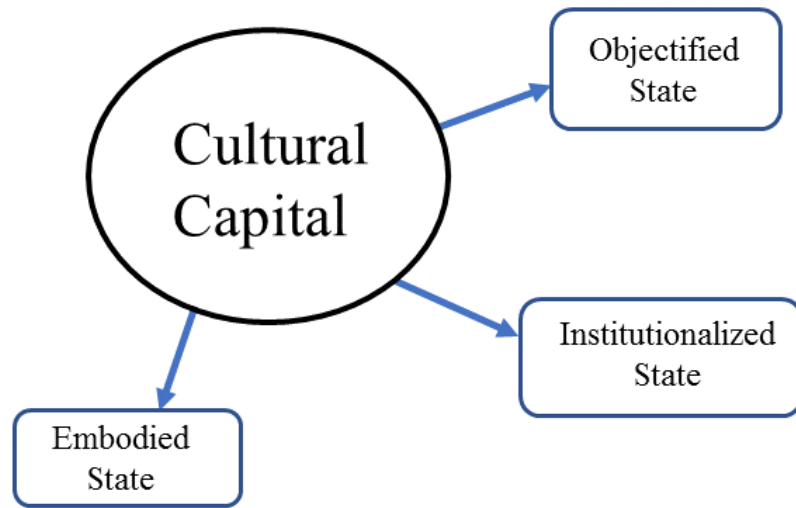


Figure 3. Three States of Cultural Capital (Bourdieu, 1986)

Cultural Capital consists of three States including the Objectified State (such as owning a bowl with my cultural symbols on it, or owning a car that shows the social class it represents), Institutionalized State (such as earning a master degree), and the Embodied State (such as establishing an identity as a TESOL professional, or recognizing the importance of writing) (Bourdieu, 1986).

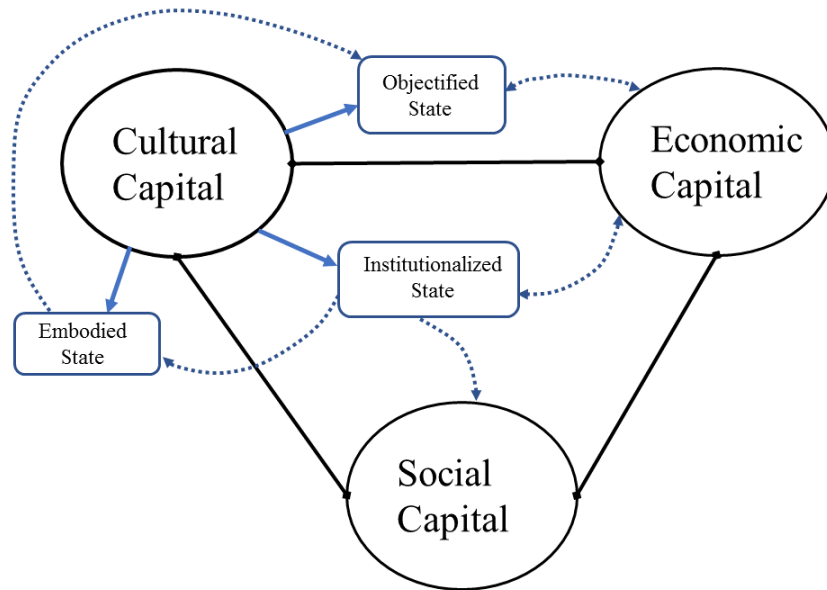


Figure 4. Potential Connections of Different Capital and States (Bourdieu, 1986)

It is also noteworthy that there are potential connections between the elements (Bourdieu, 1986; see Figure 4), and this is corresponding to Chaos Theory. For example, a cultural object can be only a kind of Economic Capital if the object does not have any link with the embodied culture of a person (Bourdieu, 1986). Similarly, an Institutionalized State of Cultural Capital is very likely to connect with the Embodied State of Cultural Capital if the institutional recognition is based on the growth of a person in terms of professional experience and knowledge (Bourdieu, 1986). The Institutionalized state of Cultural Capital can also link to Social Capital when it directly improves the value of social connections, and to Economic Capital when it directly contributes to an income or an increase of income (Bourdieu, 1986). While the connections of transformation are not necessarily direct from one to another, each transfer of Capital happens with reasons and patterns.

Understanding the complex connections between these concepts is meaningful to the analysis of data related to career paths. The interconnections or potential connections reflects the complexity of career development. The theory helps unpack the complexity

by providing an insight into the possible links between the key concepts with a framework that clarifies and categorizes the information.

The theoretical lenses of Human Capital and Chaos Theory provide a framework to conceptualize and analyze the data with both structure and flexibility. An example would be myself as a NNES TESOL professional. With my undergraduate degree in English Translation and Interpretation, I hold stronger Cultural Capital in the Embodied State as an English user, while my Social Capital declined significantly when I moved to Canada because I lost the connections with people in my profession who could have potentially contributed to employment opportunities. Having been an international student and an ELL, I acquired a more in-depth understanding of students' needs from my own experience, adding on to the Embodied State of Cultural Capital as a TESOL professional. My Cultural Capital transmitted to Social and Economic Capital as I gained opportunities to be involved in student support services and English programs in the university through which I receive income and make connections with professionals in TESOL. I am involved in the field of career support unexpectedly as a result of my own concerns for my career and the career progress I made through engaging in various activities in the university. The progress of my career development during the time in university reflects the transmission of Capital as well as the Chaos Theory of Careers: with the attractors which are my personal interests in supporting others, languages, and creative activities as well as my concerns and needs during university education, the process of development emerges with complexity and unpredicted events, transmitting the Capital in various ways. Due to the nature of adopting a customer-oriented business model and the political issues involved in the TESOL profession, individual Capital, such as native languages, nationalities, English accents, and even physical appearance and gender, can have significant yet unpredictable impact on employment of TESOL professionals as conceptualized by Chaos Theory.

By using the frameworks of Human Capital and Chaos Theory to unpack the experiences of TESOL graduates in their TESOL careers, the experiences will be broken down into various layers that can contribute differently to their career paths. While two vastly different experiences might bring about similar effects due to a key aspect they share, similar experiences might impact careers variously depending on the role the

experiences play in the contexts. The credential of the TESL Certificate the graduates have received is obviously an Institutionalized level of Cultural Capital; however, it is interesting to see the different impacts the same credential can have on the experiences of different individuals holding various types and levels of Capital.

2.5 Groups of Special Interest

There are two groups of special interest in this research. The first group is the graduates who have an enduring career in British Columbia (BC). An enduring career can also be obtained very differently. Learning from the experiences and challenges of this group by unpacking the layers and identifying the factors that directly contribute to an enduring career will provide a better understanding of the labour market of TESOL in BC.

This will also benefit the second group of special interest – the non-native English speaking (NNES) graduates. NNES TESOL professionals are recognized to have both strengths and weakness, and so are the native English speaking (NES) professionals (Mouso & Llurla, 2008). For NES professionals who travel to a different country that has a need for hiring ESOL teachers, speaking English as a native speaker is an asset: their Cultural Capital Embodied status is highly recognized and valuable so that they can transmit it to jobs/Economic Capital. However, International professionals have lost their Social Capital (Bourdieu, 1986) mostly by coming to a different country at some point of their life. NNES graduates with non-Canadian status in Canada may not have the same level of Social Capital as they had in their home country. Their previous social connections may not be effective anymore in a new country with a different culture, and they must rebuild their Social Capital prior to graduation for the purpose of career development. Higher education may increase the Institutionalized state of their Cultural Capital; however, the possibility of transferring it into Social Capital and Economic Capital can have a significant impact on their careers in TESOL.

The patterns of transferring Capital and the factors that facilitate this transfer will help future graduates make intentional decisions that will improve their careers. As it is unsure how much their Cultural Capital is valued in a career of TESOL, unpacking the meaning of professional experiences from the perspective of NNES graduates, especially

that of those who have non-Canadian status, will provide a clear guide of how to better support NNES graduates to gain Canadian work experience in TESOL and develop a long-term career.

The theories of Human Capital and Chaos Theory have significantly informed the analysis and interpretation of the data in this study, but had limited impact on the methodology which will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of the research project was to learn from the career paths and experiences of previous graduates of the TESL certificate program at TRU and understand how their study in the program prepared them for their careers in TESOL. This project incorporated a mixed-method research design as quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources were collected and components of multiple qualitative research methods were used.

3.1 Research Design

The data collection of this study includes two parts: a survey and interviews. All participants completed a survey including their background information, career paths, and evaluations of related factors that may contribute to their employment and professional development. Interview participants were invited by email to participate in in-depth interviews about how different factors contribute to their success in their TESOL-related careers and in what aspects the graduates need more support. Also, the surveys and interviews inquired about potential attractors in TESOL career experiences, such as previous experience, personal preferences and interests, or academic background, which have significant impact on career development of graduates. The survey provided descriptive data including both quantitative statistics and qualitative information. The interviews provided more qualitative details that support insights into particular cases.

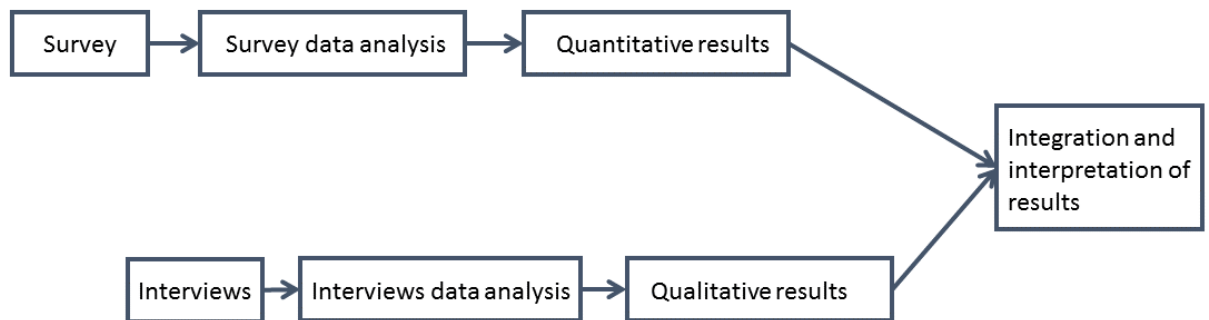


Figure 5. Research Design

The convergence model of triangulation design and concurrent mixed analysis model (Creswell & Clark, 2017) is applied in this research. The survey and interviews were conducted separately, and the data from both sources was analysed independently. Afterwards, data from both sources was analysed and integrated in the discussion (see Figure 5).

The survey and interviews are strongly interconnected and significantly contribute to the answer of the research questions of the employment level of TESOL graduates and factors contributing to employment in TESOL. The findings will lead to suggestions for improving the employment and career development of graduates in TESOL.

3.2 Mixed Methods

Mixed method research means “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2004). The mixed method is essential to not only gain the factual information about the career development of TESL graduates but also help to understand the complex experiences of participants through interviews in order to provide applicable suggestions and advice in practice. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data was the key to understanding the landscape of careers in TESOL and to learn from the unique stories of TESOL graduates. The quantitative data in this study has strengths in the statistical, practical, clinical, and economic significance indices (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004), and complements the qualitative data which was more essential in the interpretations of participant experiences.

In terms of the quantitative data, statistically, the probability of reoccurrence is high in terms of the level of complexity and unpredictability. This means that the complexity in career experiences of graduates is very likely to reoccur in the context of the complex TESOL labour market although graduates do not have the exact same individual experiences. The limitation in these indices is the small sample size (40 participants) used in this study which might lead to misinterpretations as a small number in a small sample can have a more significant impact than that in a large sample. Although the data regarding averages may not strictly represent the average situations,

the range of responses would directly reflect the level of diversity in TESOL workplaces and the level of complexity in graduates' career experiences in TESOL. In addition, I entered the research with an insider perspective as I gained experience as a TESL graduate and TESOL professional myself and used my experiences during my own job search to understand the data; however, the quantitative data helped minimize my prejudice and bias gained from my own experience.

The gap of time between the experiences of the participants and the data collection generates limited concern as the focus of the research is on the changes and complexity in career development, rather than the causes of the career effects which can change over time. In order to ensure that graduates' current employment is discussed under the contemporary context while collecting information about their career paths, the survey was designed to explore the possibility of starting with questions about their current positions and backtracking the career paths of graduates from there.

Overall the data can provide a valid demonstration of the career development of graduates of TESOL certificate programs in medium size universities in BC because the TESOL programs recognized by TESL Canada share a similar standard and the diversity of participants are incorporated in the sample of participants. Specifically, as the TRU certificate program was reviewed and accredited by TESL Canada, the program shares a type of consistency recognized across Canada and internationally, and TESOL graduates who remain in BC compete in the same labour market. In addition, the variety of individual features of participants as dynamic subjects, as opposed to indifferent objects of study, would have impacts on their career events. The findings may not be applicable for all specific individual contexts in practice but can be effective in terms of understanding the TESOL career development through the lens of Chaos Theory, as a clinical, ideal setting is not applicable in career development because all interpretation would need context. This issue is a reason why the qualitative methods came into play. The qualitative method used in this study will "obtain insights into particular ... processes and practices" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004, p. 774) in specific contexts with the respect to meanings that people intended to bring in the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

To understand the careers of human beings as a phenomenon, the methods must also consider “specific intentional content[s]” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004, p. 774) and “with respect to the system of meanings” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004, p. 774) to avoid misinterpretations in both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data will add meaning, and inform the background and context of the quantitative data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

3.3 Qualitative Methods

The qualitative method is a significant component to aid with more accurate interpretations of the quantitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). Moreover, “...a significant finding in qualitative research is one that has meaning or representation” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004, p. 774). In order to find deeper meaning in the data, elements of various qualitative methods, which will be described in this section, present the diversity, uniqueness, and complexity of the career experiences of graduates.

Although this study did not employ the protocols of Narrative Inquiry or Case Study methodology, there are elements of both involved in the data collection and analysis of the data. Case Study allows exploration and understanding of complex issues by capturing the depth of a case (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Elements of Case Study methodology were chosen for three major reasons. The first reason was that the interviews mainly answer why and how the factors contribute to careers of TESOL graduates which are the types of questions that Case Study as a research method mainly answers (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Secondly, the focus of this study is to develop “an in-depth description and analysis” (Creswell, 2013, p. 104) as well as seeing the connections in “multiple cases” (Creswell, 2013, p. 104) in order to understand the cases (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Lastly, this study explored the impact of the TESL program, as a particular event, on the career of graduates from the time of graduation to now, a specific period of contemporary time during which the researcher does not have control over events that happened (Yin, 2009).

