TALES OF RE-ENTRY TO ADULT HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS: A RHIZOMATIC

(DE)(RE)TANGLING

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By

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Shelley Marie Kokorudz, candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, has presented a thesis titled, **Tales of Re-Entry to Adult High School Programs: A Rhizomatic (De)(Re)Tangling**, in an oral examination held on March 18, 2020. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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*Via ZOOM Conference*
ABSTRACT

This rhizomatic research is an experimental wondering and wandering with a Deleuzian-Guattarian mindset. The purpose of this study is to de-re-territorialize affective adults who have been dropping out and dropping back in to high school. Adults who are dropping out and dropping in often find themselves placed at society’s margins. These margins occur outside of the (ir)rational system of education that purposes to shape its body of students, its product, its graduates, through the attainment of a high school diploma. The re-entry (dropping in) process is the focus in this study. Thus, attention is given to possible (re)consideration of re-entry high school programs by (dis)(re)tracting the territorialized views of these adult learners. The concepts offered by Deleuze and Guattari enable a range of potentiality found in the rhizomatic connections becoming produced in the intra-relational assemblage among participants and researcher. In viewing the adult learners as affective, their own subjectivities are continually becoming, but the researcher is also impacted by the becoming possibilities of the emerging assemblages. Rhizomatic (non)methodology informs rhizo intra-relational (non)method referred to as intra-view (St. Pierre, 2019; Masny, 2016) and facilitates the unfolding of the discussions that occur among participants and researcher. The researcher’s memories, personal teaching diary, relevant reading throughout the writing, and former teacher-student relationships with the participants inform the emerging rhizome. Rhizomatics intra-weave cartographies in creation of the dissertation and challenges the researcher/the reader in becoming (dis)(re)tracted to think something new within re-entry programming that is contingent upon openings created by thinking frames of post qualitative research. Rhizoanalysis in this dissertation raises questions, not conclusions.
(Honan & Bright, 2016; Waterhouse & Arnott, 2016; Masny, 2017; Reinertsen, 2017; St. Pierre, 2019), about high school re-entry programs. The cartographies (dis)(re)tract the researcher to think about the striated constitutions of re-entry programs that seem to ignore the life experiences of re-entry adult learners and fail to consider other curricula that may be more reflective of adult learner interests and needs. Why do they drop back into a system that looks so similar to the one from which they dropped out? The only thing different is the physical setting and the age of learners. Are they not merely encountering the same requirements of a system which they once exited? What are the merging possibilities that might affect re-entry high school programs to be experienced/designed differently than those which exists for teen-aged students? The assemblages emerging among the participants and the researcher in this study (dis)(re)tract the researcher to think more about the potential possibilities for re-entry high school programs, including (re)consideration of the curricula and required number of credits necessary for completion. In addition to the (dis)(re)tractions dwelling around the topic of re-entry, the assemblages and processes continually produce the transforming researcher in her own becoming as a post qualitative/post human philosopher. Her experiences as an educator, her re-entry to a doctoral degree in Philosophy later in life, and her becoming journey in academia become entangled in the rhizome. These entanglements wind and unwind as the rhizome moves and fills the blank pages of the experimenting dissertation.

Key Words: rhizoanalysis, affect, deterritorialization, high school dropout, becoming, rhizome, (dis)(re)tractions, post qualitative, post human
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The becoming researcher does not wonder and wander alone. “You can’t be one wolf, you’re always eight or nine, six or seven” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 29). I am but one subject in the multiplicity of a pack that nomadically wandered in this research project.

I acknowledge that multiple complexities contribute to this assemblage, some remain unconscious. However, there are several to whom I am most consciously grateful: Dr. Twyla Salm, my thesis advisor, who provided careful scrutiny of the document to ensure clarity and appropriate use of language; she taught me to think about the power of words on a page and how they affect readers. I am indebted to her for committing to help me complete this lengthy thesis journey. Dr. Scott Thompson, my co-advisor, who made valuable suggestions during the writing process and kept me from getting distracted in the potential vastness of my topic; he taught me to think about the importance of scholarly contribution in educational research. Dr. Paul Hart, who provided me with his time and knowledge to discuss Deleuze-Guattarian philosophy; he taught me to think deeply about concepts and gave me courage and confidence to embark on a (non)methodological journey that I could never have imagined taking. He inspires me to keep reading. Dr. Randy Johner and Dr. Pamela Osmond-Johnson, my remaining committee members, made valuable suggestions for improvements following the comprehensive exam and additional suggestions for clarity during the editing process; both of them taught me about attention to detail. My sincere appreciation is extended to each of my committee members for agreeing to be part of my team, giving freely of their time and effort while providing unique and valuable contributions.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................. i

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... iii

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................ iv

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. vii

MESA 1: Entering/Finding my way through the middle of a rhizome ....................... 1
  1.1 Background ............................................................................................................. 5
  1.2 Putting the unknown problem into context .............................................................. 9
  1.3 Dissertation/Rhizome overview ............................................................................. 19
  1.4 Intra-mesa ............................................................................................................. 23

MESA 2: Thinking with Deleuze ..................................................................................... 24
  2.1 Becoming Deleuze ................................................................................................. 26
      (De)(Re)Territorializing humanism: subjectivity, agency, identity?
  2.2 Language of Deleuze: clarifying concepts .............................................................. 35
      Rhizome and affect
      Becoming… virtual/reality… lines of flight
      Plane of immanence
      Assemblage
      Haecceity
      War machine
      Desire
  2.3 Thinking about dropout phenomenon with Deleuze and Guattarri....................... 49
  2.4 Intra-mesa ............................................................................................................. 51

MESA 3: (Un)folding a research (non)design ................................................................. 52
  3.1 Research (un)folding … (non)methodological (un)folding ............................... 55
      The becoming of education research
  3.2 Purpose of study ................................................................................................... 58
  3.3 Research wonderings ........................................................................................... 62
  3.4 Participants ........................................................................................................... 67
  3.5 Sources of (non)data .......................................................................................... 72
      (Non)transcriptions of individualized intra-views
      (Non)transcription of focus groups discussion
      Personal teaching reflective journal of researcher
      Shared completed assignments of participants
      Emerging memories and perceptions of researcher’s teaching experience
  3.6 (Non)data collection and rhizoanalysis ............................................................... 88
      Transgressive data and rhizoanalysis
      Nomadic inquiry and the (dis)(re)tracting into affective engagement
3.7 Possibilities for significance .............................................................................. 103  
Transcendental empiricism: thoughts on epistemology
3.8 So... you call this research? .............................................................................. 108  
Challenging, credibility, believability → rhizomatic accountability
Immanent reflexivity
Consistency within the paradigm
3.9 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 117

MESA 4: Territorializing education, adult learner, and dropout phenomenon .... 118
  4.1 Molar tendencies in education ........................................................................ 120
  4.2 Traditional thinking constructing the adult learner ........................................... 132
  4.3 The dropout phenomenon .............................................................................. 139
  4.4 Issues in education ......................................................................................... 152
  4.5 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 158

MESA 5: Rhizoing affect ⇔ de-re-territorialization ⇔ (dis)(re)traction ............. 158
  5.1 Analysis ... and lines of flight ........................................................................ 160
  5.2 Scene 1 getting started ................................................................................ 166
  5.3 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 179
  5.4 Scene 2 wandering a war machine ................................................................ 180
  5.5 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 183
  5.6 Scene 3 transformative puissance .................................................................... 195
  5.7 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 198
  5.8 Scene 4 disrupting a stratified, territorialized education body ....................... 200
  5.9 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 214

MESA 6: Lines of profound (re) consideration ......................................................... 215
  6.1 Becoming – researcher ................................................................................ 215
  6.2 Becoming – dropout ...................................................................................... 229
  6.3 Wandering back to wondering ...................................................................... 241
  6.4 Future research .............................................................................................. 259
  6.5 Intra-mesa........................................................................................................ 264

LIST OF REFERENCES .............................................................................................. 271

APPENDIX A: University of Regina ethics certificate .......................................... 290

APPENDIX B: Assiniboine Community College letter of ethics approval .......... 291

APPENDIX C: Brandon University ethics certificate ............................................. 293

APPENDIX D: Recruitment poster ......................................................................... 294

APPENDIX E: Participant consent form ................................................................. 295

APPENDIX F: Group participant consent form ..................................................... 299
APPENDIX G: Participant intra-view guide ................................................................. 302

APPENDIX H: Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement ........................................... 303
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Rhizome</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Haeceity</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Student journal a</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Student journal b</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Life journey</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Ella’s slide</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MESA 1

Entering/Finding My Way Through the Middle of a Rhizome

“Write, form a rhizome, increase your territory by deterritorialization, extend the line of flight”. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 11)

When MacLure (2013) wrote about the mapping of data that might exceed familiar analytical practices such as coding in qualitative research, she was speaking about moments of wonder. She reflected, “If I feel wonder, I have chosen something that has already ‘chosen’ me. Wonder is in this sense indissolubly relational- a matter of strange connection” (p. 181). Deleuze (1968/1994) wrote, “Something in this world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter” (p. 139). He often spoke of this encounter as a type of disruption. Using Deleuze’s concept of disruption, I (re)conceptualize the notion to think in terms of (dis)(re)traction. In the sense that an encounter can distract one’s focus from one thing to another, the distraction can also evoke new thinking as attention is moving, becoming reterritorialized. If one remains fixated on certain things, beliefs, or ways of doing things, new ways to see the world remain hidden. The (dis)traction takes one away from that which maintains sameness in thinking and doing. (Dis)(Re)traction moves the onlooker to a different perspective, a new way to observe/think something. Unlike the common way that retraction is defined in the English language to move backward from something, (re)traction is used in this writing as a means to direct one’s thinking somewhere else, to find traction elsewhere in the processes to think something new. The (re)conceptualization for this research project does not distract the researcher entirely away from her topic; rather, it enables her to observe/think something new within the topic becoming intra-related
with the unfolding of events that reposition one’s thinking. And so…pondering upon wonder, I shall enter the rhizome.

The impetus to embark upon a journey towards a dissertation was a series of several (dis)tractions emerging out of encounters with family members, friends, colleagues, students, instructors, and the passage of time. It took five years to understand that my own ontological perspective is constantly ‘becoming’. I was, am, and will continue to be somewhere in the middle of wonder. I am intrigued by Deleuze’s notions of becoming because, ontologically, all bodies are in a constant state of production. Becoming is an on-going nomadic journey in a life that is complex and messy. It learns to recognize and celebrate difference and multiplicity. It is impossible to find beginning and end…it is always in the middle of flow and travel and new discovery. The conviction of encountering a dissertation that would challenge my thinking, (dis)(re)tract common thinking, and contribute to new ways of understanding a topic drives my pursuit. Persons who drop out often remains marginalized in their existence due to their lack of education (Youdell, 2010, 2011). Nomadic travelling brings the researcher to the fringes, the margins, on a journey to learn more about the in-between experiences of those who drop out of high school and, much later, drop back in to high school. The journey to re-entry is complex, and the experiences of the adults in this study are affective in their capacity to (re)position unschooled adults as something more than mere statistics that are representative of those living in society without a high school diploma. They cause the researcher, and perhaps the readers of this research, to have an intra-related encounter with becoming people whose lines of flight took them in various
directions. The tales of their journeys to re-entry are deeply personal and provide
important perspective to the statistics representative of those who pre-maturely exit
the regular route of school completion.

Although there is a great deal of literature that focuses on adult learning
(Hoare, 2006; Jarvis, 2007), as well as the drop-out phenomenon, the focus on re-
entry to high school is not as prevalent in the literature. The participants in this study
reterritorialized back to high school. Their re-entry warrants attention. Rhizomatic
concepts enable me to become (dis)(re)tracted to the things that may have been
previously lost or hidden in the processes of re-entry. What can be learned about the
dropping back in to the same education system from which they once dropped out?
The adult re-entry program uses the same curricula designed to prepare teen-aged
students for the right of passage from high school. The same number of credits are
required for graduation. No consideration is given to lived experiences or reasons for
re-entry whether the students are sixteen or fifty. The researcher becomes
(dis)(re)tracted by the events in her teacher-student relationships with re-entry
learners and begins to wonder more about re-entry programs and processes. And
so…the rhizome emerges.

Since Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described the rhizome as a
production of plateaus- “a multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial
underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome” (p. 22), Rather
than using chapters, I chose to construct this rhizomatic assemblage using Deleuzian
language. This dissertation, is written using mesas – a play on words for the
messiness of the rhizome; yet, the mesa has similar meaning to Deleuze’s plateau.
The concept of plateaus was an idea used by Deleuze and Guattari to think about the continuous production (Adkins, 2015) within assemblages that are the result of intensive processes. For example, the tectonic movement / process of numerous plateaus eventually create various mountain ranges. A rhizomatic production is an assemblage of multiplicities within these plateaus.

Some of the multiplicities within this dissertation / rhizome are namable: myself as researcher, all of my committee members, my instructors, my colleagues, my participants, my journals, and the many texts I have read. Some remain unconscious to me; yet all of these multiplicities work together in the production of the mesas. Like a plateau, a mesa is a flat land formation that can exist in stableness until its limit of stability is reached (Atkins, 2015). When that point of limit is realized, a new plateau emerges to enable the traversing to a new terrain. The limiting moment is the moment of affect: the moment where one is (dis)(re)tracted by a relational occurrence of various events, objects and others. Each mesa in this dissertation is an entryway to the rhizome being created and represents moments of rupture where new becoming is made possible. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described the unfolding of a rhizome:

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo [intra-mesa]…Between things does not designate a localizable relations going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other way, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (p. 25)
At times, the production of a rhizome may seem ‘messy’. It sprawls, it roams; it is not meant to resemble the orderliness found in something linear. However, in the process of finalizing a dissertation and attempting to bring understanding to all readers, the prescribed parameters of the document cause the writer to drift back to spaces of linear construction at times. My own experimentation with rhizome construction is mostly reflected in the rhizome mapping of the participants’ and my own ‘effective’ deterritorializing moments. The unfolding of the writing is also a becoming experiment because Deleuzian philosophy and the (non)methods of rhizomatic research becomes a play(ing) with language and the break(ing) of rules associated with more traditional approaches of qualitative research. It is becoming hard work; the challenge is addictive and transforming all at once.

**Background**

“Thought strikes like lightning, with sheering ontogenetic force. It is felt. The highest operation of thought is not to choose, but to harbour and convey that felt force, repotentialized.” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xxxi)

Why does one chose to research? How does one choose? *What was MY impetus to become a researcher?* … A poignant moment during an evening of teaching a group of adults disrupted a normally undisrupted teaching space. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) might call this a moment of deterritorialization. This disruption of an ordinary moment served as an eruption in my lesson and placed me on a new trajectory. A force interjected, I was launched into my own researcher becoming.

Prelude
[Enter the (dis)(re)traction. Desire has not yet aroused the researcher’s curious journey to learn more of the becoming humans who are seated before her. The classroom is typical. There are tables and chairs, and the shelves are lined with books. There are large windows that look out onto the downtown street. The adult students wait in anticipation as the teacher looks over the class, watching the class, waiting for the top of the hour to signal the commencement of the evening learning. It is quiet. Nothing seems unusual. The teacher expects nothing out of the ordinary to occur. She has much experience over the years. What could possibly be different about this evening? The opposite side of the room is lined with computer terminals whose screens remain in sleep mode waiting to be awakened by the expecting minds of learners as they stare back at their teacher …. Becoming researcher]

Flashback: Our evening adult class had been reading a variety of memoires, journaling and sharing responses to the texts. I recorded the events in my teaching journal, and I believe it was a (dis)(re)tracting moment that reterritorialized me into a place of wonder:

This evening we shared personal connections to the memoires that we each had chosen to read (I often participate with the learning group to model and ease any apprehension that they may have to share their own ideas). One of the students was reading a piece about a young man (himself) who had been released from prison after serving time for drug trafficking and was attempting to find his way back to his community. [Name omitted] was writing about his connection with another text that we were reading in class, recalling his own similar struggles. The text had really resonated with him in
a powerful way, causing him to think of his own journey of justice and reform. Another member in the class rose from his seat and angrily banged the desk. He opened the buttons on his jacket, revealing an iron-on photo of a young family (mother, father, and two small children). He pointed to the picture on his shirt, yelling, “It’s people like you in this country that are the reason my sister and her family are dead!” He was angry, emotional, and yet he seemed sad all at the same time. I was astonished and quickly tried to take control of the class as I felt the situation could easily have turned violent. Tears streamed down his face, and nobody said anything. The young man who had just read his journal response aloud did not reply. He seemed at a loss for words. What had happened? I invited him to follow me out of the classroom, where he explained that organized crime leaders had shot his sister and her family when they refused to surrender their land in his country. He explained that in his country it is not unusual for innocent farmers to be driven off their land so ‘drug lords’ and corrupt government could expand their drug fields. He calmed himself and returned to class, apologizing to the other adult student. He told his story, his sister’s story… and many people wept that evening. This was a power( full) moment. Several adults allowed tremendous vulnerability to surface in our public space this evening. It became obvious to me this evening that this learning space will reveal much more in the days to come about the lives of these students. I do not think I should expect anything ‘ordinary’ in the days to come. (Shelley’s teaching journal, Feb. 7, 2011)

[Enter the awakening of desire within the becoming researcher …]
I had never experienced such a passionate moment in a journal response exercise in any of my years of teaching. I was amazed that we were able to continue with the class, but the students rallied, and together we finished off the evening. I still felt unsettled as the evening came to a close, and that moment remains engrained in my brain’s memory. It was as though a line of flight was physically forming inside of me, a new direction was merging, and I was becoming some/thing/one more.

Massumi (2015) explained:

The body of affect is extended first in the sense that it is not limited to the brain. It extends throughout the body through the innervations of the flesh. It encompasses the nonconscious ‘body knowledge’ of habits, reflexes, the proprioceptive system, the many functionings of the autonomic nervous system, including the enteric nervous system or ‘gut brain’. (p. 210)

In the moment, I thought about human becoming. The notion of human being reflects a constant state, but human becoming denotes a constant, evolving and changing potential. The events of life uniquely impact the becoming of each person. The horrific tragedy that occurred in my student’s life was a part of his nomadic undertaking that led him to the seat in my classroom. His personal experiences had intra-related with mine; yet, they were not my own. My understanding, perhaps my expectations, of the completion of a high school diploma has been rather simplistic. As a person who completed high school and has made a career in education, the completion of high school is just something that everyone should do. And yet, this person’s story tells a different tale; it is one that complicates the regular route to completing high school. I think back to that moment, I think differently about that
moment of feeling unsettled. I think of that moment as being distracted, or perhaps (dis)(re)tracted to think something different about (un)schooled adult learners. It is not so much the violence associated with his story; rather, it is the realization that some people’s life assemblages complicate their becoming processes. These complications intrigue me, arouse my curiosity, and perhaps they even strike an ethical cord that desires to understand re-entry processes to high school from a broader perspective than simply being an instructor within a re-entry program. I think about these adult students’ experiences and how those experiences have contributed to their desire to return to finish high school later in life. I was becoming eager to become part of their nomadic journeys. My own nomadic journey as becoming researcher would now become connected to theirs in rhizomatic fashion … moving, crossing, connecting, always producing something new. The students in my class that evening were embracing their learning in a way that seemed deeply personal to me. I was amazed at the student’s connection of the text to his own life. My curiosity was struck by desire, and I was compelled to know more about these students, their lives, and their journeys.

**Putting the Unknown Problem into Context**

The rhizomatic processes of this dissertation did not begin with a known problem. My teacher-student relationships prior to the birth of the dissertation (dis)tracted me to think more about my students’ lived experiences between the dropping out and the dropping back in to school. I had not yet thought about re-entry programs or curricula that constitutes their high school graduation. The unknown problem emerged/became in the intra-relational coming to know more about the
participants in my study. The unknown problem began to affect the process and became thought/known as my thinking wandered to the curricula requirements of the re-entry program and thought about the experiences of my participants. How was it possible for adults who had dropped out of an education system only to return to an adult re-entry program to take up the same course of study that exists in a teen-aged high school? The building might be different, the age of the learners is different, but the content of their learning is the same. The requirements for graduation are the same. Why is it necessary for these adults to prove themselves in the same courses required of teen-aged learners? How are these requirements reflective of the adult learners’ life experiences and the learning they already bring to their dropping back in? They had experienced many things in life between dropping out and dropping back in. I thought about the cliché of ‘jumping through hoops’. Is that what they are actually accomplishing in their re-entry? Re-entry programs became problematic for the researcher in the cartographic unfolding of the rhizome creation.

St. Pierre (2019) posited that in post qualitative research, “there is nothing in particular ‘to do’- no typical research practices” (p. 11). She warned against choosing designs, conducting pilot studies, representing participants in categories, and even forming a research problem. She went on to say that after avoiding methodology and reading to find new concepts, researchers should trust the concepts to “reorient their thought” (p. 13). After being (dis)(re)tracted by a real encounter, as I was in my description above, the researcher should proceed with confidence that something new may emerge, even though she does not know what is still to be created. I have to resist control and seek ways to create new concepts that might lead to something
new. The marking of a new territory begins with the encounter, a problem is not yet known. Sometimes it is difficult to avoid “the traps of common sense concepts and practices” (p. 13), but that is the challenge of post qualitative research. In my experience, the disturbing or \((dis)(re)tracting\) encounter to set the rhizome in motion marks a relentless journey of reading and experimenting. In an attempt to create and experiment in my own research of coming to learn more about adults and their re-entry to high school, I discovered that discussions with people are important, but I wanted to engage in conversations that were authentically led by participants. I wanted them to be able to speak freely and honestly about the affective events of their lives. I imagined something more to our discussions than simply asking scripted questions of participants and having them formulate responses.

The concept of \(intra\)-view thus emerges as a means for researchers and participants to intra-act. Kuntz and Presnall (2012) discussed the rethinking of the traditional humanistic structure of an interview to that of a relational event, “a wholly engaged encounter, a means for making accessible the multiple intersections of material contexts” (p. 733). It brings the researcher within the conversation as participant, not as an outside observer. She does not have the responsibility to direct the conversation or pose a pre-determined set of questions. She becomes a part of an unfolding conversation that is producing authentic intra-relational dialogue whereby the participants (including the researcher) are safe to share heartfelt and personal moments of their lives. Sometimes, the conversations extend beyond the closing of the recording device. Maybe the conversations go longer than the allotted timeframes, and maybe the space for conversation changes, but the conversation can
continue in its natural context. Parameters of traditional interviews do not dictate the rules in the producing conversation.

