

Going to Teach in Prisons: Culture Shock*

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Abstract

Novice prison teachers experience confusion and disorientation--culture shock--when they go to teach in prison because teaching and prison cultures collide. The stages of acculturation associated with culture shock are predictable and so are the identities and experiences of teachers who are positioned by the cultural dynamics of prison teaching. Acculturation theory enables us to appreciate the social-psychological dimensions of prison teachers' experience, facilitates the design of pre-service programs for novice prison teachers, and encourages veteran prison teachers to reflect on their experiences.

Introduction: Culture Shock

It's a different culture in a sense and I sort of like going to different cultures -- I think people are interesting and how they interact in different settings is interesting
(Anna, a prison teacher).

Most prison teachers did not intend to teach in prison. They started teaching in prison "casually," by accident, rather than as part of a sequenced, mediated, pre-service stage in a professional development program (Geraci, 2002, Eggleston, 1991, Wright, 2002). Learning to teach this way is not only "dangerous and frustrating" (Eggleston, 1991, p.16), it is confusing, disquieting, unsettling. For many novice teachers, prison teaching is a "totally different" experience, and prison is a "foreign place." Without comprehensive pre-service training, they find they have to "work by the seat of their pants" (Wright, 2002), frequently lacking the cultural maps (Geraci, 2002) to understand their experience. Even the stereotypic images of prisons disseminated in the media do little to dispel the confusion.

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I didn't know what to expect – I mean, I had one cousin who worked in a jail, and that was it, and he didn't really tell me any stories, and so I just knew what I had seen in the movies. When I got there, the inmates were just walking around, and I was thinking: Why aren't they in their cells? Somebody's not doing their job here! I had visions of being in a classroom with a guard with a gun, and I got there, and it was a little more lax than that! (Kathy).

Teachers bring to prison professional identities and practices fashioned in a different cultural landscape. Little wonder novice prison teachers are bewildered, confused, and disoriented on the inside as they experience the nuances of prison life. For example, they are puzzled when they encounter prisoners for the first time, who surprisingly are not the monstrous "others" portrayed in the media, but quite human after all. Moreover, they feel the heavy weight of prison walls and towers on their bodies and minds, as the silent language of architecture communicates to them they are in a different place. Furthermore, in their preliminary encounters with prison officers, they often feel insulted and demeaned when their personal belongings are searched, or their motives for teaching in prison questioned. And, they are confused and surprised when they raise the ire of surly officers who expect compliance to prison rules and practices that are a source of confusion for the new prison teacher. Novice teachers experience culture shock (Jandt, 2004) because prison cultures are different from school cultures on the outside (Geraci, 2002). Gradually, though, teachers adjust to prison life as one veteran prison teacher at an international symposium in Canada recalls.

You know, I just remember when I first started, the first week it was the first time I'd ever been in a prison. I was scared, I'll admit it. I had no idea what to expect, I was looking over my shoulder ever two seconds, checking to make sure my wallet was still in my pants pocket. Asking-you know-if it was okay to bring a wallet into the facility. I mean I was asking just tons and tons of questions-you know-the security, the programs, just everybody. Just trying to find out what it is like inside there--because it's such a foreign environment to anyone on the outside. But within a couple weeks I noticed that I stopped looking over my shoulder all the time and I stopped worrying about my wallet. I could even leave certain objects on my desk and not worry. I could step away because I knew the guys who were in my area well enough to know that if I left, you know, an immediate area for two seconds that I didn't have to worry (Cameron).

Methodology

This paper is based on the assumption that teachers' experiences of intercultural adjustment, identified as stages of acculturation, when they go to teach in prisons. Moreover, they assume various identities such as the teacher as visitor, tourist, stranger, and so on in the acculturation process. Gudykunst's (1983) approach to acculturation, as well as Jandt's (2004) work on acculturation, articulates the speculative social-psychological topography of professional experience and identities I propose here. The stages of acculturation and identity formation of prison teachers are explored by data from focus group interviews conducted by me with prison teachers across western Canada (Author, 2004). The focus group sessions held at an international symposium in May, 2000.

Further research should refine the theoretical framework to explore experiential nuances of each stage of culture shock and how that acculturation theory suggests irreversible stages of acculturation the way to acculturation. I suggest however, that some teachers proceed through all the stages, anchored as they are in their professional identity formed in other cultural contexts. And, some teachers do not proceed through all stages, but suffer setbacks in prison (with prison administration for example), so they return to an earlier stage of associated identities and experiences.

Why Culture Shock? Teaching Cultures and Identities

There are several descriptions of external (in other words, school) cultures put forward in the literature that help us to understand and describe the features of prison teaching--the school culture.

Jackson's (1968) ethnographic study of external school culture shows how culture is (re)produced in the predictable, repetitive routines--such as seatwork, group discussion and so on--that reinforce the "rules of order" in classrooms and schools. Jackson identifies schools as cultural landscapes where core values and preferences are embedded and reproduced in classroom practices, "patterning and punctuating of time, the bounding of space, patterns of discipline and control, grading and assessment, textbooks, connection to the outside world, and interaction with the outside world" (p.1). Gratch (2001) focuses on the interactions between

Methodology

This paper is based on the assumption that teachers undergo similar experiences of intercultural adjustment, identified as stages of culture shock, when they go to teach in prisons. Moreover, they assume stage-related identities such as the teacher as visitor, tourist, stranger, settler, during this acculturation process. Gudykunst's (1983) approach to intercultural adjustment and acculturation, as well as Jandt's (2004) work on the stages of culture shock articulates the speculative social-psychological topology of the prison teacher's professional experience and identities I propose here. This topology of the stages of acculturation and identity formation of prison teachers is supported by data from focus group interviews conducted by the author with twenty-two prison teachers across western Canada (Author, 2002), and from transcripts of focus group sessions held at an international symposium at Pine Lake, Ontario, in May, 2000.

Further research should refine the theoretical framework by discerning the experiential nuances of each stage of culture shock. Finally, it should be noted that acculturation theory suggests irreversible stages--transitions completed on the way to acculturation. I suggest however, that some teachers may never proceed through all the stages, anchored as they are, in historical identities formed in other cultural contexts. And, some teachers may seem to progress through all stages, but suffer setbacks in prison (with a change of administration for example), so they return to an earlier stage with its associated identities and experiences.