While Case study methodology focuses on the why and how of career progression, the narrative nature of the data focuses on the who. Due to the narrative nature of the inquiry about career paths, this study also incorporated the methodology of

narrative research to explore the individual career stories (Creswell, 2013) as a part of the lifeworld of the graduates. The collaborative feature of narrative research (Creswell, 2013) guided the implementation of interviews to ensure that participants have their voice represented in describing their stories in a chronology within the specific context of the experiences, including turning points of tensions or success (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the qualitative data was analysed thematically (Creswell, 2013), but much of the interview data is represented in a manner that preserves the authentic voices of the participants to the best level possible.

The interviews discussed the unique experiences of the graduates: the career progression from graduation from the TESL program to present day. The interview data complemented the survey data and triangulated the findings, building deeper understanding of TESOL career development as a complex phenomenon.

3.5 TESOL Program Context

The research was conducted with graduates of the TESL program of TRU. This program is a 15-credit post-baccalaureate program with five courses that include both theoretical knowledge and practical experience (Thompson Rivers University, 2017). The TRU TESL program started in 2005, and it has been running for more than ten years. Students need a completed university degree in any discipline to be eligible for applying to the program (Thompson Rivers University, 2017). Non-native English speaking applicants also need to prove their English competency by achieving a score in a TOEFL or IELTS exam, equivalent to CLB level 7/8 (Thompson Rivers University, 2017). Graduates of the program will be certified to teach both in Canada and internationally working with learners of different ages (Thompson Rivers University, 2017).

3.4 Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 40 graduates who have completed the Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) Certificate Program at TRU. 21 participants completed the entire survey, and 19 participants completed the survey partially with valid responses and informed the results for some sections. The ages of survey participants range from 22 to 65, with 13 males, 26 females, and one person self-

identified as LGBTQ+. There were three interview participants, including one male, aged 31, and two females, aged 24 and 51 respectively.

The participants graduated with their TESL certificate between 2005 and 2017, including both domestic graduates and international graduates. Graduates might be working or have worked in their home countries, in Canada, or other countries. All graduates in the database of the TESL certificate program of TRU were invited to participate in the survey through email or a post on the TESL program Facebook page regardless of whether they were currently working in or outside of the TESOL profession. The number of survey participants in each of the categories was not equal. Some graduates were contacted directly by the former TESL program coordinator or myself through personal connections as all email addresses of graduates were not up to date; this will be discussed with more details in the survey and interview sections respectively

Selected participants were invited to interviews based on the information they provided through the survey that indicated their demographic groups. As predicted during the design of the research process, there are three major demographic groups of graduates: young Canadian graduates with undergraduate degrees, international graduates who complete TESL certification along with another academic degree, and mature students seeking career transitions. Only one participant from each demographic group was selected to interview based on their age, gender, and career path; in order to include more diverse career factors to understand the complexity of career progression, interview participants are different in terms of the three factors above. The three interviews focused on the unique individual career stories of the TESL graduates from each demographic group.

3.6 Survey

All the alumni of the TESL certificate program of TRU who graduated between 2005 and 2017 with their TESL certificate are eligible to participate in the survey. The survey aims at collecting mainly quantitative data of the career paths of the TESL alumni and career-enhancing factors in the field of TESOL. Some qualitative data was requested in the survey including the perception of the participants about their career and

employment. Data collected from the survey is significant to capture the overall landscape of the graduates' careers. It provides quantitative data displaying the value of different factors in a TESOL-related career.

Participants were contacted by the TESL program coordinator directly through the email address they provided to the TESL certificate program. Some TESL alumni were contacted directly by the former TESL coordinator or myself as graduates might not have updated their email address with the program and, as a result, did not receive the survey. There were two mail outs with one week in between. The email included an introduction to the survey and the link to the consent form through Fluid Survey. The graduates could also access the survey through a link posted on the TESL program Facebook page. The consent letter for using the information from the survey for research purposes appears before the survey. The consent button is electronically connected to the actual survey, which means the survey would be terminated if a participant chooses not to consent. As the participants consented to participate, the page automatically connected to the survey page. At the end of the survey, participants were invited to express their interest in participating in the interview. They might be selected only if they provided an email address with their consent to be contacted for the purpose of an interview.

The survey mainly was designed to answer the first research question: What is the level of employment of TESOL graduates? Of particular interest is the proportion of TESOL graduates who found TESOL-related positions, graduates who found full-time, long-term positions in Canada, and other types of employment, proportion of time of career spent in TESOL, proportion who receive benefits, types of TESOL-related activities the positions required, and differences between international and Canadian graduates.

There are 10 sections in this survey, including background information, post-secondary education after graduating from the TESL certificate program, employment history, involvement in the TESOL profession, career goals, career-enhancing value of academic and non-academic factors, and whether the program provided the valuable factors that may contribute to employments (see Appendix B). The survey is adapted from the questionnaire used in the study of Priddis et al. (2013), and significant changes and additions were made according to the literature and consultation with the thesis

committee and drawing on expertise and experience from faculty and students. All of the Likert scales are consistent with 5 representing extremely positive and 1 representing totally negative. The survey takes 15-30 minutes to complete depending on the length of career path and the amount of details disclosed. As the survey was conducted electronically through Fluid Survey, the TESL alumni located in different parts of the world would be able to participate through the link sent out by email and their responses would be received online through the electronic database.

As previously mentioned, the survey extracted both quantitative and qualitative information about the career trajectories of graduates. Descriptive statistics can characterize graduates in terms of nationalities, language, gender, age, education level, and types of employment. The incomplete responses with valid information for the specific section were kept as data and used in the analysis; thus, the total responses of each section in the results may vary. In addition, some parts of the incomplete responses are taken out because they did not complete a specific section in the survey and would make the calculation in a section inconsistent.

3.7 Interviews

The selection of interview participants is based on the information the participants provide in the responses to the survey. The three interview participants also represent the three main categories of TESL students: a) Canadian students who have just graduated with their bachelor degrees; b) international students who are doing or have done their degree programs in TRU; and c) mature students who are looking to transition their career into TESOL. These three main groups were observed and identified by the previous TESL program coordinator who has been involved in teaching in the TESL program for over 10 years (K. Densky, personal communication, October 6, 2017) and which I witnessed in my personal experience in the program; the categories also appeared to be supported by the survey data. The three interview participants are representing the three main groups; however, each interviewee is a unique case and their experiences are not intended to represent that of all the graduates in their groups.

Because survey participants who consented to participate did not cover the three categories, alternatively two of the interviewees were contacted through the previous

coordinator and my personal connection specifically for this matter in order to illuminate the research questions from different perspectives and provide analytic generalization (Yin, 2009) to each of the three main student groups in TESL. The immigration status, age, current locations, and work setting are considered in the selection of participants, in order to have a more diverse group of participants in interviews. The diversity of participants can offer input from different perspectives with more career factors involved.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with a graduate who is currently in Kamloops, Canada and virtually with two graduates who are in Calgary, Canada and Wroclaw, Poland respectively. Consent for using the information from the interviews for the purpose of this study was received electronically or by hard copy prior to the interviews. Voice recording was used to capture the complete information during interviews with consent of the participants. The interviews were transcribed using transcription symbols adapted from the symbols developed by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; see Appendix D) with changes to particular symbols as the interviews are one-on-one conversations without meaningful surrounding sounds. The transcribed data was coded into themes through emergent coding (Creswell, 2013) and represented in the following chapter as a complement to the survey data with details from each unique case.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in three sections to address the three research questions:

1. What is the level of employment of TESOL graduates?
2. What factors contribute to TESOL graduates finding TESOL-related positions?
3. What are the recommendations from TESOL graduates to improve TESOL-related practices?

The three sections include quantitative and qualitative data collected from both the survey and the interviews. The survey results will be supplemented with the qualitative data when applicable to develop a deeper understanding of the data. The items in most of the figures have been manipulated into particular ascending or descending sequences. Quantitative analysis by SPSS aiming at gender differences included only male and female, as the sample from the LGBTQ+ group is too small statistically ($n = 1$) as a category.

The data from both survey and interviews are presented together in the sequence of the research questions. Further interpretations of the data will be presented in the next chapter with discussions and recommendations.

The theoretical frameworks of Human Capital and Chaos Theory are both applied in the data analysis. With the theories, I was able to view the data from the perspective of complexity instead of focusing on the average experience of graduates. The average experience does not present the full picture of TESOL careers as there is no clinical/ideal conditions for career development. Moreover, the theory of Capital also ensures that the career factors are grouped in a comprehensive structure that demonstrates the diversity of participants.

Considering the local context this study was conducted in, the results are not generalizable in all contexts globally although there is a global nature to the research questions. The majority of the data is descriptive with the exceptions of one analysis on gender differences and another on preparedness and satisfactory level. Correlative analysis was not conducted due to the small and imbalanced sample.

4.1 Level of Employment

The survey required participants to indicate their current position, employment conditions, income, and description of work. Their responses were directly related to research question 1 about the level of employment of TESOL graduates. The length of career paths from TESOL graduation to the time of the data collection also indicated a significant range amongst the participants from several months to 11 years.

4.1.1 Current Position

There is a wide range of current positions graduates hold from volunteer in a government office to CEO of a private language school. The employment organizations have a variety of different focuses including general education, academic English, business English, daily communication, cultural experiences and non-education focuses such as human resources management or customer services. Among the 26 participants who reported their current position, three identify themselves as unemployed as they are currently either a student, volunteer tutor, or doing private tutoring only when there is an opportunity. Figure 6 demonstrates the actual field of work in which graduates are currently applying their skills.

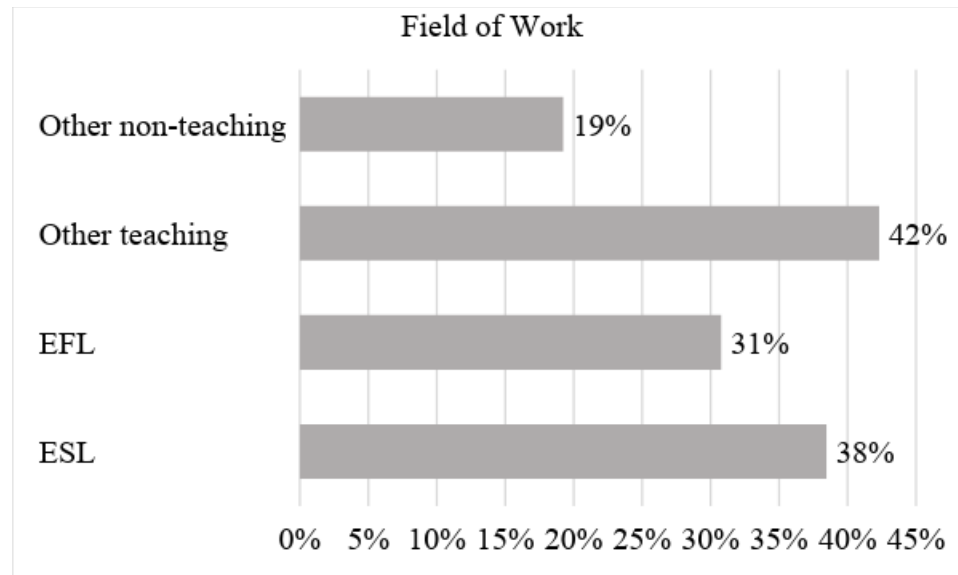


Figure 6. Field of Work

Teaching in ESL settings means that participants are teaching students learning English in an English-speaking community, and teaching in EFL settings means that the teaching happens in non-English communities (Harmer, 2013). Graduates working in teaching other than ESL or EFL made up the largest group. According to the survey, other types of teaching include tutoring, teaching in K-12, providing support services or academic advice, teaching study skills or test preparation, accreditation, and curriculum development. Surprisingly, while the TESL program was designed as a certification program for graduates to teach abroad mainly in non-English speaking countries, graduates teaching ESL (38%, 10) exceeded that of EFL by 7% (8), and almost one fifth of the graduates (6) are working in non-teaching positions including working as administrators in human resources, support services, English programs, or education consulting companies.

4.1.2 Employment Conditions

Employment conditions included questions related to types of contracts and locations of employment. The results of the types of contracts that graduates are experiencing are inconsistent with the data found in the literature. According to WorkBC (2018), a job with 30 or more hours per week is categorized as a full-time job. Among the 27 valid responses for this question, the vast majority are employed with full-time, on-going contracts (see Figure 7). The total of full-time positions exceeds that of part-time by over 60%. The total of on-going positions is also over that of the temporary positions by 60%. Weekly hours for part-time positions range from 2 to 20 hours.

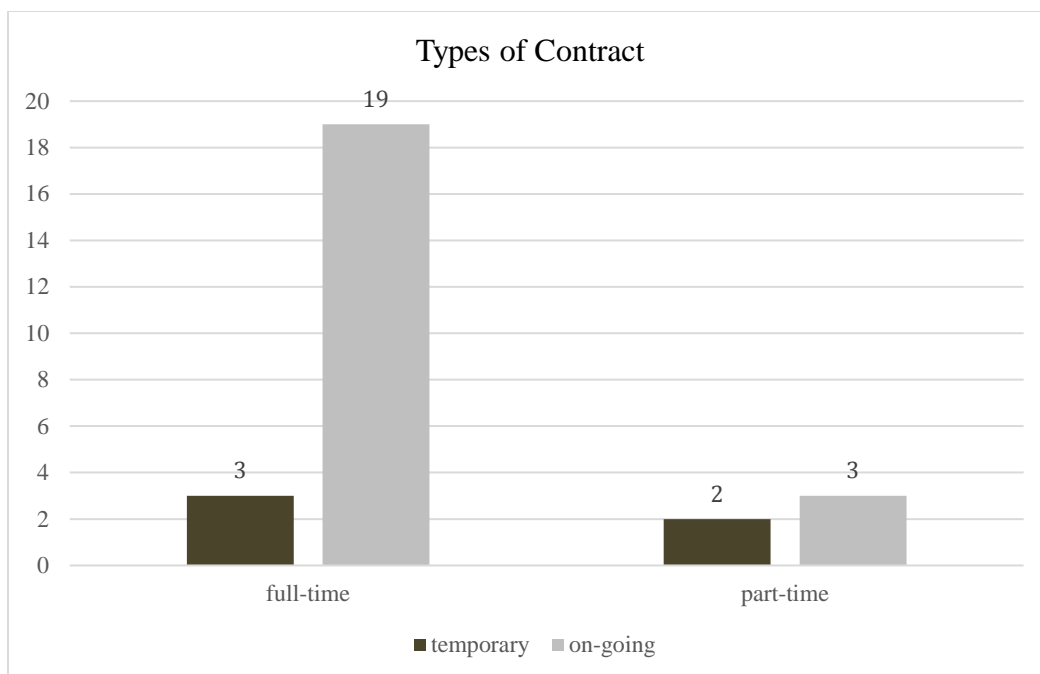


Figure 7. Types of Contract

This data is contradictory to the literature for two possible reasons. The participants who provided responses to the survey may consist of mainly the currently-employed TESOL professionals, as they would be the people who check emails and keep email addresses updated with the TESL program coordinators in order to maintain professional connections. Another reason is that, the data might represent the contract types graduates from this TESL program are holding, which shows a much more positive employment condition than the prediction from the literature. An analysis to examine gender differences in part-time versus full-time employment and long-term versus temporary employment could not be conducted due to the small sample size ($n \leq 3$).