In the laying out of a plane for new inquiry (St. Pierre, 2019), the researcher does not design a traditional qualitative research structure that begins with a problem. It begins with an encounter. At the end of this study, I came to problematize parts of a re-entry program, but I did not come to think about that until I started to find an exit point in the rhizome. I experienced wonder at the entry of the rhizome that guided my thinking, but pieces that might be considered problematic did not emerge until much later. I entered the rhizome simply, wanting to learn about the lives of adults who live without a high school diploma and then return to attain it as though it was a becoming right of passage. After all the years of living without one, what becomes reterritorialized back to the space that was once exited?

Kang (2007) asked, “How could we produce a different image of the learner in terms of the post-modern condition of uncertainty and multiplicity?” (p. 212). What image had I contrived of these adult learners in my own class? Had I marginalized them - consciously/unconsciously - by painting them in my mind on a deficit/lacking canvas simply because they had dropped out of high school? Had I minimized their decisions to come back to high school? Did I even comprehend the various elements and influences that played a part in their becoming lives that led them to the moment of becoming learners in my class? And what about my own becoming? How did I get to the moment (dis)(re)traction? Perhaps I had subscribed to a deficit way of thinking around these learners … perhaps for the first time I became aware of the space where I had territorialized. It is a humbling moment to
recognize one’s own privilege…I was about to re-territorialize and reterritorialize and reterritorialize and …

I began to think about the becoming within education as well. What kind of transformations have occurred since my own entry to the system as a rookie educator? I write this dissertation at a time in society when global technology and advancements in research are contributing to large scale growth in knowledge across a multitude of disciplines. Artificial intelligence (AI) is a reality, and a quick Google search can find answers to most questions. Although learning spaces are still typically housed among four walls of a classroom, education has come a long way from the small one-room rural school house. Teachers are no longer the expert ‘holders of knowledge’. The world wide web provides instant access to information sources that fulfill society’s needs to have its questions answered in various fields of inquiry. Events around the world become known across the planet in the form of news within mere minutes of their occurrences. High-tech media, multimedia, and computer networks “have triggered a new era of learning where the individual approach is accessible to everyone” (Postolov, Magdinceva, & Iliev, 2017, p. 107).

As the Internet has become an important learning resource for information, these authors explain:

The intense changes in each and every segment have transformed life and the way people learn. Communication and the relationship between students and professors or lecturers have been evolving ever since. … The creation of this new learning environment has led to multidimensional learning and radically new ways and paths of learning. (p. 107)
As I think about the re-entry experiences of learners to adult high school spaces, I wonder how educational transformations have affected their re-entry process and their learning experiences. No longer holders of the knowledge, the role of teachers has also evolved. As pedagogical practices encourage increased autonomy in student learning, teachers often participate in the co-creation of the teaching-learning process. Inquiry-based learning places the student more at the center of their learning. As technology gets a firmer grip on society and is having an impact on pedagogical practices, upcoming generations are also expressing differences in how they want to live their lives.

For example, in a study of the characteristics and learning needs of Generation Z (aged between 16 and 21), Peres and Mesquita (2018) described this group of individuals as “the most ethnically diverse and technologically sophisticated generation” (p. 465) … “[defying] conventional working standards (considered rigid or not very flexible), for flexibility and mobility” (p. 471). Although the participants in this study are not categorized as Generation Z learners, they defied conventional standards within the system of education and reterritorialized to various other plateaus. They demonstrated diversity in their own needs.

In addition to the impact of the instant accessibility of the worldwide web, societal values are also evolving. Diversity in gender identification, sexual orientation, and marriage laws are examples of difference that are being recognized as individual orientations among people in society, and human right legislation is working to protect these rights. Inclusion and differentiated instruction are stressed in education to meet the needs of all learners (Nanang Suprayogi, Valcke, & Godwin,
2017). However, western culture views education through a neoliberal lens. From this perspective, education is an investment in human capital and “is conceived as a private and individual good and emphasises cognitive-instrumental competence” (Arduin, 2015, p. 108), making it hard to get passed barriers that prevent inclusion. Student success and achievement are the standards “to compare and differentiate those who succeed from those who fail” (p. 108).

Delivery models for education are also evolving. The online mode of delivery for learning provides a viable option for completing education goals and provides opportunities to be part of learning cohorts from across the planet. Some schools are also experimenting with school time tables that offer alternatives to the regular Monday-to-Friday scheduling. The concept of “schooling” is changing and nobody knows for sure what the future will bring. Increasing multiple forms of literacy, technology growth, and changes in job markets dictate continuous training and new learning for human sustainability in a changing society. Education and literacy are important necessities to meet the demands in advancing societies and ensure its product (the graduating class) is capably educated in the various areas of literacy. However, an early exit from high school is still an exercised option among students.

In a world where “western countries have the highest levels of educational attainment in the world … among Canadians aged 25 and over in 2016, 14% reported that their highest level of education was less than high school graduation” (Uppal, p. 1). Quebec had the highest level of adults with less than a high school education, followed by Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The report also indicated that in 1990, 21% of all Canadians had less than a high school education. Further exacerbating
these statistics is the disproportionate number of Indigenous students who leave school early, and the ranking of Indigenous youth as the lowest in academic achievement (Lamb, 2014). At a time when data such as these would deem education vital, some individuals find themselves on other paths. These individuals become the other in the face of a system that is attempting to graduate an educated and literate person, prepared and ready to go forth and contribute to society. The statistics appear grim for the other, situating this populous as earmarked for poverty, crime, and destitution. Backman (2017) stated:

The link between school failure and life-course failure is well established in the research literature. The risk not only for outcomes such as poverty, social exclusion, and ill-health but also for crime and delinquency is dramatically higher among youth who exit education before having reached an upper secondary/high school diploma. (p. 716)

This study does not focus on the reasons for premature departure of the participants from high school, nor does it look for ways to perpetuate the dominant notions associated with people who drop out of high school. Instead, it attempts to deterritorialize notions of the ungraduated adult that have served to stratify the literature categorizing these individuals as lacking. Secondly, the study is an experiment in learning more about re-entry processes to an adult high school. There is something missing...something untold ...something else that still can be learned about these ‘fringed’ individuals. The becoming of the ungraduated adults in this study is astonishing and beautiful, opening the door for a new way to think about the human becoming of one who is educated differently, and creating a threshold in
which to step over into the discovery of unexpected wondering that prompt further inquiry.

Wallin (2014) said, “education has always been a matter of producing people, yet certainly not of the nomadic and experimental quality” (p. 117). One of the aims of education is to educate children through their various stages of development based on an organized and stratified curriculum. Wallin likened the process of education to that of factories that produce raw materials. In schools, these materials are known as children. By the end of their schooled years, children transform into adults who venture onto the planes of adulthood, prepared and readied by a system to ensure a successful right of passage.

Children come to school at an early age, and the system works to ensure that each growing body is moulded to fit the ‘normal’ stages of development described in the field of psychology. Mozère (2007) used the work of Deleuze and Guattari to “step away from the usual psychological Piagetian paradigms in Early Childhood, where children are supposed to conform to predictable developmental stages” (p. 291). The purpose of the school system is to approximate the behavior and development of the child to that which is considered to be ‘normal’, so the child will, in time, grow to be a ‘normal’ adult. Mozère claimed that the ‘normal’ child is “first defined as an adult to be, lacking inches, dexterity, capabilities and competencies, all of which will be attained if she/he develops properly according to the prevailing standards in a given society” (p. 292). In other words, the becoming child, in time, becomes the becoming adult. The education of the child contributes to the normalizing and universalizing of the human behavior. But, why is this normalization
so important? Conformity in society leads to predictability and order where human behavior can be regulated and enforced (Mozère, 2007). So, when the system of education fails to graduate all its *becoming children* into *becoming adults*, these ‘less than normal’ merging adults become reterritorialized as lacking and having failed (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Massumi, 2002b). The reterritorializing of the body now imposes an identity of failure, one that is in need of something because it is lacking. When an individual drops out of high school, one thing that is ‘lacking’ is the conventional diploma.

The pre-adult body that remains in school to complete the designated curriculum represents a normal and predictable way of living. The person exists within the norms that define an individual at that point in one’s life. This person remains in order. The point of exit begins a point of disorder, a deviation from the norm. Common sense is challenged. Unity is fragmented. But, human behaviour that challenges common sense, the territorialized, or over-coded existence of the human body (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987; Massumi, 2002b) does not guarantee society’s unity, safety, or order. It does not allow the wholeness of human experience in various dimensions to be seen. The attempt to keep society territorialized in that which may be considered ‘normal’ may constitute a sort of blindness to that which is unpredictable (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983; 1980/1987, Mozère, 2007) or beyond common sense. The invisible then becomes excluded, perhaps even missing, when we exclude affect (Deleuze, 1988; 1990; Spinoza, 1930) and desire, and the affective interactions between bodies that are not necessarily predicted (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983; 1980/1987). Human action and intra-action encompasses much that cannot be
seen. This invisibility can manifest itself in ways that are destructive and are the result of over-coded existence (Deleuze, 1988; Means, 2011). However, possibilities for other lived experiences exist that, in turn, inform views of the adult who prematurely exits high school as being incomplete and lacking. This dissertation exists, in part, to effectively bring the becoming lived experiences of re-entry adult learners to the pages. Their voices will be infused into the rhizome as the rhizome takes on its own life.

Dissertation/Rhizome Overview

The rhizome text will take the writer and the reader on a nomadic undertaking that intra-relates with the lives of adults who have lived with minimal formal education. Rather than taking a path to conclusions, rhizomatic processes of thinking and writing resemble more of a looping back and forth to connect and reconnect various ideas; the process might appear much less organized to a conformist who is rooted in traditional approaches to doing research. Rooted researchers tend to think in terms of trees, but Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) said, “the brain itself is much more a grass [a rhizome] than a tree” (p. 15). Rhizomatic research produces more questions. In terms of scholastic contribution, rhizomatic research is produced in philosophical perspectives and the researcher’s creative processes in the evolving study (Cypress, 2017). It raises questions. The research is not a quest to find solutions to problems or questions. Rather, unfolding research positioned in Deleuzian philosophy is grounded in becoming ontology and experiments with concepts that are considered (non)methods. The problems arise out of the thinking that is constantly producing new ways to wonder about a chosen topic. Post-
qualitative experiments in (non)methods are enabling processes for sense to emerge (Masny, 2016; St. Pierre, 2019). The philosophical grounding of rhizomatic research means that “writing is thinking” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 3), but the key to thinking is reading, learning, and experimenting within the rhizome. The scholastic benefit of rhizomatic research is found in the unthought questions that arise because they allow for something new to be thought forward. The researcher does not ignore the emerging questions and problems. They are the catalysts that distract the scholar to think more deeply about the intra-related issues of the topic. In addition to coming to think something new about a topic, the researcher also learns more about her own becoming within the research endeavour. There is always more to learn, more to think, more to become.

Each mesa is linked through brief intra-mesas, a play on words for the Deleuze and Guattari term, intermezzos. The philosophers used the intermezzo as the “between things, interbeing … to move between things … a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away” (p. 25). I shall use the intra-mesa in the same way. Since “writing weds a war machine and lines of flight, abandoning the strata” (p. 24), I will attempt a creative move into becoming language by wedding the intra-related bodies that deterriorialize in this rhizome.

In Mesa 2, Thinking With Deleuze, I describe the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the study through a post structural paradigm. The mesa introduces the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, explains his post-human stance, and discusses subjectivity, agency, and identity using a post-human lens. I also devote a section of this mesa to the language of Deleuze and provide an explanation of some of the
terms often used by the philosopher to prepare the reader who may be less familiar with Deleuzian philosophy. Understanding of the language is important because Deleuze pushes language beyond its “common” uses at times, which is all part of how he sees the world … always moving, never stagnant, always having the potential to ‘become’ something else. The final piece of Mesa 2 explains how the high school dropout phenomenon can be taken up through a Deleuzian lens.

Mesa 3, *(Un)Folding a Research (Non)Design*, revisits the unknown problem and the wondering that guide the chosen topic. It then describes the (non)methodology and (non)methods utilized within this immanent experiment that reflect the chosen post qualitative endeavour in which the research is situated. As such, it also speaks to the non-interpretive analysis (rhizoanalysis) of the transgressive data (data that are considered circumstantial (St. Pierre, 2002; Masny, 2009) and not intended to be viewed as ‘evidence’) that are mapped cartographically. The reinvention of qualitative research (thought of as post qualitative) is taken up in this mesa by engaging in a discussion of Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism. As well, the details of the of the research (non)design are included in this mesa. The final piece of the mesa reviews the criteria of quality in qualitative research, particularly the credibility and believability of the rhizomatic approaches in this dissertation to learn more about the topic at hand. The mesa serves as an opportunity to reflect on new thinking that potentially will emerge from the rhizome. Admittedly, I was fearful to take up a research (non)methodology that was void of described method. But, I was also motivated to do something different, something not
completely known. Described as both exciting and unsettling, Braidotti (2013) described the wondering and wandering in the not completely known in this way:

Like all people living in an age of transition, we are not always lucid or clear about where we are going, or even capable of explaining what exactly is happening to and around us. Some of these events strike us in awe and fear, while others startle us with delight. (p. 196)

As such, I have wandered and wondered in this rhizome for six years. Much has been learned and much is left to learn.

Mesa 4, *Territorializing Education, The Adult Learner and the Dropout Phenomenon*, takes a closer look at various literatures that speak to the stratifying nature of the education system, the theories behind adult education that typically drive praxis in adult education, and the traditional types of research that have created a marginalized viewpoint of individuals who exit high school programs prior to completing a high school diploma. The literature review of these three areas is rhizomatically connected, and the review, itself, is relationally connected to the purpose of this study to disrupt the ‘common’ thinking around the topic of high school dropout and to think *something new* about the lived experiences of adults who live with minimal education.

Mesa 5, *Rhizoanalysis: De-Re-Territorialization and Effect*, maps the cartographies of assemblages that I have created after multiple readings of the discussions held with participants and my own research/teaching journals. The mesa resembles that of a dramatic script presenting the rhizoanalysis of various cartographies including: Scene 1: Getting Started, Scene 2: Disrupting/Defying the
Odds, Scene 3: Affect and Becoming: Past, Present, and Future Participant/Research, and Scene 4: Disrupting a Stratified, Territorialized Education Body. The various connections are mapped in this mesa as the researcher reads and rereads the data. Each reading is slightly different, never finite.

Mesa 6, *Lines of Flight and Profound (Re)Consideration*, seeks to promote ongoing thinking. Unlike traditional methodological approaches, the final mesa does not discuss conclusions in terms of finite knowledge. The mesa considers various lines of flight that have emerged throughout the research project. The first part of Mesa 6 serves as a schizoanalysis of the *becoming* researcher, and the second half of the mesa discusses the *becoming* participant. Mesa 6 exits the research rhizome by reviewing the original research questions and considering future (un)thought research in light of a merging problem that grew out of the rhizome as I sought a space for exit.

**Intra-mesa**

The beginning of this mesa opened with Massumi’s (2002a) comparison of thought to that of a lightening strike. My experience with my students in that one evening class became the *striking (dis)(re)tracting* point of rhizome entry. Mesa 2 provides an overview of Deleuzian philosophy and describes the possibilities that exist in thinking with Deleuze to think *something else*, outside of the literature that normalizes the drop out as ‘lacking’ on the peripheral edge of society. Backman (2017) described dropouts as much less likely to support themselves from market income, have a higher mortality rate and be five times more likely to be in prison by the age of 30. Somehow, the people before me seemed to have defied these odds. My
curiosity was peaked, I felt compelled to learn more about the lives of these people and their dropping back in to high school. What else was there to learn about them? About their re-entry process? And, how would I be affected in this learning even more so than in that moment of (dis)(re)traction?

MESA 2

Thinking With Deleuze

“Write to the nth power, the n – 1 power, write with slogans: Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don’t sow, grow offshoots! Don’t be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line! Be quick, even when standing still! Line of chance, line of hips, line of flight. Don’t bring out the General in you! Don’t have just ideas, just have an idea (Godard).

Have short-term ideas. Make maps, not photos or drawings. Be the Pink Panther and your loves will be like the wasps and orchid, the cat and the baboon.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 24-25)

In his reflections of Gilles Deleuze, May (2005) suggested that thinking differently with Deleuze leads to more possible ways of living in the world. Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) preferred to explain this living in the world as becoming in the world, not being. They saw the world as a fluid, constantly changing landscape, not stagnant and stable. Different assemblages are constantly being made possible as various concepts are being plugged into one another. Creations are multiple and vast. Multiplicity, not singularity, makes up a Deleuzian world. St. Pierre (2004) said, “You will never get to the bottom of a concept like multiplicity, you will never be able to figure out what it really means, nor, if you become the least Deleuzian, will
you want to” (p. 284). Deleuze’s ever-constant philosophizing and creating of
concepts can be somewhat overwhelming, but Deleuze’s (1990/1995) promotion to
experiment with these concepts keeps them in motion.

He expected his followers and his students to take what they wanted, or
needed or could use and apply it to their own disciplines. St. Pierre (2004) saw vast
potential for Deleuzian thinking in education recognizing that “we are in desperate
need of new concepts … in this new educational environment” (p. 286). Like St.
Pierre, and many others, I also see possibilities in taking up a topic through a
Deleuzian lens for my own dissertation. What ‘else’ is there to learn about an adult
who becomes in the world without a high school education? What are the
assemblages that are formed in the lives of these human becomes? What is it like for
them to drop back into school?

The conceptual and theoretical framework described in this mesa becomes an
experiment in post qualitative/post human research. The philosophical work of Gilles
Deleuze and Felix Guattari guide the woven intricacy in terms of ontology,
epistemology, (non)methodology and axiology (Lincoln & Gubba, 2000).

In this mesa, I briefly introduce Deleuze and Guattari and their philosophy of
difference. This philosophy is linked to a post-humanist stance that crosses over into
a post-structural paradigm. The philosophers’ concepts explained in this mesa are
‘plugged into’ thinking around the adult learner’s life experiences as leavers of high
school. Explanations of Deleuzian concepts in Mesa 2 are rhizomatic in that they are
found throughout the mesa and elsewhere in the dissertation. Massumi (1987)
referred to this cycling of ideas as repetitious and noted that Deleuze and Guattari call it a “refrain” (p. xv). I begin with an introduction to Deleuze.

**Becoming Deleuze**

French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze rooted his theoretical concepts in *nomadism* and *becoming*, and he lived these ideals through his constant invention of new concepts that sprung from his ongoing mind journeys around philosophy. He was influenced by other philosophers such as Hegel and Kant, Hume, Leibniz, Nietzsche, and Spinoza (Waterhouse, 2011). Nietzsche is probably most important to mention in that he had great influence on Deleuze’s own understanding of philosophy and the creation of concepts (Perry, 1993). Prior to meeting Nietzsche, Deleuze (1990/1995) explained that he seemed to write only about the history of philosophy. After reading Nietzsche, Deleuze admitted that Nietzsche gave him “a perverse taste…for saying things in [his] own way, in affects, intensities, experiences, experiments” (p. 6). Only a year later, Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) penned *What is Philosophy?*. As becoming-philosopher, Deleuze’s first books included *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.

Deleuze’s (2005) philosophy of *immancence* resembles that of Nietzsche. Both philosophers were fixated on up-rooting hierarchical and transcendent ways of tree-thinking (Bazzul & Kayumova, 2016). Described as arborescent, tree thinking is ordered and has boundaries. Even though branches are allowed to grow, “they are beholden to the linear, binaric logic of the original tree structure” (p. 289). Nietzsche and Deleuze gave rise to rhizome-thinking whereby:
Rhizomes connect to other rhizomes, structures, codes, and languages and do not grow like trees, roots and aborescent structures … They can consist of anything from bee swarms to morse code messages and in this way are heterogeneous …. The dimensions of a rhizome are defined by the line of flight, or deterritorialization, which conjoin with other multiplicites. (p. 289)

They are characterized as untimely and nomadic, structureless, and always moving in the middle of things (Bazzul & Kayumova, 2016; Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). They lack a “generative model” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 12).

Nietzsche (1964) also influenced Deleuze when he wrote about God’s death and affirmatively resurrected life as a creative force. He was determined to move philosophical thinking outside the bounds of negativity and morality commanded by hierarchical laws. Deleuze (1962/1983) was impressed with Nietzsche’s affirmative philosophy that promoted a continuous process of overcoming (Nietzsche, 1964) and the replacement of the autonomous humanist. Drawn to the beliefs of Nietzsche, Deleuze (1962/1983) said, “Nietzsche’s practical teaching is that difference is happy; that multiplicity, becoming and chance are adequate objects of joy by themselves and that only joy returns” (p. 190).

Deleuze (1962/1983) adopted Nietzsche’s concepts of multiplicity, becoming and chance and wove them into his own philosophy. Intrigued by the decentraling of the human subject, he introduced the Overman, “a new way of feeling: he is different subject from man” (p. 163). The Overman was the inspiration behind Deleuze’s concepts of becoming (1980/1987) which are also at the heart of his philosophy.
Deleuze’s philosophical tendencies are embedded in *difference*, and *difference* forms the basis of his ontology. Jackson (2017) explained, “To create difference is to generate new relations in thought” (p. 671). The generation of new relations in thought occurs by thinking. But, thinking can only occur when common understanding, what same may call common sense, is disrupted. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (1968/1994) referred to a new image of thought that happens by chance and by a series of forces that interrupt current thoughts. He said that in the process of thinking, the aim is to profoundly fracture the thinking subject so that thinking can actually make a difference in thought. The difference is found in the unthought. Something gives “birth in thought to the act of thinking” (p. 139).

Common sense or common thoughts are disrupted by the something that causes thinking to occur. Jackson (2017) explained how common sense is problematic to Deleuzian thinking:

> Common sense is an illusion that subordinates difference; that is, common sense is governed by sameness, identity, resemblance, and sedimentation.

> Common sense allows us to relate to things that are perceptible and recognizable, common sense does not violate thought. (p. 669)

Deleuze aspires to violating thought by something that happens from outside of common thinking. In other words, thinking happens from the outside, from something that is unexpected, not by methodically planning for thinking to happen. Colebrook (2002) expanded these notions saying that “thinking is not something ‘we’ do; thinking happens to us, from without” (p. 38). May (2005) reflected and supported how *difference*, being at the center of Deleuze’s philosophy, drives
Deleuzian ontology: “What there is is a difference in itself; a pure difference that forms the soil for all identities, all distinctions, and all negations” (p. 21). As such, Nietzsche’s contributions towards difference also had an influence on Deleuze’s thinking around values/ethics.