Why Culture Shock? Teaching Cultures and Prison/Teaching Cultures

There are several descriptions of external (in other words, non-prison) school cultures put forward in the literature that help us to understand the concept, and describe the features of prison teaching--the source of culture shock.

Jackson's (1968) ethnographic study of external school cultures describes how culture is (re)produced in the predictable, repetitive patterns of behaviour--routines--such as seatwork, group discussion and teacher demonstration that reinforce the "rules of order" in classrooms and the school. Nesbit (2000) identifies schools as cultural landscapes where constitutive values, beliefs and preferences are embedded and reproduced in classroom practices--in the "patterning and punctuating of time, the bounding and use of the physical space, patterns of discipline and control, grading and testing practices, uses of textbooks, connection to the outside world, and interactions between teachers" (p.1). Gratch (2001) focuses on the interactions between teachers--how they work

together and treat one another as an important dimension of teaching cultures. Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) maintain that teaching cultures are

... embodied in the work-related beliefs and knowledge that teachers share-beliefs about appropriate ways of acting on the job and rewarding aspects of teaching, and knowledge that enables them to do their work (p. 508).

McBrian and Brendt's (1997) dictionary definition of school culture focus on the relations between teachers, students and administrators. Their definition complements Nesbit's description of school culture which leaves out student-teacher interactions by suggesting that it is an important dimension of school cultures.

Jermier, J. M., Slocum, J. W. (Jr.), Fry, L. W., and Gaines, J. (1991) provide a useful if more generic definition of organizational culture as a way of thinking and being in the world. Culture is defined by these authors as "... the basic, taken-for-granted assumptions and deep patterns of meaning shared by organizational participants and manifestations of these assumptions and patterns" (p. 170).

Little, however, has been written about prison teaching cultures, though much of the literature on prison teaching implicitly defines and describes these cultures and their (dis)connections to the taken-for-granted assumptions of prison authorities and prison operations. Mathews' (2000) work for example, highlights the different assumptions or ideological tensions between teachers and prison staff. She notes how teachers are

... professionals trained to be part of a helping profession ... charged with the duties of educating prison inmates-within a system designed for punishment. People from opposing ideological backgrounds must somehow work together in order to accomplish a very difficult mission (p.179).

Explicit references to prison teaching cultures in the literature are meager, so that in most cases, readers must extrapolate the effects of prison culture on prison teaching cultures. Geraci's (2002) work, for example, though it does not acknowledge the concept of teaching cultures, at least explicitly raises the questions of prison organizational culture and its effects on prison teachers and their practices.

I argue that prison cultures infuse teaching cultures, not by simply absorbing them, but transforming them sufficiently for the novice teacher. In other words, prison teaching cultures are thought of as hybrid, syncretic cultures—a blend of behaviors, experiences, and identities. In organizational terms, prison teaching cultures are organizational subcultures. Organizational subcultures are around the primary organizational culture, and are personal, task, organizational and performance-related. They are based on education, rank, occupation, shift, occupational commitment, and "performance" (Jermier, et.al., 1991, p.174). Organizational subcultures are the dominant organizational culture. In this case, we have organizational counter-cultures.

Geraci describes prison organizational cultures as authoritarian: There is a powerful, and often unspoken, set of principles (principles of hierarchy, and strict enforcement of rules and policies, procedures, and practices of prison staff. Culture is one of hierarchy and difference, where interpersonal relations are a rigorous taxonomy that distinguishes "Us" from "Them." The schema of criminals and crimes (author, in-press, 2002).

Cultures of confinement—such as in prisons, where life in its entirety takes place within the walls of the institution—are grounded in strategic rules and processes oriented toward incorporating inmates (and, we might add, teachers) into the system to uphold institutional order (Goffman, 1961).

Foucault's (1977/1995) vision of the prison as a system of surveillance, discipline and control contrasts with the view of the prison not as a "juggernaut capable of crushing all resistance" but as an organization where "schismatic struggles" and "battles between keepers and kept." For Sykes, prison culture is a "culture of fear, shaped by the expectancy of a riot or hostage situation." "The guard in his tower holds a position of organizational power. In a potential crisis, the possible event made improbable" (p.3). The cultural attributes of vigilance and control are substantiated in the anxious choreography (Franz Fanon, 1967) of prison movement.

The National Institute of Corrections, Department of Justice, acknowledges prisons as "fear-based cultures" (Chapman, 1998).

I argue that prison cultures infuse teaching cultures in prisons, not totally absorbing them, but transforming them sufficiently so as to create culture shock for the novice teacher. In other words, prison teaching cultures should be thought of as hybrid, syncretic cultures—a blend of home and host world behaviors, experiences, and identities. In organizational theory, teaching cultures are organizational subcultures. Organizational subcultures gravitate around the primary organizational culture, and are “. . . associated with personal, task, organizational and performance-related variables (e.g. gender, education, rank, occupation, shift, occupational commitment, and work performance” (Jermier, et.al., 1991, p.174). Organizational subcultures can resist the dominant organizational culture. In this case, we can describe them as organizational countercultures.

Geraci describes prison organizational cultures as militaristic or authoritarian: There is a powerful, and often unquestioned chain of command (principles of hierarchy, and strict enforcement of rules) embedded in the policies, procedures, and practices of prison staff. Certainly, the prison world is one of hierarchy and difference, where interpersonal relations are structured by a rigorous taxonomy that distinguishes “Us” from “Them,” in a finely tooled schema of criminals and crimes (author, in-press, September, 2004).

Cultures of confinement—such as in prisons, asylums, total institutions where life in its entirety takes place within the walls (Goffman, 1970), are grounded in strategic rules and processes oriented towards administratively incorporating inmates (and, we might add, teachers?) easily and effectively into the system to uphold institutional order (Goffman, 1970).

