

**A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED TEACHERS:  
JAMAICAN TEACHERS IN 1960S ALBERTA<sup>1</sup>**

[Jennifer Kelly](#) and Dan Cui, *University of Alberta*

This paper examines the immigration and credentialing experiences of Jamaican teachers in Alberta during the 1960s. Using teacher narratives as well as archival research the paper aims to develop a historical understanding of issues related to internationally educated teachers and how this historical understanding can inform the contemporary theoretical and policy debates on credential recognition. Contrary to an understanding that locates teacher credentialing only in the present day and a one-sided critique of its bureaucratic nature, we argue that historical analysis reminds us that bureaucracy can be both constraining and enabling. An understanding of this duality is of crucial importance for policy makers to rethink the contemporary credentialing process for internationally educated teachers.

Our research on Jamaican teachers is a part of a larger SSHRC funded project, *Racialization, Immigration and Citizenship: Alberta 1900-1960s*, which explores how processes of immigration and racialization affected the social formation of African Canadian communities in Alberta. Sociological literature on immigrants of African descent has all too often concentrated on blue-collar workers or refugees with a consequent overemphasis on immigrants as always needy; as always accepting from rather than contributing to Canadian society. This case study of Jamaican teachers attempts to fill this lacuna by highlighting experiences of African Canadian professionals who were able to immigrate to Alberta in the 1960s and gain employment in a profession certified in their country of origin. The experiences of these

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internationally educated teachers highlight middle-class immigrants of African descent; a social category often lost in research.

More importantly, this paper will link an empirical historical study of teacher immigration and teacher credentialing to current debates on the recognition of professional immigrants and their qualifications within Canadian society. Questions are raised as to what were the immigration experiences of these teachers? What forms of teacher education and certification process did Jamaican teachers have to go through in the 1960s? How did the credentialing process affect their lived experiences in Canada? How were their individual immigration and credentialing experiences linked to the social, political and economic changes at the macro level of Albertan society? What are the implications of this historical exploration of Jamaican teachers for the current debates on teacher certification of internationally educated teachers?

### **Theoretical/Methodological Orientation**

Since much of the knowledge concerning teachers from Jamaica and the Caribbean in the 1960s has been traditionally marginalized in historical documentation and literature, oral history was chosen as an initial methodology for the project. According to Ritchie (2003), “Oral history collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews...Recordings of the interview are transcribed, summarized, or indexed and then placed in library or archives” (p. 19). Besides its strength in making knowledge public, this methodology allows people who have been marginalized to be seen and heard. As Ritchie (2003) argues, “not until the 1970s did a new generation of American historians begin writing history ‘from the bottom up’” (p. 23).

In combination with open-ended semi-structured interviews which allow for themes, not highlighted by existing literature, to be identified by participants, our project is about using oral histories to reconstruct knowledge “from below.” As E.P. Thompson (1981) concurs, such an approach is “a historical lived experience” (p. 383), a useful way to reconstruct multiple perspectives. Within historiography Thompson’s highlighting of lived experience has come to be regarded as a rebuke to those Althusserian scholars who regarded experience as purely ideological and unconscious, a position whereby a true theoretical history was one that treated classes as merely bearers of the historical process without agency, and a historical process without subject. Aligning ourselves with Thompson, our position is that all experience is penetrated by ideological and cultural categories –thus we undermine an attempt to read experience as unproblematic preferring instead to interrogate it as “complex interweaving of the real and ideological elements” (1981, p.383).

In our research project, one focus group and individual in-depth interviews were undertaken with seven male Jamaican teachers who came to Alberta and Canada between the years of 1963-1969. These teacher participants are members of the Mico Old Students’ Association- a group of mainly retired male teachers who attended Mico Teacher Training College in Jamaica during 1950s and early 1960s. Mico College where all these interviewees were educated had been a men only establishment until 1957, when women were allowed to attend the college. Regarded as the premier educational institution within Jamaica, the website attests to this,

The historical significance of ... Mico embodies a tradition of resilience, endurance and relevance especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The sole survivor of over 300 “normal” schools established in the Caribbean during the post-emancipation era, Mico has given sterling service in education for over 170 years. Mico holds

the enviable record of being the oldest teacher training institution in the western Hemisphere.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, archival research on documents such as the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) magazines, the annual reports of Alberta Education and federal documents on immigration policies proved invaluable for triangulation of data and understanding the historical contexts and the specific discourses on teacher education and certification that were dominant at that time.