Nietzsche caused philosophers to consider what was valued, and a new ethics valuing difference emerged. This new ethics based on difference replaced principles of reason or transcendence after Nietzsche announced the death of God. He purported that one should no longer think about how one should live, one should consider how one might live (May, 2005, p. 7). Transcendent morality was abandoned, and philosophers regarded the invention of postmodern ethics (Bauman, 1993; Derrida, 1997/2000) as an opportunity to see ethics in terms of making a choice in how to act towards Other. Prior to the new ethics, decisions were based solely on a set of rules, removing the responsibility of self. Postmodern ethics meant that the ethical responsibility of “being for the Other” (Bauman, 1993, p. 13) enabled the creation of “me as moral self” (p. 75).

Deleuze also aspired to postmodern ethics, but in the decentring of humanism, he emphasized ethics as “a set of interrelations with both human and inhuman forces” (Braidotti, 2009, p. 145). Deleuze’s ethics of immanence (Braidotti, 2009) constitutes a negotiation of moral response in every event. Inspired by Spinoza, Deleuze described his response to ethics:

You do not judge. In a certain manner you say: whatever you do, you will only ever have what you deserve. Somebody says or does something, you do not relate it to values. You ask yourself how is that possible? How is this
possible in an internal way? … You seek the enveloped modes of existence, and not the transcendent values. It is the operation of immanence. (Deleuze, 1980, p. 15-16).

(De)(Re)Territorializing Humanism: Subjectivity, Voice, Agency, Identity?

As the decentring of the human subject reflected a move away from humanism (post humanism) and served to disrupt subjectivity in research, Deleuze’s thinking around ethics began to emerge. The interrelatedness of human and inhuman forces produced the power to affect and be affected, known as *potentia*. *Potentia* “creates joyful energy in the process” (Braidotti 2009, p. 146). Deleuze’s ideas of ethics extend beyond wrongdoing and rightdoing. Every situation is treated anew. His ethics, inspired by Spinoza (what a body can do), are ethics of immanence. Deleuze viewed the challenge in ethics as enhancing a body’s capability and thereby increasing its affective capacity and renewing “a belief in the world” (Deleuze 1990/1995, p. 176).

Replacement of the human subject also represented an epistemological departure from humanism. In doing so, Deleuze opened up possibilities of inhuman influences and experiences. These might include experiences of animals, nonorganic life and even future experiences (Colebrook, 2002). Deleuze’s epistemological stance includes *inhuman* experience. The epistemological opening of experiences that extend beyond human creates the opportunity for a researcher to consider life through a variety of multiplicities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Goodchild (1996) explained this move away from humanism not as anti-humanism, rather as:
a question of whether subjectivity is produced solely by internal faculties of the soul, interpersonal relations, and intra-familial complexes, or whether non-human machines such as social, cultural, environmental, or technological assemblages enter into the very production of subjectivity itself. (p. 151)

Masny (2006) summed up the concept of subjectivity simply by saying “the subject becomes an effect of events in life” (p. 2). One’s subjectivity is not related to a fixed notion of personal identity. The idea that the subject in research is an autonomous, thinking agent is undone in this epistemological Deleuzian stance (St. Pierre, 2004).

Foucault’s (1994) notions about anti-humanism were influential in initiating an end to the rational, agentive, and autonomous subject for Deleuze. Foucault stated, “One has to dispense with the constituent subject to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis that can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework” (p. 118). However, for Deleuze it was not so important to give up the subject; he was more interested in the events that contribute to the assemblages that are linked to human subjectivity. Events occur when different elements are assembled. The elements that become added are heterogeneous, and the bodies come into relationship with one another. These are the multiple assemblages that decenter the subject and become of interest to the researcher who wants to know more about what happens when these bodies come into relation with one another. How do they affect subjectivity? What happens to human voice and agency in this process?

Voice is also “thought of as an assemblage, a complex network of human and nonhuman agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the individual” (p. 734).
Voice is not emanated by a single subject. Post humanist perspective also steers away from distributing agency through “the vestiges of a knowing humanist subject” (p. 733) whereby a knowing subject’s choices are thought to be “willed rather than determined” (p. 733). Agency, like voice, is also an *intra-meshing* of “a complex network of humans and nonhuman agents, including historically specific sets of material conditions that exceed the traditional notion of the individual” (Barad, 2007, p. 23). It is a series of intra-actions (Barad, 2011, pp. 139-141) between numerous people and things in the world that is constantly becoming.

The theory of becoming replaces subjects and objects with bodies. Parr (2005) explained Deleuze’s view of body:

> A body is not defined by either simple materiality, by its occupying space (‘extensions’) or by organic structure. It is defined by the relations of its parts (relations of relative motion and rest, speed and slowness), and by its actions and reactions with respect both to its environment or milieu and to its internal milieu. (p. 31)

Mazzei (2013) explained the becoming of participants and researcher as an encounter in which the voice of the researcher and others “flow into and are entangled with other materialities, which, in humanism, we often call ‘lived experiences’ but which [she called bodies without organs] BwO in order to resist essentializing such experiences and voices” (p. 737). Using rhizoanalysis to repeatedly (re)read the recordings of the *intra-views* and the group discussion, the researcher does not view the participant’s voice as “separate and individual but only within the entanglement it immediately becomes and continues to become as it joins
other enactments, other assemblages” (p. 737). Gale and Wyatt (2008) explained “the ‘organs’ of the Deleuzian ‘body’ are not constitutive because they are always reforming, being re-used, drifting from tangibility and simply shifting in sense and meaning” (p. 371). The *becoming* event is thought of as a possibility in the becoming to other which is different than the present self (Semetsky, 2006). Subjectivity is understood as a process of multiplicity and is not viewed as presupposed identity.

Massumi (1992) called the process “inventive potential” (p. 140).

Mazzei referenced a discussion she completed with first-generation women academics as an example of this becoming. She described herself as “being produced in the making and doing of the interview” (p. 737). As an agent in the process, she set the interview in motion “without knowing what results might result, without any sense or intention of how [her] own becoming was and would be and might be produced” (p. 737). As the narratives of small town life with the women in her study emerged, a search for meaning was not made; rather, the interest was found in events that caused deterritorializing moments, ruptures or clashes.

For post qualitative researchers, the transcripts do not merely represent lived experiences of the participant, but an assemblage of human (participant, researcher and others like them) and the nonhuman (settings, societal norms, dreams, and anything else that comes forward in the discussions). Neither agency or meaning are attached to the participant’s words or experience. As the voice without organs (VwO) is produced:

If allowed to exert its agential force, can produce a different set of questions and research practices that do not rely on a single source of knowledge, the
knowing subject. Thus, we decouple voice-words spoken and words written in transcripts- from an intentional, agentic humanist subject and move to VwO, voice thought as an assemblage, a complex network of human and nonhuman agents that exceeds the traditional notion of the individual.

(Mazzei, 2013, p. 738)

As such, Deleuze viewed subjectification as “a specific or collective individuation relating to an event (a time of day, a river, a wind, a life …). It’s a mode of intensity, not a personal subject” (Deleuze, 1980/1987, pp. 260-261). Later, Deleuze (1990/1995) explained the concept of haecceities (p. 141). Haecceities are produced by the assemblages that are created by the nonhuman machines, events and intensities (St. Pierre, 2004) and allow the researcher to think of human subjectivity as a production of these assemblages.

The possibility of thinking about human subjectivity through the decentering of the human subject also causes a disruption to the concept of agency. In particular, critical pedagogies become unsettled because agency tends to be central to their stance. Modernist notions of agency involve individuals using their modes and means in the form of activism to take up specific beliefs and causes. Bonta and Protevi (2004) contended that Deleuze and Guattari can support individual initiation of creative action in the world, but they “refuse to mystify this creativity as something essentially human and therefore non-natural. For them the creativity of consistencies is not only natural, but also extended far beyond the human realm” (p. 5). Creativity, for Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), replaced the modernist ideas of agency. Assemblages of human and non-human experiences “consist entirely of relations of
movement … capacities to affect and be affected” (p. 261). It is a complex relational becoming that occurs in the creative responses to the various events in life.

Similarly, the concept of identity for Deleuze and Guattari is also multiple and relational. Identity is about human becoming, not human being. Individual bodies are not thought to have predefined identities. As the individual body encounters various events and assemblages, it becomes as part of the intra-relational context. Identity is not representational and is never ending. Massumi (1987) explained Deleuze’s reconceptualization of identity as a replacement of a closed equation whereby “the closed equation of representation, x = x = not y (I = I = not you) with an open equation: … + y + z + a + …” (p. xiii). The open equation includes different heterogeneous elements to produce a multiple individual, and the process is ongoing.

As an extension to understanding Deleuzian concepts, this second section of the mesa, I discuss some additional Deleuzian concepts as they become important within my own topic of adult learners returning to complete their high school diploma. The language of these concepts will (re)surface throughout the dissertation.

**Language of Deleuze: Clarifying Concepts**

*Rhizome and Affect*

I have been relational with rhizomes …
Having lived my entire life in rural Manitoba, I live close to/with/among animals and close/to/with/among the land, the earth. I live the relationships of water, soil, sunshine, weather changes, animals, insects, and plants. One rhizome that I live with on our land is called leafy spurge. It is a weed variety classified as a rhizome. It can quickly overtake grasslands and pasture lands that agricultural herds rely upon for feeding grounds. It is a hardy plant, resistant to most chemical applications and does not disappear by simply plucking the plant from the ground or cultivating it through mechanical means. Its rhizome lifelines go deep into the ground and if severed at any point, they simply regenerate and continue their spread. It is impossible to find their origination and their destination knows no end. Any disruption in the life cycle simply means a relocation of its path. It is ambulant, has many entryways, and it is not created in a linear fashion with one specific focus. It is messy and entangled. It does not remain hidden. The sprawling outreaches also emerges above ground. They become known to the bodies that share the soil with them. The human body cannot know for sure what causes part of the plant to emerge, while other parts of it remain hidden under the ground. Rhizomatic research
(dis)(re)tracts in the same way. A researcher can never know what will emerge in the process of doing researcher. Something new will be revealed, but it will remain hidden until the (dis)(re)tractions affect the researcher body to think something new. When I walk the places of our land, I see rhizomes, I touch them, and at the height of their growth in the summer, I can even smell them. I remain curious about the senses that will emerge from within this written rhizome.

Figure 1 is an attempt to produce the rhizome in my own amateur artistic way. It is the first time I ever encountered the rhizome through drawing. As I created the drawing, I thought about the intricacies of the rhizome. I was affected in the process of the drawing. I had never thought that my relationship with the rhizomes on our land would somehow inform the processes of my becoming researcher. Colman (2005) described affect as “the change, or variation, that occurs when bodies collide, or come into contact” (p. 11). It is important not to confuse affect with feelings and emotion.

Affect is not a personal feeling. When I set out to draw the rhizome, the complexity of the creation became known in a new way in my hand … Massumi (1987) described affect as power, or puissance (“to affect and be affected”, p. xvi), because it is the driving force in the process of becoming. It is the thing that, for Deleuze, reveals that which is the body is capable. Affects are not thought of as subjective feelings. They are “becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 127). The subject becomes other. Deleuze and Guattari (1994) described this becoming-other as:
an extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection. … It is a zone … of indiscernibility … This is what is called an affect. (p. 173)

Human and non-human bodies are able to change in capacities as they are in relation with one another (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, 1994). Affect (affectus) occurs within the relation, and it is different than emotion. Hickey-Moody (2013) further clarified:

While emotion is the psychological striation of affect, the way in which our experiences of change are captured by subjectivity, affectus is the virtuality and materiality of the increase or decrease effected in a body’s power of acting. (p. 80)

All the things that make up the human body (bodily tissue, organs, muscle, etc.) exist in relation to one another and communicate with one another. In this relating, they “form an assemblage, mixture or body” (p. 81). The people in my study and I, the memories that we share, the recollections of some of the participants who were previous students of mine, the journals, the assignments, the spaces in which we hold discussions, the moments after the recorder is turned off and the conversation continues all make up the assemblage in this study.

When this assemblage moves beyond the body in other relations, the body becomes “a changeable assemblage this is highly responsive to context” (p. 81). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) viewed every human mind within the body as different comparing it to “the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack” (p. 262). Affect is really about
the changing and re-making of the body in relation to the context in which it lives. The force that is produced by affect can be retained by a person, and the person may be transformed (Deleuze, 1994). Sensation occurs “when it acquires a body through the organism, [and] is immediately conveyed in the flesh through the nervous wave or vital emotion” (Deleuze, 2003, p. 40). In addition to the idea of affect not being confused as an emotion, Colman (2005) also referred to it as a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another.

St. Pierre (2019) described the concept of prepersonal when she explained Deleuzian concepts of virtual and actual. The plane of immanence introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) includes both the virtual and the actual. They exist together in a single field of “formless matter not yet individuated into subject or object, thought or practice” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 5). The plane is always becoming; it is never static. But, the actual is not conditioned by the virtual. It neither resembles, reflects or represents it. A unique creation is always generated when the actual materializes. Even though it is still linked to the virtual, it is genuinely a different creation. Deleuze (1968/1994) rejected thinking that limited experiences due to having to replicate conditions that must exist in order for the possibilities of experiences to exist. Deleuze was more concerned with “the condition of real experience, not of possible experience” (p. 154) since the possible was contingent on what is. Real experiences are new. They cannot be representing because new is “produced by presubjective and prepersonal forces and intensities on the plane of immanence but also because it does not repeat some abstraction elsewhere” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 5). Virtual cannot be represented or lived by a human’s
consciousness. When the real emerges, it is new, and it is difference, “everywhere always primary and always immanent” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 70). Even if the new exists in something that has been normalized, it is still difference (St. Pierre, 2019). Human perception is not required in the actualization of the virtual because it “is a process of genuine creation” (p. 6). These actualities never resemble one another because they are always “absolutely different” (Deleuze, 1968/1992, p. 94). They do not exist because of their essence but because of the assemblages of forces that converge by chance on the plane of immanence. The event is unforeseeable, and after it emerges, it “ceases to exist” (Deleuze, 1968/1992, pp. 209-210), unable to produce something similar.

Powerful entanglements are produced as participants and researcher and other forces intra-act during the research process. Semetsky (2013) said that Deleuze and Guattari used the rhizome as “a biological metaphor … to describe a model of thinking irreducible to the single stable foundation represented … as a principle for certainty of theoretical knowledge” (p. 81). Kang (2007) and Semetsky (2006) viewed the rhizome as a living body, not having a root or stem. The rhizome navigates a diverse world and makes connections at varying points on its paths. Semetsky (2006) believed the rhizome “embedded in the perplexity of the situation, go[ing] in diverse directions instead of a single path, multiplying its own lines and establishing the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-minded smooth space of its growth” (p. 73).

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) likened the unpredictable connections of bulbs and tubers of the rhizome to a particular way of thinking that they called
nomadic. The philosophers acknowledged tree-thinking alongside rhizome-thinking. Their preference for rhizomatic thinking simply derived from a desire to think new and different:

There is no ontological dualism between here and there [rhizomes and trees], no axiological dualism between good and bad … There are knots of aborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots. … The important point is that the root-tree and canal-rhizome are not two opposed models; the first operates as a transcendent model and tracing, even if it genders its own escapes; the second operates as an immanent process that overturns the model and outlines a map, even if it constitutes its own hierarchies, even if it give rise to a despotic channel. (p. 20)

I tried to think about tree thinking and rhizome thinking through the creation of a poem.

Tree Thinking
Closes down
returns to its beginnings along molar lines
traces sameness
binaries
Logic
root image of tree

Directed/Determined by stabled structures and systems
Rhizome Thinking…
…Opens up following unpredictable lines maps difference…
…Multiplicity
…affirms nomadic movement
The rhizome’s *intra-connected* life is unknown/unseen underground, and its becoming is imperceptible (Semetsky, 2013) or “invisible to our ordinary sense-perception. It is intuition or insight that reaches out ‘to the deepest things’ … implicated in the folds of being” (p. 81).

Rhizomatic thinking allows knowledge to be thought of as a complex process. Concepts are embedded in triadic semiotics (Semetsky, 2006) and are not simply defined by an external object. “They are artistic creations, like sounds in music and colors in painting, or like cinematic creations – they are images in thought” (p. 73), and the image of thought emerges in “affects and guides the creation of concepts” (p. 74). Traditional qualitative research lacks the aspect of affect, but post-qualitative research seeks *affect*. The passion of the study becomes felt and understood by the researcher, the participants, and perhaps the reader as the intensities of the forces drive questions that do not attempt to answer what is happening. Rather, the forces work to *affect* researcher becoming, participant becoming, and possibly, reader becoming. Lines of flight are *creating* at every segment or breaking/connecting point of the rhizome. The rhizome resists organizational structure and creates opportunity for nomadism.

* Becoming…Virtual/Reality … Lines of Flight

The earlier description of the moment of disruption in our classroom was not timely. I had not expected it. I had not planned for it. I did not have control over the moment of eruption. The event was not predicted. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) thought of life as being uncontrollable and unpredictable. He described it as *untimely*. The philosophers spoke of *virtual-actual* interactions meaning that the untimely life
moments that occur lead up to an event that he cannot be predicted. The relationship of virtual-actual produces lines of flight and the untimeliness of becoming ensues. Deleuze (1980/1987) viewed people as moving relationships, being “made up of lines” (p. 124). Semetsky (2006) explained, “the lines move us, and the most strange line is the one that carries us across many thresholds towards a destination which is unpredictable” (p. 17), turning the virtual into reality.

Deleuze (1968/1994) developed his ontology of virtual and actual in *Difference and Repetition*. He described these two realms as constantly interacting. The virtual is thought of as a plane of consistency, but it is a field from which difference can arise. Therefore, objects may be articulated as having both a virtual and an actual dimension. He used the biological example of the “double aspect of genes” (p. 185) to explain his position. Genetic determined structures have the virtual potential to become actualized. The virtual potential and the actualized are understood as reality. But, the reality becomes as part of an *intra-relational* process that includes various environmental conditions and other genes. The process of becoming emerges/occurs in the actualization. A single assemblage ensues in a space-time event. Deleuze said, “the entire world is an egg” (p. 216) to further explain this ontology of constant becoming. The egg is simply an organism that actualizes the virtual potential within its determined structure to form an embryo with hands, feet, eyes, internal organs and so forth (p. 214). In this way of thinking, the virtual is as much reality as the actual. Semetsky (2006) said, “the tapping into the virtual (never mind real) means a possibility for its becoming-actual” (p. 17).
Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) related becoming to constantly transforming relations that occur as part of processes of interconnectivity. Becoming is not defined by discrete forms of ‘beings’ (subjects/objects, ordered/disordered, normal/abnormal). Something is not simply turned into something else in the becoming process (Roy, 2003). Semetsky (2003) also explained that the transformation that occurs in becoming “does not mean becoming the other, but becoming-other” (p. 214) where difference is produced. It involves processes of movement, variation, and multiplicity. Becoming gets “outside dualisms” (p.277) and provides an option to “be-between, to pass between…never ceasing to become” (p. 277). Deleuze proposed the plane of immanence to describe a surface where all events could materialize and unify while in flux. This theory defies transcendent principles and positions life production processes within life itself.

**Plane of Immanence**

Deleuze and Guattari’s (1991/1994) concept of a surface or plane of immanence allows the researcher to intra-connect with authentic lives of the people they work with and form a “bias for” (p. 40) them. Immanence is defined as “the now that is not governed by a system of laws and relations. Immanence constantly re-opens thinking to the outside without allowing a fixed image of that outside” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 89). Masny (2016) included an explanation of the virtual and the actual in her reflections on immanence:

Immanence is virtual, pre-personal, not pre-given, and asignifying that transforms a virtual becoming to actualization. Both actual and virtual are real. It is a continuous virtual-actual interaction, and each interaction is
different. Once virtual becoming engages a presence in time and space, it actualizes. The virtual becomes actualized. (p. 667)

There is constant *intra-action* between the virtual and the actual. The virtual is not consciously thought, but as it becomes engaged in a time and space, it becomes actualized. The interactions between virtual and actual create difference.

The relational *intra-actions* between virtual and actual drew me to a rhizomatic research approach. I value relationships with others. This concept of emerging possibilities *(dis)(re)tracted* me in the direction of rhizoanalysis.

Rhizoanalysis does not call the researcher outside of herself. Following *lines of flight* frees the researcher up to break from objectifying people as she becomes “rhizomatically embedded to the ‘other.’ Thus we see difference as positive not as a lack” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 40). Moments of *affect* that create *determinatorialization* allow for complexity and reduces the temptation for researcher to oversimplify the research environment. “Rhizome researchers can problematize the status quo to ask hard questions about what is happening that deflate educational hegemonies” (p. 40). This approach allows for problematization because a rhizoanalysis research project “controls itself” (p. 41) when the researcher remains open to *affect* while negating preconceived notions of research that languish to the norm.

*Assemblage*

Assemblage is thought of as the unexpected and productive connections (Masny, 2013) that create new ways of thinking and living. “The elements in the assemblage construct relationships to each other once they come together in the
actual. There is no prior or pre-given relationship among the elements in the assemblage” (p. 341). Nail (2017) explained an assemblage in the following way:

Assemblages are more like machines, defined solely by their external relations of composition, mixture, and aggregation. In other words, an assemblage is a multiplicity, neither a part nor a whole. If the elements of an assemblage are defined only by their external relations, then it is possible that they can be added, subtracted, and recombined with one another ad infinitum without ever creating or destroying an organic unity. (p. 23)

Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) did not view assemblages as “pieces of a jigsaw puzzle”, [but more like a] “dry-stone wall, and everything holds together only along diverging lines” (p. 23). Each new mixture produces a new kind of assemblage, free to recombine again and change its nature. The intra-relational pieces, or singularities, between the elements create a set of relations that become inseparable in a kind of multiplicity that form an assemblage.