Foucault’s (1977/1995) vision of the prison as a place of omnipotent surveillance, discipline and control contrasts with Sykes’ (1970, p.xv) vision of the prison not as a “juggernaut capable of crushing all opposition” (1970, p.xv), but an organization where “schismatic struggles” and contradictions surface in the battles between keepers and kept. For Sykes, prison cultures are cultures of fear, shaped by the expectancy of a riot or hostage taking—the loss of control. “The guard in his tower holds a position organized around the theme of potential crisis, the possible event made improbable by vigilance” (Sykes, 1970, p.3). The cultural attributes of vigilance and control are valued and substantiated in the anxious choreography (Franzen, 2002) of prisoner and staff movement.

The National Institute of Corrections, Department of Justice (2003) acknowledges prisons as “fear-based cultures” characterized by a

... cliqued, selective sharing of critical information, abuse of power and position, codes of silence, and even intimidation, among other factors. This negative prison culture permeates the environment, impacting both staff and inmates, and can be seen as the backdrop to a host of prison problems ranging from poor staff morale to abuse of inmates and high rates of inmate violence (p. 3).

Despite the awareness in the literature of the phenomena of prison teaching cultures, teachers know, tacitly and practically, that prison teaching and external teaching cultures are different. For example, Gordon, a teacher at one maximum security institution for about four years, realizes that correctional education is "... separate and distinct from the field of secondary education, even the field of adult education. Although they may be twins, they're not identical." This is because "... correctional educators have a set of experiences and developed skills that make them unique from other educators in the public school." He adds that teachers on the outside "... may have a surface understanding of what it's like to teach in this environment, but don't have a true conceptual understanding of correctional education." Given the uniqueness of prison schooling, he recommends a "move towards academic recognition" of correctional education as a specialized field of education at the university.

The brief literature review on the elements (uses of space, patterns of time, relations between colleagues) described in the literature review above, enables us to identify the subtle and not-so-subtle transmutations of these elements on the inside (the things that veteran teachers, like Gordon, come to know). In the next few paragraphs I identify how elements of teaching culture are infused with prison cultures.

The prison house alters the teachers' bounding and use of physical space, as teachers adopt a military syntax of space ordered according to rules of risk, danger and control. (Some teachers maintain a heightened fearfulness of prison spaces forever, so that we might talk about "paranoiac spaces" as a feature of prison teaching cultures.). Teachers become accustomed, and eventually immersed in the institutional morass of observation and reporting (the tools of vigilance) to counter the threat of riot and crisis, and learn to control inmate movement in space and across time. When teachers become totally preoccupied with these functions, we can assume that they have moved beyond the process of acculturation to assimilation where they lose their ways of thinking, feeling and acting associated with teaching.

The ritualistic patterning of time, another dimension shaped by prison operations. Teachers on the outside have schemas based on the school day, seasons, end of year graduation ceremonies and holidays. This ritualistic patterning is different as it is subordinated to the regimented, military needs of the prison (lock-ups, searches, count, canteen, visitation) and operational needs. The meaning of temporal rituals is different. Christmas (usually a joyous time for many) is reframed for prisoners as a period of prisoner loneliness and pain.

In their interactions with students—another important dimension (re)production—teachers learn to keep their professional distance from prisoners (Geraci, 2000, Wright, 2002). Interactions are embedded and reproduce prison school cultures to which teachers believe it appropriate to warn, cajole, advise, and control. Teachers (novice and veteran) to comply with institutional demands (Geraci, 2000, for her recommendations and examples).

School cultures are built up too, in the on-going interactions between teachers and community members, or relations with inmates (Nesbit, 2000). In prisons, novice prison teachers must learn the strategies of containment—nothing in, nothing out. This is the organizational culture which limits the physical movement of prisoners inside and outside prison (Giddens, 1984).

Given the subtleties of prison teaching culture, teachers are shocked by their early prison teaching experiences. As a prison teacher, I was horrified and shocked when I saw a teacher leaving the movie projector in the prison hallway, and teachers become accustomed to teaching in prison. This is a set of assumptions about teaching and about their identities.

The acculturation literature provides a framework for understanding psychological states and identities of teachers (as well as students and so on) which underscores the collective nature of these experiences. In the remainder of this paper, I document the adjustment of the prison teacher and suggest a model of adjustment that accompanies each stage of the acculturation process. As suggested earlier, acculturation is a complex process with the possibility that some identities may emerge within the process (so that the teacher is always a tourist, no matter

The ritualistic patterning of time, another dimension of school culture is shaped by prison operations. Teachers on the outside develop temporal schemas based on the school day, seasons, end of the year celebrations, graduation ceremonies and holidays. This ritualistic sense of time is punctuated differently as it is subordinated to the regimented, mechanical, institutional time of the prison (lock-ups, searches, count, canteen, visits) reflecting the prison's operational needs. The meaning of temporal rituals is altered too, in prison. Christmas (usually a joyous time for many) is reframed by teachers and prisoners as a period of prisoner loneliness and pain.

In their interactions with students—another important site of cultural (re)production—teachers learn to keep their professional distances from prisoners (Geraci, 2000, Wright, 2002). Interactions between teachers are embedded and reproduce prison school cultures too. Often veteran prison teachers believe it appropriate to warn, cajole, advise, and admonish other teachers (novice and veteran) to comply with institutional norms and rules (see Geraci, 2000, for her recommendations and examples).

School cultures are built up too, in the on-going negotiations between teachers and community members, or relations with the world outside school (Nesbit, 2000). In prisons, novice prison teachers must learn and apply strategies of containment—nothing in, nothing out. This micro-practice reinforces the organizational culture which limits the physical and social availability of prisoners inside and outside prison (Giddens, 1984).

Given the subtleties of prison teaching cultures, it is little wonder that teachers are shocked by their early prison teaching experiences. As a novice prison teacher, I was horrified and shocked when I almost lost my job for leaving the movie projector in the prison hallway, when I went to class). As teachers become accustomed to teaching in prison, their deeply held assumptions about teaching and about their identity are called into question.

