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CROSSING BORDERS: GEOGRAPHICAL,
LINGUISTIC, AND CULTURAL

Alexander Antropov

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Alexander Antropov

Abstract

This is a personal narrative about my transformative journey as an educator through the calamities of the failed perestroika in the Soviet Union and cultural shocks of living in the United States and Canada. I analyze the factors contributing to my academic abilities that allowed me to graduate with a PhD in mathematics from a university in Russia and become a deputy dean in another university in Moscow. I explain why revolutionary social changes in Russia in the 1990s made me feel as a foreigner in my home country and encouraged me to leave for the United States. I examine what gave me the strength to start anew my professional life abroad from part-time jobs to full-time teaching positions in public schools and universities. Finally, I reflect on my transformative experiences during my doctoral studies at a Canadian provincial university, earning a PhD in education.

Résumé

Ce texte est le récit personnel de mon parcours transformateur comme éducateur pendant l'échec catastrophique de la perestroïka dans l'Union soviétique, ainsi que celui des chocs culturels que j'ai vécus comme résident des États-Unis et du Canada. J'analyse les facteurs ayant contribué à mes compétences d'universitaire, lesquelles m'ont permis d'obtenir un doctorat en mathématiques en Russie et de devenir doyen adjoint dans une autre université à Moscou. J'explique pourquoi les changements sociaux révolutionnaires en Russie dans les années 1990 m'ont amené à me sentir comme étranger dans mon propre pays et m'ont poussé à partir pour les États-Unis. Je me penche sur ce qui m'a donné la force pour lancer une nouvelle vie professionnelle à l'étranger à l'aide d'emplois à temps partiel et de postes d'enseignement à temps plein dans les écoles publiques et les universités. Finalement, je réfléchis sur mes expériences transformatrices pendant mes études doctorales dans une université provinciale canadienne, où j'ai obtenu un doctorat en éducation.

Political Context of Perestroika in the USSR

It is ironic that, after 70 years of oppression under the rule of the Marxist-Leninist communist party of the USSR, western Marxist theorists give the best theoretical

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explanation of what happened during perestroika. The process of deflecting attention from the real causes of oppression was initiated. "It involves, according to Marxist theorists, sustained deflections of thought perpetrated by the most cherished and respected traditions of our cultures: religion, nationalism, and human liberalism" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 47). For example, it was expected that, after the decriminalisation of homosexuality during perestroika, human liberalism would give more human rights to sexual minorities. Instead, the law was introduced, prohibiting the distribution of information about homosexuality among people under the age of 18 years old.

Moreover, the amendment to the Constitution of Russian Federation proposed that a marriage is possible only between a man and a woman. These events increased homophobia in the Russian society. Homophobia became an instrument for implementing the ancient principle: divide and conquer.

Theoretical Framework

This is a self-study through narrative inquiry with an attempt to give theoretical understandings of my learning experiences in crossing cultural borders (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Smith, 2006). One of the challenges is my Russian accent. In the United States (US), university students often complain about foreign accents of Non-Native English Speakers (NNEs) who teach mathematics. However, "research into language ideologies concerning NNEs in the US suggests that such complaints can be understood as manifestations of a broader project of social exclusion operating, in part, through the ideological construction of the NNE as incomprehensible Other" (Subtirelu, 2015, p. 35). To facilitate the theoretical understanding of this issue, I use the concept of *an audible minority* to describe a person with a foreign accent who is not a visible minority (Colic-Peisker, 2005). White immigrants to the host country with a predominantly white population can see "their whiteness as an advantage and a shield against prejudice and discrimination" (Colic-Peisker, 2005, p. 623). However, being the audible minorities, when they try to enter the competitive labour market, these immigrants may experience a "rude awakening" and a painful awareness of "their otherness" (Colic-Peisker, p. 633). Some American mathematics students "complain about teachers with British accents and teachers with Australian accents" (Krantz, 2015, p. 112). The students' attitude can be influenced by their perception of an accent. Lippi-Green (1994) argues that the general public perceives an accent as a combination of phonology and intonation. The linguists insist on two more elements for effective communication: (1) the speaker's level of communicative competence, and (2) the listener's willingness to hear what the speaker has to say (Lippi-Green, 1994). Giles (1970) suggests that people determine one's status in the social hierarchy by their accent. This happens because the general public is influenced by *the standard language ideology* (Milroy, 2007) that can be defined as a "bias toward an abstracted, idealized, non-varying spoken language that is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions" (Lippi-Green, 2006, p. 289). Those who do not conform to this ideology are marginalized and excluded as *others*.

