

Living and Teaching in Two Worlds: Professional Identity Development in Transnational Dual Language Immersion Teachers

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Abstract

This study explores how transnational teachers working in dual language immersion schools in the United States negotiate their professional identity to pursue a career in teaching. Researchers pay attention to tensions between transnational teachers' individual agency and the sociocultural influence of the workplace. An important issue is how changing teacher's professional identity impacts the ways in which they implement curriculum, particularly related to accountability. Framed by third space theory, we explore their heterogeneous stories and socio-culturally contextualized teaching experiences via a qualitative multiple case study. The three teachers were all teaching Spanish or Chinese in urban public elementary schools in the Intermountain West region of the United States. Data sources include a semester long classroom observation, semi-structured teacher interviews, informal conversations with the teachers, teacher journal entries, and artifacts. Our results indicate that these teachers' professional identity development processes were diverse, complex, and ongoing. All three displayed multicultural awareness regarding the codes of their new educational and cultural settings and exercised their agency through strong self-concept and frequent reflection within their situated contexts. Their prior cross-cultural teaching and schooling experiences served as a springboard that enabled them to gain a better understanding of their culturally and linguistically diverse students and to teach their target languages by incorporating elements of their students' sociocultural backgrounds. This study supports a rich sociocultural appreciation of the processes and contexts of transnational teachers' professional identity development.

Keywords: Professional identity development, teacher identity, transnational teacher, third space theory, dual language immersion

1. Introduction

Although transnational teacher identity is an emerging subject in research on teacher education and teacher development, little attention has been paid to precisely how these teachers' previous cross-cultural teaching and life experiences influence their subsequent professional identity development (Day, 2012; Gao, 2010). Furthermore, most research on transnational teachers' professional identities have focused on how teachers from non-Western ethnicities negotiate their professional identity in Anglophone countries while teaching foreign language or bilingual classes (Day, 2012; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006; Galindo, 1996; 2007; Gao, 2010; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). This study moves beyond simply seeking to understand the development of a professional identity by transnational teachers from non-Western countries to a deeper appreciation of the process involved in developing a professional identity for transnational teachers from both Western and non-Western countries teaching in American public dual language immersion schools. This study examines an overarching research question: How do three transnational dual language immersion teachers negotiate their professional identity and implement pedagogy in the realities of their classrooms? The subsidiary questions are: a) What are the transnational teachers' perceptions and experiences of the teaching profession in American public schools? and b) How do the cross-cultural experiences of these teachers influence their curriculum and pedagogical practices?

1.1. Literature Review

To address these research questions, after reviewing the existing literature on the nature of professional teacher identity development we move on to examine how transnational teachers' own positionality and situationality influence the construction of their professional identity. Finally, we investigate the relationship between teacher agency and the sociocultural context in professional identity development.

1.1.1. The Nature of Teacher Professional Identity Development

Teachers develop their professional identity via an ongoing process that continues to some extent throughout

their careers. Wenger's (2008) social theory of identity development has formed the basis of many scholars' research with teachers' professional identity development being treated as a continuous process of identification and negotiation of meanings within their specific sociocultural context (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Gao, 2010; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Many studies have emphasized that teachers' professional identity development is an ongoing negotiation that becomes an integral part of their everyday lives in the situated context (Beijaard et al., 2004; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). From this perspective, teachers' professional identities develop through a process of becoming rather than being. Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) add that teachers' professional identity development is a transformational process that reflects the multidimensional interaction between meanings, values, discourses, and local cultural artifacts.

Two different perspectives have been used to explain the continuous construction of teachers' professional identity development. Some researchers argue that teachers permanently struggle to construct a professional identity (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; MacLure, 1993; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997), suggesting that professional identity is incomplete, unstable, and tied to a dual process of socialization and identification. However, other researchers instead contend that teachers' professional identity development is a process of integrating multiple conflicting yet harmonizing sub-identities (Ballantyne, Kerchner, & Aróstegui, 2012; Beijaard et al., 2004), arguing that the harmonization of sub-identities connects to the negotiation of the multiple identities that come together to form a teacher's professional identity. In each case, researchers agree that the development of teachers' professional identity is a continuous process.