The acculturation literature provides a framework to describe the social-psychological states and identities of teachers (as tourists, strangers, settlers, and so on) which underscores the collective nature of their individually felt experiences. In the remainder of this paper, I document the stages or cultural adjustment of the prison teacher and suggest a topology of teacher identities that accompanies each stage of the acculturation process. However, as I suggested earlier, acculturation is a complex process, so we must entertain the possibility that some identities may emerge within a stage and become fixed (so that the teacher is always a tourist, no matter how long he or she stays);

some identities may be so strongly formed elsewhere as to be relatively immune to the formative processes of prison life; and some identities that seem fixed, may be altered by the contextual dynamics of prison life (a change in leadership for example). In these cases, the acculturation framework helps us speak of teacher identities or types (teachers as tourists, settlers and so on) that are not closely identified with stages in the acculturation process. More will be said about the broader intercultural forces at work in a moment.

The Stages of Culture Shock

Stage One: The Teacher as "Tourist"

Jandt (2004) has described culture shock as a five stage process. Stage one is described as the "honeymoon" phase "where everything is new and exciting. The person is basically a tourist with her or his basic intensity rooted in the home culture" (pp. 320-321). At this stage the individual is often overwhelmed with impressions from the host environment and at the same time, finds the culture exotic and fascinating. Tom, a novice teacher at Canyon Prison at the time of the interview, describes his early prison experience:

... with me, as soon as I heard that there was a job in the prison; it's like 'Wow, that's cool, I'd love to work in a prison!' You know, it seemed like one of those jobs where you can tell your friends-well, guess what I did! So, when my sister told me about the ad, and I phoned to see what kind of position it was, I spoke to Jena, and she said, 'Now, one thing I have to tell you-it is in a prison.' And I'm thinking, that's the main reason why I'm calling!

Traveling to prison gives Tom the right to claim the tourist's special privilege or authority to speak as one who's been there (wherever "there" may be):

... when I first started teaching there, I used to tell my friends, oh yes, I teach in a cage, and I have a cattle prod and every now and then one of the inmates runs up and goes 'I'm going to kill you!' and I take my cattle prod and zap them-and then he'll be like: 'Okay, I'm calm now, I'll go back to my desk!'

A tourist differs from a sojourner or expatriate socially and psychologically, not only along a spatial dimension (as someone who leaves one place for

another) but according to a temporal continuum of permanency:

A tourist visits a country for a short period of time for relaxation and self-enlightenment. A sojourner stays for a longer period of time, from as little as 6 months to as long as a year, for a specific and goal-oriented purpose, such as education. A settler is more often used to refer to a non-citizen who stays for an indeterminate length of time." (Jandt, 2004, p. 320)

Tourists come from afar and, not intending to stay long, are not from the host group. Sojourners differ from tourists in that they stay longer and as a result, they might become socially committed. Nevertheless, these teacher identities are variations on the tourist identity, in that teachers are so close to their home culture that they appreciate their host environment. Some teachers are sojourners at the end of their length of stay in prison. We hear from them how they have, through, looking for something else to come along, they find a better job, and so on.

Stage Two: Disintegration and Difference – The Marginal

The second stage in the acculturation process is disintegration and difference stage. Novices become irritated and frustrated as aspects of their home world disintegrate and the differences between their culture become more apparent (Jandt, 2004, pp. 320-321). Behaviors of others in the host culture unusual and different, and they dislike the culture. Anxiety, anger, and withdrawal are common. The teacher may adopt the professional identity and the condition of exile involves the idea of a separation from the homeland or from a cultural and ethnic origin (Ashforth & Mael, 1993). The exilic identity may be the result, though not always, of circumstances where the teacher has no choice but to leave in search of new employment opportunities. Downsizing, administrative petulance, or unsubstantiated accusations can expel the teacher out of a job. Mothers returning to their home country, exiled when they discover there are no jobs on the home side, their extensive teaching history makes them too exp

another) but according to a temporal continuum of ephemerality or permanency:

A tourist visits a country for a short period of time for such goals as relaxation and self-enlightenment. A sojourner lives in a country for limited period of time, from as little as 6 months to as long as 5 years, with a specific and goal-oriented purpose, such as education. The word expatriate is more often used to refer to a non-citizen worker who lives in a country for an indeterminate length of time." (Jandt, 2004, p. 319)

Tourists come from afar and, not intending to stay long remain socially distant from the host group. Sojourners differ from tourists because they intend to stay longer and as a result, they might become socially closer to the host group. Nevertheless, these teacher identities are variations of the more generic visitor identity, in that teachers are so close to their home culture, they cannot appreciate their host environment. Some teachers are forever tourists, despite their length of stay in prison. We hear from them how they are just passing through, looking for something else to come along, going to leave when they find a better job, and so on.

Stage Two: Disintegration and Difference – The Teacher as Exile or Marginal

The second stage in the acculturation process is described as the disintegration and difference stage. Novices become irritated and hostile as the familiar cues of their home world disintegrate and the differences between host and home culture become more apparent (Jandt, 2004, pp. 320-321). They find the behaviors of others in the host culture unusual and unpredictable and begin to dislike the culture. Anxiety, anger, and withdrawal are typical reactions. Here the teacher may adopt the professional identity and state of mind of the exile. The condition of exile involves the idea of a separation from either a literal homeland or from a cultural and ethnic origin (Ashcroft, Griffin, Tiffin, 1998, p. 93). The exilic identity may be the result, though not exclusively, of circumstances where the teacher has no choice but to leave their school in search of new employment opportunities. Downsizing in the public sector, administrative petulance, or unsubstantiated accusations by students may force the teacher out of a job. Mothers returning to their teaching careers may feel exiled when they discover there are no jobs on the street for them (because their extensive teaching history makes them too expensive when compared to

the novice public school teacher), and they end up inside. The teacher as exile is nearly overwhelmed by his or her nostalgia for home which may lead to the impression he or she is "nursing a wound" (Janmohamed, 1995, p.448). Sometimes these teachers never go home, but stay (physically) while remaining disgruntled, embittered and nostalgically attached to their professional world left behind. These teachers can also be described as marginal persons.