In job advertisements, visible minorities, for example, but not audible minorities, are always encouraged to apply for academic positions at universities despite the fact that both groups experience prejudice themselves from the majority. As a visible minority cannot change the colour of their skin, similarly, a person who started to learn spoken English as

an adult would not be able to eliminate their accent. For someone living in Canada, their first job interview at a university in the US is always by phone. I was invited for an interview by phone many times, but I never could move beyond this point because of my Russian accent. The search committee of one university, while praising my outstanding credentials, informed me that they decided not to hire anybody. As an audible minority, I can relate to Anzaldúa's (1987) writing about living in the margins of borders, in the borderlands between two worlds. In one world, I am an incomprehensible Other, a subject to social exclusion, still trying to learn North American culture and improve my spoken English. In another world, according to the research literature, I am an oppressor, dominator and supremacist whose culture and language intersects with my white male privilege (Leonardo, 2004). Honestly, I did not feel any racial privilege when a Canadian-born member of a teacher accreditation body full-heartedly advised me to go back to my communist Russia in his reaction to my Russian accent. Using Anzaldúa's language of "borders," Huber and Whelan (2009) write about a struggle of interior and exterior borders within and outside us. They see those struggles within borderlands between internal and external worlds because the borders are blurred. In turn, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), inspired by Anzaldúa, Huber and Whelan, think about borderlands as conceptual spaces where different ways of thinking about human experiences intersect and clash. In particular, I see transformative learning theory and cultural adaptation theory intersecting and clashing in these borderlands.

Background

My experiences in crossing cultural borders can be analyzed within the terms of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) and cross-cultural adaptation theory (Kim, 2001). Lyon (2002) sees common elements in these two theories and argues that a trigger event in transformative learning theory is similar to culture shock in cross-cultural adaptation theory. Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 1995, 1996; Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009; Cranton, 1994, 1996) is the process of affecting change of a frame of reference. The success of education in the Soviet Union was based on selecting gifted students for entrance and that is why a teacher-centered approach dominated my frame of reference in education. In contrast, the movement for learning-for-all with a focus on student-centered education became popular in North America. As a reasonable person, I understood that to be professionally successful in North America I should act as North Americans do. I consciously chose to change from one frame of reference to another. It was not easy. It took a lot of time and efforts. However, I needed to do it to survive professionally in North America. The Russian proverb "do not go to other people's church with your own rules" helped me to make the right choices. One of the major challenges was my habit of teaching by lecturing. When I started to teach in the United States, I realized that my lecturing often did not work for American students. By trial and error, I came to understand that even during a lecture I should take into account students' different learning styles and present course content in different forms.

While observing my teaching in a suburban high school in the US, a Department Head and a District Mentor questioned my teaching approaches and provided feedback (Roberts, 2006) thereby provoking disorienting dilemmas for me. The District Mentor encouraged my learning efforts by sharing with me that, being a Canadian in the US, he initially experienced some problems with American culture himself. By offering me

constructive criticism on my teaching, he was always able to find something I did well (e.g., warm-ups at the beginning of the lesson, examples illustrating mathematical concepts). In contrast, the Department Head, acknowledging my familiarity with the subject matter, was negative toward my pedagogical skills, provoking a resentment to changes suggested by him. Through the process of critical reflection, I came to the conclusion that the district mentor has the potential to become a personal support system that enables transformation, but the Department Head's visits did not create socio-cultural conditions for fostering transformation. I will talk more about some of these challenges in the section where I describe my struggles in the United States (US).

Fortunately, I had gained some experience in changing frames of reference when I moved from a provincial location to the capital city in Russia. The relations among people in Moscow were very different from what I had experienced in my native city. The relations were more pragmatic because of a stronger social hierarchy in Moscow. I started with the lowest level in this hierarchy because I was not a permanent resident of Moscow. For example, without residency, I did not have a right to get a job in Moscow. Some people received residency by marrying permanent residents of Moscow. As an employee of a military research institute in the suburbs of Moscow, I got a place in its dormitory and suburban residency. Later, resigning from this institute due to health conditions gave me the right to keep the place in the dormitory and suburban residency. With this step up in the social hierarchy, I acquired the freedom to apply for university positions in Moscow.

