

USING NARRATIVE INQUIRY TO EXPLORE ASSESSMENT IDENTITIES OF EFL LECTURERS

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ABSTRACT

Informed and inspired by the theoretical framework of Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Looney et al. (2017), this present study explored the identity formation of a Vietnamese university EFL teacher's assessment. Specifically, the three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry in Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and teacher assessment identity framework in Looney et al. (2017) have shaped the conceptual stance in this study. Data were collected from the participant's reflections on their assessment beliefs and practices using the Tree of life activity by Ncube (2006). Follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted to triangulate the data. Findings from the study reconfirm the discontinuity nature as an attribute of teachers' identity and assessment identity. The findings also highlighted the crucial role of the working environment and community of practice in the process of teacher's assessment identity formation. The paper concludes with some important implications for in-service teacher professional development in the EFL context.

Keywords: *teacher assessment identity, narrative inquiry, Tree of life, discontinuity nature*

1. INTRODUCTION

Research has suggested that issues of teacher identity construction as an assessor need further discussion in the language assessment agenda (Cowie et al., 2014; Looney et al, 2017; Scarino, 2013). The existing body of literature on language assessment has also emphasized the paucity of teacher assessment identity, (Adie, 2014; Cowie, Cooper & Ussher, 2014; Xu & Brown, 2016), especially those using a narrative inquiry approach. To fill the gap in the literature, the current study contributes to the line of inquiry on teacher and assessment identity by adopting a narrative approach to investigate evolving and dynamic issues while acknowledging the uniqueness of individual experiences. It explored how teachers' past educational experiences and personal histories influenced the formation of their assessment identity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Teacher identity

Researchers in education and language assessment have repeatedly acknowledged the critical importance of teacher identity, including their beliefs and practices, in the actual implementation of classroom activities. The process of learning to teach, learning

to assess, and learning to adapt the instructional plans toward student improvement is a crucial step in teacher assessment identity formation.

Although “teacher identity” has become prominent in the field of education, this concept is not universally defined (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Izadinia, 2013). The first general agreement in the literature is that teacher identity is similar to the concept of identity, which is complex in nature and made up of various elements (multi-faceted). Second, teacher identity is a fluid concept that continues to evolve. (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Miller, 2009). Barkhuizen (2017), emphasizes that teacher identity exerts significant impacts on students’ learning processes. This author views identity as a concept with multiple aspects.

“Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical – they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social material, and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short term and over time- discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places, and objects in classrooms, institutions and online” (p.4).

This definition is relevant to my study because of its complicated, contradictory, multifaceted, and diverse dimensions. My study investigated teacher assessment identity incorporating personal history and narratives from the lived experience of my participant. This professional experience has been accumulated via interactions with the professional community then linked to classroom practices. Therefore, it also shows the dynamic, diverse and distinctive features through the cognitive-emotional, ideological lense of the participant.

2.2. Teacher identity formation

Since the conceptualisation of teacher identity varies among researchers, it is important to clarify fundamental components that constitute the construction of teacher identity. The first contributing factor is related to teachers’ previous experiences as learners, which, according to Lortie (1975), shape their understanding of education and teaching philosophies. Second, teachers’ formal professional development in both pre-service and in-service periods also helps shaped teacher identity in terms of teaching philosophy and sharpened the process of identity creation (Borg, 2011; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Teacher identity is also strengthened through reflective practices (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Sanchez, 2013). The authors suggest that reflective practice allows teachers to confront and challenge their preconceived views and educational theories. Thus, through the process of teacher identity formation, they can become better teacher-educator.

2.3. Teacher assessment identity

Teacher’s assessment identity formation is a crucial step in building assessment

literacy. “With an assessor identity, teachers can reconsider alternative ways of practising, relearn and unlearn assessment knowledge, try new assessment approaches or strategies, scrutinize their conceptions of assessment, and eventually calibrate or change their assessment practices to facilitate student learning” (Xu & Brown, 2016, p.158). From an empirical standpoint, Adie (2013) explored “teacher assessment identity” (TAI) by engaging 50 participants through online conversation sharing their ways of making judgments, and the process of discussing judgement decisions on student assignments with other teachers. Through this practice, TAI can be sharpened.