1.1.2. The Relationship between Personal and Contextual Professional Identity Development

Personal and sociocultural factors also influence teachers' professional identity development. Many researchers have pointed out that teachers' professional identities relate to both their positionality and situationality (Antonek, McCormick & Donato, 1997; Dillabough, 1999; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Jeans, 1996; Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Every individual forms their identity in their situated circumstances, as it is impossible to describe the "self" without the "other". From this perspective, both self-concept and self-reflection strongly influence professional identity development (Goodson & Cole, 1994; Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Through reflective practices, teachers negotiate their professional identity in their sociocultural surroundings (Dillabough, 1999; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007).

Dillabough (1999) and Jeans (1996) assert that engagement with colleagues contributes to developing the concept of self. Furthermore, Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) point out that the monocultural sense of belonging to a teacher community often functions as a gatekeeper to exclude foreign-born teachers who have limited historical, political, and sociocultural background about their new sociocultural context. Thus, foreign-born teachers may have trouble forming a professional identity due to their marginalized status within the school. School becomes an exclusive space in which to distinguish "we" vs. "others" rather than an inclusive, boundary-crossing space. These authors suggest that teachers have an ethical responsibility to interact meaningfully with their peers to help cultivate a substantive professional identity for all teachers in the community. Thus, both personal and sociocultural factors influence teachers' professional identity development.

1.1.3. The Relationship between Teacher Agency and the Sociocultural Context

There are two main lines of research on the agency of individual teachers and the sociocultural context in professional identity development. Some researchers consider teacher agency to be a central factor in the process of professional identity development. For example, Coldron and Smith (1999) argue that teacher identity is "partly given and partly achieved by active location in social space" (p.711). Agency takes the form of teachers' active decisions, such as their choices about curriculum implementation within a given national curriculum. Thus, agency allows teachers to make independent choices, enabling them to understand themselves as teachers across different contexts.

However, some researchers question whether teachers have real agency. Foucault (1981) argues that power in a society regulates individuals' identity and their social actions through discipline. Thus, teachers cannot be free from the school structure that undermines their agency. Moore, Edwards, Halpin, and George's (2002) study reflects this tension between teacher agency and social structure, reporting that education policies and institutional decisions often take priority over teachers' personal decisions in a school system. Therefore, agency or the lack thereof contributes to the development of teachers' professional identity.

2. Theoretical Framework

To explore the development of professional identity in transnational teachers, it is important to clarify the concept of identity that is employed and its definition in the theoretical framework of third space theory, which frames this study and helps provide a clear and cohesive interpretation of teachers' experiences and teaching practices in today's sociocultural contexts. This new understanding of identity focuses on the process of becoming rather than being (Bhabha, 1990) and on negotiating meanings, values, and discourses in the situated context (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). First, identity is multiple and transformative rather than a fixed and stable entity (Gergen, 1991; Wenger, 2008; Wilson, 2001); membership and participation are crucial components of the

concept of identity in practice (Wenger, 2008). Second, identity is situated in a sociocultural and political context (Duff & Uchida, 1997), allowing identity to be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed within the realm of the situated context. The negotiation of complex interactions of meanings, values, and discourses within the relevant context is an essential part of identity development (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007; Wenger, 2008).

Moving into unfamiliar places, the transnational teachers in this study were navigating new educational and sociocultural conditions and practices. Based on research by Bhabha (1990;1994) and Soja (1996; 2009) on third space theory, we interpret the “first space” as each teacher’s teaching practice in the sociocultural context of home and the “second space” as each teacher’s teaching practice in a new sociocultural context. When first space and second space merge, third space is created. The term “third space” thus refers to each teacher own teaching practice within the new context.

According to Bhabha (1994; 1996), third space is a transformational and transformative space for creating a new identity, representing a new “area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). Bhabha (1994) contends that individuals can resist isolation in the new culture. Individuals can also simultaneously become an in-between being through navigating the integration of two different sociocultural contexts. Although individuals feel unstable because of their dual existence and a sense of “ambivalent belonging” (Wilson, 2001, p. 248), they move forward to create resistance against and active negotiation with the dominant discourse in the host society. Therefore, third space is not a physical location, but an ongoing dialectical and renewed space of creating new identity.