After moving from Russia to North America, I started to change my frame of reference by transforming my habits of mind and points of view (Mezirov, 1995). For example, I needed to change my perceptions of being intellectually superior. This understanding was supported by the fact that, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US government started to aggressively recruit famous Soviet mathematicians and scientists by establishing a simplified procedure for them to receive a green card. While I was not a famous mathematician, I was proud to graduate from the internationally recognized department of mathematics at a university in Russia. I was satisfied that it was sufficient for mathematics professors at a state university in the US to see my Russian *Kandidate Nauk* (Candidate of Science) degree in order to hire me as a teaching specialist right away. In the library of their department, I found many Russian academic journals with research articles in different branches of mathematics, including my own publications in the history of mathematics. Their graduate students studied Russian as a second language to be able to read all these research papers. However, soon I met people who challenged my academic credentials and intellectual abilities.

Habermas' (1981) concept of communicative learning can be helpful in dealing with life transitions such as moving from one culture to another. Communicative learning is learning to understand the meaning of what is being communicated. In the process of changing my habits of mind, communicative learning was the most helpful for me. Listening to the points of view of others, I tried to critically reflect on what I heard and to establish new points of reference. For example, while the mathematics professors at a state university in the US accepted my Russian degree without a formal translation and evaluation, members of search committees in other universities and colleges refused to hire me without an evaluation report of my Russian credentials produced by the World Education Services. In addition, I was sure that my PhD in mathematics would be an asset for any public high school. However, my American high school students expressed an opinion that only a "loser"

with a doctoral degree would teach in a high school. Moreover, some of them believed that they could not learn anything from a teacher with a foreign accent. Even the principal of a prestigious high school in an affluent neighbourhood told me directly that he did not want any PhDs in his school. This principal's position can be explained by the concept of expert blind spot. Nathan and Petrosino (2003) introduced this concept and showed that people with greater expertise tend to make assumptions about student learning that is in conflict with students' actual understanding. To show how my frame of reference was formed in the USSR, I provide some details about my life there in the next section.

Surviving in the USSR

I was born in the large industrial city located not far from the Ural Mountains, dividing Russia in Asian and European parts. From an early age, I experienced socioeconomic diversity. My parents were uneducated steel mill workers. Our family of five (I have two older brothers) lived from paycheck to paycheck in a one-bedroom apartment. We lived a life of poverty. However, my parents valued education and wanted all their children to get a higher education. Researchers agree that parents are the key to children's motivation and success in school (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2005). My mother wanted to be a history teacher, however, World War II changed her plans. After the war, her priority was to find a husband because of the shortage of men; many of them were killed during the war. My father started studies at the technical college while working at the steel mill, but he did not graduate because my mother did not support his studies. She was afraid that he would leave her for an educated woman. My parents often talked to me about their failed dreams of a better education. They believed in my learning abilities and encouraged me to study hard.

I have mixed memories about school teachers' views of my academic abilities. In the third grade, one assignment was to write an essay about the changes in nature in the fall. I wrote a long and well-structured paper because my older brother gave me a description of different types of essays. Initially, my elementary school teacher gave me the highest grade for this essay. Still, some teachers expressed doubts that a child at this age could write such an essay without somebody's help, especially a child from a family of uneducated steel mill workers. Research shows that teachers tend to expect less of children from low-income families (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; McLoyd, 1998). Finally, the principal invited my mother to the school to discuss this incident. The principal believed that my older brother wrote this essay for me. In addition, one teacher described me as a person "without the czar in the head". This expression describes a person without high intellectual abilities. Another teacher promised to give the highest grade to a student who would be the first to solve a difficult problem. I was the first to solve the problem correctly, but the teacher did not give me the promised grade and explained that my writing was not of calligraphic quality.

Fortunately, some teachers had high academic expectations of me because they taught my older high achieving brothers. Teachers with backgrounds similar to mine could better relate to my school experiences and had higher expectations of my academic abilities. In contrast, teachers from well-educated families with higher incomes were more sceptical about my learning abilities. Many children from low-income families received higher education because in the Soviet Union it was free for all. In particular, many of them became

teachers. For example, the teacher who gave me the highest grade for my essay was born to a low-income family and was able to relate to my experiences of life in poverty.