In a similar vein, Xu and Brown (2016) also investigated the (re)construction of EFL teachers’ identity as assessors through a training program. In this program, pre-service teachers were trained to become assessors for three reasons: (a) teachers’ working lives are marked by identity (re)construction, (b) the (re)construction of one’s identity is a natural by-product of teacher education, and (c) teacher assessment identity is a complex and dynamic phenomenon which entails various cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural dimensions.

In the same fashion, Looney et al. (2017) proposed a reconceptualised model of teacher assessment identity that comprises of five interlinked dimensions, including *My role, I know, I feel, I believe, I am confident*. The first one, *I know*, refers to the knowledge of assessment, or assessment literacy as described by Stiggins (1991, 1995) and Popham (2009), cited in Looney et al. (2017). The second one, *I feel*, involves the emotional dimensions of assessment identity (Beijaard et al., 2004), cited in Looney et al. (2017). The third one, *I believe*, refers to teachers’ beliefs about assessment including those formed by their assessment histories (e.g., Shulman, 1986, Broadfoot, 1996; Mockler, 2011), cited in Looney et al. (2017). The fourth area, *My role*, refers to teachers’ different working contexts. The final dimension, under the heading *I am confident*, is teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in assessment work (e.g., Bandura, 1977, 1986), cited in Looney et al. (2017).

Between Xu and Brown’s (2016) TALiP framework and Looney et al.’s (2017) TAI model, there are two key differences. First, whilst the former’s pyramid design emphasizes hierarchy amongst crucial dimensions, the latter’s five-circle framework promotes unpredictability, as one or more aspects may become more relevant in a certain scenario or context. For example, a teacher may know what constitutes good assessment practice but lack confidence in their ability to put that knowledge into practice. Another teacher might have the expertise and confidence, but doubts about assessment’s usefulness. The five circles in Looney et al. (2017)’s model are of the same size but can change based on the stage of a teacher’s career, the context in which he or she is working, and the stage of his or her life. Another significant distinction between the two models is that, while Xu & Brown (2016) consider teacher assessment identity an important component of teacher assessment literacy in practice, placing it at the top of their pyramid model, Looney et al. (2017) emphasize teacher assessment identity as the overarching concept of which traditional teacher assessment literacy (knowledge and skills) is only one dimension (*I know*).



Figure 1: Teacher Assessment Identity (Looney et al., 2017, p. 15)

In short, while there is a growing literature on teacher identity in various settings, far less available is the body of research on teacher assessment identity and none, to the best of my knowledge, is conducted in the context of Vietnam.

My research question is: What does the participant narrate about the formation of teacher assessment identity? To answer the question, I believe that narrative inquiry is the most suitable research methodology which allows me to witness how the participants reflect on and make sense of their own experience.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current study is part of a larger, ongoing investigation into how language teachers' assessment identities are formed and manifested. The study followed the storytelling path of narrative inquiry research (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) and examined the case of an English language teacher, who was born, raised and trained in Vietnam, a context that has not been featured strongly in the teacher identity and teacher assessment identity literature.

3.1. Context of the study and the participant

The study was conducted at the Faculty of English at a public university in the north of Vietnam, which are referred to as the Faculty and the University to ensure anonymity. As a faculty at one of the leading universities in teacher training. The Faculty is responsible for multiple duties related to the training of English for different groups of students, including English-majored and non-majored undergraduate and postgraduate students. Therefore, the staff at the Faculty usually have to cover heavy teaching workload and teach large class sizes.

In the original study, seven participants were chosen, and all of them were all lecturers of English working at a teacher training institution in Hanoi. Four key criteria

were used to choose the participants: nationality (Vietnamese), qualification (Bachelor's degree or above in English language teaching), experience (teaching experience in Vietnam), and teaching status (in-service). The participant was not chosen or described to be representative of any teacher demographic, institution, or culture. I aimed to explore in-depth a single case instead of aiming to cover the breadth across cases. Data collection was centered on self-reflection and narrative, and was also aided by the small sample size. My interest was in the uniqueness of the individuality teacher. These participants are all my colleagues whom I have been working with for several years. We all live in the same city and have regular contact as our shared work interests brought us together. Trust had already been established because of our long and positive relationship history, which assisted in creating a field of inquiry that was safe and conducive to sharing their lived experiences and meanings (Clandinin, 2013). This article presents the findings from one participant among these seven. Informed consent was obtained from the participant. His anonymity was maintained throughout via the use of a pseudonym and omission of identifying details. He was free to refuse to answer any questions he found unsuitable or inappropriate. He was briefed before each interview and performed member checking at the end of the project by asking him to read through the data and analysis and identify any misrepresentation of the data.