### **Historical Contexts in the 1960s: Push-Pull Factors**

#### *Jamaican Context*

In the late 1950s and 1960s unemployment rate was high in Jamaica as the society transitioned from a British colony into an independent territory. As Anderson (1993) argues, political independence did not bring instant life improvements. For example in 1962, the year of independence, the unemployment rate was twenty-percent of the total working population. In this sense, the main push factor that propelled Jamaicans to immigrate to Canada was the economic opportunities it provided to improve their living conditions. A review of the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* illustrates that in 1957 and beyond Canada was well known among Jamaicans with direct flights to Toronto and evident economic trade links. Further, Jamaica as a new member of the British Commonwealth in 1962 found that Britain was no longer as welcoming to Jamaican migrants.

For these teachers from Jamaica it was all too apparent from reading local newspapers such as the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* that England was no longer receptive to further immigration following the passing of the Commonwealth Migration Act July 11, 1962. The *Jamaica Daily*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.themicouniversitycollege.edu.jm/AboutUs/>

*Gleaner* as the dominant newspaper during the early 1960s was often filled with negative stories of how immigrants were discriminated against in Britain and had difficulties finding work and accommodation. In contrast, despite the racialized immigration policies, the newspaper stories about Canada often constituted a society that was sympathetic and welcoming to Jamaicans. One quote from the *Jamaica Daily Gleaner* argues that “Canada too has offered some scope, though tiny, in settlement of our citizens. Mr. Diefenbaker and his government will find it possible – and that soon – to break fully with the Caucasian limitations which in general disfigure the liberal policies of the great British Dominions” (*Jamaica Daily Gleaner*, 1961). In this political and economic climate of the 1960s, Canada began to challenge Britain as the primary immigration destination for those Jamaicans who were looking for better life chances for themselves and their families.

#### *Canadian/Albertan Context*

The economic prosperity in Canada immediately after World War II resulted in a shortage of personnel at all levels. Built on the ideal of a white settler society (Razack, 2000) Canada was slowly beginning to realize that if she was to remain competitive in the economic realm she would have to deal with citizens who were previously “deemed unsuitable” (Shepard, 1991). Following a history of immigration based on “preferred groups” who were white Anglo Celts the immigration of Caribbean teachers to Canada is an interesting reflection of the changes in immigration laws. During the 1950s immigration from the Caribbean was primarily through group immigration, for example, domestic workers and nurses. As Kelley & Trebilock (1998) argue, The Department of Citizenship and Immigration implemented “a special form of contract labour scheme for ‘colored’ domestics from Jamaica and Barbados” (p.336). It should

be noted that the Canadian Immigration officials were not keen on such “group immigration” as exemplified by the domestic scheme, and preferred that people from the Caribbean come to Canada as individual skilled immigrants designated as being meritorious and capable of filling specific job shortages. These areas of shortage were identified by Deputy Minister Isbister in his comment to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration that “some of those coming to Canada as domestics could have qualified in their own right for admission to Canada as typists, stenographers, beauticians, teachers, nurses, etc” (C. M. Isbister, Deputy Minister, 1964). For the teachers under discussion most of them came as individual immigrants whose skills and expertise were regarded as “meritorious.” We note that in 1962, the migration door to Canada opened with the introduction of the Regulations of the Canadian Immigration Act which marked a significant change in immigrant selection criteria—from an emphasis on immigrants’ race, color and national origin to their education, training and skills.