Among the participants who reported both current locations and employer locations (see Figure 8), 79% are currently in Canada out of which two thirds of the current locations is in BC, mainly Kamloops and Vancouver; meanwhile, the percentage of the employers in Canada is 71% with 63% from BC. The differences of the number between current location and employer location also appear in the overseas employment: 24% of the employers are not in Canada, while 21% of the participants are currently overseas.



Figure 8. Location of Employment

The difference of locations between graduates and employers indicated that TESOL professionals were not necessarily working in places where their employers were located. It is possibly that employers are in a different location than where the actual positions are. The distances between the employers and working employees in the same organization can be as close as two cities side-by-side, such as Vancouver and Burnaby, or as far as two different continents; for example, one employer is located in Taipei while the employee is working for the employer in Calgary. The different locations showed the global nature of the TESOL profession even within the small sample size.

4.1.3 Income and Benefits

The hourly rate of the participants ranges approximately from \$0 (volunteer) Canadian Dollar (CND) to \$50 CND despite the different payroll units including annual or monthly salary. The average hourly income was \$21.93 CND with various conditions of benefits received from the employers. 55% of the participants indicated that their

income was adequate and 17% believed their income was more than adequate, while 28% of the participants earned an income that is less than adequate.

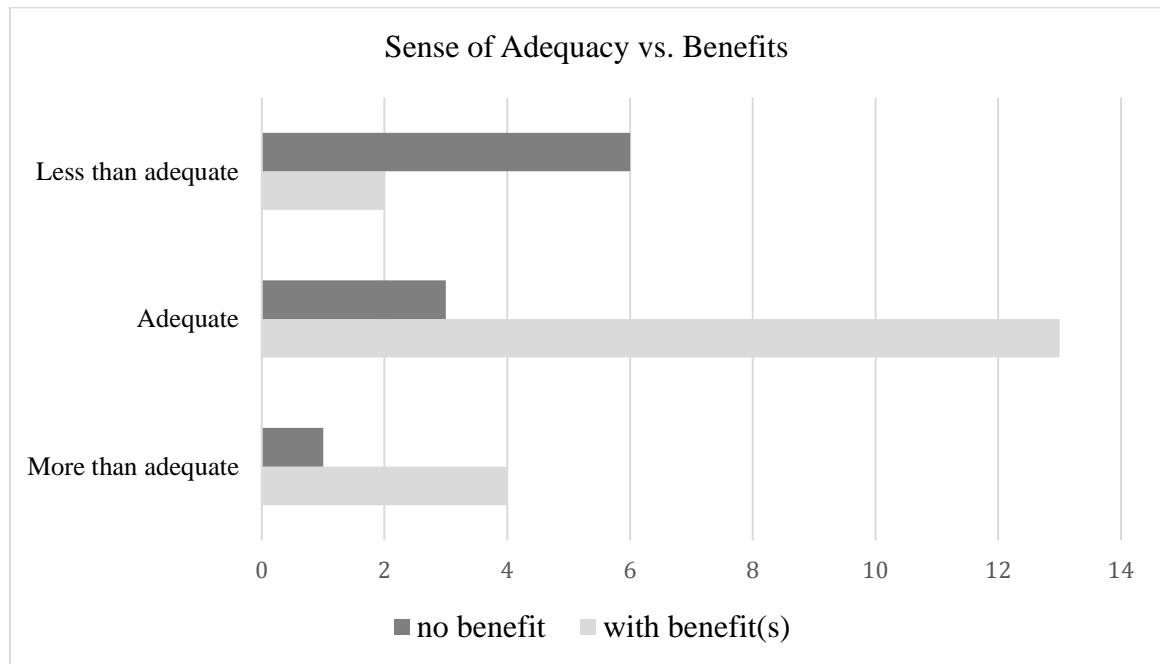


Figure 9. Sense of Adequacy vs. Benefits

Graduates who rated their income to be an adequate level have an average income of \$25 CND per hour. The average income of participants who chose more than adequate was \$27 CND per hour, and that of the less than adequate is \$14 CND. Yet, the mean of an adequate income was \$27 CND per hour while that of a more than adequate income was \$27 CND per hour. The factor that contributes to this fact might be the benefits received through employment. It was interesting to see the relation between the sense of adequacy and benefits (Figure. 9); the sense of adequacy decreases if employed graduates receive no benefits. There is a possible correlation between benefits and the sense of adequacy related to income.

4.1.4 Description of work

Responses to questions related to description of work demonstrate a vast diversity. The survey also collected information about specific duties required, ages and

English proficiency of students, and skills ELL students needed help with. The responses of this section presented a wide range of diversity.

Graduates are working in various type of organizational settings and engaging in different duties at work, including teaching, tutoring, advising, administration, assessment, and curriculum development. The numbers of graduates engaging in the specific duties abovementioned have a small range from 12 to 16, which means that all these duties share a similar level of commonality in TESOL employment. In other words, graduates were undertaking various duties instead of or in addition to teaching in their TESOL employment.

The graduates were also undertaking other duties such as education consulting, educating community, coordinating activities, communicating with agents and schools, assisting students with applications to other learning programs, marketing, and classroom maintenance. The majority of graduates were working in educational organizations including public and private schools, universities, and language schools; however, some graduates were working in businesses, military, government offices or community service centres.

Graduates were also working with students with various academic levels and language proficiency levels, and helping them with all of the English skills. Students ranged from 5 to 70 years old, with their English skills ranging from beginner level to advanced level. This wide range of variety in students regarding age and English proficiency level corresponds to the literature in terms of diversity of work conditions (Breshears, 2017). In addition, the challenges of transitioning to a teaching job and teaching multilevel classes was also reported by graduates in the interviews.

4.2 Factors Contributing to Employment

Graduates reported their ideal jobs and their status in terms of professional involvement and rated the effectiveness of different factors for facilitating their TESOL careers according to their individual career experiences. This section demonstrated a wide range of diversity in TESOL careers and the inconsistency between career goals and career experiences. The factors included in the survey were overall well-predicted and fairly comprehensive according to the literature and experience of TESOL faculty, as

participants responded to the Likert scales without suggesting any additional factors in the comment space or open response and most of the factors received a relatively wide range of rates.

4.2.1 Professional Involvement

Among the six types of professional activities (see Figure. 10), over half of the participants had teaching experience during or before the TESL certificate program, and the majority of participants had attended professional conferences. Less than half of the participants are members of a TESOL professional organization, and less than one fourth of the graduates have been active in academic presentations, research, and publications.

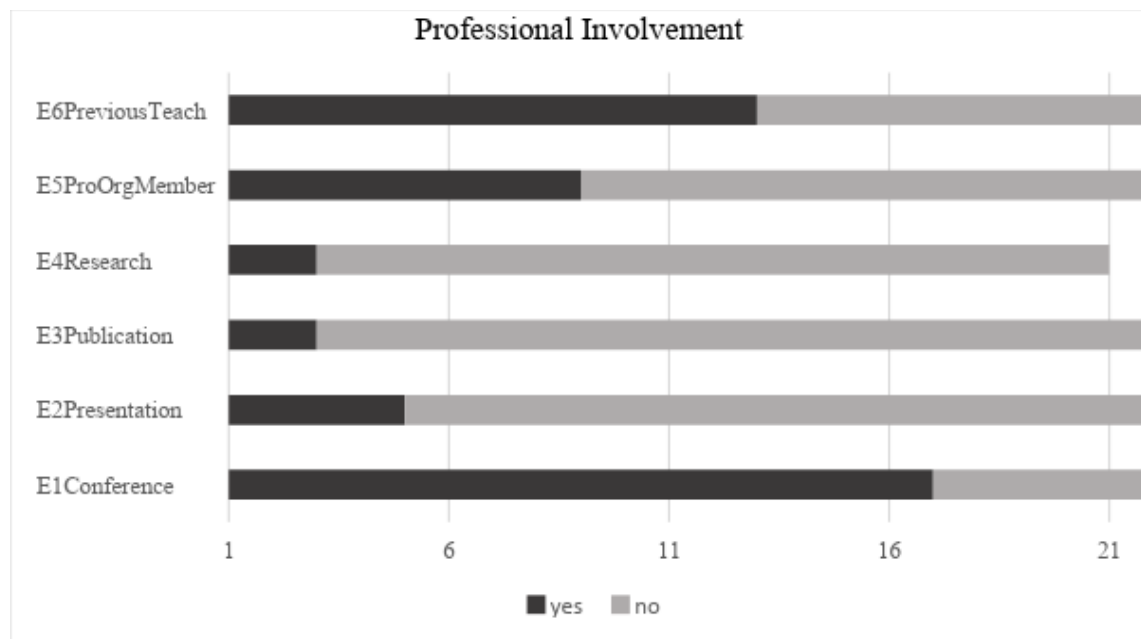


Figure 10. Professional Involvement

Among those who had teaching experience prior to or during the TESL program, they rated 3.46 out of 5 in terms of how helpful the previous teaching experience is to obtaining employment, with a range from 2, not very helpful, to 5, which means extremely helpful. According to the comments under this question, although any teaching experience may aid graduates with the teaching activities in their jobs, it may not aid them in finding employment. In other words, having previous teaching experience was

Cultural Capital for the job of teaching, but it lacked the value as Capital during the job searching process.

Regarding the ideal TESOL jobs, while some young Canadian graduates look to teach overseas, international graduates may seek employment in Canada; some mature graduates aimed at a career transition into TESOL while working around other professional or life commitments, so they have specific expectations of whether they look for work overseas or locally. Interestingly, an inconsistency is found between the ideal TESOL jobs of graduates and their professional involvement. For example, many graduates reported their interest in being a university professor, yet they are not highly involved in professional activities. Some are interested in teaching in the K-12 system, yet they have not obtained the teacher certification for that educational setting. Some reported having an inadequate resume or English proficiency as the reasons for not being employed. The vast majority of participants reported their lack of qualification for their ideal jobs.

Meanwhile, participants reported that they are overall not highly involved in the TESOL profession other than fulfilling their employment duties and attending conferences which are more passive in terms of career development. On the other hand, activities such as doing an academic presentation or research can be seen as more active forms of professional involvement; however, only a small proportion of the participants were involved in these activities.

4.2.2 Reasons for Taking TESL

The results for the reasons for taking the TESL program were mainly from the interviews. This question was intended to examine the motivation for taking the TESL program and the career expectations of graduates. While all of the three interviewees chose the TESL program because of the expectation of what they would be able to do after graduation, young Canadian graduates, mature graduates and international graduates have a different focus of consideration.

Mature students tend to consider the existing opportunities that will work around their family commitments and other professional commitments that might relate to a

different profession. They have specific information about TESOL and even experience in related professions. As Robynn indicated:

I already had my degree in adult education, I was moving to Kamloops, and I noticed that there were a lot of employment opportunities to teach English as a second language at TRU. My undergraduate degree is in English and French language, and it was...required in order to teach ESL at TRU. And TRU offer the TESL training. Umm...so all that led me to taking the TESL program.

Mature students are very aware of the kind of career in TESOL they specifically expected; they have already had reliable sources of information to search for jobs, know where they would be going to work and even whom they will work for, and have transferable skills and related experience in education in general.

Compared with mature students, young Canadian graduates are interested in TESOL more likely because of the travelling opportunities and income. Most of them have just graduated with their undergraduate degrees, not knowing what to do with their life, what their career goals are, and where they can start working because employers usually ask for more than an undergraduate degree. Scarlett directly stated that

... I was like 'I don't know what I'm going to do with my life', because I didn't apply to any master program. And...so I missed the boat on that. And there weren't many like full-time jobs. And I really wasn't in a position where I can wait you know a month or two to find a job, I needed to be doing something right now, so I was thinking about it and I was like 'you know what' like 'I should do this program', because I don't know what I want to do exactly. Umm it gives me at least a couple more years to figure out if I like teaching, great; if I don't like it it's okay. I didn't commit to a full four-years like the teaching program, right? And... I was kind of like...kind of have the year when I'm a student again and get my stuff sorted out.

...

So many my friends have graduated and they're working at a restaurant. Or they're working at like hotels or something like that, and I was like 'you know I have a degree'. I don't want to be like you know having a degree and working at a

restaurant. So for me I guess it was for the travel opportunities, umm more job opportunities, not necessarily in Canada but also abroad, and the money.

As young Canadian graduates are limited by their Economic Capital (Bourdieu, 1986), they take TESOL because it is an international certification they can earn without spending an excessive amount of time and money, and teaching overseas usually benefits them with an adequate salary with the bonus of international adventures. Their interest is more in international job opportunities than in Canadian employment.

International students choose TESL for the certification and also to best use their strengths as ELLs. With limited social connections, time and financial support, they focus more on what they are good at and can offer. They, as ELLs, are much more aware of language rules including grammar with an understanding of cultural differences reflected in languages and challenges of ELLs based on their own experiences. Mr. Dream decided to do TESL because English is his second language and he “was very good at speaking the language and knowing the bases of the language plus the grammar, and anything to do with any English rules” and TESL can help develop his skills so that “I can actually help others learn English the way I did”. Knowing that he can teach “either locally or internationally”, Mr. Dream was actually more interested in teaching in Canada due to his interest in changing his immigration status to a Canadian permanent resident. Culturally, his family’s recommendation also largely contributed to his decision to take TESL as he described the decision for taking TESL “wasn’t really my choice” but “a choice of my mother” that he agreed with.

The responses to this question outlined the different career expectations of graduates by looking into the reasons why they chose the program which also demonstrated the sources of motivation in having an enduring career in TESOL. While job opportunities in TESOL were a common source of motivation, mature students and international students draw more on their previous experience as English teachers or/and students than young Canadian students who are still trying to decide on their career goals and areas of interest. Overall, graduates had vastly different reasons to become TESOL professionals.

4.2.3 Academic Activities

Figure 11 demonstrates the average perceptions of graduates regarding how helpful the listed academic activities are to their careers in TESOL. Owning academic credentials, including a TESL certificate, undergraduate degree, and graduate degree, ranked in the top among all the activities.