**Haecceity**

Haecceity is another concept of Deleuze and Guattari to emphasize the never-ending complexity in individuation. Deleuze (1990/1995) and suggested that we have a non-personal individuality consisting of events. Haecceity serves, once again, to bring understanding to individuation as something much more than a pre-determined subject known as ‘I’:

It is the wolf itself, and the horse, and the child, that cease to be subjects to become events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour, a season,
atmosphere, an air, a life. … completely inseparable. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1908/1987, p. 262-263)

Individuation is making a constant process through haecceities. The individual subjects stop being individual subjects. They become the events that produce untimely assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Haecceities disrupt the understanding of ‘I’ because ‘I’ becomes the events in the assemblages, and the assemblages are non-ceasing. The lines of flight remain in motion, unpredictable in nature, but always producing something new in the becoming ‘I’. Figure 2 is my attempt at drawing what haecceities could look like. I imagine the constant assemblages forming and taking up power in the lives of the adults in this study who return to high school to get their diploma. What lines of flight have been produced in their becoming?

Figure 2. Haecceity

War Machine

Deleuze (1990/1995) explained, “the aim of war machines isn’t war at all. … War machines tend much more to be revolutionary, or artistic, rather than military” (p. 33). The war machine acts as a transformative force of becoming (puissance) and is exterior to State power (pouvoir). This transformative force of becoming is
connected to “life’s power of deterritorialization: a capacity to take any actual thing and translate it into a movement of flow” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 65). Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) talked of warriors arming themselves with affects in their combat against war. Deleuze (1993/1997) emphasized that in his description of combat, combat is not actually war. “War is only … a will to destruction. … Combat, by contrast, is a powerful, nonorganic vitality that supplements force with force, and enriches whatever it takes hold of” (p. 133). As such, combat reflects the disruptive/deterritorializing forces that are essential to becoming and producing something that is different. Once again, Deleuze and Guattari provide a different/complex way to think about war, not in terms of destruction or violence, but in terms of peace and production. The war machine, of which the participants in this study have been a part, is comprised of the transformative forces that have contributed to each’s own becoming and eventual return to a space where they can complete their high school requirements. Deleuze’s concepts of the war machine allow for the blurring of lines and new inventions around a topic, including the one brought forth in this dissertation. The combat experienced differently by each participant is mapped in the analysis of the data and the war machine of each participant is revealed.

Desire

Through the messiness and multiplicity in the ever-evolving assemblages, desire finds it place. The war machine also produces desire. For Deleuze and Guatarri (1987), desire is about production. Desire is not something that results out of lacking something that is not had. It is produced “out of a multiplicity of forces which form
the assemblage” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 86). Desire is created by the “productive forces of intensities and connections of desires” (p. 86). Desire is unearthed in the coming together of the non-reactive forces in the creation and production of the ever-becoming assemblages (Mazzei, 2013). Complexity exists in these productions and offers opportunity for fresh consideration of new thought into that which is being produced. Desire becomes known/recognized as the rhizome continues its production of assemblages. As affect is experienced in each deterritorializing line of flight, desire is produced, and it is reproduced at each intersection within the rhizome with unpredictable timeliness (Masny, 2006). Desire is always present in an assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

**Thinking About Dropout Phenomenon with Deleuze and Guattari**

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1991/1994) offered an enticing approach to my dissertation because they rethink research as “becoming through engagement with intensities rather than an interpretation of pre-existent reality out there” (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2010, p. 79). The researcher engages with the intensities coming out of the research, as opposed to standing at a distance from them. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) steer the researcher away from establishing origins, coding and recoding experiences, interpreting experiences, and transforming ideas into common sense which might universally be applied. This sense “closes, delineates and stratifies the complexity of people with disability” (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2010, p. 79) and might also platinize the intricacies of people who have dropped out of school. Thinking with Deleuze and Guattari means thinking about possibilities that are found between,
within, below and across binaries (Goodley, 2007) by rejecting binary’s “parasitical existence” (p.177).

Deleuze’s philosophy allows the researcher to “draw on the personal to explain the abstract” (Honan & Sellers, 2006, p. 2). It allows for complexity and messiness in real life situations. It avoids rigid frameworks and allows me to de/re/territorialize relationships and intra-actions that exist in the becoming of the participants. Mercieca and Mercieca (2010) offer two possibilities of rhizomatic research:

First, such research gives space to what is not measurable, to what is left out, to what is considered as nonsense. … Second, learning to live with nonsense provides spaces for engagement—the researcher herself becomes through her orientation towards research. (p. 88)

_Intra-relatedness_, is important in the understanding of post qualitative _intra-viewing_ approaches (Mazzei, 2013). Mazzei recognized the contribution that connected assemblages could make to the _intra-view_ process and explained:

If the _intra-view_ is also to be thought as an assemblage, there can no longer be a division between a field of reality (what we ask, what our participants tell us, and the places we inhabit), a field of representation (research narratives constructed after the interview), and a field of subjectivity (participants and researchers). Instead, these are thought to be as acting on one another simultaneously. (pp. 735-736)

The wonderings in a rhizome are “not about what participants mean, but about the forces of desire that are acting through and with our research participants”
The forces of desire are mapped by the researcher during analysis (Mazzei 5). The wonderings seek to unearth that which is produced from various intra-actions of forces. How do these forces or intensities produce new desires? The questions prompt an analysis about the becoming of participants and researcher. Post humanist research aims to decentre the intra-view so that intra-viewing processes become something else as well. They might start with some researcher prompts, but they morph into untimely deterritorializing moments and discussion that produce intra-relational haecceities that contribute to the research rhizome being produced.

This dissertation does not draw comparisons. It is not meant to prove that some adults who drop out of school can live productive lives that defy the odds of the literature that quantifies them as less productive citizens (Backman, 2017). This dissertation maps the assemblages of becoming participants who return to complete their high school diploma and a becoming researcher whose own desire to take up a research agenda occurred much later in her education career.

**Intra-mesa**

Although the linear approach to defining Deleuzian terms may be helpful to readers who are encountering Deleuze for the first time in this dissertation, Deleuze would probably argue that is was not such a valuable expenditure of time since the usefulness of such concepts is found in ways to think alternatively in the world. Wandering and wondering into the world of Deleuze, I experienced the transformation of my own ideas and desires for conducting research through a process of rupturing and reterritorializing. Mesa 3 describes the research (non)design
of this post qualitative study, an experiment using post qualitative (non)method processes to learn something new.

**MESA 3**

**(Un)Folding (Non)Research Design**

...in research, the task is not so much to see what no one yet has seen, but to think what nobody yet thought about that which everybody sees. (Schopenhauer, as cited in Leafgreen, 2009, p. 87)

Elizabeth St. Pierre (2010) suggested that it was urgent to “rethink our understanding of both knowledge and its production in order to revision revitalized academic and public discourses to guide our teaching and learning” (p. 175). This mesa begins by briefly reminding the reader of the possibilities found in the decision to take up research through Deleuzian thinking and rhizoanalysis. The remainder of the mesa addresses the research components associated with the (non)methodology including the unknown problem, purpose of study, research wonderings, an introduction to the participants, the sources of (non)data, and possibilities for significance. I also include an explanation of Deleuze’s inquiry approach known as transcendental empiricism. I speak about the epistemological transformation of qualitative inquiry through transcendental empiricism. In this approach, (non)data is conceptualized as transgressive, analysis is rhizomatic, and reporting is cartographic. Finally, the end section of this mesa provides some wondering around the credibility of post qualitative research.
The *Becoming* Evolution of Educational Research

The revitalization of positivist ideals in educational research (St. Pierre, 2011) has continued to evolve in response to conservative research politics emphasizing experimental research grounded in random, controlled trials that serve as the gold standard for high quality research. Despite a number of isolated concerns over a decade of debate pertaining to various applications of qualitative methodologies, St. Pierre (2019) described post-qualitative inquiry as “methodology-free” (p. 3). Acknowledging that the complexities of the real world implicate realist-based approaches leaves room for the potential for researchers’ *becoming* as they explore the entanglements of concept-based inquiry. Furthermore, because of ontological “pure difference” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. xx), serious questions arise pertaining to the coding of data and research-derived themes.

New theory-based practices assume “a two-world ontology of specific instances in internal relations organized under and represented by broader, general concepts” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 6), rendering positivist-interpretivist theory problematic. Theorists, therefore, regard traditional approaches in both quantitative and qualitative research as increasingly simplistic by way of reducing academic problems to condensed correlations while addressing the complexities of educational research. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Torrance (2011) described educational research as having been “turned into a technology that can be applied to solving short-term educational problems” (p. 578).

Post-qualitative research has responded in various ways. In respect of this thesis, for example, Cumming (2015) reminded researchers that “working with
rhizoanalytic approaches offers opportunities to engage with, and disrupt the sometimes limiting strictures of qualitative research methodologies” (p. 138).

Jackson and Mazzei (2013) further supported the possibilities of post-qualitative (non)methodologies in their description of their work utilizing Deleuze & Guattari’s (1980/1987) concept of the “plugging in” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013, p. 162) of data. The abandonment of data analysis that traditionally would limit the inclusion of data to that which was pre-thought, coded, and interpreted freed them from the limits of humanistic inquiry:

…rethinking of an interpretive methodology gets us out of the representational trap of trying to figure out what the participants in our study “mean” and helps us to avoid being seduced by the desire to create a coherent and interesting narrative that is bound by themes and patterns. (p. 262)

Centering subjects within interpretive qualitative methodologies has misled researchers to a supposedly coherent narrative that represents truth. However, working within, against and beyond these qualitative strategies to decentre participants allows researchers to work the limits of such concepts as voice. This does not mean that interview-type methods are abandoned. Instead, it recognizes many interpretations of interview data as complete. Rather than seeking stability within and among the data, post-qualitative researchers are drawn to data that seems as much about difference as sameness (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013). Resisting the coding imperative takes readers into spaces and places of real, lived experiences of participants rather than accounts based solely in researcher interpretation and representation. Theory-based concepts that initiate the researchers’ work become
“plugged into” the reading of the text, creating a different relationship among the texts so as to “constitute one another and in doing so create something new” (p. 264).

It has become obvious that post-qualitative researchers will not settle for the type of research as handmaiden to educational policy that claims ‘truth’.


Indeed, the desire to engage in experimentation with (non)methodology aroused my own curiosity and passion to take up a challenge in the completion of a doctoral dissertation. I wanted to “seek something new under the sun”. In the quest to do something different, to think something different or displace the conventional, transcendental empiricism becomes a suitable framework to embrace. Waterhouse (2011) described transcendental empiricism as a reinvention of qualitative inquiry into that which we call rhizoanalysis. Rhizoanalysis enabled me to intra-relationally incorporate my own experiences as educator and becoming researcher, my own teaching journal, my many readings around my topic and my memories in a relational mapping of the returning high school adult learner.

Research (Un)folding … (Non)Methodological Pondering

Originally intrigued, I was also a bit overwhelmed, by a (non)methodology that defied traditional qualitative research by extending the boundaries of its set rules,
promised complexity, and sought difference. I was excited about the idea of moving beyond myopic views of subjective experience (Waterhouse & Arnott, 2016), but the unfailing effort to discover a set of instructions in how to proceed unsettled me. Courage came in moving forward because there was no prescribed way “to do” rhizoanalysis (Masny, 2015). What would I do? Would it be possible, in the intra-views, to create an affective intra-relational discussion among the bodies present? My former experience in research while doing my Masters Degree was rooted in quantitative methods. I knew I wanted greater complexity and room for difference and disruptions in the literature around my topic. As I moved into the discussion with my first participant, I could feel moments of struggle in the process. Parts of me wanted to hold tightly to “rules” of interview and attempting to keep consistency from one person to the next. But, the meeting felt ‘cold’ and less relational. I relaxed and became bold. I gave into discussion…something that felt natural and real. I was becoming in the process, I did not detach from the relational space that was occurring with my participant. I let go of interview and becoming intra-view found space to unfold. It “felt” right, and I was amazed and humbled at the

As I edit the dissertation, I pause here. I think about why I wanted to stick to rules. Was I scared to venture outside of the proposed questions that glared at me in the questionnaire? Would I be defying ethics? I really just wanted to have a conversation with the person in the room with me. But, I kept thinking that I had to do it the ‘right’ way. I laugh about that now. Probably Deleuze would laugh at me too. I am not sure that there is even any such thing as a ‘right’ way.
vulnerability of each participant’s willingness to share their own moments of rupture and personal becomings with me. As such, this dissertation is as much about the reterritorializing of a researcher’s understanding of (non)methodology as it is about the topic at hand.

Ulmer (2017) called post human research a “critical endeavour … in the sense that it is urgent … it has the potential to transform as it emphasizes the roles of ‘interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness’ in research” (p. 843). In her claim that we live in a time of “environmental exigency” (p. 843) and that all life forms share the Earth, she recognized the promising possibilities that exist in “working toward interrelations among post-methodologies” (p. 843) and potentially “(re)incorporating humanistic perspectives into post human methodologies” (p. 843). This dissertation becomes an experiment for this becoming researcher to wander in that space. In an effort to wonder and wander without a prescribed method, and in order to use the theoretical lens of affect, I took a deep breath and stepped off the traditional path. I broke up with the rules and became intra-relational with something different … I entered the rhizome.

***************

Think …..Wonder …..Dream …..Create the (un)seen

….. Reflect .....Wonder ..... Remember ..... Write ..... 

….. traditional… assumptions about research ..... 

ponder ….what else?…..how?…..think difference 

courage .....BECOMING researcher .....
I have taken St. Pierre’s (2011) advice to read hard and not to expect understanding after the first reading. She also suspected that coding has been taught to graduate students because “we don’t know how to teach thinking” (p. 622). I want to be a thinker, not a coder. This dissertation, by St. Pierre’s definition, is post qualitative. I do not seek to find an alternative, rather I “pursue the supplement” (p. 613) that is beyond the structure of traditional qualitative methodologies and interpretive analysis. And, I roam around in language that is not always clear.

I began this mesa with an explanation of my own coming to a place of rhizomatic inquiry. In the remaining part of this mesa, I will describe how the research design was framed. I describe the (non)methods associated with the research and explain the (non)data analysis. My own experiences as a public educator over the years were considered in the deterritorialization of the returning high school dropout. At times, the excerpts from my teaching and research journals emerge on the page to reflect or emphasize the multiplicities emerging within the (non)data. (Non)data are fluid and not meant to represent truth or draw conclusions. The (non)data in this project contribute to the creative assemblages of the connections that happen around the chosen topic. As such, the final product may not resemble a traditional dissertation in terms of its order or academic voice and style.

**Purpose of Study**

The desire that is born out of “a multiplicity of forces” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 86) in the creation of an assemblage played on my curiosity to seek learn more about adults who abandoned a traditional path to high school graduation only to find their way back. The purpose of the study is to (de)(re)territorialize the high
school dropout found at the margins of an education system that operates within an
discourse to produce the ideal graduated body. Although a review of the literature
used to inform this dissertation is derived from research around the dropout
phenomenon, the focus for this research is on the affective events intra-related to the
re-entry of the becoming adult participants. As the dissertation aims to learn more
about the affective experiences of the participants, (dis)(re)tractions around re-entry
programs also emerge in relation to other research that describes the needs of
Generation Z (Peres and Mesquita, 2018; Postolov, Magdinceva, & Iliev, 2017).

As an education system sets the stage for an ideal graduate, it also serves as a
catalyst to exclusion and discrimination when an individual exits the system “less
than ideal”. As one’s legitimacy and visibility becomes lost in society, the literature
tells us this person remains stagnant, lacking, and virtually unrecognized in society.
The individual’s existence is insignificant. However, the significance and implication
of mapping the assemblages of the participants’ lives allows for an emergence of new
ways to think about the insignificant body that lives on the fringes. Historical
evidence found in various research exists to position the uneducated adult as a burden
to society, incapable of living an independent and fulfilling life. Yet, the researcher’s
own intra-action with adults who return to complete their high school diplomas has
served to provide a much different perception of these learners. The intra-
relational/connectedness of bodying assemblages formed ‘in between’ events of
dropping out and dropping in to high school provide an affective account of these
adults’ journeys. The non-interpretive approach to the research allows the telling
narrative of the participants to be read in their raw forms. Each reader of the
dissertation will be affected in different ways each time the document is read. Deleuze’s theory of affect provides an excellent frame to think about these adult learners and education in various and differentiated ways:

For Deleuze, affect represents a pre-conceptual intensity which acts as a force of both empirical and virtual production. … [and] is a key force in the movement, arrangement and distribution of perception and with it ethical possibilities which reach beyond it” (Means, 2011, p. 1097).

It is not the job of the researcher to interpret the words or bring meaning to the text. Bodies affect other bodies. Affects are active forces. The choice of an affective tactic to learn about the uneducated adult as an inclusive body through its lived experiences establishes the potential to launch supplementary knowledge of social and educational perception alongside the existing narratives. Affect implies an augmentation, mutation, or diminution in that body’s capacity to act. In other words, feelings are personal and biographical, emotions are social, and affects are pre-personal (Kingsmith, 2018). The affective relational and contextual intensities embodied by these adults that make up their lived experiences can now be expressed. Legitimization and visibility are gained by a group that is traditionally thought of as being socially at risk, and perceptions that typically rest in attitudes of “lacking” may be influenced. During my intra-view with Ella, she admitted:

*I never thought that anyone would ever want to find out about my life. I’ve been a dropout for a long time, and most people probably think that I am on welfare and have just been a nobody all my life. What do I have to offer? That’s not how I see myself, but I don’t think other people would really
believe or see me as a being a person who could ever have anything to offer or even have anything intelligent to even say.

As the conversation continued, she repeated her intrigue that I, as researcher, would want to hear about her life events. She said:

*I was surprised to hear that someone would want to do research on people who dropped out of school. I have never really had anybody pay any kind of special attention to me in this way.* [She laughs and adjusts her glasses.]*

*Maybe it is kind of a big deal that I finally graduated. Yea, I suppose it is. I never really thought I would when I left school a long time ago. It’s kind of cool, yea, I guess it is. You never know what journey life will take you on I suppose.*

An affective perspective allows educators to gain insight into the lived experiences of adults who have dropped out of high school. Rather than focusing on the “lack” associated with the statistics surrounding individuals who do not complete a high school education, or how life “ought to go”, educators can learn more about the real experiences of people who live life without completing secondary education. This dissertation explores the lines of flight that emerge in the dropout’s resistance to the molar institution.

The purposes of this study are:

1. To (re)think the assumptions that exist in the general discourse in society surrounding the adult who lives without a high school education.

2. To explore the social and political implications of the assumptions within the literature by way of possibly thinking *something else* about education
and its contribution to the decisions of learners to drop out of school.

What might we learn about educating *becoming* people in high school, and can we think something new about re-entry programs for adults?

**Research Wonderings**

The purpose of this study is to “think more” than the discourses surrounding adult learners who have not completed high school in a traditional timeframe. The researcher wishes to learn more about the life events and re-entry circumstances of learners who exited from school as teenagers and later return to complete a high school diploma. More specifically, I wonder: How can affect theory influence thinking around high school dropouts with a view to influence education stakeholders in areas of research, praxis and educational discourse? By the time the last word is printed on this dissertation, I wanted to engage in discussions with my participants to learn about their life experiences. Also, while attempting to embody a philosophy inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, I wanted to attempt post qualitative (non)methodology to *become* researcher outside of the parameters of something traditional. I wanted to wander in unfamiliar ways of coming to know something more about something. The research wonderings arise out of an assemblage of the problems discussed in Mesa 1, thoughts arising from the literature around the topic of the dissertation, and the opportunities found in a rhizomatic undertaking.

I come to the study wondering:

1. What assemblages can be created that affect the (de)(re) territorialization of the participants beyond course work in their dropping back in to high school? This is the sense making of the virtual, what sense can be made of what has happened?
2. What concepts might emerge out of the rhizome that mobilize processes of social and individual growth to dropping back into school? This turns to the actual, to see how something can actually become.

The productions of the relational *intra-actions* of this study are mapped into a cartographic assemblage. They *intra-relate* with the researcher’s *becoming* as these lines of flight intersect and map the complex process of (de)(re)territorialization of all who are involved in the research of the dissertation. How do their nomadic journeys reflect/challenge the existing discourse of the high school drop out described later in Mesa 4?

The idea is not to identify the reasons for leaving school so much as it is to understand how Wallin’s (2014) description of a factory image of school curriculum, grounded in molar tendencies, contributed to the production of assemblages that (de)(re)territorialized participants away from school. But, more importantly, the focus of this study is the re-entry, so I am curious about the experiences of people

In my years of teaching I did not think of a class text as much more than a choice of a book to address curriculum outcomes. Sure, I have tried to chose books with which students might connect and perhaps find some deeper insight. But, these adult students seem to need/crave these books as part of their own understanding to their own becoming. Getting their diploma is one thing...that is one of their goals, but these texts seem to feed their souls some how. Younger students don't seem to have that same intensity in their relationship with books. Not that I have experienced it anyways. (Shelley's Teaching Journal, November 6, 2016)
who drop out of a system, only to drop back in later in life. What might be learned about re-entry? I do not intend to form conclusions and provide over-arching statements about the system, but it will be interesting to see how molarization played a part in the assemblages of these participants, and if it is still molarizing in re-entry. My conversations with these adults impacted me immensely. As an instructor in the adult re-entry program, I do not always have the time to have intense conversations about their lives. I was able to learn much more about the events of their life and their return to school in the capacity as researcher, but my experience as an instructor allowed me to intra-relate as a person who knows the program. I bring some history with me as I talk with them. They have known me as a former teacher or have seen me in the building while they are in other classes. I am not a stranger to them. Our former relationship helps to keeps the conversations flowing. As I recall the classroom conflict that I discussed earlier, I remember one other moment of affect that intensified a response to a text we were reading in class. The students were discussing a particular section of a novel where the main character had expressed sorrow for not having a relationship with his father before the old man had passed away. One of the students spoke emotionally about the impact of the text. Like the main character, he was also estranged from his father for almost twenty years. After reading class text, he made the decision to board an airplane and travel to reunite with his aging father. He described his encounter with the text as a life-changing event for him. At that moment, I realized I was experiencing a response from this group of adult learners unlike anything I experienced when teaching teenaged students in my regular high school classes. Teenaged high school also make
connections to the texts they read, but perhaps the experiences of adults are more numerous … I am not sure. But, I was astounded at the depth of insight that was occurring in many of the students, and I was struck by the impact their own lines of flight were contributing to their reading reflections. And … something within myself was being awakened. I was excited to be among a group of learners who seemed to come alive when reading a book. They savoured the text in a different way and made numerous connections to its content. I was affected by this particular student’s connection to the text. It was as though I was being ‘physically struck’ to pay close attention to what he was saying. To elaborate, I was surprised at my own emotional response to hearing the story of this student. The rawness of his vulnerability to share such a personal experience created an empathetic episode in the class towards his situation, and the attention in the room shifted from that of the text to that of the person sitting in the chair. I have taught many high school Language Arts classes over the years, and I had not witnessed such an emotional and physical response to something that a student had read. He had tears in his eyes as he described how he thought about the missed years with his father. He confessed that if he had not read the book in class, he never would have given another thought to his father. He said he barely had read anything in his life, but he was thankful for the opportunity to read this book. He said that as he was reading it and making the decision to contact his father, it was as though a weight was being lifted from his shoulder after feeling the guilt of not speaking with his father for so many years (Researcher’s teaching journal, November, 2017). It was as though the book had (dis)(re)tracted a source/haecceity of becoming healing in this man’s life. I lost touch with this student
at the end of the school term, but it would have been interesting to learn of other lines of flight that may have emerged. What line of flight even brought him to the text? These questions are not necessarily meant to be answered, but they are indicative of the kind of thinking/wonder that can surface in the process of rhizoanalysis.