The participant featured in this article was Mr. Topaz (pseudonym). He has been working as a lecturer at the Faculty since 2011. At the Faculty, he is recognized by both managers and fellow teachers as an approachable, reliable, and dedicated teacher. For students, he is known as a strict but fair teacher whom they highly respect and admire. Now he is working different teaching-related jobs as he wants to accumulate diverse experiences. His teaching philosophy is to wholeheartedly dedicate to helping students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills which enable them to get a job. In addition to his full-time commitment to the Faculty's work, he regularly tutors secondary and high school students. Mr Topaz is also the only Vietnamese lecturer at the Faculty who has landed a permanent position as a Cambridge examination assessor. The knowledge he has acquired from this side job is not different from what he has gained from his university working experience, but he highly values the opportunity to learn about and experience the internationally recognized and standardized procedures of organizing and conducting assessment work.

The researcher has worked closely with Mr Topaz since he was offered a job at the Faculty. As a colleague having witnessed his maturation and improvement as a language teacher, I have already established a high level of trust with the participant, which allows for the smooth data collection process.

3.2. Data collection procedure

To collect data for the study, I used individual, semi-structured interviews conducted in Vietnamese at the participants' choice. First, several background interviews were conducted, each lasting between 10 minutes and one hour as a result of students' availability. Then I introduced the participant to the Tree of Life (Merryfield, 1993), which is a self-reflection tool used as a metaphor to tell and reflect on their experiences.

Originally, the Tree of life activity was developed and used in Ncube's work with children who had lost their parents to HIV/AIDS. The activity aimed to encourage these children to talk about their difficult experiences in ways that are not traumatizing and to enable them to believe in their abilities, acknowledge their dreams and feel stronger in themselves. The activity was used as an auto-biographical semi-structured interview tool by Tran and Sanchez (2016) to elicit data about the identity formation of two Vietnamese English teachers via a case study design. In this study, I adapted the activity for the teacher to explore the formation of his assessment identity. Based on the interviews conducted in the previous stage, I invited him to reflect on all the different aspects of his teacher assessment identity, including his past, future goals, strengths, challenges, and support system available to him. I walked him through a process of thinking about different parts of the tree based on the related guided questions and then drawing the tree and its parts on paper. In this way, the participant constructed his own version of a Tree of life which is a visual narrative of his teacher assessment identity.

In the next stage, I used the narrative interviewing technique suggested by Chase (2005) to capture the participant's living stories. The technique positioned the interviewee as the narrator and the interviewer as the listener. The interviews were not structured as I aimed to maximize flexibility and spontaneity. I elicited the story-telling process by using general, open-ended questions about a particular aspect of the participant's Tree of life. In this way, the participant was invited to reflect on the creation of his Tree of life. He explained the various parts of his tree while recounting the related stories and responding to the questions asked to facilitate a greater understanding of his narratives. The participant was also invited to elaborate more about any other components of the tree. In this stage, while I aimed to elicit key incidents (the important time, places, people involved in the incidents) which happen in the participants' life and have a profound influence on the formation of their teacher assessment identity, I gave over to the narrator and the story itself and embraced an open-minded and encouraging attitude to listen to what the narrator was sharing. Based on the participants' reflection on their Tree of life, I provided an interpretation (also known as the re-storying process) of each participant's narratives using the three-dimensional inquiry space: interaction, situation, continuity (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) before discussing the emerged themes. In other words, the construction of narrative texts in this stage followed the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space framework.

For the continuity dimension, participants' critical incidents were identified and how they influence the participants' assessment identity formation and assessment practice was discussed. Critical events were identified together with their context and significant others (participants in the events). For the interaction dimension, I focused on the influence of different key figures in the participants' narratives (the leaves of the tree) and the participants' conversations with the self. Finally, I discussed the impact of the various working environments, including the makeup and cultures of these communities of practice in these contexts, on assessment identity formation and TALiP. To ensure trustworthiness of the analysis, the results were also sent to participants for verification.