Further, the overall shortage of skilled personnel was evident in the education system in Alberta. Along with the increase of student population resulting from the post WWII baby boom, Alberta as well as other provincial education systems encountered enormous challenges, one of which was teacher shortage. Educational historian Kas Mazurek indicates, “teachers themselves were a desperately sought-after labour commodity” (1999, p. 11). Economically it was a time of expansion for all levels of the Canadian education system and since education is a provincial responsibility it was at this level that educational issues were tackled. Although there had been a chronic teacher shortage since the 1940s (Departments of Education, Baker, 1948), economic prosperity along with the growing student population in the 1960s accelerated the demand for school teachers. A review of the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) magazine from the 1940s to the 1960s reveals teacher shortage as a consistent theme. For example, a February 1953 ATA

magazine Editorial entitled “More school and teachers needed” directly addressed the issue of teacher shortage indicating clearly that the ATA had warned the public about a teacher shortage as early as 1938, but “no actions was taken until 1944. At such time “the entrance standard was lowered and a short course in teacher training was started” (p.4). Despite other actions such as bursaries, isolation bonuses, a planned recruitment program to attract high school graduates, the teacher shortage continued. The Editorial finished with a declaration that “the underlying causes are low salaries, inadequate pensions, lack of security, and unsatisfactory living and working conditions” (p.4). It should also be noted that within Alberta discussions as to how to solve the teacher shortage incurred hot debate in terms of whether to lower or increase the entrance requirements.

This discourse was evident during the 1950s, wherein the (ATA) argued that the teacher shortage cannot be solved by the usual expedencies “such as short courses in teacher training, low entrance requirements, and bursaries,” which have all been tried in other provinces (ATA, October 1952, p. 5). It was argued that these measures tend to cheapen the profession and make it more difficult to attract and retain capable potential teachers (ATA Magazine, December, 1952; March, 1953). To avoid this vicious cycle of lowering entrance standards and teacher quality it was postulated that the ultimate solution was to professionalize the teaching force by raising entry requirements and teacher training standards. Under ATA’s suggestion and efforts, this viewpoint finally culminated in a watershed document in Alberta education history: the Cameron Commission Report (1959). This report recommended that “the minimum requirement for all teachers entering the profession be four years of university work, including the B. Ed. degree or its equivalent” (Clarke, 1968, p. 19). Although its actual implementation encountered some

difficulties, this document did mark the 1960s as an important transition period in the move towards teacher professionalization.

### **Lived Experiences of Jamaican Teachers in Alberta**

Through the oral history interviews we are able to garner an understanding of the everyday lived experiences of these internationally educated teachers from Jamaica. In contrast to other Caribbean residents attempting to immigrate to Canada during the late 1950s and early 1960s these Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) were invited to come and work in Canadian schools and share their expertise and skills. This institutional openness (as exemplified by the advertisements of school boards in Jamaican newspapers) is one of the main points about the lived experiences of these Jamaican teachers; the fact that they were able to come to Canada given the institutional barriers and hostile attitudes towards immigration of peoples of African descent from 1911 onwards (Jakubowski, 1997). The overall experiences of these teachers varied according to the geographic location of the schools to which they were allocated. Some, similar to earlier immigrants of African descent (Kelly, 1998), encountered isolation and marginalization while others adopted Canadian leisure activities such as curling and skiing. As migrants these teachers experienced culture shock, initial difficulties accessing accommodation, as well as varying degrees of racism. As immigrant professionals they had added issues concerning recognition of credentials alongside difficulties with being adequately rewarded economically and recognized for years of experience and education gained outside of Canada. To understand the experiences of these IETs with credentials and certification we need to ascertain how they came to Canada with high expectations in response to initial institutional and individual openness. In particular we highlight two themes for further analysis. First, how the IETs

encountered institutional openness that led to them applying for immigration, and second their experiences, once in Canada, of getting recognition of their Jamaican teaching experiences and certificates.