Pamela's comments on her identity and experience are relevant here. Pamela works for a private education company in prison and would like the same pay and benefits her unionized colleagues receive for teaching in prison. She is even willing to leave teaching for another position in the prison if it became available. However, even when unionized staff positions are advertised in prison, her "application" (literally and figuratively) to become member of the host culture is considered unacceptable. In response to an organizational climate survey sent out by her employer, she explains why she is dissatisfied with host environment:

We all work in the same institution. If a competition for a CSC [Correctional Service of Canada] position becomes available, we often apply. One of the main reasons we are not accepted, is we do not have CSC experience. I fail to understand this line of reasoning. We are not considered equal, nor are we treated, respected or paid equally to other CSC staff. Equality in wage parity would be a giant step forward.

Pamela describes her feelings and identity as a marginal person this way:

It is frightening to think of how little input we have into the decisions that are made by CSC surrounding our jobs here. Many a staff meeting will see us in endless discussions about things like, 'do you think we should order the blue pens or the black ones with the shiny tops?' Worthwhile and significant operational policymaking is never discussed with us.

Pamela's marginality is produced in her relations with the prison school manager who, unlike her, is a civil servant. She cites examples of how he accuses her of keeping her classroom lights low during the screening of a film (despite the fact that some lights cannot be switched off for security reasons). She describes how she is accused of unprofessional behavior, (speaking poorly of the CSC), but the details of her transgression (described by an anonymous inmate) are never revealed to her so she can defend herself. She relates how

her wishes not to be filmed by a news crew for a news story are ignored by the prison school manager. Eventually she finds a better job in the community. In these incidents (reminiscent of the antagonistic posture of the prison manager that she has in status in prison.

Stage Three: Reintegration - The Teacher as Stranger

In the third or reintegration stage, old and new cognitions are negotiated. There is an increased ability to function in a new culture, but there is anger and resentment toward the new culture for being a stranger (pp. 320-321). Teachers who experience the difference between their worlds less chronically than the exile can be described as "strangers" (strangers intend to stay, to take up residence, but are not yet fully integrated) by an indifferent or ambivalent host culture. They are, in a sense, and far, socially close and distant from the host group. They are negotiating to close distances. The position of the stranger is that of the individual on the margin, part inside and part outside (Jary, 1995, p. 656-657). For Schutz, (1964) the ideal-type of the immigrant who aspires to be part of the culture, but is not fully shaped by the knowledge that he or she is still an "outsider" to the culture.

An ideal-type situation of the teacher-as-stranger in a prison school staff must negotiate the strike line. Strike actions pose particular difficulties for teachers, posing as they do general problems of occupational solidarity (or division). Strikes clearly separate union positions within an organization. In my Canadian experience, contract teachers cross the line with CSC escorts (such as those on the line), while others honor the picket. Some teachers declare themselves and take personal leave to resign. In a recent letter, Pamela expresses her anger at having to be involved in a strike action, and, at the same time, being criticized for not taking up space that really belonged to unionized staff.

Stage Four: Gradual Adjustment - The Teacher as Insider

In the fourth stage, the gradual adjustment continues. The teacher "... 'good' and 'bad' elements in both the home and the host culture" (2004, p. 320). The novice is becoming more comfortable and they are able to understand and predict the actions of others.

her wishes not to be filmed by a news crew for a newscast on prison education are ignored by the prison school manager. Eventually, she leaves prison to find a better job in the community. In these incidents (real or imagined), she reports the antagonistic posture of the prison manager that re-confirms her marginal status in prison.

Stage Three: Reintegration - The Teacher as Stranger

In the third or reintegration stage, old and new cognitive cues are melded, and there is an increased ability to function in a new culture, though there is still anger and resentment toward the new culture for being 'different' (Jandt, 2004, pp. 320-321). Teachers who experience the differences between home and host worlds less chronically than the exile can be described as strangers. Teachers as strangers intend to stay, to take up residence, but are positioned (made into strangers) by an indifferent or ambivalent host culture, so they feel both near and far, socially close and distant from the host group, and are constantly negotiating to close distances. The position of the stranger is "the position of the individual on the margin, part inside and part outside the group" (Jary & Jary, 1995, p. 656-657). For Schutz, (1964) the ideal-type of stranger is the immigrant who aspires to be part of the culture, but whose experience is shaped by the knowledge that he or she is still an "applicant" to the host culture.

An ideal-type situation of the teacher-as-stranger appears when contract staff must negotiate the strike line. Strike actions present enormous relational difficulties for teachers, posing as they do general problems of social and occupational solidarity (or division). Strikes clearly separate management from union positions within an organization. In my Canadian experience, some contract teachers cross the line with CSC escorts (subject to the derision of those on the line), while others honor the picket. Some teachers prefer not to declare themselves and take personal leave to resolve the dilemma. In her letter, Pamela expresses her anger at having to be on the line to support the strike action, and, at the same time, being criticized by those on the line for taking up space that really belonged to unionized staff.

Stage Four: Gradual Adjustment - The Teacher as Settler

In the fourth stage, the gradual adjustment continues as persons are able to see "... 'good' and 'bad' elements in both the home and new cultures" (Jandt, 2004, p. 320). The novice is becoming more comfortable in the new culture as they are able to understand and predict the actions and expectations of others.

For this reason, novices feel less isolated, more in control (Jandt, 2004, pp. 320-321). Kathy at Canyon Institution enjoys teaching in prison because she no longer has to mark student assignments late into the evening as she did in school on the outside. (She is prevented from taking assignments out of prison by privacy legislation which protects the identities of her students.) Kathy also likes "working at the pen because of the hours and you can leave it at work. I really enjoy that. I don't know what I'd do if I did have to go back to public school. You know, you can do your work and leave it there. That's what I like about it."

Another prison literacy teacher and administrator describes facetiously, how in prison, there are no extracurricular activities, no parent-teacher interviews, and no home visits. Teachers appreciate how, in the host culture, they are not permitted to stay after school with students, usually because the school is not supervised by guards after school hours. (Even so, staying later with a student, even when it is operationally possible to do so, is also treated with suspicion, so it becomes a practice which is discouraged, as novice teachers soon learn.)