In the first grade, I saw a beautiful picture of a university in Moscow on the cover of my textbook. I fell in love with this picture and promised myself that I would study at that university someday. My dream motivated me to study hard. My efforts paid off and I was admitted to that university. After receiving a graduate degree, I taught mathematics at the university level in Moscow. I was a highly respected and well-paid professor. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union all my savings were devalued. I felt like a foreigner in my home country because the university professorship lost its prestige, and money became the one and only measure of a person's value. Then I became a deputy dean at a major university in Moscow because miserable salaries forced many university employees to resign in their search for a better life elsewhere. Eventually, I also started to look for an alternative and left Russia for the United States as an exchange scholar at a state university.

Struggling in the United States

After a year in the United States, I tried to find a teaching job. I was shocked to learn that I would have to start my professional life anew. My first teaching job was a part-time job at a private learning center with a modest hourly salary. Later, I got a better paying part-time job at a religious school. It was a challenge for a person from the atheist USSR to navigate through a religious educational environment. I realized that I would never be fully accepted by the school community without practicing the same religion. The principal of one school even asked me to resign because he found a teacher of mathematics who shared his religious beliefs. Later the same principal rehired me because that teacher could not teach calculus. Likewise, a hiring committee of another Christian college offered me hourly pay instead of an advertised one-year replacement contract because I was not a member of their denomination. I rejected their offer because with this hourly pay my wages would be less than my earned unemployment benefits. I never taught at catholic schools because they required a letter of recommendation from a catholic priest.

In the Soviet Union, I never taught in private schools. I taught at state universities that provided free education and had an opportunity to select the most gifted students from many competing applicants. I knew only one teaching method: lecturing. More capable learners replaced students who could not learn from my lecturing. In the United States, for the first time in my life, I realized that I could be replaced if my students had problems understanding my lectures. I understood that my livelihood depended on the students' evaluations even more when I was forced to participate in recruiting new students for the private school where I taught because without the sufficient number of students this school would have to close its doors, and I would be out of a job. I decided that, without the knowledge of various learning theories and teaching methods, I would not be able to build a successful career in secondary education. Hoping that my lecturing would be sufficient at the postsecondary level, I tried to get a teaching position at a university or college.

Fortunately, at that time the United States and the USSR signed an agreement about the recognition of university degrees. The World Education Services in New York evaluated my graduate degree from a university in Russia as the equivalent to a PhD in mathematics from an accredited university in the United States. It helped me to secure Adjunct Faculty positions at a state university and technical college. While I was hired as a full-time

mathematics instructor at another university earlier without the evaluation report from the World Education Services, this report helped me to enroll in the initial licensure program in mathematics education at this university. As a full-time employee, I was entitled to take courses for free. A six-credit course in human relations helped me to build a good rapport with my students. From other courses, I learned about educational psychology, classroom management, learning theories and teaching methods. At the end of each semester, I received a summary of the student evaluations of my teaching. I critically reflected on the students' comments about my teaching for making improvements. Research shows that educators' regular reflection on their experiences in building linkages between theory and practice with the goal of improving student learning can make the process of reflection more effective and transformative (Korthagen, 2014; Schön, 1987; Van Woerkom, 2003; Vermunt & Endedijk, 2010).

One of the new ideas that affected my practice was about grading. While students at Russian universities were always happy to get better grades than they deserved, American students expected to receive objective and accurate evaluations of their academic achievements. Reflecting on their expectations, I concluded that American students want to know their strengths and weaknesses to make informed decisions in competitive job markets. To meet their expectations, I changed my grading system, making it more detailed. For example, I assigned a specific number of points to each step in solving mathematical problems on a test. With this strategy my grading became more objective and accurate.

My calculus students at the university gave me a standing ovation at the end of the semester. In addition to my skills in explaining difficult mathematical problems in simple ways, they were amazed by my ability to radiate happiness. I received a thank you card from my students where each of them expressed genuine gratitude for my teaching. Clayton and Sheffet (2006) found that students' perceptions of an instructor's personality and the evaluation of instruction were strongly related.