I was privileged to many other such responses during my course of working with these returning adult learners. I was intrigued because the connections they made to the texts ‘seemed’ important to their own understanding of their own becoming, or perhaps the journal responses were allowing them to reflect on their own nomadic journeys and causing their own deterritorializing moments. I am not sure, but their class discussions caused me to wonder more about the journeys of these students who had lived many years with minimal education. I suppose I had experienced what Deleuze would describe as my own deterritorializing moment to learn more about the experiences of adults who return to high school. I liken this moment to the one and only time I stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon.

I was mesmerized. I had seen many pictures of the Grand Canyon and heard other people’s account of the natural wonder, but standing there was of no comparison to seeing a picture in a book. I could not begin to describe what it was like to look across the vastness of the space and take in the breath taking view in front of me. I knew, at that moment, I had come to know something and live something about the Grand Canyon that I could never have done without being there in that space in that moment. A picture of the Grand Canyon or an article about its geography is just not the same as coming to know it by way of being there. Perhaps I might come to know it differently each time I would visit. Unfortunately, I have not
had another opportunity. That is how I think of affect- that brief moment of an experience that moves one’s thinking and causes a ‘taking in’ of the thing/event that is happening in that precise moment. Some might say it causes one to ‘be present’ and just allow the ‘seeping in’ of that which is occurring. At the same moment, it is (dis)(re)tracting a body somewhere else. Deleuze might call this a moment of transcendental empiricism (described below) whereby ideas are being formulated by the experience or the event.

This study became an intra-relation of the educated researcher, a former high school teacher and the adult participants who had recently completed their high school education after several years of living without a high school diploma. As the research becomes constituted, the resulting creation opens the opportunity to learn something new and different about self and other and to elucidate complexity of the becoming of those individuals who were once formally unschooled.

The dissertation becomes an experiment in method and content. It is a non-conformist approach to learn more about the uneducated adult learner who returns to a high school space later in life. As well, the researcher’s own academic becoming is entangling within the rhizome as she experiments with unconventional (non)methodology and transgressive data.

**Participants**

Five participants were invited from a local adult collegiate in central Manitoba for this study. After receiving approval from the University of Regina’s Research Ethics Board in the spring of 2018 (see Appendix A), I began a searching process for participants. An invitation to participate in the study was emailed by the
collegiate’s administrative assistant to former graduated students on my behalf. An information letter was included in the email (see Appendix B). I requested the participation of adults over the age of 25 to ensure that they had several years of living in the world without a high school diploma in order to possibly speak about a wide range of experiences over several years. Eight people responded to the invitation, but three had to withdraw after their personal circumstances changed, and they could no longer commit to meeting with me. Three of the five participants were former students of mine from the adult re-entry program. Although, the other two were not in my class, we were familiar with one another as we had seen each other in the school. I initially corresponded with the five remaining participants via email and meeting dates were arranged. Consent forms were signed (see Appendix C), and our discussions began. Four of the five meetings were held in one of the counsellor’s office at the collegiate on weekday afternoons. The fifth meeting occurred on a Saturday morning at my office since my final participant lived very close and thought it would be convenient to use this location. I brought cookies and coffee for each of our meetings and treated them as guests in these spaces. I was extremely appreciative of the time they were taking to share their personal lives with me. I felt both honoured and humbled at their presence. I spoke about the purpose of my study to each of the participants and explained their right to voluntary withdraw from the study. Each of them was eager to participate and signed the participant forms without hesitation. Although I had expressed that we would need about an hour for the discussions, each meeting went over an hour and none of the participants were in a hurry to leave. One of the meetings reached two hours, and I suggested a second
meeting if the participant thought he still wanted to tell me more about his life. Instead, he decided he would join the group discussion later the following week. Of the five participants, two of them were able to join the group discussion. Two had former commitments and the final person was moving out of province in just a few days.

The participants indicated that they did not have a preference if their real names or pseudo-names were used. As some of the discussions became very personal in nature, we mutually decided to use pseudo-names to protect the confidentiality of the participants and any individuals that may be connected with the participants who were not actual participants in the study. The participants spoke about particular geographical locations and other personal things such as age that could be revealing of identities; therefore, we made the ethical consideration to increase anonymity through use of pseudo-names and estimated ages. Specific locations mentioned in the discussions have been removed or changed. Please allow them the opportunity to introduce themselves:

**Randy:** *I was born in Europe. I have 2 sisters, my Mom, my Father came to Canada when I was 7. My father passed away shortly thereafter. We moved to Ottawa, lived there for a couple years and after that, I kind of went on my own. Into my own place, I started working and that kind of goes into the fact why I had to drop out of school. Yeah, 2 sisters, I am currently in the military. I will be leaving the province very shortly.* (Intra-view, May 18, 2018)

**Lara:** *I came from a big family. I am adopted. Poor, but who isn’t? I’m [mid 30’s] years old right now. I was going to school in a small town from*
Kindergarten to 8 and it was nice. I don’t know if I have an attention disorder, I mean when I was younger I could sit there and listen but then I’d be gone off into space and totally lose concentration. So, that was one fault that was even at a younger age and then high school was, I don’t know, it was; I was more interested in having fun than learning. I’d rather go play football with the boys or stand outside and smoke cigarettes. But, yea, school just wasn’t there for me in high school. The only part I enjoyed was the cooking class. I make good pies (laughter). (Intra-view, May 3, 2018)

**Jimmy:** Born in [location deleted]. Most of the time we ended up back in [location deleted but we moved all over [location deleted. I lived in [location deleted for a while, lived in [location deleted; numerous places. By the time I was in my grade 12 year I had gone to 12 different schools. Some of them were just because like where you have grade 6 on the one side and you jump to grade 7 on the other side. Even though you’re in the same location you had two different schools. Then by the time grade 12 rolled around I had basically only had English credit left to do. I dropped out of school because I had a job that was making the money already and just figured I didn’t need to carry on. I am [mid 40’s] years old now. (Intra-view, May 5, 2018)

**Ella:** Well I grew up in the north and the school system only goes to grade 9 there. Very beautiful area but I guess my problem with school started when my Dad died. Because I was a bad kid. We got moved to another area and from going from a small reserve school to a big school of 800 it was kind of hard to adjust. So, I didn’t do the work. I turned bad (laughing). I was a bad
kid. I didn’t do the work and I was just slacking off in the class and I was only in grade 5 so halfway through the year we went back to my birth place and then I just continued not to; to top it off, like the head teacher didn’t like me either. He used to throw erasers at me and so I would throw them back. So, I failed grade 5 and I failed grade 6. I failed both grades with this Mr. (name deleted) guy because we just didn’t like each other, we butted heads. After that, I continued not to go to class. I’d just make excuses. I kind of lived alone, so I just stayed at home whenever I wanted...I was 12. As soon as I turned 16 I quit. So, I was part way through grade 9 so, actually only finished my grade 8.

Cam: I was born in the eastern part of Canada. When I was 16 turning 17, I decided to leave my hometown and moved to another city in another province with an aunt and uncle to pursue a baking career at a technical high school. From there I dropped out my grade 12 year or my grade 13 because I had failed English and I dropped out to go to work at the ski hill because drama and stuff. I can go into more detail about this, there are points throughout that have guided me to where I am now. A lot of them were excuses at the time that I later realized were excuses. So, the official reason why I came out to the school was I wanted to pursue baking. But the real reason is I wanted to run away from my problems. So, that’s where it kind of started. I am [mid 30’s] now and moved out when I was 16. I should back up and say my parents divorced when I was I think 2 months old. My father was absent, he wasn’t around. I met him once when I was 8 and that led to drama between
my family where his side tried to keep me and my brother when we came out to visit. My family came out and it was like “Hey, these are our kids. We’ll tie you up in court. Back off.” So, that ruined almost every bridge and communication line to that part of the family. (Intra-view, May 10, 2018)

Sources of (Non)Data

Something is happening here. Data and contents, research and researchers are moving dissolving. It therefore does not show what but ways … Notions of translocality and writing allow new and other ways of speaking of data, content, and research(ers) as change and as curating. They allow navigating in, ontologically speaking, third rooms. This is not about our words per se therefore but our dispositions and possible new life processes. Ultimately asking questions about what, when, where, and whose knowledges apply. We constantly need new types of data (without), thus new types of methodologies.

It is the way I see this, a democratization of the research process ultimately an increase of its relevance. (Reinertsen, 2017, p. 247-248)

(Non)data sources used in this study included: 1) (non)transcriptions of individualized intra-views; 2) (non)transcription of group discussion; 3) personal teaching reflective journal of researcher; 4) shared completed assignments of participants; and 5) emerging memories and perceptions of researcher’s teaching experiences.

(Non)Transcriptions of Intra-views

Barad (2003) elaborated on post human performativity saying that it “allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming, in its ongoing ‘intra-
activity” (p. 803). The post human stance questions the dichotomous
categories/characteristics of human and nonhuman bodies. Performativity, a term that
is often associated with feminist and queer theorist, Judith Butler (1993), emerged as
an alternative to social constructivism and a way to escape representationalism
deeply rooted in Western culture and research. Barad (2003) explained that
discursive practices are often confused with language, and meaning is often made
through the use of words. Discursive practices and meaning making are a human
phenomenon. Barad rejected the idea that humans are phenomena; rather, they are
independent becoming entities (de)(re)configured “with shifting boundaries and
properties that stabilize and destabilize with specific material changes” (p. 818). A
posthuman refiguration allows discursive practices to be “rethought in terms of intra-
activity … ongoing intra-actions of the world through which local determinancy is
enacted” (pp. 820-821). Barad further explained that meaning is also not found in
language because discursive practices are not acts of speech, nor can they be
represented in linguistic productions or be thought of as human-based practice.

Human bodies do not preexist, and they are not simple end products. They are more
complexly “part of the world in its open-ended becoming” (p. 821) because they are
in constant intra-action with human and nonhuman bodies as “ongoing performance
of the world … in its causal intra-activity” (p. 821). Barad explained:

Knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another
part … We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we
know because ‘we’ are of the world … the kind of understandings that are
needed to come to terms with how specific intra-actions matter. (p. 829)
Barad’s concept of intra-activity merged out of her work in Physics, but the concept opened possibilities for relational ways to converse with participants as researchers engage in post qualitative work. Kuntz and Presnall (2012) described the relational encounter:

A productive reunderstanding that foregrounds the embodied and emplaced nature of interaction. Through the *intraview*, diffractive seeing is made possible, an integrative, *becoming with knowing* that is inherently transformative. (p. 733)

Rather than thinking of the interview as a linear process whereby the researcher poses questions and transcribes these responses as an outsider who interprets, the *intra-view* allows the suspension of the traditional performative roles of the interviewer and interviewee to open space for “an ongoing intra-active engagement” (Barad, 2007, p. 376). For Kuntz and Presnall (2012), the *intra-view* “resituate[d] the interview as a process-based, intra-active event, rather than a concept … a cocreation among (not between) multiple bodies and forces” (p. 733). The researcher does not have to remain a spectator or an objective observer who interprets the experience through a transcript.

Barad (2007) posed that matter was more trustworthy than matter. Although she was speaking from a physicist’s lens, she was speaking of the authenticity of the *intra-view* that allows for an authentic experience found in a relational (non)method conversational approach in an authentic exchange of words. Kuntz and Presnall (2012) conducted a walking *intra-view* in place of the traditional sitting interview so that participants and researchers might engage more deeply in free-flowing
discussions. The participants consented to have the conversations recorded as a means to preserve the conversations so they would not be lost in my imperfect memory. Knowing that I would be able to revisit the unpredicted conversational unfoldings allowed me to be at ease and give full attention to the conversations with my participants and to intra-act within the unfolding spaces of conversation.

I did not undertake a walking intra-view for this dissertation. However, I attempted to free up discussions in an authentic capacity by allowing the participants to speak openly and candidly of their experiences. Because ALL bodies matter through the world’s intra-activity (Barad, 2007), I began the discussions by telling them about my work and my curiosity of their experiences, and I attempted to create a space where they might feel safe to take a lead in the discussions. I was not striated by a scripted set of questions to drive robotic responses. I invited the participants to choose the location of our discussions and engaged in responsive listening (Kuntz & Presnall, 2012) with them:

Through [intra-views] we are fully engaged and we transform perception and perspective. As thinking engages the unthought, we may speak with a resonance that expresses the limitations and potential violence of negation, as well as indicate a univocity beyond the articuable, through our attempts to listen. (p. 740)

Barad (2007) cited a poem, Cascade Experiment, as an appendix in her text. Several of the lines in the poem resonated with me:

Because truths we don’t suspect have a hard time making themselves felt … we have to meet the universe halfway. Nothing will unfold for us unless we
move toward what looks to us like nothing: faith is a cascade. The sky’s high solid is anything but, … (p. 397-398)

The *intra-view*, hopefully, allowed unsuspected ‘truths’ or *(dis)(re)tractions* to *become affective* through conversations with my participants. The poet does not use the word ‘revealed’ in her iteration of truths. She says that they can be ‘felt’- a much more appropriate description of the revelations of the bodies in this research dissertation where spoken experiences are *becoming affectus* (Deleuze, 1988), producing in unimagined assemblages through intra-actions of bodies coming together in space and time to talk about life experiences.

In consideration of the posthuman *intra-view*, participants constitute part of the elements that interact in a relational assemblage; the conventional researcher-participant relationship no longer exists. (Masny, 2016). All the elements, including researcher, become part of a transforming assemblage through relational affect. The data that is producing during rhizoanalysis are not directly experienced (May, 2005). Rhizoanalysis moves away from humanist research tendencies of representation, interpretation, and categorization. Masny (2016) explained, “palpation enables sense to emerge” (p. 672). Traditional analysis of interview data attempt to interpret meaning in the data. Data are reduced to construct findings, but post human researchers reject the notion of findings, arguing that the risk of misportraying what has happened is too high. Masny (2016) suggested that “palpation invites uncertainty and the untimely in an assemblage” (p. 672). She referred to palpation as the “antidote to interpretosis [because] representation and interpretation de-territorialize and re-territorialize as sense-event and palpation” (p. 672). Both May (2005) and
Masny (2016) viewed the removal of interpretation as the removal of judgement. Instead of arriving at answers and sensible conclusions, more questions arise in face of the problems posed, and resistance to fix the problem emerges. The idea of knowing something for sure is becoming impossible. The (non) methodological aspect of rhizoanalysis is a different way of doing research. It is a different way of thinking … nomadically taking the researcher to new thinking, new questioning, new innovating.

The concept of *intra-view* guided the discussions with participants in my dissertation. The *intra-views* served as the largest contribution to learning about the experienced assemblages of the people in my study. Although I had prepared some questions ahead of time (see Appendix D), the conversations became open-ended. The *intra-views* varied in length, and a couple of them extended beyond the recording. Conversations continued in the leaving of the spaces on walks to our vehicles, in a stairwell, on a bench on the sidewalk. The *intra-views* provided a venue for the participants to speak about their experiences around their childhood, their schooling, and their life events leading them back to complete their high school diploma. I was free to engage in the unfolding of the conversation, not as an outside observer, but as an active participant. As researcher, I did not control the conversation. I simply got them started, and they unfolded in their own ways.

Each of the digitally recorded discussions was transcribed by a bonded transcriptionist who attempted to produce a verbatim transcript. All filler words such as “uh”, “um”, etc. were included. Parenthesis were used to insert nonverbal sounds such as (crying). Square brackets were used where an inclusion of an explanation by
the transcriber such as [phone ringing] was made. Emphasized words are written in all capital letters and any words that were unintelligible were indicated with three asterisks [***].

The *intra-views* provided an inspiring source of (non)data to be considered in rhizoanalysis through Deleuze’s notions of *affect*. For example, Lara talked about the transformation she experienced in her dropping back into school.

Lara: *Before I was quiet and kept to myself. People I talk to are like, “Eh, Don’t talk to me.” And now it’s like, “How’s it going? How is life? ... Like... who is this lady? (smiling)*

Honan (2014) posed that post qualitative research (non)methods should provide an opening for researchers to experiment, to play, and disrupt what is taken for granted in qualitative research methods. St. Pierre (2013) said that post qualitative ontologies “do not assume there is a given, a real world (data) that can be gathered together (collected) and described (analyzed and known)” (p. 225). The de-centering and de-privileging of the interview does not equate to eliminating the *intra-view*. Thinking with Deleuze and Guattari meant that I could experiment with ways to “allow the collision of forces to join other enactments and assemblages” (p. 738). In my dissertation, the assemblages eventually became known, but they *intra-cluded* previous readings, schools, family relations, memories, journals, interviews and dreams. Even the settings of the *intra-views* and the timing of the *intra-views* came into play as participants shared their experiences.
The entanglements of bodies (Nordstrom, 2013), which I prefer to think of as *intra-tanglements*, came together to *affect* an *intra-realational* becoming assemblage. The *intra-view* is not traditional qualitative research. It is a place for becoming relational connections between participant and researcher, a place for genuine, undirected conversations to emerge between participants and researchers through open and authentic dialogue.

**Randy:**

“I have to admit feeling a bit uncomfortable hearing the *description of this violence. I was amazed that Randy shared such an intimate experience of his life. He appeared vulnerable to me during those moments of his story. I listened intently. How does an event ending in death de/re/territorialize a person? I was not there in that story, but I was becoming a part of it now ... hearing it. Stories like this are not part of my ‘common’ sense, my everyday world. I am amazed, once again, that this person sits before me ... his becoming continues ... as does mine. (Shelley’s Interview Journal, June 2, 2018)

knocked down, he cracked his skull on the ground. He died on the scene. Me and my buddy were both initially charged with manslaughter. He [the other person in an altercation] ended up surviving, they dropped it to ... like aggravated assault ... and we spent two years going to court before eventually they realized that it was self-defence and they dropped the charges. Because of the fact that we were two white guys in the military
coming from rough backgrounds they immediately assumed that it was one of us. Even though there were five of them and two of us.

The *intra-view* is merely one connection in the hub of connections that is produced in the research machine. The discussions may migrate in directions that are not imagined by the researcher, but these unsuspected *lines of flight* are part of the nomadic process during rhizoanalysis. *Intra-views* have the potential to “lead to responses that are far more personalized” (Xerri, 2018, p. 140). The intra-views in my dissertation included many personal contributions:

**Ella:** *I have many health problems, you’d think I was an 80-year-old or something* (laughing). *I recently got diagnosed with dysplasia where my oesophagus muscles don’t work right. So, they are trying to figure out the cause for that but I have to take these pills to help me swallow and I keep choking and it’s sickening. So, it’s weird.*

**Jimmy:** *It doesn’t matter what you have. You can be a kid or you can be an adult, but there is certain stuff that you are going to have; be it your bed, be it a couch, be it a chair, be it a pillow, be it a box of history. Anything, you are going to take that stuff with you and already there is a whole bunch of that history that we have just thrown in the garbage because really when you look at it, it’s not going to mean anything 20 years down the road anyways. No one is going to look at it so we get rid of it. Stuff in my life has really been nothing more than just clutter. It stresses me out, it stresses my relationships and it just causes worry about finding money to pay for all the stuff. I don’t*
want financial stress to destroy my relationships. When I figured that out, it was easy for me to get rid of stuff.

“Jimmy has no need for material things in his life. His whole philosophy of ‘less is better’ has freed him from the ‘rat race’ of life. I wonder if his experiences associated with not having a high school education has contributed to his ability to find the sense of ‘peace’ that he exudes. He completed high school much later, but not for material gains. Perhaps another disruption of common sense?? He is much more focused on relationships.” (Shelley’s Interview Journal, June 4, 2018)

The (non)transcriptions of the recorded discussions were not completed for the purpose of interpretation, representation or other such traditional handling and making meaning of words spoken. The (non)transcriptions served as a way to insure the preservation of the recorded conversations. I was worried that technology could fail me, and I did not want to lose the dialogue. Even after the recordings were completed, we often continued to converse beyond the space of our meetings, on the way back to our vehicles or in a stairwell. These conversations were not recorded, and they did not get (non)transcribed. Fearful that I would forget these unanticipated extended conversations, I would do my best to make notes as quickly as I could after each person departed.

I was extremely privileged to hear the personal experiences of these amazing people. I think…
They taught me. They opened to me. They trusted and they shared. I listen, I try to hear, I try to … just listen … what is becoming?

(Non)Transcription of Focus Group Discussion

At the end of each of the individual meetings, each participant was invited to be part of a group meeting to discuss their experiences. Focus groups have been useful in “reinforce[ing] the data-gathering process” (Xerri, 2018, p. 143). Like the intra-views, I did not want to treat the group discussion as an event controlled by myself. I was hoping the participants would speak freely in the discussions, and a natural unfolding of the discussion would occur as it had in the former meetings. Three participants had originally expressed a willingness to attend the focus group discussion. Only two of my participants ended up joining the group discussion (Cam and Jimmy) due to a last minute change in the schedule, but it was extremely interesting to engage with Cam and Jimmy in the discussion that ensued. I was particularly struck how they wanted to hear about my life experiences as well. At one point in the conversation, as they spoke about their own relationships and how relationships can have impact on our decisions in life, they drew me into their reflections:

Jimmy: Every year we go; once a year we join up with these random group of guys and go on a canoe trip together. Again, it’s just an acquaintance that is carried on. There is just a difference in your relationships later in life. When you’re in school you are there every day and you meet them every day. Once you get a job wherever you do your job. Friendships end up being kind of that group that you connect with unless you do something outside of that.
Intra-viewer: That’s interesting.

Cam: Relationships of convenience I’d say.

Jimmy: Yup.