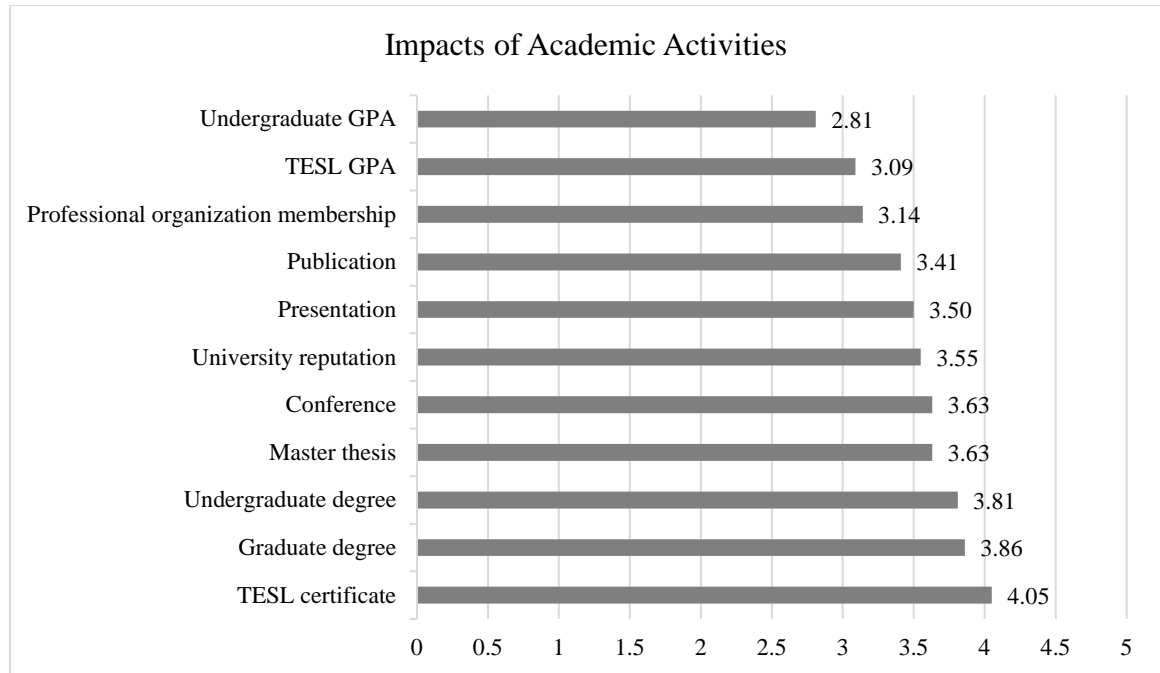


Figure 11. Impacts of Academic Activities

An analysis was undertaken to examine gender differences in perceived effectiveness of academic credentials, including undergraduate degree, graduate degree, and TESL certificate. There was no significant difference on the effectiveness of the three mentioned credentials between male and female ($p \geq .225$).

Table 1. Gender Differences on the Effectiveness of Certificates on Employment

	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>t (df)</i>	<i>p</i>
	Female	Male		
G1aUndergraduate	4.08 (1.04)	3.44 (1.33)	1.25 (20)	.225
G1aGraduate	3.69 (0.86)	4.11(0.78)	1.17 (20)	.256
G1aTESLcertificate	4.15 (0.99)	3.89 (0.92)	0.63 (20)	.553

The next group of valuable academic factors are academic involvement, including research (such as a master thesis), publications, and presentations and conferences. While most participants lack active involvement in professional development according to the last section, they recognize the effectiveness of active professional involvement. The least effective factors reported are GPA and membership of professional organization. Participants acknowledged the importance of professional involvement, yet the membership in professional organizations is not reflected to be valuable to their career development. The significance of the reputation of the university attended was unexpected because the quality of education is assumed to be equal in Canada regardless whether a university is famous or not. If the standard quality of education in Canada is true, the reputation of the university attended should not have an impact on job searching and employment; however, it appeared to be more influential than GPA and some active professional involvement in terms of perceived impact on career progression.

Despite the statistics interpreted through the averages, it is also noteworthy that participants demonstrate a large range of variety in their responses. All the factors except for GPA and university reputation have a range of responses from 2 to 5, while the three factors formerly mentioned have a range from 1 to 5 in the same item. In other words, a factor might have been valuable in the career of one graduate while having little impact in the career of another. As the factors are rated by participants according to their own TESOL career experiences, the range of rates demonstrates the complexity and the various uniqueness of individuals and their career experiences.

4.2.4 Teaching Experience and Skills

Teaching experience and skills have a higher average of effectiveness on the career success of TESOL graduates than academic activities and other factors in the following section according to the responses. Among all types of teaching experiences, TESOL-related teaching experience was significantly more effective than non-TESOL teaching experience in facilitating career development. In addition, only basic computer skills were reported to be significant in a TESOL career.

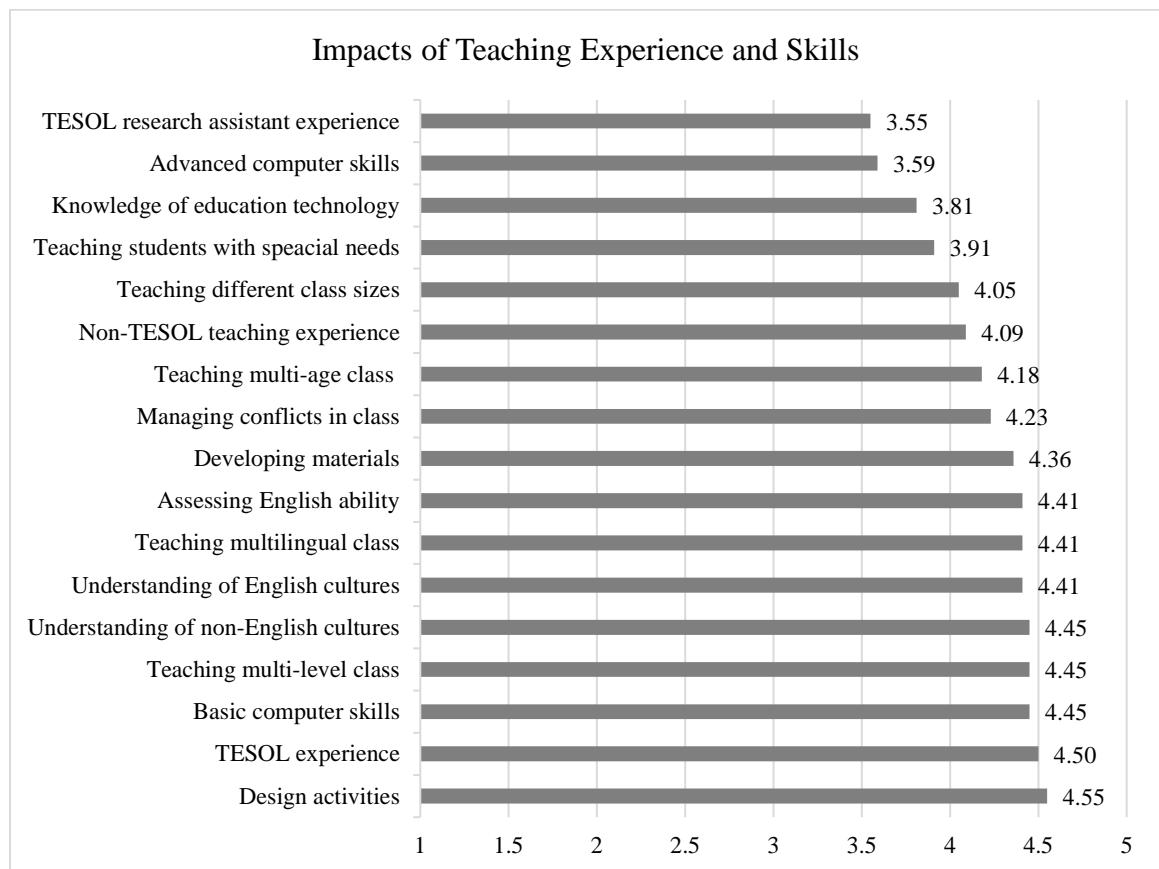


Figure 12. Impacts of Teaching Experience and Skills

Compared with whether one has teaching experience, the transferable skills, including understanding non-English cultures and English cultures, and the ability to assess the English ability of students, design appropriate activities for a class, teach multilevel or

multilingual classes, and develop student-oriented instructional materials, were essential to careers in TESOL. Other important skills also include managing conflicts in the classroom, adapting to different class sizes, and teaching students of different ages (such as children and youth). Although teaching students with special needs, knowledge of existing language-teaching software and online resources, advanced computer skills and experience as research assistant in TESOL are not reported to be essential, these items still have average rates above 3.50 out of 5. The rates of essential skills in TESOL teaching had the least variety among all the factors.

4.2.5 Other Factors

Factors other than the categories abovementioned are also included in the survey. English skills were indicated to be the key factor for both Canadian and international participants. Openness to different opportunities, persistence in job searching, and network of staff through the TESOL program seem to be valuable in the careers of participants, while the other factors as shown in Figure 13 are still influential to career development with an average over 3.60.

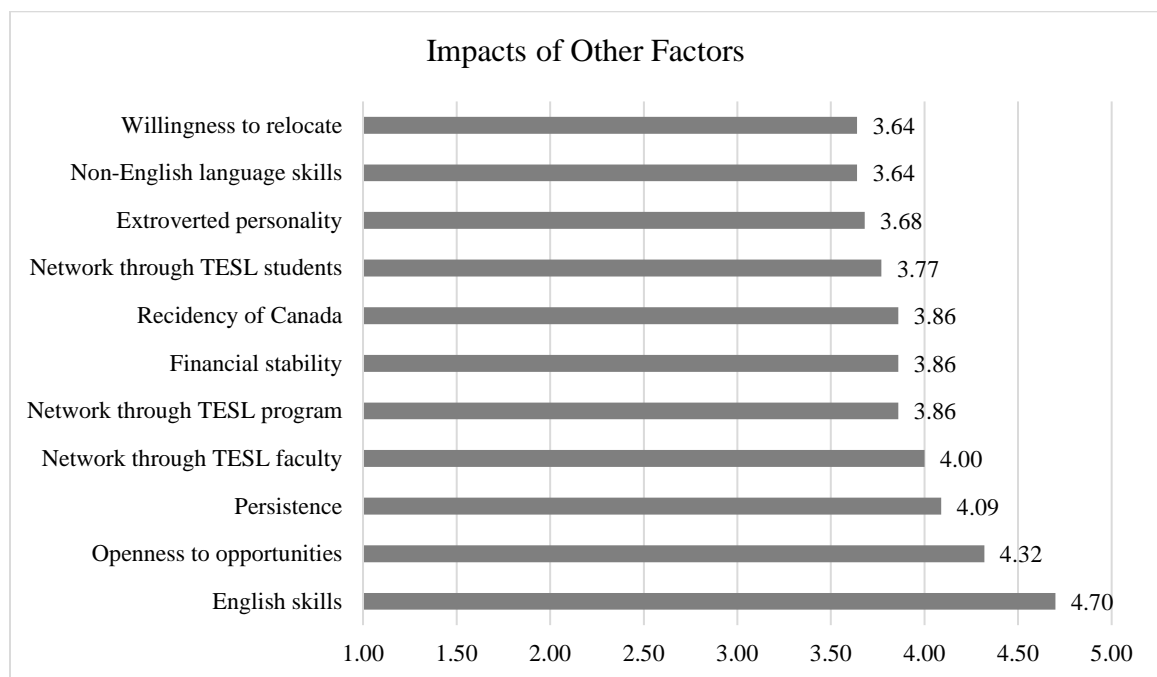


Figure 13. Impacts of Other Factors

The three main themes appearing in the interviews in terms of factors impacting career transitions were personal factors, the job searching process, and adaptations in the workplace. Mature students were affected more by personal factors and less by job searching skills than new graduates who experience fewer limitations in the types of jobs they could choose but had limited experience to rely on to get the jobs. All three types of students made important adaptations to their workplace after graduation from the program.

Personal factors. The career transition involves many personal decisions in terms of life goals and career goals that are impacted by personality, previous experience and background, and preferences of work and travel destinations.

Mature students have more specific goals that motivated the decision of taking the TESL program. In the case of Robynn, who has experience in teaching adults and curriculum development, she had the source of job information before taking TESL and had a plan of teaching in TRU. She did not express any struggle with her job search and described a relatively smooth transition into a teaching job specifically as she expected. As mature graduates are experienced in the transitional process with their transferable skills acquired from their previous career, they are more prepared even before entering the TESL program, so their post-graduation plans are more likely to work out with less unexpected incidents.

While the survey results indicated an uncertain attitude towards the importance of personal factors, the interview results happen to show that personal factors are actually influential factors especially during career transitions. Scarlett described the struggles trying to find her personal preferences of employment such as job duties, geographic locations and cultures, and “I don’t know what I want to do exactly”. She also expressed her unwillingness to work in entry-level jobs with the minimum wage, such as retail or serving, and her limited financial situation as she “wasn’t in a position where I can wait you know a month or two to find a job, I needed to be doing something right now”. Robynn chose the TESL program in TRU also partly because she “was moving to Kamloops” and “noticed that there were a lot of employment opportunities to teach

English as a second language at TRU”. Mr. Dream had partly decided his personal preferences of employment when he came to study in Canada: “as an international myself, as a person who is driven to get a degree in Canada, my main goal in the end was to get my immigration document, my permanent residency in the country”, and he considered the TESL program because of his mother’s suggestion. Moreover, some international NNES graduates also reported in the survey that their English skills had limited their career opportunities in TESOL. These personal factors seemed to be a small part of a TESOL career; however, they are an influential part of the complexity of career decisions and unpredictability of career trajectories in TESOL.

Job searching. Searching for work in TESOL was generally reported in both the survey and interviews as a significant challenge in the transition for new graduates with not enough previous experience to rely on.

Sources of information played an essential role in the job searching process. Mature students took much less time in job searching due to their ability and experience than young Canadian graduates and international graduates. Robynn has very reliable sources of information about career and job postings in TESOL in TRU where she planned to stay and teach, which led to her decision of taking the TESL program in TRU to meet the hiring requirements. Her level of preparedness in adapting to a career in TESOL also facilitated her job searching after graduation. She received her first job offer right after she graduated. “It happened so fast that I didn’t really have a chance to think about it”, said Robynn. Meanwhile, Scarlett found it challenging to find reliable sources of job information and properly interpret the job postings. Mr. Dream directly stated that “I have to be honest with you that my transition to the ESL workplace has not been an easy one” because he was unfamiliar with the job market culture in Canada. Graduates also expressed such needs overwhelmingly in the survey responses to recommendation to the TESL program which will be discussed in the next section.