Through this third space identity, individuals can participate in the creation of new cultures and have substantive memberships in their contexts. This provides opportunities for people in in-between contexts like transnational teachers to continuously reconstruct their professional identity. In this study, we highlight the way the three transnational teachers negotiated and developed their professional identity in their own third space, each coping in their own way with the “constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, and meanings” (Soja, 1996, p. 2).

3. Method

In this study, we seek to advance our understanding of the process that enables transnational teachers to develop a professional identity when they live and teach in a foreign country, in this case, the USA. To this end, we employed a multiple case study method (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995; 2005; 2006; Yin, 2014). This approach was deemed particularly suitable for this study because it enables us to understand and illustrate the complex nature of teachers’ experiences with the curriculum and pedagogical practices in their natural dual language immersion classroom settings. It also allows us to interpret the classroom events from the teachers’ point of view and provides an in-depth description of the phenomenon as experienced in real-world settings (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995; 2005; 2006).

Data for this study were collected from teacher journal entries, semi-structured teacher interviews and informal conversations, participant classroom observations, and artifacts over a period of five months, from mid-January, 2013 to mid-June, 2013. The data were triangulated with document analyses of teachers’ journal entries and semi-structured teacher interviews. Both semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with the teachers were conducted to elucidate the underlying meanings and values of their pedagogical practices. The semi-structured interviews followed a specially developed interview protocol (see Appendix A) that was used as a guide, with the majority of questions asked being created during the interviews. This ensured that while all points were covered, there was sufficient flexibility to allow the interviewer to probe for more details or to discuss specific issues that arose (Verma & Mallick, 1999). Each semi-structured interview took an hour and was audio-recorded. The interviews were transcribed for analysis and the contents checked for accuracy by the interviewees. The information gleaned from the first interview and subsequent journal entries guided the second interview. After the interviews, the teachers continued writing weekly journals to critically reflect on their teaching practice and provide additional insights. Questions sparked by the interview content were provided as possible journal prompts, but the teachers generally directed their own reflections. This interrelated data collection and analysis helped us to build a more balanced understanding of the professional identity development of transnational teachers. Field notes from participant observation sessions (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011) and thick description field notes (Stake, 2005; 2006; Yin, 2014), along with teacher-generated documents and classroom materials such as teachers’ lesson plans, work sheets, and other classroom artifacts provided by the teachers during the classroom observations were also used in the analysis.

3.1. Participants

Three female transnational dual language immersion teachers participated in this study; their names have been changed to protect their privacy. The participants were all teaching at public dual language immersion elementary schools, where some subjects are taught in English by one teacher while other subjects are taught in each school’s second language, ideally by a native speaker of that language. Each of our participants was

teaching subjects in their native language and their respective languages were used as a second language in their schools. Their schools were all located in the Intermountain West region of the U.S.; it is important to note that transnational teachers from other countries and those teaching in other parts of the U.S. may have different experiences and interpretations.

3.1.1. Amy

Amy was born in Spain and identified herself as ethnically Spanish. She was teaching multiple subjects in her native language, Spanish. She arrived in the U.S. in 2012 and at the time of the study was in her first year of teaching in a U.S. school system. Prior to her arrival, Amy earned a bachelor's degree in education in Spain, taught for six months each in New Zealand and Peru, and taught in the U.K. for five years. Amy explained that she considers it important to share her Spanish culture through her teaching and facilitates her students' learning through her connections with schools in Spain. Her American students often write letters in Spanish to Spanish pen pals. By communicating in Spanish and English, her students develop their linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding.

3.1.2. Grace

Grace was born in Taiwan and identified herself as ethnically Taiwanese. She was teaching multiple subjects in her native language, Mandarin Chinese. Before moving to the U.S., Grace completed her undergraduate studies and taught for five years in Taiwan. She came to the U.S. in 2009 to earn a master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language before returning to teach in Taiwan for another year. Grace also started her first year of teaching in the U.S. in 2012. She aims to be a "creative and knowledgeable" teacher, and although creating interesting activities for students requires "lots of preparation time", she clearly preferred focusing on teaching and caring for her students to "conducting administrative paperwork in Taiwan."