Marlene, a minimum security teacher who started as a volunteer in a chapel, describes her personal growth, and we sense how she has found her place in prison, by learning to back away from inmates, to give them room when they need it, to understand their good and bad moods. There is a sense that she has settled with regard to the nature of her students and her relationship with them when she says:

"I've learned how to be a quiet, gentle spirit [in prison]. I thought, well, I would have to be dead first before that happens, but as soon as I came here, it was the only way, because . . . you have to be very sensitive about their egos, you know they, being in jail - they can't read, they can't write.. ."

At stage four, teachers assume (approximately) a settler identity and state of mind. Unlike the tourist, who is definitely going home, and the stranger, who is caught between home and host cultures (and unsure about both), the settler makes a commitment to stay, progressively converting the past into traces that are felt in the present, and erasing attributes from the home culture that inhibit his or her integration in the new culture. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1998, p.212) describe how settlers are born in the new space between home and host cultures and fashion a distinctive culture which involves "borrowing" from both cultures.

Stage Five: Reciprocal Interdependence - The Teacher

Teachers do not simply forget the world outside the prison. They rekindle what they lost (like settlers in the frontier) by reasserting the ontological priority of the outside as their home. This comes to issues of teacher certification, program accreditation, and teacher certification (Wright, 2002). In the fifth stage of the process, teachers gain a clear understanding of the reciprocal interdependence of the host cultures (Jandt, 2004). At this stage, teachers act as translators or mediators of cultural worlds. Teachers pull the outside (the community, its norms, and practices) into the prison. It becomes more like an outside than an inside. At this stage, teachers achieve biculturalism "by becoming able to cope with the demands of home and new cultures" (Jandt, 2004, p. 321).

Holly's description of herself as a "go-between" teacher, who is shaped or positioned on the edges of inmate, teacher, and host cultures:

As the coordinator, I kind of see my job as based on relationships. I mean . . . I think it's my job to be there for them. I mean, you know, concerns or whatever. If there's something that should be addressed by say CSC [Correctional Services Commission] whatever, I feel that I'm the . . . you know, the one who [can] be there to support people and I think about the school. Not necessarily my own-although that you can sort of have some input. But basically, the teachers are feeling and always sticking to their guns and things like that at the school. Are we meeting their needs? I also think it is my role to be there for students, maybe slightly in a different sense, but even just to speak to even if it were, you know, even a situation where or even a teacher or as a mediator sometimes having some difficulty with a student I can either be there or the three of us sit down so that I lend support to the teachers and to students. I think it's also my job to take responsibility if something is not working well for it and it is my duty as well. I also think it is my duty to make things we are doing are not only meeting the needs but fitting into the bigger CSC picture. And I think

Stage Five: Reciprocal Interdependence - The Teacher as Translator

Teachers do not simply forget the world outside the prison walls. Over time, teachers rekindle what they lost (like settlers in the host environment), by reasserting the ontological priority of the outside as the "real world" when it comes to issues of teacher certification, program accreditation, and student certification (Wright, 2002). In the fifth stage of the adjustment process there is a clear understanding of the reciprocal interdependence between home and host cultures (Jandt, 2004). At this stage, teachers assume identities as translators or mediators of cultural worlds. Teachers make enormous efforts to pull the outside (the community, its norms, and practices) into the school so that it becomes more like an outside than an inside. At this stage teachers have achieved biculturalism "by becoming able to cope comfortably in both the home and new cultures" (Jandt, 2004, p. 321).

Holly's description of herself as a "go-between" reveals how her identity is shaped or positioned on the edges of inmate, teacher, prison and outside cultures:

As the coordinator, I kind of see my job as basically . . . almost like public relations. I mean . . . I think it's my job to be there when the teachers have, you know, concerns or whatever. If there are any issues that come up that should be addressed by say CSC [Correctional Service of Canada] or whatever, I feel that I'm the . . . you know, the diplomat in that case, that I [can] be there to support people and I think also to help give direction to the school. Not necessarily my own-although that's one of the bonuses that you can sort of have some input. But basically to find out what all the teachers are feeling and always sticking to our goals and the objectives and things like that at the school. Are we meeting the objectives of CSC? I also think it is my role to be there for students. I use the word counseling maybe slightly in a different sense, but even just as another person to speak to even if it were, you know, even a situation with another student or even a teacher or as a mediator sometimes. For example if a teacher is having some difficulty with a student I can either speak to them myself or the three of us sit down so that I lend support to both I think, you know, to teachers and to students. I think it's also my job to sort of take the final responsibility if something is not working well, I think that I'm responsible for it and it is my duty as well. I also think it is my job to make sure that things we are doing are not only meeting the school objectives but also fitting into the bigger CSC picture. And I think as just a human being I

think it is also my responsibility to, you know, help offenders, to be a role model or give them guidance and directions where they will be able to succeed on the street. You know, maybe they don't have a lot of skills and either people skills or work habits and that kind of thing. I sort of . . . see myself as basically, sort of a go-between everyone, you know, I sort of pull it all together, that's how I see it.

As Walter Benjamin (1968) has noted, the task of the translator is not simply to transmit the information from the source language by finding its lexical equivalent in another, but to ensure that the translation is culturally appropriate so that it conveys the unfathomable, the mysterious and the poetic as well. Teachers who adjust well to prison life are able to make sense of their multicultural environments and like Holly, translate them for their students.

Acculturation Is Not a Given: Some Factors to Consider

By now, it should be apparent that the acculturation process is not simply a matter of the teachers' desire and knowledge to integrate into the host culture. As I suggested earlier, the stages of intercultural adjustment of the novice prison teacher, and the identities he or she adopts, are shaped by the social transactions between the teacher and host world members. First and foremost, the ideological distinctions between education and corrections lead to divergent worldviews and practices that are often contradictory and for many, mutually incompatible. As a result of these different, deeply held assumptions, there are teachers who want to/do not want to be part of the system, who are welcomed/not welcomed by its members: Teachers who plan to stay may feel (and be) marginal because of host member reactions. The marginal person is the typical case of the "stranger who strives for membership in the host community, but meets with an antagonistic host reaction" (Gudykunst, 1983, p. 408). In some prisons, the inmate code and unionist stance of prison guards may be so strong and pervasive as to position teachers as a minority group in the middle of opposing factions, where they serve "as buffers between dominant and subordinated groups and can become the targets and scapegoats for the stress of the system" (Kitano, 1980, quoted in Gudykunst, 1983, p. 408).