Adaptations in the workplace. The adaptations are usually reflected in the job skills such as curriculum design or teaching methods. Robynn “had to put in some pretty long hours to develop some material” to meet the needs of her students because “The

curriculum provided...it was...it has a lot of gaps”. She also sought advice from the TESL instructors to adapt to teaching multilevel classes. Scarlett, on the other hand, had to adapt to a different teaching method than what she was used to:

I think one of the biggest transition is...my school uses the direct method...and...there’s nothing wrong...ok. Of course in our program we definitely learned more communicative than anything else. Of course we learned about the other methods. But we mainly focus on the communicative approach. Umm...and when I came here, I had to learn to teach in a direct method. And for me it was weird. Because...like umm...part of it is like you’re...with the direct method you’re correct the students while they’re speaking. For me in the TESL program I was kind of taught not to cut students off. And for me that was hard. And my boss was like ‘I know it’s kind of weird at first. But they come for you to correct them. They know it’s going to happen, and they want it to happen...and I was like ‘when you say it like that, that’s kind of make it a bit easier for me like...to do that. Because the one thing was I just didn’t want a student to think that like I was like belittling them and make them feel stupid, or interrupted them. But my boss was like no they know that you’re going to correct them and they want you to. So for me that was easier. But the direct method is quite different, so I think of course the different approaches and teaching styles like...we come from a program that was a very communicative based and I’m in a direct method school. It’s definitely have some issues sometimes.

Apart from the teaching method, she also had to adjust to a teaching schedule that changes weekly and her teaching is usually not during regular work hours because her students could be working full-time.

4.2.6 Impacts of the TESL Certificate Program

Participants provided positive feedback about the effectiveness of the TESL Certificate program. All the courses are rated over 4.10, among which TESL 3050: Practicum ranked at the top of the list, followed by TESL 3010 Curriculum and Instruction. Participants found TESL 3020 Pedagogical Grammar and TESL 3040 TESL

Techniques on a similar level in terms of effectiveness in their career, which are slightly higher than the TESL 3030 Intercultural Communication Studies.

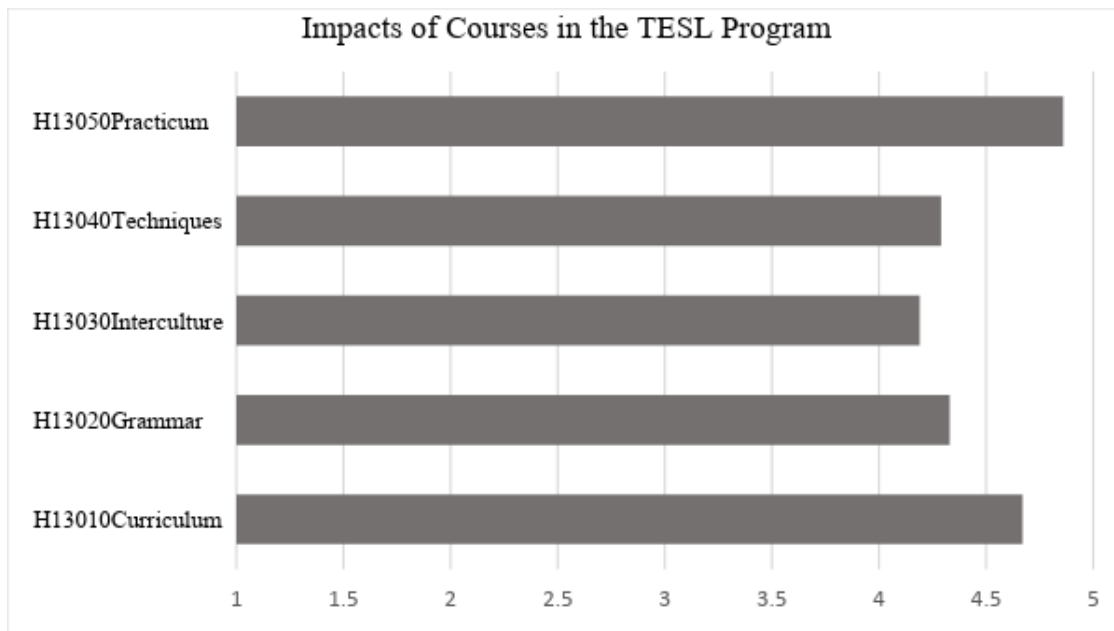


Figure 14. Impacts of Courses in TESL Program

Participants also rated how helpful the TESL program was to the factors related to career development in TESOL. The program was efficient in supporting students with career networking and building a supportive community for the graduates, yet there was a bigger gap identified in improving skills of graduates especially the skills of teaching students of different ages and teaching different class sizes. Neither have the participants identified that the TESL program significantly improved their English skills as it might not have been considered as a part of the aim of the program.

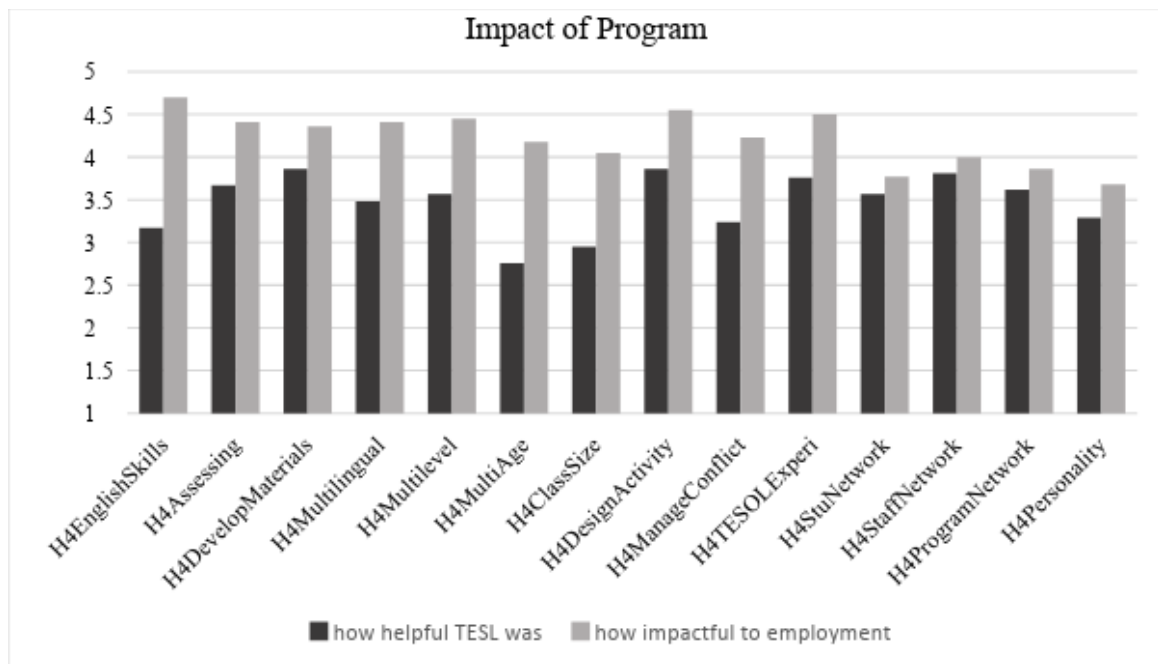


Figure 15. Impact of TESL Program on Career Factors vs. Effectiveness of Factors to Career Development

Applying the same Likert scale, the responses also reflected a gap between participants' sense of preparedness to TESOL careers and their satisfactory levels to the TESOL careers (see Figure 16). With the same range of rates (1-5), overall, a higher level of preparedness was reported than the level of career satisfaction. This shows, while graduates feel that the TESL Certificate program prepared them to their post-graduation careers, they only have a medium level of satisfaction in their subsequent careers in TESOL.

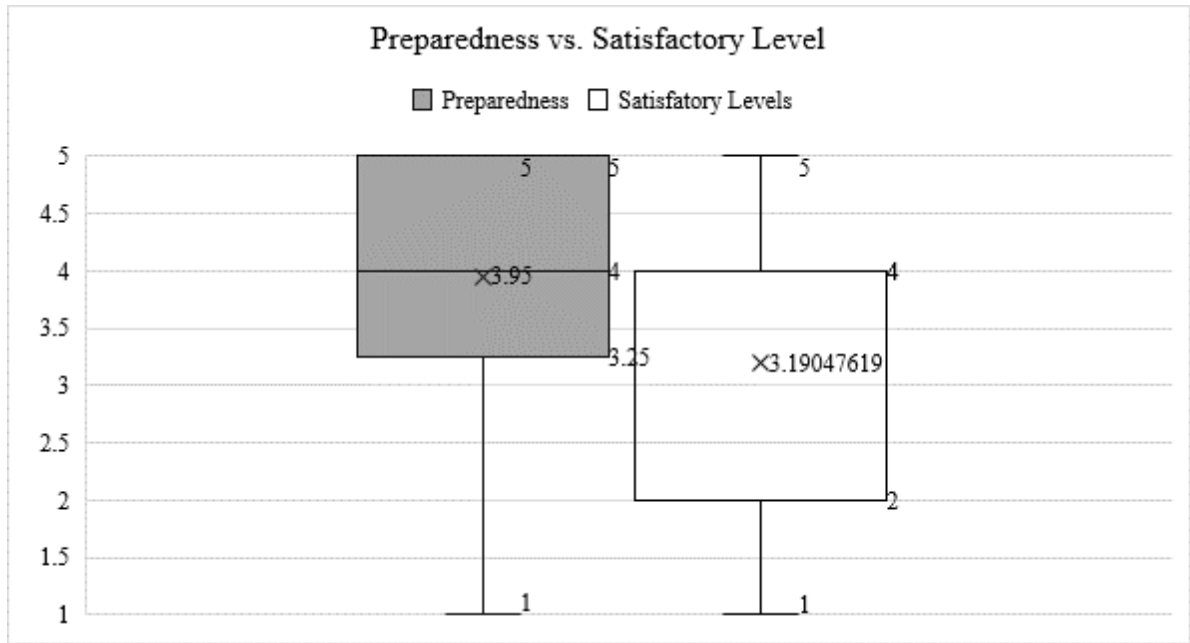


Figure 16. Preparedness vs. Satisfactory Level

Two tests were run to analyse whether there is a significant difference between satisfaction level and preparedness, and whether they were related. A paired *t*-test showed that the rates of preparedness ($M = 3.95$) were higher than that of career satisfaction ($M = 3.19$), ($t(19) = 3.56, p \leq .002$). Moreover, a Pearson correlation analysis found that the levels of preparedness and career satisfaction were moderately related ($r = .67, p = .001$).

	N	Correlation	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Preparedness & Career Satisfaction	20	.670	.001	3.559	19	.002

Table 2. Correlation between Preparedness and Career Satisfaction

Overall, according to the *t*-test and correlation analysis, rates of preparedness were higher and so may develop before career satisfaction. There was not a significant difference on these two items between the two genders ($p \geq .861$).

According to the qualitative responses, graduates mainly had challenges during their job seeking processes in spite of the fact that they have adequate skills needed for TESOL-related jobs. As a result, although there is no course suggested to be added into the program, a majority of participants suggested to improve support in teaching students with special needs, of different ages, or with different sexual orientation, in doing administrative jobs, and in career development (such as career mentoring). For NNES graduates, the intensiveness of the program is also reported to be challenging as they need more exposure and practice in teaching in a different teaching culture with various approaches as well as in improving their English skills.

In spite of the various levels of preparedness and satisfaction, more specific information behind these numbers was captured in the open responses and interviews. All three interviewees described very positive experiences overall in the TESL program. They benefited mainly from the instructors in TESL, the multiple methods of teaching with a focus on students, the practicum in which they gained hands-on teaching experience, and the learning community built into the cohort nature of the program. Participants, especially mature graduates who were seeking a career transition, reported that they developed a sense of purpose in teaching and felt comfortable and confident through studying in the program. A main reconsideration of the learning experience in the TESL program was the intensity of the program. Depending on the previous experience, acquisition of TESOL related skills prior to the program, and learning styles, graduates experienced different learning curves during their studies in the TESL program.

Instructors. Instructors were reported to have a significant impact on the learning of graduates by modelling teaching with different methods and being student-centred in an ESL classroom, supporting and caring for TESL students during their learning and practice, and motivating TESL students with their great passion in learning and teaching of TESL and ESL.

Instructors are the main support for the graduates both during and after the program. Young Canadian graduates like Scarlett are very appreciative about the fact that the instructors of the program are supportive, caring, and passionate about teaching:

The teacher had such passion for the program and...they really did care about like you know what we were doing after teaching and all the stuff. I just felt they were very interested in us as people, and for me that was really good like umm I felt close to them. They would (find the...share of things) they have done, or things that are possible through the program. They were very invested in us finding a job after university...and what not.

Mr. Dream also supported the idea that the program was informative and up-to-date because of the instructors:

They teach you a lot of the methodology and the process of what is it like to be an ESL teacher in the field. So they were really up to date with everything.

... The teacher of the class will actually tell you what you need to improve, what you need to...what was good that you taught and everything. So they were very careful in each and every step of the way.

The support of instructors happens not only during the program but also after students have graduated:

Well, I've gone back to my previous instructors for a few times for advice.

...I'm not afraid to ask for help. And I have, and they responded like 'of course come on in' and had great conversations. Provided me with resources or advice.

For sure. And I felt that that was open, when I graduated. I never felt...like there's no hesitation about getting in touch with them.

...And particularly...in specific.um the TESL teachers that I had for my TESL program MODELLED how to teach an ESL program.

(Robynn)

Instructors overall have been presented as role models and as a significantly influential factor in the TESL program in all cases. The connection with instructors facilitated the practices of graduates directly by providing support, resources and guidance during and after the program.

Pedagogy focus. Although not all of the three cases specifically identified the preferences of pedagogy in ESL classrooms, the program had a strong focus on student-

oriented, communicative methods while providing exposure of other teaching methods in class.

Robynn, teaching in an organization with a similar style preference, found it very helpful to have the communicative approach discussed in detail and demonstrated in almost all the TESL classes. It has also been consistent with her previous experience as a curriculum developer: “What IS similar [to my previous background] is ... there’s a lot of emphasis was put in my Adult Education training on understanding the students and being very student-focus, and that’s very similar.”

Scarlett appreciated the exposure of different methods because she was required to use a very different method at work than the communicative method: “I like the program because it showed different ways of teaching, and for me that’s the most important thing was that there’s many different ways to teach something, and there’s not really a best way, it depends on you know you as a teacher, who you’re teaching, what you’re teaching, [and] why.” Because, as she mentioned that “in our program we definitely learned more communicative than anything else”, she encountered an important transition that I will discuss in the third interview question.