3.1.3. Tina

Tina was also born in Taiwan and identified herself as ethnically Taiwanese American. She was teaching multiple subjects in her native language, Mandarin Chinese. Before moving to the U.S., Tina earned a bachelor's degree and taught English in after-school programs for two years in Taiwan. After moving to the U.S. in 1997, Tina completed a bachelors' degree in elementary education. During the study, Tina was in her tenth year of teaching in the U.S. Tina's stated objective was to educate her students as independent, critical thinkers rather than "memorizing machines." She encourages her students to think broadly and learn actively, explaining, "I love the school here... It's very healthy! I don't like how the system [in Taiwan] treats kids. It's all paper- and score-oriented... I don't want to be one of the 'bad guys' that is a part of [that] system."

3.2. Data Analysis

Using the research questions as guidelines, we coded and sorted data from the teacher journals, semi-structured teacher interview transcripts, field notes, and artifacts into emergent categories and themes for further coding and analysis. We searched the categories and themes utilizing the constant comparative method throughout the data analysis process (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The initial codes were generated through open and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2012) based on the generated categories and themes and the data collated by focused coding based on the concepts of first, second, and third space. This process revealed five major themes: pedagogical changes, the teacher-student relationship, roles for parents, collaboration with peers, and challenges. These themes exemplify two important contexts of professional identity development: adjusting the ambiguous second space professional identity and creating the new third space professional identity. As part of the sociocultural and ethical responsibility of studying and writing about professional identity development, we continued to consult the participating teachers whenever we had questions about their cultural norms or intentions. We also cross-checked our interpretations with the teachers at frequent intervals and kept open the possibility of disrupting our initial interpretations to bring new insights to this study.

4. Results

Negotiating new teaching practices emerged as the major theme related to the transnational teachers' professional identity development. This negotiation process consisted of five sub-themes: a) pedagogical changes, b) the teacher-student relationship, c) roles for parents in instruction, d) collaboration with peers, and e) challenges in their new context. We classified teachers' practices related to their home countries as their first space professional identity, and practices related to the U.S. as their second space professional identity. Their third space professional identity refers to the new teaching practices the teachers developed based on the fusion of their teaching experiences in both countries. The participants' experiences may not be representative of all educational cultures in the U.S., but always required adjustment from their home countries' school cultures.

4.1. Pedagogical Changes

All three teachers used a teacher-based lecture style in their home classrooms, but have moved to relatively student-centered teaching methods in their new U.S. dual language immersion settings. They must negotiate

these different pedagogies according to the educational contexts and their own interpretations. Amy and Grace, in particular, were aware of adapting their second space professional identity through acculturation, noting that they were using a more student-centered pedagogy compared to that used in their home countries. Amy was consciously implementing hands on activities in her U.S. classroom. As she explained in an interview, “the American way of teaching tends to interact more with the children. I need to provide the kids real hands on materials, field trips, experiments, working with things that the kids can touch.” She clearly believed that student centered teaching was an effective way to motivate her students and that these interactive experiences were more common in her new context than they had been in her classroom in Spain.

Grace also adjusted some of her methods based on her U.S. teaching experiences, noting that the American classroom is relatively student-centered. In an informal conversation, Grace said, “my [American] students do not like just listening and taking notes. They want to practice in class.” This led Grace to change her teaching strategies to incorporate activities such as making and singing Chinese songs as part of her lessons. She also created a blog to help students to review Chinese lessons at home and write assignments, facilitating students’ learning outside her classroom.

Interestingly, Tina’s professional identity development process was quite different from those of the other two teachers. She created her own third space professional identity. When teaching, she used both student-centered methods and traditional Taiwanese lectures, saying:

In Taiwan it’s more lecture style, we do not have hands on or small group activities. It’s always teacher-centered. In the U.S. it’s more student-centered.... I want to give my students more interactive learning experiences.... [But I also] emphasize [to] my students [that they need] to memorize phrases, tones in Chinese, and push them [by] drilling when I teach new things. I repeat it over until they understand...Memorizing and drilling [are] very important and effective ways to learn [a] foreign language.