*Immigration to Alberta and Canada: Institutional openness*

There are no detailed records of how many teachers came to Canada, and specifically Alberta, in the late 1950s and early 1960s but based on the interviews and archival research we can estimate approximately 50 Caribbean teachers settled in Alberta. The interviews with some of these teachers reveal that there were a variety of ways in which they heard about the teacher shortage in Alberta and the need for, what was euphemistically called, “import” teachers. A common source for information was the various advertisements that were sent out across the British Commonwealth. As one participant stated:, “Well, when I came here ... Alberta was having a teacher shortage. They were advertising [...] especially in Jamaica for teachers, and we had a very good friend who was at York University here and was already teaching.” For others, previous excursions abroad expanded their social horizons and generated cultural capital through access to information and contacts that encouraged them to immigrate to Canada.

What made me decide to come to Canada? Alberta? Number one, I traveled to Britain on a scholarship... I finished my year and met some great people there, students from all over the world... students from Canada, and we became very good friends and they – at the time there was a kind of exodus from England to Canada. You know, graduates – because there were jobs available. And I became very good friends with some Canadians, and they encouraged me to come to Canada.

Word of mouth and friends already in Canada were also useful ways of accessing information about the need for teachers. One interviewee stated, “Well, my wife had a friend who came to Canada and that friend got some info about Alberta especially, wanting teachers. So she sent her info about Alberta; about the place and need for teachers.” While the initial

invitations to come to Canada indicated institutional openness, in contrast the demands and requirements of the teaching jobs were often within isolated and remote areas which Canadian born teachers found unattractive.

Advertisements in the ATA magazines and newspapers during the late 1950s and early 1960s indicate that the demand for teachers was most acute in the Northern areas of Alberta and often within Metis communities. As J.W. Chalmers argues in his 1962 article “The school in the forest”:

[T]hese schools lay east of the Peace River to the Athabasca and the NAR, and North of Lesser Slave Lake all the way to Fort Fitzgerald. Many had only recently been elevated from the humble status of mission schools. Half a dozen others had existed for 20 years or so as Metis Colony schools. Some were located in tiny settlements; a few in ancient fur-trading centres. (Chalmers, 1962, p.17)

Several interviewees indicated that their experiences in isolated northern communities encompassed teaching in Metis and aboriginal communities. Such isolation from the mainstream of teaching also contoured their experiences in ways that illustrate how occupational status, and rural experiences come together to produce long-term economic effects. While many of the teachers might be regarded as coming from a third world country, many still experienced culture shock at rural life in Alberta. One teacher indicated the degree of culture shock he experienced when located to an isolated northern community:

In [Town A], the strangest thing was that the children came to school on a horse-drawn carriage (they never had school buses). And that was their bus for the first two years, I think. And the horse goes around the houses, bring the kids to school, and take them back in the afternoon. We always said Gee... we don't have this in Jamaica. This happened winter and summer for the first two years and then they got the buses. You can understand because the roads up there were not conducive to have a motor vehicle travel on them. It was just an awful, terrible road.

Along with issues related to geographic location, social issues also impact their lived experiences. Of note, often these Internationally Educated Teachers were the first person of

African descent seen in these remote areas. Although many of the interviewees described how “the people ... are really nice up there”, nonetheless issues of racialization were also part of their narratives and lived experiences especially with regard to issues of credentials and certification.

### *Credentials and certification*

While immigration experiences were taken up with varying degrees of ease a common source of frustration was with regard to recognition and evaluation of their Jamaican credentials. Evaluation of credentials and certificates was a significant factor in the experiences of these teachers. Here we highlight two main points: first, the certification process in 1960s Alberta and the fact most Jamaican teachers were evaluated at the lower levels. Second, such assignments were particularly significant in this period of professionalization in contouring the economic life chances and lived experiences of these IETs. To upgrade the low evaluation of their credentials and consequent lower salaries many Jamaican teachers had to return to school and university in order to become designated as professionals.

Certification was highly differentiated in Alberta. Examination of policy documents and the teachers’ narratives reveal that in early 1960s there were at least six classes of certificates and designations that a teacher could obtain in order to teach in Alberta. These classes were further divided between permanent and interim certification.