I also employed three validation methods to ensure the trustworthiness of my research data and findings, as guided by Creswell (2006) when he discussed the evaluative standards for narrative studies. Firstly, I collected various data from the interview and the conversation with participants during the Reflective Task and Tree of Life activity. Secondly, throughout my data collection and analysis, the constructed participants' narratives and the interpretations of their narratives were shared with the participants. The participants provided feedback on the narratives regarding the "truth" of the story and commented on whether I had successfully captured and shared their voices. This is what Clandinin & Connelly (1998, 2000) referred to as "back and forth" (p.56). Finally, throughout the process of data collection and analysis, I engaged myself in the reflective practice. This is what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe as "be wakeful, thoughtful about all inquiry decisions" (p.184).

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings

4.1.1 The temporal dimension

Mr Topaz's passion for teaching and understanding of testing and assessment were sparked by his teaching practicum. He recalled the incident between the end of his third year and the end of his final year at the teacher education institution.

I didn't know much about testing and assessment, apart from what I've gained at the university. When I was assigned to design an end-term test during the practicum, I was anxious because there was no test specification or clear marking criteria whereas the tests at the Faculty had clear target outcomes. Our Dean was meticulous. She carefully checked and rechecked the test papers I produced. I learned a lot and realized that a test is like a mirror, reflecting both the teachers' efforts and students' progress in the course. Extract 1 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz continued to discuss how his teaching approaches and opinions on testing and assessment were molded throughout his first few years at the Faculty. He admitted that his assessment was primarily subjective at the start of his teaching career. When Faculty leaders began to emphasize the importance of testing and assessment, more training and seminars were provided for teachers. With the benefit of hindsight, he credited two elements for his progress in testing and assessment.

During 2013 and 2014, the Faculty developed and finalized marking scales and rubrics of most of the assessments used in the program. At first, I partially understood these descriptors, yet now I'm very confident, especially in assessing students' speaking and listening. The descriptors are clear to me now, and I can recite them by heart. Secondly, I performed different tasks, like conducting training for high school teachers or working as a professional assessor in private language centers and schools. Extract 2 (Topaz, interview)

The second turning point in his story occurred when he began working as a professional assessor for a Cambridge licensed testing center in Hanoi. He recounted how making mistakes at work forced him to improve.

When I started working for the Cambridge testing center, one day, after I'd finished interviewing all young learner candidates, I submitted all the marksheets without going over them. Three days later, the center informed me I'd omitted the analytical marks in two marksheets. I insisted on getting chance to listen to the recordings again but couldn't. I had to rack my brains to recall candidates' performances. Luckily, all the candidates were nearly of the same level, and my assessment was satisfactory when re-investigated. Since then, I always remind myself to conduct all the procedures more conscientiously. Also, my marking in the initial stage was inconsistent with other trainees', so I decided to practice further. Now, I am confident that my marking is considerably more consistent and trustworthy. Extract 3 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz's third major event occurred when he was working at the Cambridge testing center in 2020 when Cambridge re-assessed all of the center's examiners during an annual Certification Day to ensure consistency in marking and inter-rater reliability. He was requested to provide his appraisal of a student's documented performance in the A2 Keys for School examination in order to renew his license. Cambridge testing and assessment professionals would check his remarks and grades for students and evaluate the quality of his performance. He was disappointed with his result (Needs Improvement). Yet, he was determined to improve.

I believe I need to actively do more assessment to improve my performance. Besides following the standards by Cambridge, I actively find more similar samples with examiners' comments from the Internet. I listen to and grade the sample, before comparing mine with other examiners' scores and comments on the performance. I do improve! This year, I am awarded the Satisfactory level in the Certification Day event. Extract 4 (Topaz, interview)

What may be learned from the situation is how being evaluated can motivate Mr. Topaz to improve. He felt his identity as a professional and trained assessor was questioned as a result of the experience, so he worked hard to establish himself and was proud to attain the Satisfactory level on the most recent Certification Day. As a result of this encounter, he has a different viewpoint on testing and assessment. He believes that in testing and assessment, he needs to be severe, and refuses to accept compromises, even if it meant upsetting his coworkers.

While working together with other teachers to mark students' assignments, I always reverse the right to make the final decisions for those assignments I'm in charge of. I always stick to my standards and the marking rubrics. If we cannot reach an agreement, they can talk to the Head of Faculty. I must say that I am stubborn and obstinate in holding my standard. I always give marks according to the set of criteria. For weak students, I'd rather provide them with extra materials and free tutoring sessions than lower my expectation. Extract 5 (Topaz, interview)

4.1.2. The interactional dimension

Mr. Topaz regarded the lecturers at the teacher training institutes as those who had had a long-lasting impact on his own identity. He singled out two teachers, describing them as enthusiastic, dedicated educators who were both stern and kind to their students.