Even though Tina sometimes felt uncomfortable when students disliked note taking for memorization, she believed that her lecture style teaching and student-centered teaching were compatible when teaching Chinese. Although Amy and Grace developed second space professional identities regarding pedagogical changes, Tina’s experiences led her to create her own unique third space professional identity.

4.2. The Teacher-Student Relationship

Another emergent theme for these transnational teachers as they navigated their professional identity was the relationship between teacher and student. Amy and Grace considered themselves caregivers and believed that the American education context encouraged teachers to develop close connections with their students. Their relationships with students reflected their second space professional identity. Grace explained that, “In Taiwan, teacher and students are more formal.... [They have] almost no personal relationship with each other... here is more humane.” Grace explained that teachers in the U.S. are emotionally accessible and have more freedom to care for and about their students. In Taiwan, however, teachers simply do not have enough time to interact with their students because of the heavy administrative workload required and the hierarchical education system. Amy was also enjoying her personal relationships with students, believing that students in the U.S. “are more than just a grade”. She clearly felt strong personal attachments to her American students, explaining that American teachers had many techniques to build interactive relationships with students but that “in Spain ... we just punish or just scold children in a stern voice.” Both found that personal relationships with students were different and more personal in the U.S. than in their native countries.

However, once again Tina viewed her relationship with her students differently. Although she evidently cared about her students, she identified as more than a caregiver and stressed her role as an authority figure, “I don’t like the philosophy of being friends with students. Students need to have an authority figure they can look up to.” She described the invisible hierarchy in her classroom, noting that “a teacher.... needs to act almost as a caregiver in the U.S... But you cannot care for a student like a baby all the time. Students and teachers should know their roles. It can’t cross.” Tina’s perspective on the teacher-student relationship was deeply rooted in Confucianism. She delineated her boundary in the teacher-student relationship very clearly in the new sociocultural context. While Amy and Grace developed second space professional identities regarding their relationships with students, Tina stayed mostly within her first space identity.

4.3. The Role of Parents in Instruction

All three teachers believed that parents are an important part of students’ education, but the role the parents were expected to play differed according to each teacher’s context. The teachers reported the U.S. parents were more involved in schools than the parents in their native countries. However, the ways they navigated the parents’ role in their classroom revealed a great deal about the transnational teachers discursive teaching practices.

Amy showed second space identity by accepting the new parents’ role in instruction. Parents in Amy’s class tend to be enthusiastic volunteers, with three mothers regularly reading Spanish-language children’s literature to

the students, participated in role-play activities, and helping grade papers. Amy commented that parents' engagement in the classroom was very "uncommon" in her class in Spain, but she accepted and enjoyed the active role they were playing in her American classroom. At first, she "hesitated to ask parents to help her" but parents rapidly became a "very important part" of her instruction.

Grace and Tina felt that most parents could not participate actively in Chinese instruction due to their lack of Chinese language skills. Grace noted that teachers in Taiwan did not expect instructional help from parents but that in her U.S. school she regularly asks parents to help prepare materials or decorate classroom walls. She showed her third space identity by allowing parental involvement in preparation but not instruction.

Tina kept her first space professional identity, explaining that she was uncomfortable with parents helping, even with menial labor. As she said, "in Taiwan, there is an invisible line between teachers and parents." She clearly believed that a parent's role was to support their child's education at home and had not changed her professional identity in terms of encouraging greater parental engagement in her new educational setting. It is interesting to note that the three teachers all navigated the parents' role in instruction differently, with Tina maintaining her first space identity, Amy embracing a second space identity, and Grace developing a third space identity.

4.3. Collaboration with Peers

All three teachers' stories revealed second space collaboration with peers, as opposed to their first space experiences that featured little if any professional cooperation. For example, Amy and Grace both connected professionally with colleagues through shared planning and were enjoying the second space approach of fostering relationships with peers.

Tina, in particular, engaged in collaborative relationships, not only working closely with her partner teacher to avoid "mirror teaching," where students learn the same content in their morning Chinese class and their afternoon English class, but also sharing instructional materials with colleagues and developing lessons together. She also used social media to connect with peers and was confident that if she was struggling with teaching, she could ask her colleagues for help. Tina's professional relationship with her peers extended beyond the school environment, and she claimed that most of her friends were also teachers. All three teachers thus built collegial relationships in second space.