Intra-viewer: Your conversation reminds me of my own children. My daughter who is in her early 30’s lives out in Calgary. You talk about high school drama, Cam... There was a lot of drama surrounding her friends in high school and so on. Always a lot of tears amongst the girls. I would always say to her, “You realize these are your high school friends. In ten years time you are never going to…” But interestingly ten years later those girls are like thick as thieves and they don’t live in the same place. One lives in Edmonton. One lives in Calgary, two live here in their home town and they’re like a sisterhood. They consistently make connections and have regular visits.

Relationships play big roles in our lives, don’t they?

Personal Teaching Reflective Journal of Researcher

Since I began working with returning adult learners, I have kept a reflective journal about my experiences and thinking around our classroom discussions. The journal held many reflections that were useful in mapping lines of flight around the chosen topic. One of my entries reads:

This was an extremely rewarding evening of teaching. Listening to these adults respond to the text (the novel we are reading) shows amazing insight and personal connections to the lives of the characters in the story. It is as though they are able to put themselves into the lives of the author’s created characters. They show such passion. I wonder if it is their own lived
experiences that allows them to draw such profound connection. It is unlike anything I have recognized in my regular ELA classes with young teens. It makes me want to learn more about who they have become since leaving their own high schools from years past. (Shelley’s Teaching Journal, November 18, 2017)

**Shared Completed Assignments of Participants**

Outside of the individual and group discussions, some of the participants offered to share some of their completed assignments that they had kept after graduating from the adult program. Most of the assignments involved writing pieces or selections that posed particular challenge that had been overcome. Each piece was a part of the individual becoming and became part of this rhizome research. Jimmy wrote in one of his in-class reading journals:

*I have completed the reading of this book. It is probably the first book I’ve completed since I quit school. It is the first time I read and watched a movie about a book. This book, and your whole class so far, has opened my heart and my mind to go places. I have put up walls or have forgotten and felt alone for a long time. Some of those situations have been very painful in my life and I really did not want to deal with them.* (Jimmy’s journal, Nov. 24, 2017)

The actual entry is pictured below in Figure 3 and Figure 4.
As we read through the chapters of the novel, prepare to make an entry into the double entry journal. If you prefer to set up your journal on a computer, you can save your work and just keep adding to your journal. You want the journal to reflect a deep level of response based on the events in each of the chapters. Use yellow sticky notes as you read to help you track your thoughts so that you can go back to the chapters and formulate some appropriate entries into your journal. You should pick words or phrases from the text that strike a question or connection as you read and record them using the following format. You may use as many sheets as necessary for your entries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Page Reference</th>
<th>Personal Response/Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: Nov 24</td>
<td>You (God) have overdone it!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter and Page Number</td>
<td>Call it writer’s block, call it laziness, call it my mind getting in the way, call it what ever you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words or Phrase (Quotation):</td>
<td>Permission to speak freely?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I think,&quot; he said, somberly, &quot;God overdid it.&quot;</td>
<td>I had a chance 27 years ago to sit in a classroom and complete Regents and Regents and get my grade 12 Diploma. For what ever reasons I am now in your class today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am very thankful for who you are and the lessons you are teaching me in this class. Thank you for opening my mind and my heart in all the lessons you have put in front of us to do. You may think that it is just part of my lesson plan,&quot; but I do believe it is more than that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have completed the reading of this book. It is probably only the fourth book I have completed since I quit school. It is the first time I read and watched the movie about a book.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Student Journal A
I feel so humbled being a part of these people’s lives. When Jimmy says he is having a difficult time with the assignment and then decides to “just let go and write”, I am reminded of the impact that both teacher and student can have on one another. It is an intra-related unfolding of each one’s becoming journey. The assemblage is complex. I read the journal responses of all my students. They amaze me. This is the moment of affect. This is the moment where I stop and wonder. What do I say? There is no interpretation … only cause to experience that moment and let the affect take hold. I am learning something new in this moment as an educator. I am learning the power that the reading of a text can bring to a person’s life. I am
learning that the experiences lived by each of these adult learners is felt anew in something as simply reading a text in which they make a connection. The text, the past experiences, the movie, the moment that the pen meets the blank pages of the journal are all part of the assemblage that brings about affect and influences desire. It is teaching by being present as affect takes hold. No more… no less. Affect that is creating in that moment is not an impetus for interpretation; the complexity that exists within that assemblage leading to affect is simply told in its rawness. It is up to the reader to decide what to do, to think, in that moment.

Emerging Memories and Perceptions of Researcher’s Teaching Experience

_ I remember the first day that I walked into an adult education classroom for students to complete their Grade 12 English Language Arts. Nothing new here. Just another English class to take up curriculum. I remember being wrong about not finding anything new in that teaching space. Little did I know that those people and that space would take me through a learning adventure in academia … there was a moment of (dis)(re)traction, Deleuze would say deterritorialization, and now I can recall it through memory and I can name it.  _ (Shelley’s Research Journal, December 5, 2017)

In addition to the researcher’s journal, other memories of teaching experiences at the adult collegiate and in pre-adult high schools emerged during the writing of the dissertation. Expressions (found in the memories) of the becoming educator organically became part of the becoming of my chosen topic in education and have played an important role in the writing about this education topic and subjectivity.
**(Non)Data Collection and Rhizoanalysis**

“There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (Shakespeare, 2003, Act 1, scene 5, lines 167-168).

Gerrard et al. (2017) described post-qualitative inquiry, such as rhizoanalysis, as throwing open the basis of research practices found in methods, methodology, and the claim to know. Rhizoanalysis is a (non)method that is inspired by Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism (Colebrook, 2002). Masny (2013) discussed rhizoanalysis in terms of a way to think differently about (non)methodology. Thinking differently about (non)data may cause some uncomfortableness but promotes transparency and openness and may allow creativity to unfold. Rhizoanalysis asks new kinds of questions in the research event and provides alternative ways of knowing. Masny spoke of this post qualitative approach as nomadic, but claimed, “it is important to qualitative research because it is a game-changer: transforming life” (p. 345). She further purported, “Rhizoanalysis focuses on what it produces and how it functions as a way to conceptualize research-as-event” (p. 345). It creates the potential to think beyond what is already known because the research is thought of as Deleuzian experimentation where the researcher has no idea what the results will be.

Rhizoanalysis is being used more frequently by educational researchers such as Bowles (2001), Cole(2005), Dillon (2016), Honan(2004, 2005, 2007, 2014), Jackson and Mazzei(2013), Kang(2007), Masny(2016), Pires(2014), and Waterhouse and Arnott(2016). This type of analysis enables these researchers to analyze various sources together and assess how affect is working among them to produce an unpredictable network. The sources used in the research are of different origin and
affect one another in unpredictable ways. As they are analyzed together, a rhizome emerges. Researchers do not focus on emerging patterns or meaningful structures, but they look for that which may have otherwise remained invisible in typical analysis. They do not avoid transcribing their discussion with participants, but instead of finding patterns in the transcriptions, they use their data to deconstruct and map the events and experiences of participants.

While there are various ways to approach rhizoanalysis, Masny (2016) confirmed, “the ontology remains the same: subject decentered, immanence and difference” (p. 669). She further explained:

Within the assemblage, there is an intensive reading (disruption). Molarization happens. The force of molar line emits a line of flight, a reading immanently. What happens next is unpredictable. … Reading an assemblage intensively relates to an untimely disruption that creates a rupture. Reading immanently consists of what might happen (potentiality) in reading, reading the world and self in an assemblage. Reading intensively and immanently the relationality of elements in an assemblage de- and re-territorializes content (bodies relating to one another) and expression (social nature of language). Reading self refers to the relationality of elements through the power of affect/becoming. Reading an assemblage in rhizoanalysis consists in reading the interaction between bodies, expression, and affect. (p. 669)

Difference is found in the effect of the constant interaction between virtual and actual. Masny explained, “the virtual becomes actualized only to become virtual
again. It is the forces of difference that allows for creation and invention to happen continuously” (p. 667).

Post qualitative approaches, such as rhizoanalysis, look forward and are likened to creating a map. The *intra-view* can be brought to the reader in such a way that the researcher can break away from the role as an interpreter, removing the discourses in which the researcher operates (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). By using post-qualitative approaches, the researcher thinks differently about traditional interviews and analysis of the data collected (Mazzei, 2013). This rhizomatic research utilizes the concept of *intra-view* and (non)data. Unlike modernist attempts to bring meaning to transcribed interview data, Mazzei explained that, in rhizoanalysis, the voices of participants “cannot be thought as emanating from an essentialist subject nor can they be separated from the enactment in which they are produced” (p. 732). In other words, Mazzei theorized that limiting data to spoken words cast limitations on the production of knowledge.

An *affect* approach to research that is assembled around Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism includes the concurrence of (non)methodology and (non)method (St. Pierre, 2019). Through this (non)methodological process, St. Pierre (1997) described the emerging of circumstantial transgressive data which Masny (2009) called rhizomatic. She proclaimed the methodology appeared disrupted and reterritorialized as a rhizomatic process (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). As an inductive approach, it does not apply pre-established categories. It resists temptations to interpret and ascribe meaning; rather looking for what emerges through the intensive and immanent reading of data. (p. 7)
Mazzei (2013) suggested that participants often have made their own meaning out of the experiences they share, so rather than attempt to arrive at meaning, I mapped connectives by developing interview questions and ‘talking’ to participants in order to think about how things work together so that a VwO might be produced. Connectives that were considered included family, aspirations, gender norms, disappointments, hopes, geography, institutions (Mazzei, 2013), but also included other connectives that surfaced at the time of the interview. Being an anti-interpretive methodology, rhizomes captured a version of the adult learner beyond modernist interpretive research approaches because the conversation with participants was directly quoted in lengthier phrases. The words of the participants do not exist apart from them or me. VwO implies a joining of forces “between the material and semiotic and the time of the interview and the time of our lives” (Mazzei, 2013, p. 737).

**Transgressive Data and Rhizoanalysis**

Since post qualitative researcher challenges the notion of human interpretation of other human experiences, in rhizomatic research, (non)data is not considered as evidence but as *transgressive* (St. Pierre, 2002). Viewed as “fluid and in flux” (Waterhouse, 2011, p. 137), the (non)data cannot be coded and is beyond representation. Traditional coding and analysis is linear, but in the rhizomatic process, “the linear process is interrupted because the researcher enters the narrative in the middle” (St.Pierre, 2002, p. 404). The *transgressive data* escape language, becoming “uncodable, excessive, out-of-control, out-of-category … the commonplace meaning of the category, data, no longer held” (p. 404). In further
reflection of this unpredictable data, Masny (2013) stated, “rhizoanalysis operates within transcendental empiricism in which sense expresses not what a text means or is, but rather its virtual potential to become” (p. 341). The (non)data are not viewed as evidence of truth to what ‘something’ might mean. The (non)data produce connections as the researcher intensely studies the sources to map the assemblages that enable the researcher (and readers of the research) to make sense of the research event.

Since meaning is not inherent in the (non)data, the duty of the researcher, in post qualitative research, is not to represent or interpret the participants’ experiences. Rather, the researcher presents and exposes the experiences through rhizomatic mapping whereby “sense emerges through the power of affect” (p. 342). In other words, the “report findings” are no longer taken up as a representation, but as cartography known as map making (Waterhouse, 2011). Deleuze (1990/1995) said, “Never interpret” experience, experiment” (p. 87). The researcher is able to study her assemblage and experiment with the relational flows and connections that occur among all the elements. The experimentation is a creative process. The intra-views and other (non)data take the researcher to new assemblages, new questions, that give way to new becomings that seek to shape how both participants and researcher are becoming in the assemblages of the research.

New wonderings are more about the forces that act upon the participant and the researcher in the becoming of both. Post humanist researchers find ways to plug into the material and the discursive concurrently. In choosing a Deleuzian ontology, researchers do not want to stop producing knowledge. They attempt to enact research
practices that take a break from the traditional assumptions about subject, voice and agency in order to produce knowledge and new ontological adventures.

Rhizoanalysis allows for this experimentation through making connections with heterogeneous elements and following multiple paths of analysis, not for the purpose of arriving at transcendent conclusions, but rather to inspire thinking. Colebrook (2002) said, “Thinking is not something ‘we’ do; thinking happens to us, from without. There is a necessity to thinking, for the event of thought lies beyond the autonomy of choice. Thinking happens” (p. 38). We do not all think the same.

Readers of this dissertation will all think something differently as the text is read. Each time I read something for a second or third time, I think something different about a text. Likewise, when I look at my (non)data, I often think something different each time I review it. I plug into the (non)data differently every time.

Mazzei (2013) encouraged the researcher to think of research as the “machine that is a hub of connections and productions with interviewing being just one of those connections” (p. 739). The discussion dialogues from my intra-views were not the only means to move in the coming to know more deeply about the participants’ experiences and to think how this becoming of knowing might (dis)(re)tract thinking about re-entry programs. Mazzei suggested that if researchers are “to make sense of these material and discursive material constructions and joining of forces, perhaps we must think practices that disavow an over-reliance on words as the primary source of meaning” (p. 739). Other transgressive data did become a part of the analysis in this dissertation, including my own teaching experiences working with adult and pre-adult learners. Furthermore, three of the participants had began a relationship with
me while they had formerly been students in my class at the collegiate. The (non)data collection is nomadic. These previous relational intra-actions made for a seemingly more natural entry way into having some deep conversations with the adults in the group. The two students who were not in my class had seen me in the halls of the building. We were not strangers. They knew me as someone who had been part of the re-entry program for many years. I was not a stranger stepping into the space. I was/am/continue to be part of the program. I did not just ‘drop in’ to the program for the purpose of completing a dissertation. The dissertation emerged as part of the intra-relational journey with the program long before I ever thought about completing further graduate work. The research process is a nomadic experiment in trying to affect the coming to know about the people and the program in this rhizome. It is a process that speak to ‘hows’ and ‘ways’ that thinking happens and to how connections occur in the rhizoanalytic event.

While rejecting the myopic view of subjective experience, this dissertation maps the assemblages that emerged out of unpredictable affects. While affect does have a link to emotion, affects are “products of a multifaceted event. Affects express preconscious, visceral response to an encounter, before that response is represented and named as a particular emotion” (Waterhouse & Arnott, 2016, p. 124). The wondering then becomes one of understanding how these assemblages work together and what it is that they produce, not about what they ‘mean’. The production of these assemblages is taken up in Mesa 5 and Mesa 6.

**Nomadic Inquiry and the (Dis)(Re)Tracting into Affective Engagement**

Adkins (2015) said, “the project of becoming, of creating the new, begins
with seeing the nomadic in everything” (p. 13). Nomadic inquiry involves the production of assemblages through intense processes. All assemblages are “continuous deformations in relation to one another” (p. 63). Not unlike nomadic research, life journeys are also nomadic (Figure 5 below is one of my student’s recollections of her own life journey that brought her back to the adult high school). She gave me permission to picture her work. When I asked her why she didn’t put the dates in order, she said:

*When I think of my life, the dates get all mixed up. I know for sure when I was born, and when I was a kid I moved around a lot. I remember those days. I put the years down for some of the major events in my life because I think those are the right years. But, I didn’t put them in any order because I don’t think of my life as order... it is kind of all mixed up. Like how the years get mixed up in my mind, so my poster is like a collage with the events all muddled up everywhere. I remember when I left school. I didn’t like it any more and I remember when I quit. I remember my struggles, but it is all mixed up. It all just happened. But I had happy times in life too, and I am really happy now that I know I graduating soon, this year. I want my kids to see that. And my husband is proud too. We make a good team.*
My interest in Deleuze arose from his insights into collaborations with others and the ideas that could be generated through the relational aspects that occur between people, things, and events (Deleuze & Parnett, 2002). After completing a biographical inquiry into ‘becoming men’, Gale and Wyatt (2008) used nomadic inquiry to discuss the relational aspects and experiences that were created between themselves, two men, while collaborating with one another in their writing project. They explained how nomadic inquiry afforded them the opportunity to become aware of discursive forces that act upon each other to fix and categorize their identities. The multiplicity found in Deleuzian thought allowed for the decentring of self and formed openings to new emerging possibilities:

Nomadic inquiry can take us through the plateaus and territories of Deleuze and Guattari’s topographies of space, resisting the certainties and stabilities of
the logos of striated space, where language is interested only in the closure of
the denotative utterance, and exploring, through the application of strategies
of territorialisation, the doubt and uncertainty of the nomos of smooth space,
where language celebrates the openness of the connotative utterance. (p. 372)

Emerging possibilities are enticing to me because they allow me an opportunity
to learn something new through the created becomings within the project. Semetsky
(2009) said, “an inquiry into the as yet unknown is nomadic” (p. 451). The nomadic
journey paves the way to find those “more things that are dreamt of in Heaven and
Earth” (Shakespeare, 2003, Act 1, scene 5, lines 167). That is the beauty of nomadic
inquiry. The process is as much experiential as it is experimental.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) worked with patients who had
schizophrenia and other mental health issues. Wanting to venture away from the
traditional approach of analysis in treatment, Deleuze and Guattari encouraged their
patients to take lines of flight as a means to take their thinking in a different
direction. Lines of flight were used to challenge traditional ways of thinking.
Although they do not always result in new ways of thinking, they create a way to
think outside of dominant thinking. They are nomadic, breaking free from
territorialisation, deterritorializing and rupturing into new territories or simply
destructing. They represent both risk and opportunity. Nomadic thought breaks away
from traditional ways of thinking, resists boundaries and “can be called the
Deterritorialized par excellence” (p. 444).

Guerin (2013) used words and phrases such as “always learning”, “open to
new knowledge”, “in between”, and “flexible” (p. 146) to describe rhizomatic
culture. In her work with doctoral students to learn more about their experiences in a multidisciplinary doctoral writing group, she described the doctoral researcher traits as flexible, multiple, collegial, and connective. As society’s needs change, Guerin proposed that research cultures also need to adapt to these changes. Recognizing that a rhizomatic approach to research is well suited to an altering research climate, she also said that the traits that she uncovered in the doctoral researchers are the qualities that are likely to be prized by the complex and diverse research environments new researchers are entering today. Perhaps what we are seeing in the accounts from doctoral students in these writing groups is the emergent embodiment of the nomadic scholar poised to follow Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1988, p. 24) exhortation: ‘Don’t sow, grow offshoots!’ (p. 147)

The growing of offshoots is possible in nomadic inquiry. The beginning of my own mesa as a graduate student constituted a process of living as instructor, student, and emerging researcher. While I did opt to construct part of my data later in my research journey, a portion of my (non)data collection was occurring simply through my everyday living experiences. Likewise, analysis was even take place during simple tasks like saddling my horse or reflecting on my day as I close my eyes to go to sleep. Nomadic inquiry (Semetsky, 2008; St. Pierre, 1997) was occurring from my very early entry point in the whole process. As St. Pierre (1997) has said about her own nomadic story telling about the women from Essex Country, the rhizome that I write about the returning adult learner “has no beginning and no end
but has always been, and I slip into it over and over again in different places, and it is as if I too have always been there” (p. 379).

The journey of nomadic inquiry can take the researcher to unknown paths, and the becoming researcher willingly treads these paths while taking up the wondering within her topic. New wondering will rise to the surface, and original wondering may even be reconstituted. Deleuze (1968/1994) proposed some interesting thinking around the creation of problems and questions. He spoke about the concept of ready-made questions that tend to disappear at the arrival of solutions, and he suggested that these types of problems are not actually authentic problems. As such, I attempted to respond to my wondering in this dissertation, not formal questions. According to Deleuze, inquiry around a type of epistemology that formulates specific questions fails to reflect a genuine desire to take up research that is truly problematic to the researcher. This type of inquiry can result in the confirmation of answers that a researcher may have already anticipated at the beginning of a study. Deleuze suggested that the focus in this type of ‘already known’ research focuses on a product, not necessarily a process. In the cartographic creation of this rhizome, I began by wondering about the lives of adults living without a high school diploma. A potential problem around re-entry programs did not emerge until much later into the process, not until I had spoken with all my participants and thought about our conversations for a long time.

As a nomadic researcher, I do not look to confirm the ‘already known’. I attempt to create new ways to think and inquire (Deleuze, 1968/1994). In the process, I am inspired by the desire to recognize problematic issues as they are revealed as
problems (Honan, 2004; Sellers & Honan, 2007; Semetsky, 2008, St. Pierre, 1997; 2011). The goal is not to arrive at solutions to problems. Rather, problems tend to emerge out of our thinking. Deleuzian thinking means that knowledge “constitutes a dynamic process of inquiry as an experimental and practical art embedded in experience” (Semetsky, 2009, p. 443) where I am able to “make, remake, and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon” (Deleuze in Semetsky, 2009, p. 444).

Semetsky (2009) described the possibility for the making, remaking and unmaking of concepts through the distribution of multiplicities in smooth space. She contrasted the notion of smooth with striated (as discussed in musical terms) where striated is

ordered by rigid schemata and point-to-point connections ensuring a linear and fixed structure, and smooth – as an irregular, open, and heterogeneous, dynamical structure of fluid forces, ‘a field … wedded to nonmetric, acentered, rhizomatic multiplicities. (p. 451)

The smooth space is where the ‘not yet thought’ can arise. It is the space where common sense thinking can be overcome “based on the affective logic of the included middle” (p. 451) and new thinking, which is the aim of transcendental empiricism, arises. Deleuze (1968/1994) stated:

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but a fundamental ‘encounter’….It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition. (p. 139).
Semetsky (2009) described the ‘something that forces us to think’ as “intuition that lays out on the plane, or surface, the dynamical structure of experience; and it is the reading of signs … that engenders knowledge” (p. 451). Regardless of one’s choice of description to discuss the surfacing of new ways of thinking on that smooth surface, the researcher becomes displaced or deterritorialized through these intensifying moments. This *becoming* may be understood as *affect* (Semetsky, 2009). As a nomadic subject, the researcher *becomes* through nudging found in affect. I have been referring to this nudging as *(dis)(re)tractions.* “The affective capacity is what defines the body in action” (Semetsky, 2006, p. 5), and open-ended relations that are always in play with one another are what, Semetsky says, *affect* the world. Traditional ways of knowing include logic, reason, and deduction; they do not take up an *affective* response to (non)data. Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) described the first reactions to data as moments that were “interesting, remarkable, or important” (p. 82). An *affective* response to (non)data is often felt before it is thought. In my own research process, this often happened even before the transcriptions were completed. They happened at moments in my discussions with my participants, and I made note of them in my journal immediately following our meetings so I would not forget about them. They would be important in the cartography of mapping the assemblages. Semetsky (2004) described these moments as the “Firstness of intuition” (p. 433), always preceding cognition. It is a way of knowing before we ever fully think something. It happens in the “immediacy of experience” (p. 434), *(dis)(re)tracting* us to think more about connections and analysis. It is a vital part of the process.
This (dis)(re)tracting plays a part in the (non)methods to bring about “tiny perceptions … or pricklings” (Deleuze, 1993, p. 87) that act as pre-conscious existence having the potential for a researcher to learn something new. Adkins (2015) saw this thought production as intense whereby “thoughts seem to percolate in and out of conscious awareness” (p. 16). As the (dis)(re)tracting becomes perceived in the person’s consciousness, an assemblage is created as it merges into a disparate relationship with another contrasting part of the assemblage thus producing the threshold of consciousness. This merging moment holds the potential to disturb stability, or deterritorialize that which was once comfortably territorialized, and reterritorialize the body to the next plateau.