We must be careful, too, despite the obvious utility of the stage model, not to presume that the acculturation process is:

. . . neither linear nor consensual as much of the literature would seem to posit. It is rather, a complex process involving resistance, differences, reversals during which features of both liminality and in-betweenness quite some time—a truly syncretic culture (Naficy, 1997).

A linear model of the acculturation process cannot account for the complex collective negotiations for power and status (e.g., between prison officials), the teachers' collective and personal negotiations, and conciliation to prison culture, and the recursive nature of the process (for example, teachers who felt settled, can find themselves with a change in prison management). In what follows, we consider cultural dynamics and cultural positions or teacher identities to consider.

1. The psychological orientations of the novice prison teacher. Not all teachers have a migrant personality (Boneva & Frieze, 1997). Whether to transition between cultures or professional roles, those who succeed are those with personalities that thrive in a new environment. The search for novelty, the exotic, is a key feature and appears in its ideal form, in the cultural position of the explorer, and, in a milder form, as tourist. If the challenge is coupled with a thirst for knowledge, the teacher as the researcher/traveler, (the ideal-type here is the anthropologist).
2. The teacher's implicit goals and worldview. Personal history, experience, class, race and gender shape the teacher's ability to adjust to the new culture. Some teachers who go to prison (often implicitly) hope to "save" inmates as a manifestation of their service orientation and worldview, links teachers to an agenda which binds them to the world inside prison, so they are prevented from leaving and acculturating. Missionaries are like sojourners, converts who plan to return home at some stage, despite the challenges.
3. The teacher's explicit goals and worldviews. Some teachers go to prison as reformers and rebels, hoping to change the system. They are antagonistic to prison culture from the beginning. If prison officials are antagonistic, these teachers are positioned as outsiders and criticized because they lack boundaries, or identities.

... neither linear nor consensual as much of the traditional sociological literature would seem to posit. It is rather, a conflictual and dialectical process involving resistance, differences, reversals, and leaps forward, during which features of both liminality and incorporation may coexist for quite some time—a truly syncretic culture (Naficy, 1999, p. 563).

A linear model of the acculturation process camouflages the intricacies and complex collective negotiations for power and status (by teachers, prisoners, prison officials), the teachers' collective and personal strategies of resistance and conciliation to prison culture, and the recursive nature of the acculturation process (for example, teachers who felt settled, can feel like strangers again with a change in prison management). In what follows, I suggest some of the cultural dynamics and cultural positions or teacher identities/experiences to consider.

1. The psychological orientations of the novice prison teacher. A person may not have a migrant personality (Boneva & Frieze, 2001) that enables him or her to transition between cultures or professional worlds. Teachers who succeed are those with personalities that thrive on challenges in their profession. The search for novelty, the exotic, is aligned to this orientation, and appears in its ideal form, in the cultural position of the prison teacher as explorer, and, in a milder form, as tourist. If this quest for novelty and challenge is coupled with a thirst for knowledge, the teacher may appear as the researcher/traveler, (the ideal-type here is the anthropologist).
2. The teacher's implicit goals and worldview. Personal forms of knowledge and experience, history, class, race and gender shape and limit the teacher's ability to adjust to the new culture. Some prison teachers who go to prison (often implicitly) hope to "save" inmates. This "missionary zeal" as a manifestation of their service orientation and more broadly, their worldview, links teachers to an agenda which blinds them (culturally), to the world inside prison, so they are prevented from "going native"-acculturating. Missionaries are like sojourners, colonialists, and researchers who plan to return home at some stage, despite their length of stay.
3. The teacher's explicit goals and worldviews. Some teachers adopt identities as reformers and rebels, hoping to change the system from the inside. They are antagonistic to prison culture from the beginning. If prison officials are antagonistic, these teachers are positioned as intruders, and criticized because they lack boundaries, or identified as "con lovers."

Friendly prison officials might attribute the behaviors of novices who position themselves as reformers or rebels to the fact that they are guests (if they come and go), or if they stay, that they are newcomers. Tacitly, prison officials expect they will tire of their agenda and leave or assimilate. After a temporary reprieve they may also subject the newcomer to discipline and force acculturation on them.

4. The prison school culture already in place. Veteran, acculturated prison teachers will teach novice teachers the ropes, by explaining and reinforcing the norms and rules of the prison. They may not tolerate inconsistencies and infractions for long, and thereby accelerate the acculturation process as the novice is subjected to an intense socialization process. On the other hand, because of their intolerance they may intensify the novice's culture shock and feelings of frustration. Without a local prison teaching culture to anchor them, the teacher may feel exiled and marginalized within the school and the prison.
5. Unplanned or unfortunate acculturation. Feeling shunned by the prison staff, and not at home with the teaching staff, some teachers become "double agents" as they secretly defend, and become enamored with, inmates and their culture. Some teachers "go native" as the result of the power struggles between keepers and kept. Inmates of course, are only too willing to "set up" teachers, and may play the key role in their transition.
6. Personality politics. Some prison school managers are a source of stress and alienation because of their management styles. One privately contracted manager described how she and her contract staff spent "12 years of misery in corrections" under the brittle, self-centered personality of the prison school manager (a civil servant). With a change in management she discovers she has "a free hand to run the school, spend money, solve problems. All of a sudden, our school is stress-free and a beautiful place to work for all of us. We have the reputation for doing things right and we are trusted and left alone [now]." (Jena, personal correspondence, June, 2004). Senior prison leadership staff can also shape the culture of the prison, and hence the school.
7. The novice's ties to significant others in the community. Friends, parents, can help teachers feel at home in the prison by applauding their efforts, or they can treat them with suspicion. Marlene describes how her husband and others in the community told her she was "wasting her time" teaching in prison. She discovers how others in the community "harden their hearts" to the idea of her working there. Samantha feels isolated and

unappreciated for the work she does in prison acculturation process, or which may lead to an and a greater determination to integrate). She about the work teachers do in prison, and those understanding why we would be doing it." She necessary, imagining that people in the comm would you want to do that? Why wouldn't you on the outside? What can you possibly gain fr or whatever?"