4.4. Challenges in the New Sociocultural Context

The teachers inevitably faced challenges in their new sociocultural context, including a lack of both tangible and intangible support and community socialization. In particular, the teachers noted a lack of intangible support in the form of explanations of school norms. For example, Amy sometimes felt "overwhelmed" when people assumed she already knew about American school events such as the Science Fair or Reading Fair and did not explain the relevant protocols. Moreover, Amy and Grace found it difficult to understand why schools celebrated "cultural events" such as Valentine's Day in the classroom. Amy said that adjusting and negotiating the new educational culture was "a difficult aspect of being an international teacher in the U.S."

These transnational teachers faced a lack of tangible support in the unavailability of curricular materials combined with relatively unstructured curricula for subjects taught in their native languages. As Grace said, "It was very difficult since I had very little materials available to me. I have to make everything by myself." In their home countries, many books and materials were prepared and provided for their instruction. They felt "everything is available" but that they still needed to develop teaching materials. Tina explained, "In Taiwan, the entire curriculum set standard to follow" but that in the U.S., the curriculum for Chinese language immersion was incomplete at best. She yearned for "a more complete set of standards, learning materials to follow."

In addition, socialization influenced the transnational teachers' sense of belonging in their new community and motivated their desire to develop professionally. Grace reported that learning the desirable cultural codes of the local community was important but difficult. However, this lack of socialization did help her develop an awareness of her teaching in the new culture and made her think about pursuing a doctoral degree as an opportunity to support her professional development. Due to a perceived lack of intangible and tangible supports, combined with difficulties in social settings, all three teachers felt a sense of marginalization and isolation while navigating their new contexts.

5. Discussion

We analyzed these emergent aspects of transnational teachers' professional identity development utilizing a third space theory framework. We organized this analysis based on the two contexts of professional identity, namely adjusting the second space professional identity and creating the third space professional identity as a new identity.

5.1. Adjusting the Second Space Professional Identity: A Sense of Ambiguity

Like the many other transnational teachers living and teaching in foreign countries in previous studies (Beijaard et al., 2004; Gao, 2010; Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007), the three transnational teachers in this study were attempting to negotiate the meanings and values of becoming reflective teachers in the U.S. Their narratives reveal the complexities involved in the development of transnational teachers' professional identities as they adapt to new settings (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). The teachers displayed high levels of respect and multicultural awareness regarding the codes of their new sociocultural context because of their cross-cultural teaching and schooling experiences. However, settling in the new sociocultural context was both complex and challenging. There was a common sense of the ambiguity in the negotiation and navigation between their first space and second space practices (Bhabha, 1994; 1996).

A distinctive feature of professional identity development was the teachers' uncertainty of meaning between their home and American discourses (Beijaard et al., 2004; Gao, 2010). They negotiated the transition and their dual memberships in their native and American cultures through their practices. For instance, although Amy and Grace still struggled to understand aspects of their new school culture such as celebrating cultural events in the classroom context or other school events, they were attempting to actively embrace the school culture of their new world. Tina's narrative shows the conflict inherent in this process of negotiation (Kostogriz & Peeler, 2007). When Tina incorporated traditional Taiwanese pedagogy such as emphasizing memorizing and drilling in Chinese teaching, this created tension between her and her students due to the dissonances between their teaching and learning cultures.

5.2. Creating the Third Space as a New Professional Identity

The teachers' practices demonstrated their ongoing construction of professional identity and agency, showing that teacher identity is influenced by both agency and external factors (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Many researchers assert that self-concept and self-reflection are essential for creating teachers' new professional identity in the situated world (Antonek et al., 1997; Dillabough, 1999). These teachers created their own teaching space in their U.S. classrooms and were exercising their agency through strong self-concept and frequent reflection within their situated contexts. All three participants identified themselves as professional teachers of both foreign languages and other subjects. While all three teachers struggled at first to plan their curriculum and instructional materials, they all expressed high levels of self-confidence in their teaching as they gained experience in their new context. For example, Tina was very aware of the legitimacy of her new pedagogy, which resulted from her own interpretation of two conflicting teaching styles. Bhabha (1994; 1996) and Wilson (2001) view this dissonant process of identity development as a natural rite of passage for shaping a new identity in the situated world.