Handling the learning curve. The intensiveness of the TESL program was a common theme appearing in the case studies. Mature students usually had previous learning or work experience that aids them during the learning, so they had a smaller learning curve than young graduates who have just graduated with their undergraduate degrees especially when the degrees are not in any education-related field of studies. When previous experience of learning or work cannot supplement the learning in TESOL, the learning curve appears to be steeper; similarly, the process of learning takes longer if learning in TESOL is inconsistent with their previous experience. The transferable skills and knowledge between TESOL and previous experience determines the amount of new learning. Another issue mentioned commonly was whether to take the practicum after all the other courses or take the whole program in one semester. As Robynn mentioned that she chose to finish the program in one semester because she has the background in teaching adults and “likes to just get in, get out and get done” and be able to start working. However, Scarlett decided to do the practicum in the next semester

so that she could have time to start navigating the TESOL profession and doing job searching before graduation. Students make this decision depending on the learning curve they predicted according to their background and learning style.

Practicum. Another very influential part of the TESL program was the practicum, which is consistent with the survey data shown in Figure 14. In spite of whether taking the practicum in a separate semester, graduates reported significant learning and improvements during the practicum. Mr. Dream stated that the practicum was a significant part of his learning:

They also had a lot of the practicum which was very useful. Because you get...you only...you don't just to learn...you don't get just to learn about it on paper but you also get to do it in front of an actual class. And then the teacher will actually...the teacher of the class will actually tell you what you need to improve, what you need to...what was good that you taught and everything.

Students felt supported in the practicum class in which they apply the learning from other courses and develop their teaching skills that are directly transferable to the workplace.

The practicum is a significant source of exposure to teaching English. Mr. Dream did his practicum in two different settings and had experienced the challenge of keeping students focused and interested, which is similar to what he may still experience in his current teaching job. As an experienced professional in adult education, Robynn still highly appreciated the practicum:

...there's so many observations that was built into the practicum, it doesn't feel like all of a sudden you're standing in front of a classroom and you're overwhelmed by 'well I haven't really finished the course work yet and I don't know really know what I'm doing'

For mature students, they were also provided a safe space to integrate their previous experience into a TESOL setting before going into the workplace. Nevertheless, a component missing in the data is the professional connections. Participants did not mention this benefit of practicum in either the survey responses or the interviews.

Supportive community. An effective supportive community that facilitates learning and practice in TESOL was built through a cohort base during the time when students were in the TESL program. This community consists of students, instructors, sponsor teachers of student teachers in practicum, and sometimes even TESL alumni who were involved in TESL classes as guests or on campus as a staff member. It is a continuously developing community that supports graduates both practically and emotionally when they encountered challenges or stress in workplace or life in general. As Robynn stated:

Well, I've gone back to my previous instructors for a few times for advice,

...

I'm not afraid to ask for help. And I have, and they responded like 'of course come on in' and had great conversations. Provided me with resources or advice.

For sure. And I felt that that was open, when I graduated. I never felt...like there's no hesitation about getting in touch with them.

Scarlett also enjoyed the learning community as she appreciated its impact on her learning experience in the TESL program:

I really enjoyed it like we had a small group. We all really got along. We were a lot closer than I had been in any other class because of course we spent all our classes together. And...yeah I was really enjoyed it. And the professors of course are great. They made you like actually excited to teach.

The teacher had such passion for the program and...they really did care about like you know what we were doing after teaching and all the stuff. I just felt they were very interested in us as people, and for me that was really good like umm I felt close to them. They would (find the...share of things) they have done, or things that are possible through the program. They were very invested in us finding a job after university...and what not. And I think they just had like really good...i guess kinda of sense of community.

The community played an important role in the career of TESOL graduates especially during the transition from being a student teacher to working as a TESOL

professional in the field, which will also be discussed in the third interview question below.

4.3 Recommendations from TESL Graduates

Recommendations from participants included three main categories: teaching practice, job searching, and program design. These themes appeared to be consistent in both the survey responses and interviews. Participants provide recommendations and advice not only in the designated questions in the survey and interview but also throughout the parts in which they expressed their needs and challenges. Despite the vastly different needs and considerations, the three interviewees reported concerns and recommendations in similar aspects of their careers.

4.3.1 Advice for Future Graduates

The advice from participants focused mainly on the aspects of teaching practice and job searching. The needs and advice in these two aspects have reoccurred in the interviews and responses of the survey.

The practicum has provided valuable teaching experience to graduates. While reconsiderations had been given to whether students should take the practicum course along with other courses in TESL or take it in a separate semester, graduates found great value in the practicum course. They suggested that TESL students should expose themselves to a variety of experiences teaching different ESL subjects in different settings, and they may decide when to take the practicum according to the size of the learning curve TESL presents to them. For graduates new to the labour market, the practicum experience was essential in their job searching.

Adaptations to work time, workplace culture, and class needs are also essential to successfully transition into the TESOL workplace. According to the survey responses and the interviews, ELL students can be highly diverse in terms of levels of proficiency, ages, and needs in a class of any size. Although the TESL Certificate Program only focuses on training graduates to teach adult learners, graduates must be able to adapt into different teaching styles and schedules depending on the cultures, contexts, and student needs. The ability to adapt involves skills in observation and reacting accordingly in a limited time.

Therefore, having TESOL experience is important for both teaching (be comfortable and confident) and job searching, and a higher academic qualification might be preferable to employers. Previous experience, including practicum, academic backgrounds, previous teaching experience of any kind and life experience, serves as a resource for graduates to draw from when they meet challenges especially during the career transitions. As Robynn pointed out, the instructions were more effective and engaging when the instructor was comfortable with the instructions and conducted their lessons with confidence, and the instincts in quick decision making during the instructional practice is developed through experience in teaching and working with students. In this sense, maintaining the TESOL community might be an effective practice to improve teaching and facilitate career transitions of individuals in TESOL.

Other suggestions included developing one's own resources for teaching and learning, being willing to work extra hours, building relationships with students, being careful with work contracts and communication especially in international work settings, and navigating different career options before making the career decision to enter TESOL.

4.3.2 Recommendations to TESL Program from TESL Graduates

Participants suggested to add more topics in teaching skills and job searching skills. The needs expressed by the participants include two categories. One category focuses on developing teaching skills, such as:

- How to actually teach, navigating the classroom education as in: I can impart the information however, I am missing the ability to teach it in a manner that is retained by the students. Furthermore, prior teaching skills would have been essential.
- How to teach different age levels, different ability levels, different language levels
- How to assess the language skills of different age levels, different ability levels, different language levels. Classroom management for different age levels, skill levels and cultures
- Special education

Another category of needs expressed by the participants was the job search and career development skills. The need of career support for graduates has been a repetitive theme throughout this study. Specifically, job searching skills has been perceived as a large gap of learning. Participants took a long time to become self-directed in navigating the labour market or found themselves lacking the ability to find work independently. They reported a specific lack of skills in:

- Tips on finding work.
- Conflict resolution, contract law
- More exposure to experiences of overseas employment experiences
- Canadian Job Searching of ESL Related Job/Career Opportunity
- More intense job searching.
- Job searching
- How to find a job, where to look, what places are more reputable, where to look after your short-term contract ends
- There is no focus in the program on entrepreneurial skills for setting up a private business, but definitely we had guest speakers who had taught EFL in different countries and that was good.
- Canadian ESL job opportunities with immigration as their main goal

They expressed the need to learn to find reliable sources of job postings, identifying potential jobs online, developing appropriate resumes and cover letters, effectively presenting oneself in professional communications and job interviews, and making personal career decisions. They suggested that these learning needs should be addressed during the study of TESOL.

Maintaining connections with potential employers in Canada is also suggested as a possibility to support the career development of graduates. By having the connections, students may conduct their practicum in potential workplaces, and recommendations and communications between the TESL program and the employers can also inform the TESOL teaching practice in the program.

Lastly, an effective practice of developing and maintaining the community of support including faculty and graduates was found in the responses although this practice was not directly suggested by the graduates. Participants disclosed that their instructors

have been very resourceful especially regarding instructional practice while their peers have provided useful information during their job searching. This community of practice of the program needs to be effectively maintained in order to continuously support the graduates in their post-graduation careers in TESOL.

4.4 Limitations

This study also has limitations. First, the impact of various changes might not be reflected in the research. For example, the information collected may not include changes of the labour market or changes in the societal environment of the TESOL profession, such as the increasing popularity of global study and work abroad opportunities, the more open discussion of diversity and inclusion, and the improved awareness of TESOL qualification. The TESL certificate program at TRU has been delivered since 2005. The environment and demands in work the graduates face may have changed as the world is increasingly globalized. Additionally, the changes of the TESL program, which may influence what the graduates have gained from the program, are also not considered in the research. The results and findings of this research may not be equivalently applicable to other TESOL programs in other universities, particularly outside of Canada, as only TESL graduates of TRU have participated.

The number of the sample is smaller than expected as a result of the length of the survey and limited access to the survey. To have an overview of career paths, the survey is relatively long, resulting in many incomplete responses. In addition, graduates can be working in any part of the world or have been moving due to the nature of the TESOL profession; thus, their contact information might not be updated, and they may not access the email they used to use or the Facebook page of TESL. The data was collected in a 4-week period before the survey was closed, so some graduates who have access might not have been able to take the amount of time to respond. Due to the small sample size, most of the correlative analysis were not applicable.

The survey of this study was designed to back track the career paths of graduates from their current employment status to the graduation from the TESL program. This resulted in two issues: Some participants were not able to recall the details of their previous employment, and the Capital graduates might have acquired before the TESL

program is not described in the data. For research on the career paths of TESOL graduates, qualitative methods, such as narrative inquiry or case studies, seem to be a more comprehensive method for capturing details that can support the analysis of career development.

Despite the limitations of the study, the survey data and interviews provided sufficient information to answer the research questions and provide insight into the career progressions of TESL graduates. The next chapter will integrate the results of both the quantitative and qualitative data and provide insights into successful careers in TESOL and recommendations for different stakeholders in the TESOL profession.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Traditionally career development in TESOL has been researched from the perspective of causal effects without the understanding of contemporary career development as a chaotic phenomenon. Bourdieu's (1986) forms of Human Capital and Chaos Theory (Bright & Pryor, 2005) provide the theoretical lenses to reconsider the ideas of career success and readiness of TESOL graduates within the complexity and uncertainty of careers. Based on the two theories, recommendations are made to increase Capital of individuals rather than following the linear cause-effect principle, which means that improvement of Capital does not guarantee visible benefits such as career success because of the complexity, but career success will not happen without enough Capital.

5.1 Diverse Employment

The results of this study are consistent with the literature in terms of the diverse workplace and employment conditions in the TESOL profession. As the need for learning the English language is increasing, TESOL is needed in many different specific settings to fulfill diverse global communication needs. In other words, TESOL is needed in any setting where communication in English is needed. Such diverse settings of communication also contribute to diverse needs of language learners, so it is almost impossible for TESOL programs and professionals to be fully prepared for everything that can possibly happen in all the teaching and learning settings. For TESOL graduates in this study, the adaptations to the workplace presented similar features to the learning curves they experienced in the TESOL program as the gap of knowledge and experience determined the amount of learning. The adaptation to the workplace is presented as a necessary part of the learning process for TESOL professionals, as it is almost impossible to be perfectly prepared for the diversity of employment in TESOL. The learning curve varies depending on the amount of adaptation required in a new job.

The Capital and transmissions between the forms of Capital for TESOL graduates is unexpected yet predictable if the individual context is taken into consideration. Although the Capital of individuals can play out differently according to the context and the complexity of Capital interactions, graduates should be aware of the changes and complexity in the TESOL labour market.

Graduates should also be perseverant in improving their skills that can potentially become Capital in their career progression to embrace the diversity of the TESOL workplace. Success is not just that a graduate finds a job easily when graduating from a university program and failure is the result for those who cannot find jobs; career success is achieved when a graduate is able to navigate the profession and have an enduring TESOL career by being perseverant in making progress in spite of the chaos of unpredictable challenges and changes.

5.2 Reconsideration of Readiness

From a macro level, career development in the modern era is chaotic. Meanwhile, on the micro level, the Capital a graduate holds can be a chaotic system in itself as the interaction of factors in professional and personal life can be complex and unpredictable, and this makes defining readiness even more difficult. Having reconsidered the meaning of career success, I also believe that the concept of readiness is worth reconsideration. Traditionally, readiness is about how ready a graduate is to perform the job they are trained for. However, according to the results of this study, in TESOL, not only is there no one specific job (teaching) that graduates are entering into, but the graduates also have to cope with diverse employment conditions in a changing labour market and the need to increase their own Capital to facilitate their careers. In the contemporary era with chaotic career development, readiness of TESOL graduates includes not only the skills to teaching English language, but also the career development skills, maturity, and character to adapt to the uncertainty in order to successfully and actively facilitate their career progression. In other words, graduates need to be ready for the possible variety of TESOL jobs they might be hired for in and out of the TESOL profession, and also for the uncertainty in their career development.

5.3 Career Development in TESOL

Needs of students in the TESOL programs can be very different. While the intent is not to generalize, the three types of graduates profiled in the interviews are consistent with the survey data in this study. The survey responses and the three interviews showed different focuses and challenges in terms of learning in TESL and career transitions. In an

attempt to demonstrate the emerging patterns from the diverse career paths of participants, Figure 17 proposes a possible framework for considering the intersectionality of the three demographic groups.

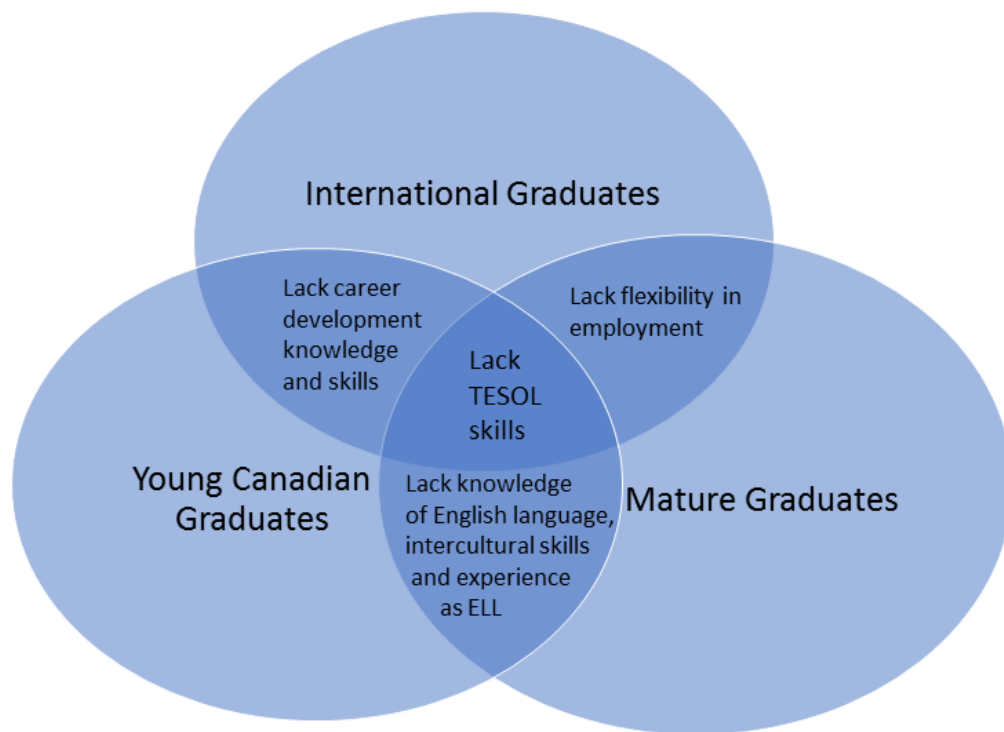


Figure 17. Challenges Experienced by TESOL Graduates

While young Canadian graduates have more interest in seeking employment overseas, international graduates and mature graduates are more likely to favour jobs in Canada. Mature graduates focus more on pedagogy during their studies and work, but younger graduates, both international and Canadian, have more concerns about job searching and career development. These different goals lead to diverse learning needs in a TESOL classroom.