I did my best to pay attention to these moments of intuition and (dis)(re)tracting in my research. Aside from making notes in my journal immediately following each of the conversations with my participants, I highlighted the areas of the transcripts that I found interesting or important or struck me as remarkable as I read them. I was not marking these areas to categorize or group them; I was highlighting them as an immanent response to the data and the thoughts that I was having. I used sticky-note marking papers to record my thoughts and paste them directly beside the highlighted texts to record my thoughts as I read the transcriptions so I could remember what I was prickling in those intuitive moments. After reading the text several times and adding to my sticky-note markings, I began to map my thinking. This is where assemblages of the elements found in the (non)data began. I wanted to see how they might work as I planned to move into the reporting phase of my research- that part of the research in which I am able to share what I have learned.
or thought. The mapping of thinking does not necessarily produce knowledge. The cartography or mapping of the assemblages affirms the multiplicity of the elements at play. It also leaves the research open to new lines of flight as thinking is ongoing, continually happening or moving.

**Possibilities for Significance**

“You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept.” (Shelley’s journal November 4, 2017, as quoted from *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margaret Williams, 1958, pp. 9-10).

Massumi (2015) said, “The point of thinking with affect is to think through our implication in relational fields, and the potential we might find there” (p. 151). He was speaking of the varying activities that play into events. These events are simply points of entry that create the potential for further open-ended occurrences. As I worked through this dissertation, several points of entry emerged to offer insight into the becoming of adults living with minimal schooling.

As an educator, I have always maintained the importance of an education for all people. My intent is not to question the value of an education or the potential benefits that an education can offer. I did not set out to seek answers as to why people chose to leave school or how an education system might evolve to ensure higher graduation rates. That is the quest of others. Manitoba Education and Training (n.d.) reported that Manitoba’s four-year student-tracked high school graduation rate for 2017 was about 79%. The province of Saskatchewan reported a 76.5% graduation rate for 2017 (Saskatchewan Education, 2017). Graduation rates vary from province
to province in Canada, but a grade 12 diploma is generally viewed as the minimum requirement for pursuing additional education and for entry into the world of work. What becomes of the 21% or 23.5% of the premature exiting students? Is there anything to be discovered besides the daunting negative statistics represented by this population?

My intent was to extend lines for thinking about unschooled bodies in new and underrepresented ways. The importance of the human body is found in the simplicity of simply being human. Importance or visibility should not be defined by the amount of education that one possesses. Descriptions that are rooted in lacking are attached to people that are less educated. Equity is found in simply being human. This research into the becoming of the adults in this study is a paradox to the common thinking that has attached itself to the uneducated body. How else can we understand this body? Are the statistics that are rooted in concepts of “lacking” the only way that we can think about the individuals that divorce themselves from the system of education? This dissertation serves to disrupt those descriptions and patterns of lacking. The individuals in this rhizome do not break easily. Their edges have been polished and their becoming is unravelled. The study will deterritorialize the uneducated adult found at the margins of an education system that operates within a discourse to produce the ideal graduated body. The overarching attempt to experiment with affect theory to influence thinking around high school dropouts and influence education stake holders in areas of research, praxis and educational discourse drives the researcher’s choices in bringing news ways of thinking around this group of adult learners.
Transcendental Empiricism: Thoughts on Epistemology

Deleuze’s thinking around *haecceity* allows for a machinic connection of experiences (Colebrook, 2002) beyond the subject whereby experiences create one’s ideas (immanence). Deleuze offers up the concept of *transcendental empiricism* to counter traditional ideals towards empiricism of immanence. Colebrook (2002) explained:

Life is lived directly and immediately. We do not perceive a picture or idea of the sun, we experience sunlight itself. Indeed, far from our ideas of *ordering* our world; the world itself produces ideas – or images – of which we are effects. … Ideas do not order experience; ideas are the *effect* of experience.
(p. 80)

I was not convinced that traditional empirical approaches were going to work for my own research given the complexity of individual experiences around the topic of dropping out of school.

Affect theories place value in context and social construction, not meaning. The phenomena being studied in affect theories are not patterned or validated (Deleuze, 2004). Research theories describe and demonstrate and elaborate; they expose the uncommon or exceptional. They are part philosophical and part research. Ruitenbergh (2010) described the challenge of the philosopher to be taken seriously as researcher, and the researcher to be taken seriously as philosopher as one of the greatest challenges of education. Deleuze provides transcendental empiricism as opportunity to address the conflict and “knit a new breed of intellectual, a new breed of analyst, a new breed of militant: blending the different types and running them
together” (Guattari in Deleuze et al., 2004, p. 217). Deleuze’s philosophy, nested in transcendental empiricism, describes the ways that the various elements of perceived reality and human experiences mesh and generate the events, experiences, and the “I” of our own identification. Rai (2011) summarized transcendental empiricism as taking

the body, its events, its relations, and pre-individual, molecular-molar singularities as the moving whole of its mode of experimentation …

characterized by a continuity of moving parts and wholes in which the ‘whole’ that they are implicated in does not refer to any pre-given unity, [and] this emergent unity-in-multiplicity is constituted by virtual (real but not actual) tendencies and capacities. Potentialities of the body are involved/evolved through an experimental method of becoming-active…an ethics of intensive composition or the processes of assemblage of interpenetrating multiplicities. (p. 316)

In other words, a researcher is able to approach her topic through ethical experimentation from the perspective of the body ‘becoming’, allowing for the unknown to surface and, perhaps, new questions to be asked. Questions arising from lived experiences can be addressed in transcendental empiricism without establishing universal truths or ideals in the process. Transcendental empiricism also aims “to bring into being that which does not yet exist” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 147). New ways of thinking can emerge through thing which does not yet exists. Deleuze stated:

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but a fundamental ‘encounter’….It may be grasped in a range of
affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition. (p. 451)

Gerrard et al. (2017) affirmed that “post-qualitative inquiry challenges the authority of research that searches for ‘truth’ in the experience of others” (p. 390).

Using an affect lens to look at education enables me to bring together theoretical/philosophical and empirical qualitative methodology. This (non)methodological approach that merges philosophy and qualitative methods enables the researcher to access (non)data and sources that have been collected throughout life and sometimes, from unexpected places and circumstances. These (non)data sources, referred to as transgressive (St. Pierre, 2004) are not always typically associated with traditional research. They are sometimes found in memories, dreams, poetry, art forms, and other unsuspecting places.

As such, transcendental empiricism becomes my epistemological stance that informs my research project as lived experience— one that I, as researcher, can take up in wondering. Transcendental empiricism transcends the experiencing subject, focusing on the thinking that is produced by experience as an event. Rhizoanalysis has allowed me to reterritorialize the adult dropout into an expanse of multiplicity and affective intensity. A quest to find what is missing (Bowles, 2001) is important in order to understand human experience in its complexity. Rather than understanding these adults with limited schooling from a linear perspective that leads to a specific unifying identity, rhizoanalysis opens the door to something new, something with a non-linear and non-innate perspective. The (non)data is
transgressive, analysis is non-interpretive allowing for rhizomatic connections, reporting is cartographic (explained below), and the end point or product that is produced involves an ongoing thinking process. Affect remains the lens to look at the topic from an educational perspective. Possibility for new perspective drew me into the rhizome…

**So…You call this research?**

Clark and Parsons (2013) defined research as “academic work fuelled by a promise of change as the ‘affect’ of research go beyond what can simply be represented” (p. 35). St. Pierre (2011) spoke about the limits of “conventional humanist inquiry” (p. 613). Post qualitative research has reconceptualised concepts of validity and reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Research transformations that began decades ago as adaptations of scientific method (St. Pierre, 2011) have evolved, now allowing research credibility to be found in the fidelity given to the voices of the participants in this study. I was not interested in producing ‘results’ or ‘principles’ or embarking upon a quest for meaning that results from coding and interpreting data. Additionally, I did not want to simply copy what is seen. This research was an attempt to bring the (un)interpreted voices of the participants to the pages to provide an authentic account of their experiences as re-entry adults to an adult high school collegiate.

I cannot deny the person sitting with me in conversation is human. We share that label, but each of us has *become*, and continues to *become*, a constant production of that which is interrelating in each of our own life assemblages. Each of us is different; each participant, the researcher, each reader of the dissertation, but for
Deleuze, May (2005) said, “difference is not a thing, it is a process” (p. 24), and difference “allows creation and invention to occur continuously” (Masny, 2006, p. 150). Thinking difference rather than sameness is possible in a rhizome. The binary mindset becomes challenged and enables researcher to think beyond what ‘is’ to consider the future. There is a break from binaries. Jackson (2017) described this break up as freedom from a reliance on methods and a new starting place outside of method. The outside is an important concept in Deleuzian thought and undergirds my argument for thinking without method in qualitative inquiry.

As the research project (un)folding, (non)data emerged to create the multiple and complex experiment to deterritorialize human experience. Individual and group discussions (intra-views) with my participants, student assignments, my own memories of personal lived experiences and recorded experiences in my personal journal, along with a review of literature surrounding high school dropouts and adult learning, provided diverse entryways into the lived experiences of the participants in this study. The rhizome creation allowed an assemblage of various sources to develop new thinking around the topic of high school dropout and those that return later in life to attain their high school diploma. It even navigates some tension between what is territorialized, deterritorialized and reterritorialized.

The research study set out to disrupt the thinking about the ‘unschooled’ body by deterritorializing the subject of education. Within this deterritorialization, the researcher is conscious that the process of writing and completing a dissertation is essentially territorializing. The researcher is also affective in the journey. In addition to looking at education and the ‘unschooled’ and framing my discussion, the lens of
affect is extended to the ways of doing research through transcendental empiricism as epistemology. The result is a convergence of (non)methodology, (non)method, and subject matter that coexist with the becoming found in lived experience.

In order to extend complex considerations of the dropout phenomenon and the becoming of adult learners, rhizoanalysis was chosen as a (non)methodology to better understand the assemblages that have been, and are being, produced in the lives of the participants and researcher. Kang (2007) proposed the inception of rhizoactivity to discuss lifelong learning with the aim of breaking down binary thought stemming from modernism and humanist approaches to research. Rhizoanalysis was “proposed as a conceptual tool to produce an image of learning/learner in a postmodern world” (Kang, 2007, p. 207), reflecting the multiplicity and connectedness associated with adult education research in a postmodern paradigm. It represents an abandonment of modernist approaches to research and an extension of qualitative research whereby post qualitative research defies the boundaries of traditional methods associated with interviews and data analysis. The study is highly influenced by philosophy, making its (non)methods, essentially, philosophical in nature.

Non-representational research calls method into question. It challenges the prescription of method by arguing that standardized methods do little more than provide a false sense of security that knowledge is stable, or even knowable. … It embraces the uncertainty of knowledge and the forces that accumulate to produce events … as an ongoing opportunity in a politics of hope, creativity, and imagination. (Ulmer, 2017, pp. 838-839)
Scholars who conduct non-representational / non-interpretive / posthumanistic / rhizomatic / Deleuzian … research do so without boundaries that precisely define the research or prescribe a set of instructions that explain how to get it done. A scholar who seeks alternative ways to thinking and conducting research might be drawn to (non)methodologies to maintain an openness to different ways of thinking about research. In consideration of post practices in qualitative research, I would like to take a few moments at this point in the dissertation to address the aspects of critique that surround these evolving research choices.

**Challenge, Credibility, Believability → Rhizomatic Accountability**

As creative and generative as rhizomatic research has been for me, self-doubt and uncertainty have also been a part of the journey. One must find one’s own way in the ‘doing’ of the research. No model exists to direct the building or producing of the product known as dissertation when choosing a non-method approach in the seeking of new knowledge. But, Braidotti (2013) encourages a taking up of the challenge in posthumanism and “urges us to think critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming” (p. 844). In doing so, I do not have to perform the same as researchers who have gone before me or of those who will follow. I only have to become researcher within the paradigm-specific notions to which I have nomadically wandered, remembering that the nomad does not wander without purpose (often to find the next oasis), but rather constantly moving and navigating the complexity of the assemblages that are being produced. Jackson (2017) said:

In the social sciences, and qualitative research in particular, method reigns
supreme to provide normative forms to our thinking in research. In other words, method supposedly, saves us from criticisms of credibility and reliability. A fixed image of method (i.e., a method that precedes inquiry) takes on a stratified form of trustworthiness that validates research. (p. 666)

In this stratifying description, method becomes “molar agency” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 76). Known methods stabilize the research process. Methodology was once the basis for qualitative inquiry, but the taking up of a non-traditional research approach such as rhizoanalysis leaves the researcher in an experimental space in the learning of something new. Jackson (2017) said:

Critiquing method is not enough. Experimenting with method differently is not enough. We do not need method to think. Our task, then, is to keep creating the new without method: doing without method by staying on its outside in an act of creative destruction. (p. 674)

As such, a new and becoming researcher is aware of the accountability owed to the scholarly community that the work is worthy of its attempts. It must be believable. Ulmer (2017) said, “scholars who embark upon non-representational research may be filled with self-doubt, trepidation, and uncertainty as they seek for different ways of producing knowledge” (p. 843). The work in rhizoanalysis is to have diffractive transparency (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017), moving beyond representation and interpretation, seeking the affective intra-relational connections of human and non-human bodies.

Terms such as validity and reliability have been inherited from scientific research traditions rooted in a positivist paradigm (Waterhouse, 2011) that includes
quantitative research, and they do not reflect the language of research pertaining to a post qualitative or post humanist paradigm. The focus is not so much on the methods, and reproduction of such, but rather on the creation of new. Qualitative research “produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or means of quantification” (Cypress, 2017, p. 256). However, Waterhouse noted the evolution of concepts in post-qualitative research so that its value is discussed in terms of “trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, plausibility, and so forth” (p. 140).

Lather (1993), highly influential in the understanding of post-qualitative processes, spent much of her time pursuing the concept of *rhizomatic validity*.

Described as disruptive and deeply political, Lather thought of *rhizomatic validity* as transgressive, violating boundaries and “generating counter-practices of authority” (p. 685). Lather refused to over-simple answers to questions. She offered *rhizomatic validity* as a new way to think about the quality of educational research, both in terms of creativity and ethics. Cypress (2017) reconfirmed these notions of researcher creativity within “the evolving study” (p. 260), noting since qualitative research deals with people and multiple assemblages, the research is complex and should leave room for creative ways to allow the participants’ voices to be read authentically, void of researcher interpretation.

Lather (1993) offered an explanation to scrutinize Deleuzian rhizomatic approaches to conduct research. *Rhizomatic validity* enables research to be assessed according to its “creative, affective powers” (Waterhouse, 2011, p. 141). It is not judged by an external set of criteria. Although Lather provided a viable alternative to review rhizomatic research, Scheurich (1997) cautioned against “the resourcefulness
of the Same to reappear with new masks that only seem to be Other” (p. 90). In other words, he did not want to see the rawness, difference and messiness of rhizoanalysis (Other) to simply be transformed back into a process of theory and methods (Sameness). He actually suggested that a researcher just present raw data that would leave a reader and researcher “stunned into silence” (p. 90). Reflecting that the academic world may not be entirely ready to accept the notion of silence, he therefore concluded, “What is called for here, then, in the absence (fear) of silence, is a … loud clamor of polyphonic, open, tumultuous, subversive conversation on validity as the wild, uncontrollable play of difference” (p. 90). Research will always be valued in educational scholarship as a means for innovative transformation within a constantly becoming profession. There is room to expand notions of what defines plausibility. In terms of rhizomatic research, perhaps, we can focus on that which gives fidelity to the voice of the participants and allows the researcher and readers of research to learn something new … therein lays rhizomatic (non)validity.

**Immanent Reflexivity**

Deleuze (1990/1995) discussed the importance of creativity in the replacement of reflection in order for the production of new relationships and assemblages to occur. Waterhouse (2011) viewed this substitution of reflection for creation as the transformation of reflexivity into a becoming process. She described reflexivity as being “performed in the writing of the dissertation and involves reading, reading the world and self” (p. 144) and called it immanent reflexivity. Stronach et al. (2013) described traditional practices of reflexivity as:

obsessions (which are more extra-professional that professional) with
universalistic prescription and a priori methodological specification … a kind of educational death – a sentence perhaps commuted to a life of imprisonment – that educational research must resist. (p. 104-105)

Immanent reflexivity offers an alternative to a fixed set of practices that reflects a Deleuzian paradigm. Its aim is not to lend itself to the making of truth in the dissertation. Being a performative reflexivity, Stronach et al. (2013) describe it as a type of “envisaging” (p. 104) or “picturing” (p. 97) that can “open up more plural possibilities” (p. 98). The authors explained:

“Picturing,” then, may be a performative metaphor for reflexivity. If so, it is picturing that includes its own frame, embodies itself, and anticipates its audience. But in each case reflexivity may require a different “picturing” of the agentic self in acts of (self-) creation. (p. 99)

Stronach et al. used the creation of paintings to describe how the artist picks up a brush and begins to paint by painting “himself into the picture in act of apparently perfect reflexivity” (p. 99). It is as though the artist paints himself into the subjects of his painting; he is not only looking at the canvas as he paints, but he looks back from the canvas at the observers as he paints himself into the picture. “It is the instability of these perspectives that animates the picture by focusing onlookers into reflective and reflexive action … [and] offers pictures that exceed the real” (p. 100). Much like the artist painting himself into his canvas, the researcher puts herself into the middle of her research. Waterhouse (2011) described the researcher as “a key element, but only one element amongst many, that contributes to the research event, its assemblages, its flows, and becomings” (p. 144).
Consistency Within the Paradigm

The question of what counts as convincing or plausible in post qualitative work is best taken up in relation to the paradigm in which the researcher is situating her work. *Rhizomatic (non)validity* and *immanent reflexivity* are well suited to a post structural paradigm and reflect the philosophical stances of Deleuze and Guattari. The credibility of the research can be discussed in relation to how the research process is reflected within a chosen paradigm. Lock (2011) said:

> It is not helpful for qualitative research practice to be ensconced in some fixed set of methodological rules or in some particular ‘most rigorous’ analytic approach. Rather, being aware of, sensitive to, and having ways to make sense of and explore various possibilities in design, data gathering, analysis, and even writing are helpful. This suggests the need for exposure to a deep range of possibilities. (p. 659)

Deleuze and Guattari offer a possibility to do research without subscribing to the accepted routines of traditional routine approaches. Deleuze’s ontology was about concepts of difference. He was not interested in learning about how one ought to live or understand the right way to live. He was more interested in “how we act and how our lives go” (May, 2005, p.171). May explained:

> There are no instructions … no handbook. … What he has done instead is to conceive the world in a way that makes conformity not the monolith that needs to be broken but instead the detritus of our possibilities. It is not … deviance that needs to explain itself. … It is conformity that should make us raise an eyebrow. Difference is there, always. It is immanent … we explore
and experiment, not in order to reject this world, but in order better to embrace it. (p. 171)

The merit of doing quality research in Deleuzian fashion means that the researcher’s topic is de/re/territorialized. The work becomes an experiment in that territory of finding difference to create new ways of thinking. Deleuze puts forth “an ontology of problems, an ontology that faces us neither as an explanation of the world nor as a solution to a philosophical question (p. 172). He challenges the researcher to go beyond what may already be known, what may have already been taught. May described it precisely when he said, “we are never finished with living … there is always more” (p. 172). There is always more to learn about the way people live.

**Intra-mesa**

In this mesa, I described aspects of the rhizome experiment for this dissertation by mapping out the (un)folding of the (non)design. I have also weaved in Deleuze’s notions of transcendental empiricism and have offered an explanation of creative non-methods that constitute the taking up of rhizoanalysis. This explanation is imperative to understand how the credibility of research may be discussed within a post-qualitative paradigm. Experimentation and creation are necessary components of a non-traditional research project that aims to think something new. A set of rules does not exist to direct a researcher in the (un)folding of the design. Through experience, the research becomes, immanent encounters occur and something else is created. The researcher is able to learn more about how the participants live as unschooled people in the world and how they find their way back to school later in life. As the process unfolds, wondering is always producing, and in this research,
wonderings begins to emerge around re-entry programs and how they might be re-imagined. Mesa 4 serves as a review of the literature around the topic of dropout and the territorializing ‘truths’ that have firmly substantiated themselves within education.

**MESA 4**

**Territorializing Education, Adult Learner and Dropout**

_I remembered that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, awaited those who had courage to go forth into its expanse, to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils._ (Emily Bronte in _Jane Eyre_, chp 10, p. 87)

Territorialized notions of the bodies that are supposed to be graduated/produced within school makes the decision to leave school non-sensible, and the bodies are marginalized from the norm. But, the invisible can have the potential for virtual creative power (Deleuze, 1988; Means, 2011) that can be used to re-imagine things in society and education spaces. The dominant and linear views of less educated adults as lacking and incomplete can be transformed by deterritorializing the adult through the systematic liberation of desire (Deleuze, Lapoujade & Taormina, 2004). In the same way that Mozère (2007) incorporated Deleuzian thinking into her work to create new narratives around young children’s desire and development and the competence of female staff members in daycare centres in France, lines of flight can be explored to create new narratives around the lives of uneducated adults whose moments of intensities brought them back to an adult high school space. Empirical evidence of less educated adults normalizes an
impoverished way of being and keeps hidden other narratives of becoming. In an effort to attend to difference and seek out alternatives to the normalization associated with this group of adults, this study strives to, as the quotation above suggests, go forth in an expanse to seek knowledge.