8. Uneven acculturation. There are specific domain teachers actively seek integration and decision domains such as disciplinary hearings they shy staff may actively solicit the support of teacher of the initiative to control gangs, for example), when it comes to general security briefings.
9. Inter-institutional configurations. The novice te in other institutions, such as public school bo agencies will influence the acculturation proce are generally less secure than state-employed employed by the local school district, might be teachers (assimilate), to ensure contract renew teachers working in a unionized environment, outsiders). Greg, a contract teacher, comes to F in the system:

Personally, many days I feel like I do not The practice of denoting my status as a c stripe on my name tag almost makes me same situation) an obvious pariah in the union staff.

On the other hand, teachers who are private c prison culture, staking out identities based on employees. By contrast, teachers affiliated with authority with articulated statutory requiremen state wide authority over budgets, personnel a may anchor teachers in outside communities, and identities. These teachers may not identif

unappreciated for the work she does in prison (which might curb the acculturation process, or which may lead to an opposite defiant stance, and a greater determination to integrate). She feels no one really knows about the work teachers do in prison, and those that do, "have a hard time understanding why we would be doing it." She believes that justification is necessary, imagining that people in the community are asking, "Why would you want to do that? Why wouldn't you rather just teach in a school on the outside? What can you possibly gain from that, other than a living, or whatever?"

8. Uneven acculturation. There are specific domains (contact zones) where teachers actively seek integration and decision-making authority and other domains such as disciplinary hearings they shy away from. Similarly, prison staff may actively solicit the support of teachers and invite them in (as part of the initiative to control gangs, for example), and resist their presence when it comes to general security briefings.
9. Inter-institutional configurations. The novice teachers' professional location in other institutions, such as public school boards, or private contracting agencies will influence the acculturation process. Contract teachers, who are generally less secure than state-employed prison teachers or teachers employed by the local school district, might become more like guards than teachers (assimilate), to ensure contract renewal (though as contracted teachers working in a unionized environment, they may still be considered outsiders). Greg, a contract teacher, comes to know that he is out of place in the system:

Personally, many days I feel like I do not fit into the prison system.

The practice of denoting my status as a contractor with a bright yellow stripe on my name tag almost makes me (and likely others in the same situation) an obvious pariah in the eyes of much (sic) of the union staff.

On the other hand, teachers who are private contractors might resist the prison culture, staking out identities based on their differences from state employees. By contrast, teachers affiliated with a local educational authority with articulated statutory requirements or school districts with state wide authority over budgets, personnel and curricula (Gehring, 1990), may anchor teachers in outside communities, legal statuses, philosophies and identities. These teachers may not identify themselves as prison

teachers, so that a positive or negative host reaction is not as significant to them as it might be for contract teachers.

Conclusion: Life in the Borderlands

We now have an extensive theoretic vocabulary to describe the prison teachers' experience and identity formation in prison and to identify the factors that may contribute to their socialization. Hopefully, novice prison teachers possibly can use this article as a conceptual map to chart a course through a very confusing territory. Veteran prison teachers might reflect or reconstruct their past experiences to understand how they acquired their identities as "correctional educators." Those interested in the professional development of prison teachers might experience some pleasure knowing that pre-service courses can be designed to acknowledge, and yet escape, the personal narratives (war stories) that infuse teachers' conversations because they have a tentative theoretic framework that considers the collective, cultural dynamics of their experience.

Prison teaching is an intercultural phenomenon, a mixture of teaching cultures and prison cultures. Acculturation theory provides insight into the acculturation process. It may be useful too, as a means to identify prison teacher "types" that originate in stages of the acculturation process and retard further professional growth as they become fixed and rigid identities. We might find too, that the acculturation framework opens up a different conversation about teacher identities, that are only vaguely related to the stages identified here. We might ask how teachers function as traffic cops, judges, supply sergeants, and so on. In other words, we could expand our descriptions of teacher identities, experiences, and practices by considering general teacher types, where some of these types are part of the acculturation process, and other types reflect the dynamics of teaching in prison.

Perhaps prison teachers will forever live out their professional lives in the borderland – the:

. . . state and . . . space of liminality, the in-between. Borderlands are a kind of space, social as much as physical or geographical, which are co-inhabited by people of different cultures, classes, ethnicities, religions, languages, as well as sexualities and genders and politics. A borderland is a contested zone . . . (Stanley, 1997, p. 2; emphasis in original).

The borderland is potentially, an introspective and perspectival place where teachers experience the collision of cultures and the deeply embedded

assumptions in them. In the borderland, novel experiences are shaped, as teachers assume—and are assigned—identities: sojourners, strangers, outsiders, intruders, middle ground dwellers, settlers. These identities speak to the experiential, the transition from permanency to ephemerality, liminality to incorporation. These are identities that are initiated and sustained by the experience of dislocation and relocation—going to teach in prison.

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assumptions in them. In the borderland, novel experiences and identities are shaped, as teachers assume—and are assigned—identities as tourists, guests, sojourners, strangers, outsiders, intruders, middle group minorities, translators, settlers. These identities speak to the experiential, temporal continuum of permanency to ephemerality, liminality to incorporation, continuity to novelty; these are identities are initiated and sustained by the teachers' physical dislocation and relocation—going to teach in prison.

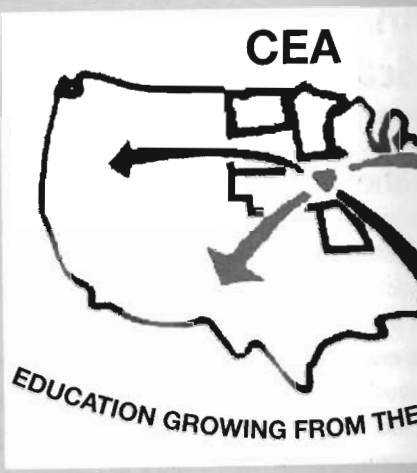
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Biographical Sketch

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