Along with diverse needs, graduates also hold different Capital. Mature graduates own the Capital of job searching and career developing skills, oftentimes with previous related work experience which facilitates their career progression. Novice graduates usually lack these skills and experience but are more open to different opportunities

especially to overseas teaching positions, and they can adapt to less stable circumstances because of fewer other commitments and responsibilities such as family and children. International graduates, especially the NNES, may have better knowledge and experience about ELLs, but their NNES status might have an impact on their employment (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). TESOL programs should recognize the diversity of student needs and take them into consideration in the program design and promotion.

Despite the different Capital and needs of graduates, the skills to cope and navigate the chaos seem to be required Cultural Capital for TESOL career development. According to the data from the survey and the interviews, participants identified career development skills including not only job searching skills, such as finding reliable information sources, resume and cover letter writing, professional networking, and interview skills, but also personality characteristics (such as perseverance) and career planning skills such as time management, goal setting, taking action, and active involvement in the profession. TESOL graduates need to develop these skills and thus increase their Capital along with their TESOL studies in order to be ready for TESOL employment as well as the chaotic nature of the TESOL profession.

Another significant issue in career development is the match between TESOL career goals and the Capital of graduates. Assuming a career goal can be fulfilled by the Capital it requires, a graduate should actively plan and take actions to improve the required Capital in different ways. If one is not willing or able to improve the institutional state of Cultural Capital to meet the academic requirements of the position as a university professor, then becoming a university professor may not be a realistic career goal until the improvement is possible. Similarly, graduates should be actively involved in professional development such as attending TESOL conferences or engaging in research in order to increase their Social Capital and Cultural Capital in the TESOL profession and stay in an active position in their own career development. However, according to the survey data, the majority of participants are passive in terms of professional development with few who are involved in research, presentations and publications actively. On the other hand, career planning in TESOL should not be a thought of as a linear plan (ie. Publication of an article does not directly lead to an employment) due to the uncertainty and complexity in the profession. Graduates could benefit from maintaining a certain

level of openness to different learning and work opportunities to allow flexibility and development of transferable skills.

Lastly, a professional TESOL community, such as BC TEAL, can have a significant role to play in the career development of TESOL graduates through access to awards, scholarships, bursaries, job information, and regular professional development opportunities (BC TEAL, 2018). The TESOL community itself can be a resource of Social Capital and Cultural Capital for its members, thus, facilitating the transmissions of Capital. Moreover, a professional community could support graduates in the chaos of careers, and serve as a potential attracter in expanding the careers of graduates; ironically, less than half of the participants obtain a membership of a professional organization.

5.4 Recommendations

TESOL education is more than delivering the courses of a TESOL program; it also includes preparing graduates for future careers in TESOL and supporting them in their career development. All stakeholders, including the students, employers, instructors, and administrators, must actively take on the responsibility for success of TESOL graduates. In order to support the career success of TESOL professionals and build a sustainable, high-quality profession, the following recommendations based on the findings of this study are summarized below.

5.4.1 TESOL Program Students

A proactive attitude in the TESOL profession will benefit both the individuals and the profession. Graduates should have the perseverance and courage to increase their Human Capital through every opportunity they encounter. Although there is no guarantee of career success in the contemporary era, career progression would not happen if the Capital required is not built to an adequate level. According to the gaps identified by the participants, graduates should try to acquire not only TESOL skills but also job searching skills in addition to strong professional communication skills in order to obtain TESOL employment with employers in different geographical locations. Each active involvement in professional development would add a stepping stone for career development and increase the Capital for career success.

Active professional involvement will also benefit other TESOL professionals as well as add to the professionalism in TESOL. Additionally, graduates, as TESOL professionals, should raise the important issues in the profession and bring up constructive discussions with their colleagues and employers. As previously mentioned, a small proportion of graduates were members of a TESOL professional organization while they reported this factor to be fairly important. Being proactive in addressing important issues can not only improve individual practices of TESOL professional but also increase the possibility of positive changes in the TESOL profession.

Graduates should also be aware of the changes and challenges of the TESOL labour market in order to be prepared for a career in TESOL. According to the data and the literature, some graduates lack knowledge of job searching and awareness of potential challenges, and this may result in a lower sense of preparedness and challenges in job searching. Developing job searching skills, including identifying reliable sources of job information, writing effective resumes and cover letters, understanding the expectations of employers, making career decisions meeting the needs of oneself, and finding appropriate support for oneself, can help graduates better navigate their career options and professional cultures prior to graduation and transition more smoothly to the TESOL workplace.

5.4.2 Administrators

Despite the fact that education as a public-sector activity may be funded by public or private stakeholders or both, administrators of TESOL programs hold the responsibility of guaranteeing that administrative decisions are meeting the needs of learners while balancing the interests of other stakeholders.

Maintain small class size. The diverse learning needs and Capital of students are well demonstrated in the data of this study. In order to support the diverse learning needs effectively, having small class sizes is a way to ensure the quality of learning and teaching (Glass & Smith, 1979). The small number of students allows the instructors to identify the various needs in a limited time and design teaching accordingly during the program. For example, many graduates reported the significant impact of the connections

with TESL instructors, and this would not be possible in a large class size. The learning community with close connections between members built in a small class would also make the learning experience in the TESL program more enjoyable as indicated in the interviews.

Update Program Design. Apart from meeting the requirement of program accreditation, TESOL programs need to be reviewed and updated constantly in response to changes of the TESOL profession and labour market. As reported in the interviews, participants lack the experience in different teaching settings, which resulted in a lower level of preparedness in the transition to a teaching position. Therefore, TESOL programs should also ensure that graduates have enough exposure to different teaching settings and accumulate experience before graduation through practice in a supported environment, such as a practicum course, or a co-operative program with potential employers. The practice prior to graduation will not only provide opportunities for students to implement the knowledge and skills studied in their TESOL classes but also keep graduates informed about the updates in the TESOL profession and increase the Human Capital of graduates in terms of teaching experience.

TESOL programs should also consider possibilities of post-graduation support for graduates who experience career challenges, such as maintaining connections with potential employers for employment opportunities or providing resources and funding for instructors to continuously support graduates. Participants reported a significant benefit of the informal support received from TESL instructors after graduation when they encounter challenges in employments. Career mentoring may also be an option as the need for expanding teaching skills and job searching skills can be addressed through having experienced TESOL professionals share their experiences as mentors because the need for job search skills are indicated in the responses of “skills needed but not received in the TESL program”.

Collect Constructive Student Feedback. A regular process for students and graduates to provide meaningful feedback would be beneficial for making appropriate administrative decisions and program improvements. Students have the first-hand

experience of learning in the TESOL courses, and graduates experiencing career transitions have deep understanding of the challenges and needs for career success. Students and graduates are sufficient sources of information; their experience, knowledge and needs demonstrated in the data of this study are informative and constructive for TESOL program design. Thus, an effective process to collect meaningful feedback would help develop an up-to-date understanding of student needs for the administrative process which can contribute to more informed decision making to better support graduates and future students. For example, participants provided feedback on their career experiences, and the following comments were received:

- There are more employment opportunities because of TESOL education experience; however, most are part-time
- It is difficult to find full time employment in small communities. A TESOL recipient must move to big markets in Canada where they can get paid work or overseas.
- Having a good relationship with employers before seeking a job. It's about who you know and your skills matter little if you do not know the employer beforehand.
- Willingness to just put yourself out there- "a clown on a stage".
- Letting former students know where they can look for employment. Maybe as a classroom activity having the students look for a job or navigate the TESOL employment website.
- I think if you're willing to relocate, that is the biggest factor in setting yourself up for a myriad of job opportunities. Also, there is demand for private tutoring, so if you have entrepreneurial skills and business savvy, you can set up your own private tutoring business in almost any city.
- I have only worked at TRU World, and have not sought employment elsewhere. My employment through TRU World was very much based on recommendations from professors in the TESL department to TRU World staff.

These comments can be career advice for graduates who are in need of TESOL career development knowledge and skills. The advice should also be considered by the

administration in terms of program promotion in order to manage the expectations of prospective students.

5.4.3 Instructors

Instructors have a significant impact on the career development of graduates. As participants mentioned in both the interviews and the survey responses, instructors are one of the main sources of support graduates would seek when they encounter challenges.

During the teaching of TESOL courses, instructors should consider the diversity of learning needs of their students and try to accommodate the differences through curriculum design and lesson planning and delivery. It is also possible to incorporate and model the accommodation of student needs as part of the content of the TESOL program as graduates may encounter similar levels of diversity in their future TESOL careers. As a result, TESOL instructors and students can develop better understanding of diverse student needs and transfer the challenge of accommodations into a learning opportunity for both.

TESOL instructors may also consider introducing more diverse teaching methods in the TESOL classes. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been a mainstream teaching method in many NABA TESOL and ESL programs; however, TESOL graduates, as identified in the data, may teach in various types of settings and different cultures around the world, and their extensive knowledge and practice of CLT may not be applicable in some settings such as a Direct-Method school in Poland. While instructors mentioned the strengths and weaknesses of different teaching methods, they could provide more exposure and practice of various methods during the TESOL program, so that graduates could acquire a better understanding of a variety of methods. As a result, graduates may adapt more smoothly to employment that requires teaching methods other than CLT.

In addition to teaching methods, graduates felt that instructors should also provide approaches and strategies that aid the teaching practices in classes with young learners and learners with special needs. Graduates also wanted more classroom management skills in their TESOL program. These suggestions to improve the TESOL program will

benefit TESOL graduates to transition into classroom teaching, and also improve the effectiveness of instruction in the TESOL classroom.

Lastly, maintaining connections with students after graduation was identified as an effective way for TESOL instructors to offer career advice and support graduates to continuously improve their TESOL skills. This may also increase the career success of TESOL graduates and facilitate improved teaching in EAL programs globally.

5.4.4 Employers

With the high level of diversity in TESOL employment, TESOL employers should review hiring protocols. As participants share a variety of nationalities, professional backgrounds and linguistic backgrounds, employers may not find a stereotypical candidate with an NABA background. While it is still a common practice to have “native English speakers” as a job requirement, this does not reflect the diversity in TESOL graduates.

Employers should also provide benefits to employees to increase the sense of adequate income as there is an obvious correlation between the participants’ sense of income satisfaction and benefits. Considering the low number of participants belonging to a professional organization, employers may consider paying for professional memberships for their employees and providing time for professional development in order to improve the quality of work. In this case, the employers would remove the financial barriers if a novice TESOL professional lacks the Economic Capital to participate in professional development.

Employers should support TESOL professionals to adapt to new environments during transitions, as the data suggested that graduates may not be prepared for all employment settings. This is applicable regarding not only novice professionals but also mature professionals because the new workplace may include some aspects that one has never experienced before. Better supports and benefits during the transition to a new workplace can help retain employees for a longer term by improving Capital of a new employee which provides stability for employers. Therefore, employers should take on the responsibility of supporting TESOL professionals to adapt into different work settings

by providing a budget for additional training, professional development, and benefits in addition to an adequate salary.

5.4.5 Professional Organizations

TESOL professional organizations, such as BC TEAL and TESOL International, have been key providers of professional development opportunities by organizing conferences and webinars, facilitating research and publications, and building TESOL communities to promote stronger professionalism. The organizations are raising awareness to the public about TESOL issues by establishing professional standards and generating and facilitating conversations. However, only a small number of participants are members of professional organizations, which might have been a result of the limited Economic Capital of new TESOL professionals or the lack of recognition of Cultural Capital from professional organization memberships. Participants reported inadequate salary, lack of benefits, discriminatory hiring practices, and irregular working conditions, which professional organizations should work to improve. Specific practices could include discounts for new professionals, mentorship opportunities in career development and research, and more opportunities of involvement for in-training professionals.

5.5 Conclusion

I entered this research with the traditional cause-effect mindset for understanding career development and was seeking the answer to the wrong question: what are the causes for successful TESOL careers? As I looked into the data and contemporary career development theories to find theoretical frameworks for my data interpretation, I realized the complex and dynamic changes in career development.

The research design might have been limited by my previous mindset of looking for what graduates should specifically do to improve their careers. However, each participant of this study narrated a unique career story. I came to realize that my frustration with “try it out” as career advice was a result of my previous mindset. Realizing the norm of non-linear career progression in TESOL, this advice makes sense.

For further research, the complexity and dynamics of changes should be taken into consideration from the beginning and integrated into the research design. An

example would be to use case study or narrative inquiry methodology to explore the career paths of graduates through the lenses of Chaos Theory and Capital with an understanding of the new meaning of readiness. Further quantitative research with a larger sample size with a balance among genders, nationalities, native languages, and specific demographic groups would also make it possible for more correlative analysis to be conducted.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

It was a sunny morning in March 2017. We were on the way to the 51st TESOL International Expo 2017 in Seattle. Four of us from the same TESL cohort were driving from Kamloops and singing “A Party in the USA” along the way.

At the US border, the officer asked, “Where are you going?”

“We are going to Seattle for a conference about teaching English to speakers of other languages”, my friend Scarlett, who was driving, answered using the full term of TESOL.

While the officer was going through our documents, he asked: “What do you need to teach English? Do you speak other languages?”

“No, not necessarily”, Scarlet said.

“Oh, so you just need to speak English to teach English! Cool.”

The officer seemed to be very satisfied thinking about the possibility of himself teaching English one day. We responded with silence. I felt we should have responded because obviously something was wrong with his assumption; on the other hand, we really needed to uneventfully get through the border.