A few achievements in the United States made me happy. First, it was a quick transition from a part-time low-paid job to a full-time job with generous health and dental benefits. I took classes in a master of education programs with a plan to earn a PhD later and to become a professor of mathematics education. Second, I successfully built social relations. After arriving at the university as an exchange scholar in university administration, I attended various university classes and actively participated in discussions with students and professors about new trends in American education. I did not miss any social events at the university in order to have additional opportunities to listen to the points of view of Americans about different issues and ideas. Also, I joined the club of international students and scholars at the local church. With my new American friends, I went to movies, sport games and camping. They invited me for dinners, birthday parties and weddings. Third, I always received good evaluations from adult learners in my evening mathematics classes at a state university and technical college. The students liked that I started with simple problems and increased the level of difficulty gradually, giving everybody an opportunity to catch up with their classmates in understanding mathematical concepts. The majority of students came to my evening classes tired after long working hours at their full-time jobs. Their attention span was reduced by their tiredness. I tried to be creative in resetting the student attention clock periodically. Sometimes, a good joke and laughter helped to reset the clock. Sometimes, a short change in a learning activity resettled the clock. Burke and Ray (2008) found that, while college students' concentration levels were limited and hard

to maintain, some active learning interventions had a positive influence on their ability to focus on course materials.

A Battle for an Assistant Professor Position at a University

While I was able to get some modest teaching jobs at the university level in the US, an assistant professor position was out of reach for me because mathematics departments were looking for applicants with specific research interests. Unfortunately, the departments were not interested in my specialization in the history of mathematics. Because many mathematics departments expressed interest in mathematicians with research interests in mathematics education and teacher education, I decided to earn a PhD in this area of expertise. I assumed that some teaching experience in public schools would help to get admission to a doctoral program in mathematics education.

I was surprised to learn that in North America, in addition to a university degree, you need to finish an accredited initial teacher education program and receive a teacher certification from a governing body such as a state or a college of teachers to be eligible to teach in public schools. While many institutions of higher education in the USSR were designed to prepare future teachers for public schools, it was sufficient to have a university degree in mathematics to be eligible to teach this subject in high schools. In 2000, I completed an initial licensure program in mathematics education at a state university, received a teaching license to teach mathematics in Grades 7–12, and started teaching mathematics and reading comprehension at a public school. My acquaintance with educational ideas such as student-centered education (Brush & Saye, 2000) and cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1998) started in the initial licensure program and continued in my teacher professional development activities.

Cranton (1994, 1996) argues that transformative learning can occur in professional development. By participating in numerous teacher professional development workshops, I gained new knowledge and skills that helped me to be successful in urban public schools, teaching students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, including special needs students and English Language Learners (ELL), such as children of Somalian refugees. In particular, these skills and knowledge, combined with my own childhood experiences of poverty, gave me an opportunity to better understand the needs of students who were from low-income families at a local school. All these students were eligible for a free or reduced price breakfast and lunch. I distributed the breakfast to the students in the classroom in the morning and supervised their lunch in the dining room at noon. In addition, I could relate to refugees' struggle with adapting to a new culture because I experienced cross-cultural adaptation myself.

A culture shock concept in the cross-cultural adaptation theory is similar to a disorienting dilemma or trigger event concept in the transformative learning theory (Lyon, 2002).

Kim (2001) defines cross-cultural adaptation as a double-edged process in which a person becomes capable of functioning effectively in a new culture. Kim views this process as a double-edged one because it is "simultaneously troublesome and enriching" (p. 21). Similarly, culture shock is a double-edged concept. On the one hand, culture shock is the "anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1960, p. 177). On the other hand, culture shock is "at the very heart of the cross-cultural learning experience, self-understanding, and change" (Adler, 1972/1987,

p. 29). In the same way, a disorienting dilemma and a trigger event are also double-edged concepts because they both involve stress and anxiety that eventually have the potential to lead to a similar positive outcome: new learning and transformation (Lyon, 2002). At a public charter high school, I supervised students' service-learning projects and advised them on their career development. My students in the pre-calculus class were happy with my ability to find good examples for explaining mathematical concepts, and examples that everybody could understand. Their parents and the executive director of the academy praised me for sparking students' interest in pre-calculus.