- Professional
- Standard S (grades 4-11)
- Standard E (grades 1-9)
- Standard E and standard S
- Junior E (grades 1-11)
- Letter of Authority

Letters of authority were the most consistent form of recognition and evaluation given to these Jamaican teachers. Regarded as necessary when immigrant teachers were unable to present

any proof of successful teaching, letter of authority was the lowest rung of the accreditation process. Even though it allowed access to the classroom it was viewed as undermining the stance of professionalism and was not popular with education leaders with most IETs being encouraged to upgrade their credentials; a process that often resulted in their foreign credential being devalued further. For some IETs it was not only teacher education from Jamaica that was devalued by the provincial authorities; experiences gained in K-12 education were also deemed deficient in comparison with Alberta academic standards. This attribution of deficit to Jamaican education resulted in these teachers having to return to school to repeat their high school education before they could make progress in their new employment. The significance of these evaluations can be ascertained in the following quote in the Department of Education Annual Report of 1962: “such assessments are needed to enable the applicants to pursue further education, to gain admission to vocational or professional organizations and to obtain evidence of education qualification for the purposes of employment” (p.53). Whereas in the 1950s the dominant and contested discourse surrounding teacher shortage meant getting more teachers into schools; by the 1960s dealing with the teacher shortage meant more professionalism linked to a theoretical approach garnered through university education. One person illustrates the effect of the dominant discourse:

I think I should mention here that while you are on your letter of authority, they are asking you to go in and get certification - a degree within the next 2 years or so... all teachers must have a degree. And so what we had to do was to try to get [into] a university but they wouldn't accept what I had from Mico. They wanted us to do Grade 12, so we all had to prepare and do Grade 12 in 5 subjects. And I went to Alberta College in the summer on correspondence..... But that's how I got my Grade 12 certificate... You had to get that to get into university because when we gave them what we have from Mico, they've never heard of Mico. They all thought it was false.

This process of recognizing credentials generated frustrations for many of these teachers. As one interviewee indicated, their three-year teacher training in Jamaica was only equal to one year of university education at the University of Alberta, or two years at the Faculty of Education in Calgary. In order to get a four-year B.A. degree qualification most had to undertake two or three more years of university education. It is evident that the necessity for a university degree became a driving force for upgrading among these Mico educated teachers. As one teacher recalled,

You need a university education. University education is what is standard here and you better put yourself in a position to get that training.

A second important factor in the process of credential recognition was that a letter of authority was ranked very low on the salary grid. This low evaluation for salary purposes was an important aspect in pushing these IETs to return to studying and acquiring a university degree. Ideally, as H. T. Coutts, Dean of the Faculty of Education, and a charter member of the Teacher Evaluation Committee of Alberta, argued:

the evaluation of the teacher education and qualifications of teachers who have been prepared in other jurisdictions must be on a basis no less but no more favorable than is applicable to teachers who have been prepared or are currently being prepared through the programs of the University of Alberta. (Coutts, 1965, p. 29)

But in actual practice, those who acquired their teacher education from other jurisdictions were usually placed in a disadvantaged position on the salary grid through an evaluation which did not give much value to their prior learning and teaching experiences. According to the “Appendix to Salary Schedules”, (an evaluation framework document which was jointly prepared by the Department of Education, the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta, the Alberta School Trustees’ Association, and the Alberta Teachers Association), “the holder of a letter of authority who did not also hold a recognized degree received salary entitlement for

only one year” (McFetridge, March 1961, p. 56). The Alberta Department of Education annual report of teachers’ salaries for 1964-5 illustrates the monetary significance related to class of certificate held by a teacher. Whilst the highest possible salary for a professional certified male teacher was \$22,000; for a male teacher with a letter of authority it was \$10, 2657. (Department of Education Annual Report 1965, p.216) For some Jamaican teachers, this lower economic return accounted for the low point in their initial teaching experiences in Canada at that time.