He recalled how these professors gave him feedback on a regular basis, regardless of their workload, thereby serving as a role model for him as a teacher.

I am forever grateful to my teachers for their hard work and dedication. They graded my writing regularly, and I felt that I truly benefited from their comments. They inspired me to become a teacher like them. Extract 6 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz stated that his belief in the value of assessment for learning stemmed from his positive experiences in these teachers' classrooms. Assessment for learning is far more important to him than achievement examinations or assessment of learning because it tells teachers and students what needs to be done.

The comments my teachers made were very useful. I paid more attention to them than the scores. I felt much better when I read the teacher's positive feedback like "Well-done" or "I like your ideas". The specific comments helped me a lot, and I always tried to avoid the same mistake. I expect my students to do the same because I know the hard work my teachers put in to write such detailed comments. Extract 7 (Topaz, interview)

His present supervisor, the Dean of the Faculty, has a major effect on his performance as an assessor. She gave extensive remarks on his debut job as a young lecturer at the Faculty, as described in the previous part.

She (the Dean) exerts a huge influence on me as an assessor. She instructed me on how to design test items, introduced different standardized tests to me and guided me through speaking and writing assessment. She laid a foundation for me to grow as a language assessor. Extract 8 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz regarded his supervisor as one of the few experts in language testing and assessment at the Faculty and in Vietnamese academia.

She (the Dean) is very thorough and has a high standard. She studied overseas and has participated in ministry-level projects related to testing and assessment, so she knows the current and best practices of testing and assessment. Extract 9 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz's pupils are another group who have had an impact on his testing and assessment. Most of the emotions he associates with conducting assessment work and interacting with pupils during these activities are negative. He blamed it on the students' lack of effort and eagerness to learn.

They (My students) lack appreciation for my hard work. Although I spent hours writing detailed comments for their assignments, many quickly glanced at the remarks and repeated the same mistakes. In the last two years, sometimes I had classes of up to 80 students, so marking was huge workload. Especially during the pandemic, I had to stay at home, surrounded and drowned in these assignments. I felt like being suffocated by these negative emotions. Extract 10 (Topaz, interview)

Mr Topaz welcomed the tiring and stressful assessment experience in the Cambridge center as an opportunity for him to grow as a professional and internationally qualified assessor yet described the emotion related to testing and assessment work at the Faculty as "gloomy" that he has to combat with the positive energy kindled by his former teachers' passion and dedication to teaching.

4.1.3. The situational dimension

Mr. Topaz's narrative emphasizes the Faculty, his full-time workplace, and the Cambridge community where he works as a professionally hired assessor as the communities of practice and working contexts that have shaped his teacher assessment identity construction. He described the Faculty as "the birthplace of his professional identity."

The staff at the Faculty are open-minded experienced. We used to host seminars to share our knowledge and experience. We also have to do difficult tasks (like training high school teachers or evaluating different sorts of candidates' language), which plays an important part in my development. Extract 11 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz related his assessment identity creation and professional development in testing and assessment with the Cambridge community, which is a more specialized community.

Though the knowledge and experience I've gained from my university is invaluable, I'm not 100% satisfied since in terms of language assessment, the procedures adopted at my university are not globally recognized. That's why I decided to apply for the position of speaking examiner for Cambridge ESOL. I have to go through certification annually, regularly monitored by my supervisor, who supervises my procedures and assessment before providing feedback on my performance. Extract 12 (Topaz, interview)

Mr. Topaz clearly differentiated the two groups. The former is a teaching community, in which he and his colleagues perceive themselves mostly as instructors, whereas the latter is a specialized testing and assessment community. The majority of training and work at the Faculty are focused on pedagogy rather than testing and assessment while his Cambridge colleagues are all professional and internationally registered assessors.

We are quite confident in our teaching methods and strategies at the Faculty. However, because there is no actual expert in assessment, we freely debate what has to be done and come up with a standard approach.... I've learned a lot about assessment while working for Cambridge where I can't make mistakes. Several of my colleagues failed to keep their international code, but many experts have remained certified. I frequently consult them and have gained a wealth of practical information. Extract 13 (Topaz, interview)

Besides these working environments, Mr. Topaz emphasized the importance of workshops, training, and research conferences relating to testing and assessment he attended. These "temporary and short-lived communities" gave fuel for thought while also assisting him in evaluating his testing and assessment knowledge and practice in accordance with Faculty, national, and international standards. He regarded these locally-cultivated networks as in the early phases of formation, having the potential to play larger roles in the lives of persons engaged in testing and assessment when compared to the Cambridge community.