The less structured curriculum and lack of educational support were challenging for these teachers, but also provided opportunities to exercise teacher agency (Coldron & Smith, 1999). The transnational teachers developed greater teaching capacity and pursued professional development through curriculum planning and instructional preparation. For example, Grace changed her teaching style by stressing activity-based learning, including singing Chinese songs instead of memorizing content and creating classroom blogs to help build positive relationships with students and parents. Thus, Grace was developing an awareness of teaching and schooling in her new culture that other American teachers might not have (Gao, 2010). Amy encouraged students' Spanish learning through using her cultural resources in order to supplement the lack of opportunity for using target language in everyday practices. Each teacher's unique positionality as an in-between being clearly played a positive role in her professional identity development.

6. Conclusion

In this study, we examined how transnational teachers negotiate the sociocultural and educational practices in U.S. dual language immersion classrooms, and how they create their own professional third space at the core of their professional identity development. Our findings suggest that transnational teachers' professional identity development processes are complex and ongoing. Viewed through the lens of third space theory, teaching in a new setting is a constant process of constructing and reforming professional identity. The transnational teachers in this study mixed aspects of American and their home countries' teaching cultures while negotiating their classroom practices. There was a great deal of ambiguity in their everyday teaching practices and negotiation of meanings in teaching throughout this process as they demonstrated their in-between status.

Furthermore, the findings revealed the transnational teachers' constant identification and repositioning as they modified their professional identity in their school-centered contexts. These findings echo Dillabough (1999) and Jeans (1996), who contend that a teacher's professional identity relates closely to their context. Engagement with peers, students, and students' parents gave these teachers a sense of belonging despite their lack of collective historical, political, and sociocultural memory.

Due to the qualitative case study approach, the scope of this study was limited; the focus was on three

female teachers in two schools. For future research, it may be useful to recruit more participants from diverse backgrounds, in order to expand the scope of the study. While the scope of this study could limit how these findings are applied to other educational settings, there is potential for educators from foreign countries to benefit from increased knowledge around how teachers' professional identities form and shift as they engage in school practice within their community environment.

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Appendix A Teacher Interview Protocol

The questions suggested below will serve as a guideline for interviews with transnational teachers. The interview questions are based on survey questions and seek to understand transnational teachers' a) personal backgrounds and history, b) beliefs regarding teaching and education, and c) experience of being transnational teachers in the U.S. public schools.

I. Personal Background and History

1. Tell me about your personal, social, and cultural backgrounds and history. (e.g. family backgrounds, immigration/cross-cultural experiences)
2. How did you become interested in teaching, particularly in the U.S? ^[1]_[SEP]
3. Tell me about your school and students.

II. Beliefs on Teaching and Education

1. What is your ideal image of a good teacher in your home country and in the U.S? ^[1]_[SEP]
2. What is your philosophy of teaching and learning, especially foreign language education?
3. How do you see yourself as a foreign language teacher?
4. What personal as well as sociocultural biographies/experiences influence your beliefs?
5. What do you believe are the most significant challenges facing social studies teachers?

III. Pedagogy

1. Have you noticed any differences between the way other transnational teachers teach and American teachers teach based on the following dimensions: a) relations with students, b) relations with colleagues and school staffs, c) relations with classroom authorities, and d) self-confidence in teaching abilities.
2. What roles do your personal, cultural, and social experiences and identities play in your teaching practices?

IV. Experiences of Being a Transnational Teacher ^[1]_[SEP]

1. How do you define your racial, ethnic, and cultural identities?
2. What is it like to be a teacher in American schools?
3. What are the benefits/disadvantages of being a transnational teacher?
4. Have you experienced racial, ethnic, or cultural discrimination?
5. What type of institutional support do you think are necessary for teachers of color?
6. How do your sociocultural experiences influence your curriculum and pedagogical practices?