One interviewee illustrates his disappointment,

The only low point was when I got my first cheque, it was not good, I’d done three years of teacher training in Jamaica, and one year in England, so I counted that as four, and when I got my first paycheque, it was reduced to one year, because you’re paid here according to number of years in university, so mine was reduced to one year...

### **Discussion**

In trying to understand how it is that IETs were able to enter Canadian society as professionals we have to recognize the possibilities opened up by teacher shortages allied to the early stages of teacher professionalism. Had the teaching profession been fully regulated previously they may never have got the chance to use their teaching skills and to continue to upgrade. Several of the men came with their families while for others their adventures were as single men or women. Isolation in teacherages was an issue with some regarding visits to busy cities such as Edmonton or Calgary as a way of keeping in touch with fellow Caribbean folks. It is interesting to note that a few teachers while willing to identify issues of racism often drew on discourses of professionalism in order to rationalize their unwillingness to make such matters public.

Caribbean teachers who came to Alberta to teach during 1960s were swept up with the effects of growing professionalization of the teaching force at that time. Analysis of interview

data indicates that most of these teachers were granted a letter of authority by the Department of Education, which is regarded as “the most temporary of expedients in the certification field” (ATA Magazine, November 1961, p. 28). In this tidal wave of professionalization it was vital for the job security of these Jamaican immigrant teachers to upgrade their letter of authority and obtain a valid interim and professional teaching certificate by taking university courses –which most did.

Examining the narratives of these IETs further we find that up until the late 1960s the main stakeholders and players in teacher education were the Department of Education, Alberta Teachers Association and the University of Alberta all of whom were arguing strongly for professionalization of the teaching force as a mechanism to improve the economic and social positions of teachers, garner public support for education and improve its recruiting position as a profession. What we see is the development of a form of intellectual and cultural hegemony through the cooperation of these various educational groups and individuals (see Figure 1) as they use the concept of professionalism, especially the ATA, alongside a consequent hardening of bureaucratic evaluation procedures to close off certain options within the teaching force.