My Transformative Experiences in Canada

In 2005, I immigrated to Canada because my US visa expired, and I failed to extend it. I was shocked to learn that the evaluation report of my educational credentials from the World Education Services in New York would not be universally accepted here despite the fact that this organisation had a branch in Canada. A new evaluation was suggested as I was not able to transfer any courses for credit. To avoid all these problems with the lack of recognition of my degree from a university in Russia, I earned a PhD in Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development with a specialisation in mathematics teacher education from a very recognized Canadian university in 2014. I was not able to transfer any courses for credit. During my doctoral studies there, I learned a lot about equity (Esmonde, 2009), social justice (Esmonde & Caswell, 2010) and inclusiveness (Cook-Sather & Des-Ogugua, 2018) in education. I combined this new knowledge with my previous lived transformative experiences to make more effective my supervision of the school-based student teaching of more than a hundred mathematics teacher candidates in a Canadian education program. My supervision was limited to observing teacher candidates' teaching and writing evaluation reports based on my observations. While talking about my commitment to transforming from one education context to another, I am fully aware that some teachers simply resist implementing new research-based approaches to teaching and learning, including student-centered education. This resistance is often associated with the theory-practice divide (Houston, 2008). The disconnectedness between teacher candidates' university-based course work experiences and their school-based field experiences is generally conceptualized as the theory-practice divide (Falkenberg, 2010).

I consciously chose to promote student-centered education, because I strongly believed the theory-practice divide could be re-conceptualized from a problem into an opportunity. Teacher candidates could use contradictions and tensions, surrounding the theory-practice divide, for synthesizing diverse perspectives on content, and pedagogical and educational research knowledge. They could integrate this perspective in their practice teaching. Teachers and researchers can be viewed as two worlds meeting and clashing in the conceptual borderland of teacher candidates' school-based field experiences and trying to convince teacher candidates that their approaches to teaching and learning are better. Placed in the center of this conflict, teacher candidates are frequently confronted with disorienting dilemmas because their associate teachers in the school and their supervising educators from the university have different expectations about teacher candidates' performance in the classroom. The associate teachers are the gate-keepers here who can stifle positive outcomes because their letters of recommendation are more important for school districts in a hiring process than the letters of university educators.

Conclusion

Some researchers focus on life transitions as factors in transformative learning (Merriam, 2005). Other researchers call for more cross-cultural perspectives in research on adult education (Christie et al., 2015). In my article, I tried to respond to these two trends in research by analyzing my relocations from one culture to another as life transitions with their potential for transformative learning. The collapse of the Soviet Union and revolutionary changes in the 1990s in Russia, my home country, became trigger events for reconsidering and transforming my worldviews and behaviour patterns. Rapid changes in Russia fostered my autonomous thinking and encouraged me to take full responsibility for my actions. I experienced the relocation from Russia to the United States and later my immigration to Canada as crossing cultural borders that reinforced the need to change my frame of reference primarily through the process of self-reflection and integration of new experiences. Transforming a habit of mind and a point of view, two dimensions of my frame of reference, helped me to build a plan of actions leading to success in my professional and social life in the United States. Communicating with others and engaging in discourse with them facilitated transformations. Many challenges in my transformative journey made me stronger and enhanced my ability to overcome barriers on my way to a better future. However, despite all my transformational learning, I was not able to build a successful professional career in Canada. I believe this happened because I am trapped in the borderland between two clashing worlds. On the one hand, I am an audible minority viewed as incomprehensible Other. On the other hand, I am allegedly a beneficiary of a white male privilege. I realized that I would not be able to build a successful professional career in Canada unless some crucial changes are made to hiring policies and regulations guiding recognition and/or evaluation of foreign educational credentials. While I am a member of an accredited college of teachers with two doctoral degrees, I cannot get a teaching position in a high school. Prospective high school teachers, graduating from accredited initial teacher education programs in Canada, must have certification in two teaching subjects (Reid & Reid, 2017). While the certification in the first teaching subject must be supported by at least five full undergraduate courses in this subject, only three full undergraduate courses are needed to support the certification in the second teaching subject (Reid & Reid, 2017). It means that certified teachers with the three courses and doctoral degree in mathematics are equally qualified to teach mathematics in a high school. Supervising teacher candidates' practice teaching in public high schools and talking with their associate teachers, I found that mathematics is sometimes being taught by teachers who have expertise in other areas such as music or physical and health education instead of mathematics (as these teachers can also get involved in extracurricular activities, for example). If audible minorities cannot have the same opportunities in hiring as visible minorities, then it does not make any sense to invite thousands of foreign professionals to immigrate to Canada because they all have accents. The World Education Services have branches both in the US and Canada, however, evaluations of foreign credentials made in the US branch are not recognised in Canada unfortunately. Similarly, the majority of newcomers to Canada failed to meet their professional career goals despite their qualifications (Busic, 2011).

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