I met trainers and trainees from different universities in Vietnam when I enrolled in teacher training courses. They taught me new things. There are still many unsolved

questions. For example, a common response is that this is a decision made by the board of examiners, and invigilators must adhere to it. This is known as the *Setting the Standards* stage in the Cambridge community, which implies we simply follow what has been determined without properly comprehending the rationale behind the choice. Because there are no shared work or projects, these communities frequently die away within a few months. Extract 14 (Topaz, interview)

4.2. Discussion

The following themes have been identified through the data with Mr. Topaz.

4.2.1. Teacher assessment identity is peripheral and supplementary to teacher identity.

As discussed previously, teacher identity in this study is viewed as a complex, contradictory, and multifaceted concept with different dimensions, dynamic across time and place and integrating personal history and narratives, constructed through interactions with others, and linked to classroom practice (Barkhuizen, 2017), and identity is multiple, constructed, and dynamic (Barkhuizen, 2017; Holland, 1996; Dolby, 2000). Mr. Topaz made a clear distinction between his teaching identity and his teacher assessment identity, especially while working in different settings. Nonetheless, his story revealed that professional development in the field of testing and evaluation was an important element of his journey to becoming a teacher.

4.2.2. Teacher assessment identity formation process is heavily role-model driven.

Mr. Topaz recalls learning from dedicated teachers and lecturers who meticulously graded his assignments and provided extensive feedback. His coworkers, as well as his high school instructors and lecturers from the teacher training program, are among them. The Dean of the Faculty, for example, has been a mentor to him since he first entered the Faculty.

4.2.3. Teacher assessment identity is mostly cultivated and formulated during in-service formal and informal training at the workplaces.

The path to becoming a teacher is contextualized (McLean, 1999). Mr. Topaz regarded his interactions with his colleagues at the Cambridge authorized testing center as extremely valuable. He can learn from professional assessors in this environment, which he describes as a more testing and assessment specialized community. He also emphasized the need of seminars, trainings, and conferences as sources of inspiration. One of the biggest advantages of short-term training courses, he said, is that it allows him to meet and learn from colleagues at different universities and specialists in the subject.

4.2.4. Personal mental space and virtual space on the Internet for personal reflection are crucial for teacher assessment identity formation.

The narratives also corroborate and reaffirm the importance of place-based identities in the construction of identities. Mr. Topaz's accounts demonstrate this, as he definitely donned many hats at various workplaces. In the Faculty, he is primarily

a language instructor who is both stern and forgiving with students when they make mistakes, and who makes use of evaluation as a mechanism for gaining and offering feedback on students' work. He is a professional assessor at the Cambridge testing institution who rigorously follows the standard procedure and takes delight in the high-quality assessment job he performs.

5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study has provided an in-depth investigation of the formation of assessment identity of one Vietnamese EFL teacher, whose narratives showed that identity and assessment identity formation were complex processes that involve both professional and personal aspects. The case in this study provides implications for teacher education and teachers' professional development. First, the richness and complexity of teachers' lives should be recognized and cultivated in teacher education. This can be accomplished through self-reflection and the use of tools like the Tree of Life to help pre-and in-service teachers become more aware of their own assessment identity and the role of many influences in its construction. Second, as teacher identity and assessment identity are driven by role models during in-service training, the mentor-mentee scheme should be adopted on a regular basis to promote more impactful and sustainable forms of professional development for teacher education.

One limitation of this study is the geographical scope of the study. The only participant featured in this article works in a teacher training university, which contextualizes the narratives to this institution. The interpretation and understanding of the narratives can contribute to the conversation at the local and provincial level but plays a smaller role in the national conversation. Another limitation of the research is that of narrative inquiry as a research method. This method is not feasible for studies of large numbers of participants. In addition, the large amount of information collected to understand fully the individual experience poses major challenges to data analysis which was slow and meticulous. An extension of this research would be to use classroom observation to add evidence to the narrated identity of each participant. Because narrated experience is influenced temporally and contextually, using classroom observations would provide future research to shed light on what is happening in the classroom and how these classroom events relate to the participants' narrative of testing and assessment identity.

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