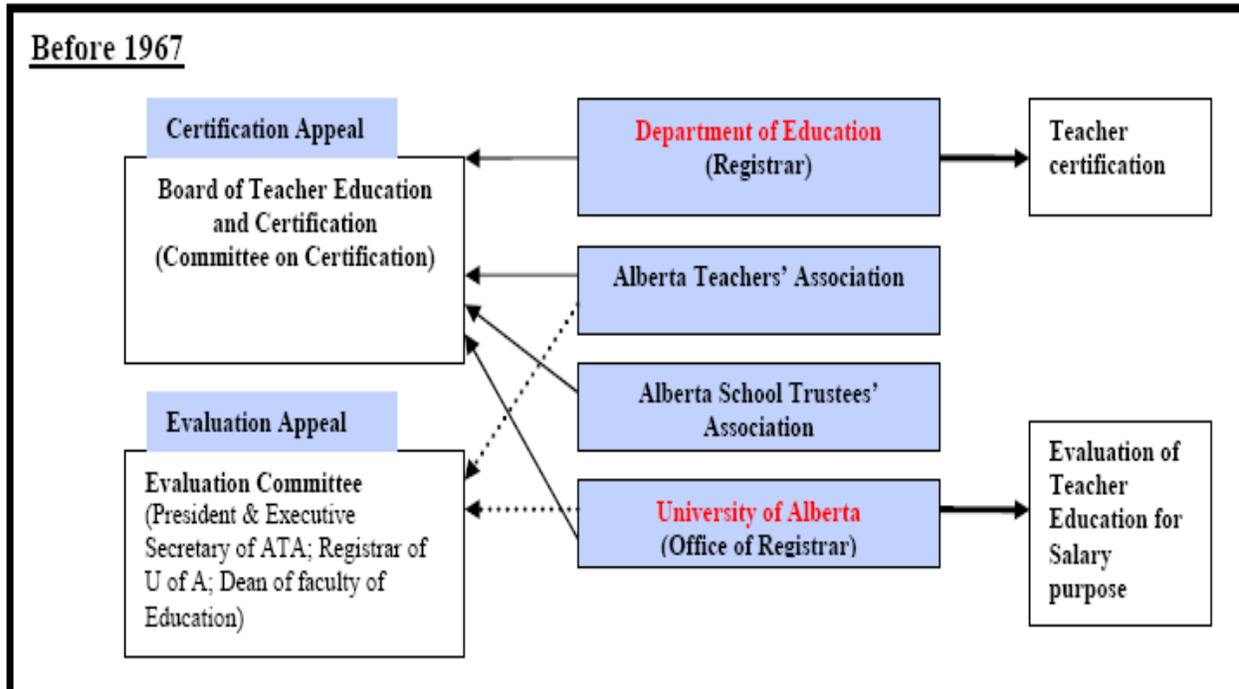


Figure 1. Various organizations involved with credentialing and certification

Following the Cameron Report (1959) the process of professionalization of Alberta's teaching force could be identified through five aspects: first, the increase in the number of certificates that were issued in each year; second, the increase of total certificates held by teachers; third, the increase of university degrees held by teachers; fourth, the decrease of the number of letter of authorities; and finally, the increase of male teachers (Department of Education Annual Report 1969, 1970; ATA Magazines, 1960s). From 1961 to 1966, the total teaching force in Alberta increased from 12, 433 to 16, 800 and the proportion with one or more university degrees increased from 29.5 percent to 41.5 percent accordingly (Clarke, April 1967). This point is substantiated by our participants who indicated clearly that as part of a general push towards professionalization they had to go back to university to obtain a degree. Up to 1970, a total of 22, 726 certificates were held by teachers under contract, an increase of 41% in five years and a total of 9, 512 university degrees were held by teachers which is an increase of 4% over 1969 whereas the number of letter of authorities issued decreased from 1, 139 in 1969 to

865 in 1970, a drop of 24% (Alberta Department of Education, 1969, 1970). As early as 1962 Alberta became the first province across Canada to require university matriculation and two years of university preparation for first certification (Clarke, September 1966).

The Alberta Department of Education Annual Reports during the 1960s illustrate the move towards requiring a four year degree for teachers and a consequent push to decrease the number of “imports” and the number of letters of authority that were granted. In examining Figure 2 we see the projected phasing out of the dependency on IETs and the consequent decrease in issuing of letter of authority which had been the key to allowing these Jamaican teachers to bring their skills and knowledge directly into the Canadian education system.

TABLE V  
ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED  
ALBERTA TEACHER DEMAND AND SUPPLY,  
1960-76 IN '000

ACADEMIC YEAR	ANNUAL PUPIL INCREASE	EXPANSION DEMAND (1)	NET REPLACEMENT DEMAND (2)	TOTAL DEMAND	CERTIFICATES TO ALBERTANS (3)	CERTIFICATES TO IMPORTS (4)	TOTAL SUPPLY
1960-61	16.5	.8	1.2	2.0	1.2	.6	1.8
61-62	13.2	.7	1.4	2.1	1.2	.6	1.8
62-63	14.5	.7	1.4	2.1	1.1	.7	1.8
63-64	14.4	1.0	1.6	2.6	1.2	.7	1.9
64-65	14.3	1.0	1.8	2.8	1.4	.7	2.1
65-66	11.3	1.2	2.0	3.2	1.4	.9	2.3
66-67	10.7	1.1	2.3	3.4	1.3	1.1	2.4
67-68	13.1	1.2	2.6	3.8	1.9	1.7	3.6
68-69	15.6	1.1	2.7	3.8	2.1	1.7	3.8
69-70	12.0	1.0	2.8	3.8	2.1	1.5	3.6
70-71	10.8	.7	2.1-3.1	2.8-3.8	2.1	1.3	3.4
71-72	5.8	.6	2.2-3.2	2.8-3.8	2.2	1.1	3.3
72-73	2.5	.5	2.2-3.3	2.7-3.8	2.6	.9	3.5
73-74	0	.3	2.3-3.3	2.6-3.6	2.8	.7	3.5
74-75	-.1	.2	2.3-3.4	2.5-3.6	3.0	.5	3.5
75-76	2.2	.2	2.3-3.4	2.5-3.6	3.3	.4	3.7
76-77	2.5						
77-78	4.3						
78-79							
79-80							