This anecdote emphasizes to me that TESOL is a profession that requires particular knowledge and skills more than simply the ability to speak English. In spite of the huge amount of effort put in to raise awareness about TESOL, the misconceptions of TESOL as a profession continue.

It is my hope that this study has added to the conversation and credibility of TESOL as a profession. TESOL career development is complex and chaotic in the contemporary era with the involvement of political and practical issues; as a result, TESOL professionals must continuously engage in opportunities to increase professionalism and develop skills to adapt to the changes in the profession. This means that students’ education is not completed when they graduate with their credentials; instead, learning continues during the career transitions and progressions. While resources are limited for further post-credential support, this lack of resources makes further research necessary to understand career experiences, the complexity of transitions, and changes in the profession.

To contribute to the conversations in the TESOL profession, I will present the findings of this study at the BC TEAL annual conference in May 2018 in Vancouver, and share the findings with the TESL program faculty, administrators, and students at Thompson Rivers University. In addition, I hope to potentially publish the results in the BC TEAL Journal to reach a wider audience and benefit more TESOL professionals. This should keep me busy while I contemplate possibilities for future research and continuing my education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Consent

Thompson Rivers University

SURVEY of Career Trajectories of TESOL Program Graduates

Vera Ziwei Wu – June 27, 2017

You have been asked by Ziwei Wu (Vera) of the School of Education, Thompson Rivers University, to participate in a research project titled *Career Trajectories of TESOL Program Graduates*. The goal of the research project is to identify career-enhancing factors of TESOL graduates, to provide information for program improvements, and offer career advice to students. Your identity and all records will be coded by numbers, not names, to ensure confidentiality. The findings of the project may be presented in reports, at conferences, and in research journals.

Participants may become upset by the interview questions as they may inquire about obstacles in their career in the TESOL profession. Participants will be offered information to access support services at the university (e.g., TRU Career Education 250-371-5627 is available for alumni) for distress related to current and future employment.

Your stories and feedback are important to help me understand the career path of TESL graduates and improve the program. This survey takes about 30-40 minutes and your responses will be kept confidential. While there is no monetary compensation, all participants who complete the survey can enter into a draw for a \$25 CND Starbucks gift card. At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you would like to enter the draw, participate in the interview, or/and receive a copy of the study result. Your contact information will not be linked to your answers in this survey.

You may ask any questions or register any complaint about the project with either the researcher named above (Vera Ziwei Wu, 250-879-1644, wuz151@mytru.ca) or with supervisors Dr. Patrick Walton (250-828-5378, pw Walton@tru.ca) and Dr. Karen Densky (250-371-5653, kdensky@tru.ca) of Thompson Rivers University. If you have any questions or issues concerning this project that are not related to the specifics of the research, you may also contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee – Human Subjects, telephone number, 250-828-5000.

Thank you for participating.

☐ By checking this box, I voluntarily agree to participate in this project. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw my participation in this project at any time without consequence. I may refuse to participate or withdraw my participation in this project at any time without consequence. My involvement or non-involvement in this project is in no way related to my status as a TRU TESL alumni.

Please print this page as a copy of your consent of participation.

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Thompson Rivers University

SURVEY of Career Trajectories of TESOL Program Graduates

Vera Ziwei Wu – June 27, 2017

A. Demographic Information

1. Gender: ____ Female; ____ Male; ____ Other
2. Age: _____
3. GPA of TESL Certificate: _____
4. Home city: _____
5. Current location (city, province, country): _____

B. Languages

1. Native language(s):

2. Other languages (In order of proficiency from lowest to highest, use the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Can-Do Statements as a guide to indicate your level of proficiency): (EXPANDABLE LIST)

Language: _____

Level of proficiency of:

Speaking 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Writing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Listening 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reading 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

C. Post-Secondary Education

1. Month /year you graduated with your TESL certificate: (1-12) / (2005-2017)

2. Academic degrees you earned in addition to your TESL certificate:

(EXPANDABLE LIST)

Degree/certificate and Major/Minor:

Institution: _____; Year of completion:

3. Were you an international student or a domestic student when you received your TESL certificate? International____; domestic____

D. Employment since Graduating from TESL Program

Please provide information about each position you have held since you graduated from the TESL program: (EXPANDABLE LIST)

1. Position title: _____

2. Employer's location (city, state/province, country):

3. Field of work:

___ Teaching English as a second language

___ Teaching English as a foreign language in non-English countries

___ Non-teaching related positions (please specify: _____)

4. Date of employment:

From ____/____/____ (month/year) to ____/____/____ (month/year)

OR ___ Continuing (no end date)

5. Nature of position:

___ Full-time; ___ Part-time (hours per week: _____)

6. Salary and benefits:

a. Hourly rate of pay: _____

Was the salary adequate for your cost of living?

___ Less than adequate; ___ Adequate; ___ More than adequate

b. Benefits you received:

___ Health insurance

___ Retirement pension

___ Vacation pay

___ Professional development

___ Other (please specify _____)

7. Types of work activities required (select all that apply):

___ Teaching

___ Tutoring

- ☐ Student advising
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Assessment
- ☐ Curriculum development
- ☐ Other duties (please specify: _____)

8. What was the educational level of the students with whom you worked:

9. Work setting (select all that apply):

- ☐ Public school (age of students: _____)
- ☐ Private school (age of students: _____)
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Other (please specify: _____)

10. What English language skills did you help your students with:

- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Speaking
- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Pronunciation
- ☐ Other (please specify: _____)

11. Your students' English level:

Beginner;

Intermediate;

Advanced

Writing

Reading

Speaking

Listening

12. Why did you leave the position?

E. Professional Involvement

Please provide the following information about your professional involvement:

1. Have you attended TESOL-related academic or professional conferences? ____ No ____
Yes

2. Have you given any TESOL-related presentations in academic or professional conferences?

3. Have you written TESOL-related journal publications?

4. Are you conducting any TESOL-related research?

5. Are you a member of a TESOL professional organization?

6. Did you teach during or before the TESL certificate program?

7. If you answered Yes to item 6, how much did your teaching experience aid you in obtaining employment?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Extremely well)

Comments:

F. Ideal TESOL Position

1. What is your ideal job in the TESOL field?

____ Language school instructor

____ K-12 public school teacher

____ K-12 private school teacher

____ Tutor

____ University professor

____ Other (please specify: _____)

2. TESOL-related jobs you are interested in but do not feel qualified:

3. What TESOL-related jobs did you apply for but did not get?

4. Why do you think you did not get these jobs?

___ Not academically or professionally qualified

___ Geographical location

___ Life circumstances (please specify: _____)

___ Other (please specify: _____)

5. In retrospect, how satisfied are you with your career since graduating with your TESL certificate?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Extremely well)

Comments:

G. Value of Improving TESOL-related Employment

1. Rate the items below that are helpful to find TESOL-related employment.

1=No value, 2=Little value, 3=Some value, 4=Great value, 5=Essential

1 2 3 4 5

a. Academic activities that are helpful:

Master thesis

Attending TESOL-related conferences

TESOL-related conference presentations

TESOL-related academic publications

Being a member of a TESOL professional organization

Under-graduate degrees

TESL certificate

Graduate degrees

Reputation of the universities

GPA of under-graduate degrees

GPA of TESL certificate

b. Teaching activities that are helpful:

TESOL-related teaching experience

Non-TESOL-related teaching experience

Experience as a research assistant of TESOL-related research

c. Technology skills that are helpful:

Basic computer skills (such as MS Office, Moodle, etc.)

Advanced computer skills (such as sound track processing, video processing, etc.)

Knowledge of existing language-teaching software and online resources

d. Teaching abilities that are helpful:

Assessing English ability of students

Developing instructional materials to meet different needs and learning purposes

Teaching students with different linguistic backgrounds

Teaching students with different levels of English proficiency

Teaching students with special needs

Teaching students in different ages

Teaching different class sizes

Designing learning activities

Conflict management in classroom

Understanding cultures of English-speaking countries

Understanding cultures of non-English-speaking countries

e. Other factors that are helpful:

Proficiency of English

Speaking

Writing

Listening

Reading

Other (please specify: _____)

Proficiency of languages other than English

Willingness to move

Openness to different opportunities

Extroverted personality

Financial stability

Persistence in job seeking

Personal networks with other TESOL students (of TRU and/or other universities)

Professional connections through TESOL staff

Personal networks through the TESL certificate program
Permanent Residency or Citizenship of Canada
Other factors (please specify:
_____)

2. What (knowledge, skills, or any other abilities) did you NOT receive from your TESL certificate program that would benefit your career?

H. Value of Program Activities

1. Rate the courses below that are helpful to find TESOL-related employment.

- Feel free to write in comments about any particular course.

1=No value, 2=Little value, 3=Some value, 4=Great value, 5=Essential

1 2 3 4 5

TESL 3010: Curriculum and Instruction

TESL 3020: Pedagogical Grammar

TESL 3030: Intercultural Communication Studies

TESL 3040: TESL Techniques

TESL 3050: TESL Practicum

- Please specify where you completed your practicum:

___ Kamloops Immigration Service

___ Thompson Rivers University, TRU World

___ Thompson Rivers University, ESL Department

___ Other locations (please specify: _____)

ESL courses before entering TESL program

Other courses (please specify: _____)

Comments:

2. Are there any courses or topics that were NOT offered as part of the TESL certificate program that you later wished you had been able to take?

Inclusive and special education

Teaching young children

Editing

Administration

Career mentoring

Other (please specify: _____)

Comments:

3. Are there any courses or topics that were offered as part of the TESL certificate program that you believe are not necessary? If so, please describe:

4. Rate how helpful is the TESL program to improve you in the following aspects:

1=No value, 2=Little value, 3=Some value, 4=Great value, 5=Essential

1 2 3 4 5

Assessing English ability of students

Developing instructional materials to meet different needs and learning purposes

Teaching students with different linguistic backgrounds

Teaching students with different English levels

Teaching students of different ages

Teaching different class sizes

Designing learning activities

Conflict management in intercultural environments

Proficiency of English

Speaking

Writing

Listening

Reading

Other (please specify: _____)

TESOL-related teaching experience

Personal networks with other TESOL students

Professional connections through TESOL staff

Personal networks through the TESL certificate program

Extroverted personality

Comments:

5. Are there any courses or topics that were offered as part of the TESL Certificate Program that you believe are important but were conducted ineffectively? If so, how can the program improve?

6. Overall, how well did the TESL certificate program prepare you for your subsequent career in TESOL?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Extremely well)

Comments:

I. Open response

1. In the space below, write any comments you wish to share about the TESL certificate program of TRU. These retrospective comments may be general or specific, positive or negative. I welcome your feedback.

Email: _____

☐ I would like to enter the draw for a **\$25 CND Starbucks card**.

☐ I would like to talk about your career path, provide the program with some suggestions, and give current students some career advice through a 60-minute **interview**.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the **results of this study**.

Appendix C: Interview Consent

Employment and Career of Canadian TESOL Graduates Consent to Participate in a Research Project (Interview)

I have been asked by Ziwei Wu (Vera) of the School of Education, Thompson Rivers University (250-828-5378), to participate in a research project titled *Career Trajectories of TESOL Program Graduates*. The goal of the research project is to identify career-enhancing factors of TESOL graduates, to provide information to support program improvement, and offer career advice to students.

The project includes interviewing four graduates of the TESL Certificate Program of Thompson Rivers University. I understand that I will be interviewed for about 60 minutes by the researcher who will ask me about my experience as a graduate of the TESOL program. Notes will be made and conversation will be recorded during the interview. Potential interviewees will be selected by the researcher. The interview will be held in a mutually agreed upon space (concrete or virtual). My identity and all records will be coded by numbers, not names, to ensure confidentiality. The findings of the project may be presented in reports, at conferences, and in research journals.

I acknowledge that I may become upset by the interview questions as they may inquire about obstacles in my career in the TESOL profession. I will be offered information to access support services at the university (e.g., TRU Career Education 250-371-5627 is available for alumni) for distress related to current and future employment.

My signature on this form indicates that I understand the information regarding this research project, including all procedures and the personal risks involved, and that I voluntarily agree to participate in this project. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw my participation in this project at any time without consequence. My involvement or non-involvement in this project is in no way related to my status as a TRU TESL alumni.

I understand that I may ask any questions or register any complaint I might have about the project with either the researcher named above (Vera Ziwei Wu, 250-879-1644, wuz151@mytru.ca) or with supervisors Dr. Patrick Walton (250-828-5378, pwalton@tru.ca) and Dr. Karen Densky (250-371-5653, kdensky@tru.ca) of Thompson Rivers University. If I have any questions or issues concerning this project that are not related to the specifics of the research, I may also contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee – Human Subjects, telephone number, 250-828-5000.

I have received a copy of this consent form.

Name: (Please Print)

Address:

Participant's signature **Date**

Investigator's signature **Date**

I agree to recording the interview. The recording will be destroyed after 7 years or earlier by electronically erasing all files and all materials with hard copies will be physically disposed in a secure way.

Signature **Date**

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Interview Questions

1. Why were you interested in the TRU TESL program?
2. What was your experience of the TRU TESL program?
3. Can you describe your transition into the TESOL workplace? Please include your successes and challenges.
4. What advice/recommendations do you have for future students and TESOL faculty?

The principle investigator may ask for elaboration. For example:

Can you tell me more about ...?

Would you like to tell me more details about ...?

Transcription Symbols

[] []	Overlapping talk
()	Unclear/inaudible talk
,	Rising intonation
.	Falling intonation
...	Hesitation
CAPS	Emphasis, stress sound
\$	Laughter
\$ \$	Smile voice

Appendix E: Ethic Approval



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY

July 04, 2017

Ms. Vera Ziwei Wu

Faculty of Education and Social Work

File Number: 101612t

Approval Date: July 04, 2017

Expiry Date: July 03, 2018

Dear Ms. Vera Ziwei Wu,

The Research Ethics Board has reviewed your application titled 'Career Trajectories of TESOL Program Graduates'. Your application has been approved. You may begin the proposed research. This REB approval, dated July 04, 2017, is valid for one year less a day: July 03, 2018.

Throughout the duration of this REB approval, all requests for modifications, renewals and serious adverse event reports are submitted via the Research Portal. To continue your proposed research beyond July 03, 2018, you must submit a Renewal Form before July 03, 2018. If your research ends before July 03, 2018, please submit a Final Report Form to close out REB approval monitoring efforts.

If you have any questions about the REB review & approval process, please contact the Research Ethics Office via 250.852.7122. If you encounter any issues when working in the Research Portal, please contact the Research Office at 250.371.5586.

Sincerely,



Andrew Fergus
Chair, Research Ethics Board