(1) Assuming 0.1 per cent annual reduction in pupil-teacher ratios for 1970-76.  
 (2) Net replacement demand for 1970-76 based on annual teacher loss ranging between 10 and 15 per cent.  
 (3) Number of 1970-76 certificates calculated on current university projections and estimated certificates replacing letters of authority.  
 (4) Assuming annual reduction in teacher imports 1969-76.

Figure 2. Actual and Estimated Alberta Teacher Demand and Supply 1960-76 (Source; G. Loken, 1969. Qualitative and quantitative aspects of teacher demand and supply p.21)

The following two teacher narratives observed the shift from allowing IETs into the classrooms in the 1960s to refusing them in the 1970s:

When I came to Canada in 1961 lots of teachers in Alberta never had a degree. Even some Principals did not have it.

By 1970 one newly arrived internationally educated teacher found a different climate and reception:

They said that I had to go into university. [In] previous years it was different [but now] I wasn't able to teach. [So] I started university in Sept 1970 for a 2 years graduate diploma, and I graduated and then started teaching in 1973.

Once Alberta could increase the number of professional teachers coming out of university it no longer required the services of IETs and many teachers from the Caribbean who came in early 1970s found that the teacher shortage was no longer as acute and that they were no longer given the flexibility to start teaching before getting a university education. The bureaucracy was no longer enabling; it was much more constraining.

Theoretically the research reveals that issues around credentialing are connected not just to the degree of knowledge with which immigrants enter Canada. For Collins, social closure is evident in that,

Education requirements for employment and advancement reflect the interests of groups that have the power to impose them more than they reflect the technical needs of positions... however because [the credentials are] thought to be related to work competence, [they] can be used by powerful groups to legitimate exclusion and disguise other bases of rejection, such as ethnicity, race or social class." (Collins, as cited by Murphy, 1988, p. 103)

In other words these Caribbean teachers were able to use the dominant discourse on professionalism available at this specific historical conjuncture of 1960-1969 in order to begin work in their profession and to upgrade to their credentials.

## **Conclusion**

Looking back on the history of the professionalization of the teaching force in Alberta, it is clear that the requirement of university education played a significant role in raising the standards and prestige of teacher education. For officers of the ATA an all-degree teaching profession was a step towards gaining status for classroom teaching and a mechanism for increasing the attractiveness of teaching for young people. However, for the Jamaican teachers who had already arrived they were placed at a disadvantage through a lack of advanced standing by not being given full credit for prior knowledge and qualification.

This process of credentialing along with increasing bureaucracy was both enabling as well as constraining for immigrant teachers. Thus, although their teaching credentials and experiences were devalued they were able to gain a minimal degree of recognition that allowed them to start at a higher level on the economic ladder than some newcomers today as described in Walsh and Brigham's (2006) research on IETs in the Atlantic Provinces. Our research might point to the need for Canadian authorities to develop schemes that work with and recognize the knowledge that immigrants bring with them rather than consistently telling IETs that they have no skills. This data generation corresponds to the current debate on the non/recognition of foreign credentials for immigrant professionals in Canada (Guo & Andersson, 2005). The inability of Canadian society to recognize the skills immigrants bring with them means that internationally educated professionals will have decreased opportunities to practice their profession; unlike earlier IETs in our study, who arrived at a specific historical conjuncture of teacher shortage, and change in immigration policies and who could at least get a step on the first rung of their professional ladder.

**Jennifer Kelly** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. Her primary areas of research are racialization, identity formation and youth culture

**Dan Cui** is currently a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. Her research interests include immigration, citizenship, and identity, Chinese Canadian youth and the sociology of education.

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