This mesa is a production of my reading journey of various and numerous texts. I followed the readings through the gaps, through the spaces that were not filled with knowledge or statistics. I utilized the reference lists and broadened my reading around the ever-forming questions that seemed to emerge. I reviewed my own journals and utilized the conversations that I had with my participants. Their voices intertwined with the knowledge emerging from the various readings and provided a multiplicity, a new dimension, perhaps an unfolding and refolding of the learning.

Mesa 4 begins with a discussion around the molar tendencies of an education system that attempts to produce the ‘ideal’ graduated student. It closes with a general overview of education in its application to this dissertation. The work of Pires (2014) to learn more about the territorializing of children that influences education curriculum and every day teacher practice is cited as an example to support notions of the territorialized graduated student. In her dissertation she wrote that policy documents ‘‘construct authorized versions of the curriculum, subject, teacher, and student’ and ‘officially write the teacher and the student – who they should be, what they are to do and say, and when they are to say it’’ (Cormack & Comber, 1996, in Pires, 2014, p. 59). Although this dissertation does not focus on the territorializing of children, it does address the attempt of the pre-determined curriculum and system to
stratify the ideal student that typically graduates from high school. Secondly, this mesa takes up various teachings in literature that have historically served to inform educators’ thinking around adult learners, including some of the learning theories associated with adult learning. Education policy that addresses adult learning is not prominent in public education spaces because the focus for learning remains on pre-adult learners. However, many theorists (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Jarvis, 2007; Knowles, 1980; Mezirow, 1991, etc.) have given much of their lives to studying adult learning and offering theories in the area that might inform adult learning education in the spaces of post secondary education. Much of this work reflects traditional approaches in research that categorize and conclude over-arching truths about how adults learn. Finally, the mesa reflects on the phenomenon of the high school dropout as it has been taken up in traditional approaches to conducting research. Apart from the literature that speaks to the effects of leaving school (Utomo, Reimondos, Utomo, McDonald, & Hull, 2014) and why people leave (Campbell, 2015; Fall, 2012; McNeal, 2011; O’Neill Dillon, Liem, & Gore, 2003), very little research exists to better understand the real lived years of experiences of adults who prematurely leave high school.

**Molar Tendencies in Education**

While Wallin’s (2014) description of school curriculum that was once dominated by a factory image might be slowly becoming reterritorialized, Wallin described molar tendencies in education in this way:

What remains in tact is the school’s figuration in the production of social life-forms. The school not only anticipates the kind of people it will produce, but
enjoins such production to an *a priori* of life to which students are interminably submitted. Despite the general wearing out and criticism of such forms of educational organization, the fabulation nevertheless ‘retains its place and hangs on like an ailing patient’ (Guattari, 2009, p.173). (Wallin, 2014, p. 117)

Aoki (1993; 2004) confirmed this closed and territorialized standardized approach to curriculum through the language, such as “goals”, “aims”, and “objectives” (p. 202-203) that is used in curriculum documents. Wallin (2014) viewed this rigid approach to curriculum as an attempt to maintain control of the product (the graduated student) that is being constituted within the system of school. In his recollection of a 2012 article printed in the *New York Times* about the frequent medicalization of children to regulate their academic and behavioural difficulties, Wallin suggested, “schools are not made for children: children ought to be made for schools” (p. 119). These molar tendencies in education form the basis for the production of the “molar public” (p. 119) that graduate from high schools. Described as a “social machine” (p. 119) that manufactures labour power and social categories, schools attempt to graduate “people circuited to their representational self-similarity according to State thought” (p. 120). William Pinar described education as “taking what is observed and understood and incorporating it, swallowing it whole, and allowing it to alter one’s intellectual-chemical-psychic condition” (Pinar & Grumet, 2015, p. 19). Berardi (2014) discussed “chaotic spasm” that is necessary to rethink about education in new ways and not simply restore historical approaches in the taking up of knowledge. He said, “moving forward means creating new institutions of research
and common learning and teaching which have to be conceived in the process of deterritorialization that is called ‘movement’’’ (p. 192).

All of these researchers were describing learning spaces that specialize in the production of a people who constitute a majority perspective known as “molar public” (Wallin, 2014, p. 120). This regulatory and standardizing drive of education inevitably produces “the reification of common sense, or, rather, the territorialization of thought according to that which is given (that which everyone knows)” (p. 120). The problem is that the concept of common sense annihilates difference in thinking, and in spaces, such as schools where conditions for thinking should exist, they do not.

Wallin spoke about the perils of standardization on which molarization is built. In particular, he discussed the pressures (often produced by the State) placed on teachers as they serve as scapegoats for the ever-increasing social issues that schools are expected to sustain. The pressures of standardization, also felt by students, are evident in the increased numbers of suicides among adolescents (Wallin, 2014) to achieve in “stultifying levels of academic performance and institutional conformity” (p. 123). The challenge becomes one of allowing the introduction of supple lines that can cross over the molar lines to disrupt spaces of molarization where standardization dwells. In doing so, molar tendencies may become reterritorialized through a line of flight. Wallin (2014) explained that in contemporary education:

It is the line of flight that constitutes the greatest political challenge in so far as it might become capable of evading the image of an adapted and homogeneous people implicate to the teleology of standardization, producing
instead the conditions for a nomadic war-machine capable of fulminating a critique of the State from the position of an outside thought. (Wallin, 2014, p. 133)

As mentioned earlier, this is where the dropout becomes a political problem for contemporary education. The dropout becomes the deviant who chooses to move outside of the image that is created by the institution and disrupts the institutions in two ways:

First, it deterritorializes the ostensibly stable image of the curriculum-as-plan by exceeding the a priori epistemic commitments, methodological habits and utilitarian possibilities presupposed by the plan as a given. Second, the dropout resists integration by plotting a line that no longer differs by degree, or, rather, in accord with some founding image of ‘identity’ as its grounding matrix. (p. 133)

The dropout disidentifies with the diploma that grounds one’s understanding of self at the time of graduation. The dropout is already on the move to somewhere else.

In thinking about the dropout from the perspective of a nomadic force, Wallin explained that the dropout has the potential to confront the system with something that it may not have been otherwise capable of thinking about. The dropout acts similarly to a protest group that, in its refusal to remain quiet, it disrupts the orderly conduct of a space/system. It is no longer in-sync with the norm. As the dropout disidentifies with the institution, it also puts institutional life in a position of immediate relation to that which is outside (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986). Wallin (2014) claimed:
Herein, the dropout might be thought of as a minoritarian figure vague
(vagabond) enough to escape molar essences while fringe enough to elude
over-identification with a given people. It is in this way that the dropout is
always born on a constitutive line reterritorializing elsewhere – producing or
inhabiting smooth ecologies with their own potentials for resingularization.
(p. 134-135)

Wallin further explained that while this line of flight provides escape from the
pedagogical practices of a system deemed as “best”, the exit also serves to threaten
the system’s economics and diminishes its credibility to educate all students
successfully. If the break from the system serves as a threat, Wallin suggested that
attempts through such measures as policy inevitably surface to prevent thinking
about leaving. For example, the rhetoric associated with life-long learning
insists upon processes of permanent retraining, re-accreditation and
permanent registration that effectively tether the desiring-production of the
‘educated’ subject to forms of institutional regulation and segmentary
management” (p. 135).

The result is a permanent reliance on the institution and a diminishing of ability to
think outside the institution. Barriers are established that eliminate nomadism.

The irony in this discussion is that the act of dropping out of school
necessitates change in thinking. No educator that I know would encourage a student
to drop out. However, the ‘out-of-the-box thinking’ to sometime emerge through
nomadic resistance (war machine) can produce something new. For example, as
some students are lost in the system that just seems to fail their needs, new schools
that champion their differences have started to emerge. Students, who may have otherwise rejected education in its entirety, will sometimes seek alternative schools that promote a culture of autonomy and a less rigid schedule. I was reminded of the effect of rejecting alternative ways of schooling in a Nigerian study that I read while completing this dissertation. I chose to include it because the subjects of the Nigerian study were nomadic people, and in some ways, the participants in my study are also nomadic. Nigeria attempts to provide education for its nomadic populations found in Northern Nigeria, but has struggled in its attempts:

Their major concern was the dissemination of knowledge and skills that would make the nomads more productive. These early initiatives failed mainly because they were not based on an adequate understanding of the nomads’ educational needs, culture and occupational roles. Moreover, they did not involve the nomads in program conceptualization, design, and/or implementation. Consequently, the curricula were irrelevant to their needs and existential realities. (Umar & Tahir, 2000, p. 233).

In Canada, Steele (2018) discussed the role of post-secondary education in relation to the rapid advancements in technology. Citing the attempts of Rochdale College to work in a partnership with University of Toronto between 1968 and 1975, Steele used the historical example to think about the modern day importance of alternative forms of post-secondary institutions. Camuti (2004) also pointed to the need for technological education in Ontario secondary schools since “a surprising 47 percent of schools indicated that technological education enrollments had increased over the past three years” (p. 2). As the world itself transforms and becomes, ways of doing
school also *become* as lines of flight emerge in education.

If we are to think in terms of *becoming* and less about how things *ought to go*, Wallin suggested that this ontological shift could have profound possibilities outside the notions of standardization. “The ability for institutional pedagogy to both detect and affirm molecular (supple) lines of difference are integral to its potential to transform the very conditions that inform upon the creation of a people” (Wallin, 2014, p. 136). Concepts such as molar lines that have arisen through the becoming of post-structural perspectives have provided opportunity to think anew. Youdell (2006) said:

Post-structural ideas do not come out of a rejection of concerns with material conditions. Rather, they come out of a recognition that existing structural understandings of the world, whether these focus on economic, social, ideological, or linguistic structures, do not offer all the tools that we need. (p. 35)

Having new tools such as Deleuze’s molar lines, the supple line and the line of flight are not viewed as descriptive, but rather they are taken up as means to *experiment* with an education system outside of standardization. Wallin (2014) referred to this concept as the need for education ‘to get a grip on life’ in so much as a break from standardization might also mean a break from the very thing “that has effectively produced a *missing people* in contemporary education” (p. 138).

The evidence-based movement in education is another area that is receiving some criticism for its discourses (Biesta, 2007; Bloch, 2004; Lather, 2004; Olson, 2004; Shahjahan, 2011). Shahjahan (2011) suggested that the trend around the
evidence-based movement erupted as a response to greater accountability. Shahjahan criticized the movement claiming a colonial discourse formed the very basis of its existence and posited:

Colonial discourse is present in the evidence-based movement in at least three ways:

(1) the discourse of civilizing the profession of education, (2) the promotion of hierarchies of knowledge and monocultures of the mind, and (3) the interconnection between neoliberal educational policies and global colonialism. (p. 182)

Other researchers such as Lather (2004) argued that evidence-based education is another form of surveillance and control where accountability and managerialism are emphasized. Stronach, Garrant, Pearce, and Piper (2013) described evidence-based approaches to research as a “kind of educational death” (p. 105) and explained:

Current efforts to “nationalize” educational research (as evidence-based practice, as ethically proper, as nationalized research training and universally prescribed methodologies such as random-controlled trials) are all educationally backward in that they trail behind similar homogenizations in U.K. schooling, at least, they are already failing because of the ways in which they destroy creativity, originality, trust, and experimentation. (p. 105)

While noting that Canada has also embraced education accountability through its zeal for standardized testing, Shahjahan (2011) explained:

Evidence-based education projects a monoculture in different education systems, promotes technical skills and conceptualizes learning as a package
that is transmitted from teacher to students, from government to the public (Hodkinson 2005). Furthermore, it also pushes minoritized bodies ‘out’ of schooling … whereby their identity is reconfigured into a subjectivity informed by high-stakes testing. (p. 192).

Diversity is not tolerated in a system governed by evidence-based policies and ideologies. The monoculture that Shahjahan spoke about is reflected in single-mindedness that produces difficult and impossible spaces for diverse bodies and knowledge forms. Shahjahan understood that supporters of evidence-based education possess good intentions to improve all student learning, but unintentionally, the colonizing discourse results in the perpetuation of striving to “control and ‘tame’ education” (p. 197). During our group discussion, one of my participants commented:

*High school seems like such a long time ago. I’ve lived a whole life since then. But, I remember how free I felt when I walked out of the school for the last time. School was nothing like the classes we have here at the collegiate. If it could have been more like it was when I came back, I might not have left school. It just seemed to me that the teachers just thought that they knew everything. They asked a question and they just wanted one answer. It just seemed like if I thought anything different, I was always wrong. I knew I wasn’t stupid, so I just got fed up of trying and figured it was easier to leave.*
There was no respect shown to anybody with something different to say. At least here with these other adults I have met ... and the teachers too...we talk about stuff in class, and it isn’t always about being right. It’s just about what you think, and it’s kind of interesting to see how many different ways people think. (Cam)

“How do we show respect for students who think differently? Why do teachers make students feel like there is only one answer? How do we know? Cam seems to realize that there may be more than one way to think. It is important to him that teachers can be open minded ... is it important to teachers? Do we recognize our own biases? What is ‘right’ anyways? Is there such a thing?” (Shelley’s Journal, June 4, 2018)

Perhaps that is what happens when tolerance for difference is lost...people become lost too. They drift away and disappear. How do we reject status quo that determines excellence to make room for diverse ways that are also capable of excellence? How is excellence even decided? What is the cost of our current ideals about achievement? What gets left out when we only think about education in terms of evidence-based practices and policies? How do teacher preparation programs perpetuate these paradigms?

Shahjahan (2011) noted that many of his pre-service teachers who have taken his course in methodology have a difficult time imagining research and evidence that go beyond numbers. He sees this as “a testament to the hegemony of the structural environment that reminds them of what constitutes valid knowledge every day” (p. 200). Even though these graduate students often speak of the stifling elements of
standardized testing, they still cannot imagine ‘valid’ research unless it falls in line with quantitative and measurable methods.

Biesta (2007) cautioned against such standardization and reflected that the nature of professional judgment “is moral rather than technical” (p. 11). He cautioned of the risks that are associated with accepting evidence-based research as the truth and concluded, “from the point of view of democracy, an exclusive emphasis on ‘what works’ will simply not work” (p. 22). Lather (2004) also argued for an open-mindedness that could see a way to produce knowledge outside of positivist ideals associated with disciplined inquiry. In Bloch’s (2004) response to the 2002 report from the National Research Council (NRC) that suggested educational research was lacking rigor in scientific methods, Bloch said:

I am not an adherent of one or more even two ways (eg. qualitative and quantitative) of finding truth and knowledge and do not believe we have always made ‘progress’ through our scientific rigorous and objective research traditions, I certainly believe that contesting knowledge, but not necessarily through restricting the ways in which that contest can be fought, is an important goal of educational and other researchers. (p. 103)

The world is complex. It is not certain. It is global and has become much more interconnected through advancements in technology and the Internet. Why would we assume that traditional scientific methodologies serve as the best or only way to inform and increase knowledge? Research must serve to “break open truths” (p. 104) and utilize alternative ways to re(imagine) theories, policies, practice, and the becoming of the human bodies that take up learning in school spaces.
Molar lines will continue in familiar, linear paths, maintaining a strangle hold on a system that awaits nomadic flight in response to a call for new/un/familiar territory where difference might be found, where the missing might find visibility. Different types of research, such as rhizoresearch, interrupt discourses that deny becoming and possibility. Daring to venture into the less known and being courageous enough to be open to alternative research ways may be the only chance at releasing the choke hold of molarization in education. Olson (2004) emphasized that to think of “educational research as the search for cause-effect relations among treatment programs, programs, and teaching methods ‘that work’ makes unacknowledged assumptions, first, about the growth of a science of education, and, second, about those who benefit from that science” (p. 25). He expanded by reminding readers that human science research is not designed to dictate what teachers and students should ‘do’. Rather, it serves to inform them in the various decisions that they make in the “multiple and varied contexts in which they work” (p. 25).

Since human existence is complex and people are not linear, Denzin (2014) said, “Something new is always coming into sight, displacing what was previously certain and seen. There is no truth in the painting of a life, only multiple images and traces of what has been, and what is now” (p. 1). Why would we not embrace the same notions in education? Thinking Deleuze makes room for the multiple, the difference, and the something else. In the nomadic journey, the something else merges out of the molar lines, and possibilities can be (un)happily (un)thought.
Traditional Thinking Constructing the Adult Learner

Much of the research and literature around adult learning situates itself in modernist epistemological ways of thinking about learning and knowing. As Pires (2014) discussed in her dissertation about the territorialized child, adult learning has also been categorized and coded into specific types of models and theoretical frameworks. One might say that molarization has also pervaded over adult learning. These rigid approaches reflect the rationalization of subject that are found in the underlying principles of enlightened modern humanism (Honan, 2005; Sellers & Honan, 2007).

Adult education dates back to the 1920’s (Merriam, 2001) when early researchers sought to discover if adults could learn. Intelligence tests were also developed, and in the 1950’s educational psychologists began to focus on problem solving and cognitive development in human learning. Researchers did not differentiate between adults and children, but when they did focus on adults, they studied the effects of advancing age on recall, processing of information, and problem solving, most often by using positivist research methods. By the 1990s, Malcolm Knowles’ ideas around andragogy (1980) were contributing to the understanding of adult learners and were influencing practice in adult education. However, it was criticized as doing little to expand knowledge on the processes of learning, and it had not achieved status as a theory (Merriam, 2001).

Additionally, the self-directed learning model emerged in the time frame that Knowles introduced andragogy. Over time, other researchers contributed to understanding of adult learning. Chen, Kim, Moon, and Merriam (2008) reported that
in their review of 93 articles pertaining to older adults, three themes emerged. Older adults were portrayed as a homogeneous group by age, gender, race, ethnicity, and able-bodiedness. Secondly, they were viewed as having few limiting cognitive or physical limitations, capable and motivated to learn. Finally, the life context of older adults usually drives the response of programming for this group of learners. For example, some of these learners chose postsecondary options, and others may choose less formal spaces to extend their life-long learning journey such as job workshops, museums, and other informal learning venues (Nanton, 2016).

Hoare (2006) reminded readers that it was only in the last couple decades that scholars began to consider learning as being integral in the development of adults. She recognized that many adults were able to maintain active lives well into their 90s. Hoare defined adult learning as “a change in behaviour, a gain in knowledge or skills, and an alteration or restructuring of prior knowledge” (p. 11). Adults were viewed as being able to continue to develop and learn as they advanced in age, and they were capable of accessing numerous resources and employ various strategies in their learning. This perception of longevity in adult learning played well into research and discussions about lifelong learning. Jarvis (2007) offered a definition of lifelong learning:

The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person - body (genetic, physical, and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) - experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual
person’s biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person. (p. 1)

Both Hoare (2006) and Jarvis (2007) viewed adult development as a means to grow and change. Adults were viewed as fluid, not stagnant in their growth and development. Their ways of seeing the world and of learning new things were/are not limited. Ella, one of the participants in my study, reminds me of the fluidity that is part of one’s nomadic journey. The lines of flight initiate desire to put her name down for school, to train in the area of health care or work with elders produce opportunities for growth and change.

**Ella:** It’s awful. Like I’m [in her 50’s] now. I should know what I want to do with my life. But I really liked working with as a health care aide. So, I am thinking something in that line but I guess I will have to go for more school, put my name down to school to further my education in health care in that kind of field. Because I was thinking, my first thought was teacher’s aide and I was thinking, “I don’t think I could put up with kids”. (laughing) I honestly don’t think I would; I am not suited to that job. I don’t mind working with elders. I loved working with elders. So, I am really thinking of doing something in that field. I just don’t know what yet.

Ella is/was becoming. Her words are an example to understand transformation in a post-structural paradigm. Transformation is constant, and various *haecceities* contribute to that process.

Historically, transformative learning theory has also influenced understanding of adult learning by emphasizing the important role that experience plays in its
impact on learning (Mezirow, 1991 & 1995). Merriam (2001) and Hoggan (2016) discussed transformative learning and its theoretical connection to adult learning. Merriam (2001) determined that “transformational learning is a complex process involving thoughts and feelings, … not an independent act but is an interdependent relationship built on trust.” (p. 18). Thought of as much more than a simple linear process, transformational learning enables researchers to broaden their understanding of adult learning. Merriam (2001) described its use as “explicating the meaning-making process. It is not what we know but how we know what is important” (p. 22). Relationships, feelings, and contexts can affect the processes of learning in adults.

Hoggan (2016) defined transformative learning as “processes that result in significant and irreversible changes in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world” (p. 71). He described various criteria to explain transformation. True transformation is thought to have depth, breadth, and relative stability. Other scholars, as well, have used transformational learning theory in their research of adult learners. Nohl (2015), for example, discussed the various phases of transformative learning, reporting that transformative learning does not necessarily need to originate with a disorienting dilemma, which is often thought to be part of the process in transformational learning. Nohl concluded that “transformational learning may begin unnoticed, and sometimes even casually, when a new practice is added to old habits” (p. 45). This notion challenges Mezirow’s (1991) claims that learner must acquire certain skills early in the process as part of their plan for change. Nohl (2015) contended that knowledge and skills could be acquired later in the process. More importantly, Nohl found that adults did not necessarily begin searching for things that
were missing in their lives, but “the new practices intruded, unsolicited, into their life and opened up new, unexpected horizons” (p. 47).

**Jimmy:** After trying to make money in my own mechanic shop, I wanted to be a fireman. Everywhere I looked to do with firefighting, anything, anything, anywhere to do with firefighting you needed grade 12. I just wanted a change. The move to [location deleted] helped push that and then just the change of pace of life and what was happening. And the more I saw that diesel mechanic, being a mechanic, really your lifespan of being a mechanic, you’re going to be about 50, 60 years old or somewhere in there most guys quit mechanicing because it’s physically demanding. Firefighting is too but there is a different passion behind it. Where a diesel mechanic you are fixing people’s junk … And where firefighting you’re helping a person and is taking a really bad situation making it better. Not necessarily are you going to save the guy’s life, or you are saving their life here but you are changing that, just that bad situation form one area and just taking the curve and throwing it a different way. And you are dealing with people’s lives instead of their stuff.

Cranton (2013) was mindful that social change has been linked to adult education for a long time and criticized scholars who focus on individual

“I wonder if ‘taking the curve’ is like getting on a ‘line of flight’. It’s interesting that the students sounds like he is speaking the language of Deleuze”.  
(Shelley’s Intra-view notes, June 4, 2018)
transformation while neglecting social change. She summarized various scholars’ work in transformative learning theory and suggested an integrative approach to the continuing development and approaches to understanding transformative learning. She spoke of Boyd & Myers (1988) who viewed transformative learning as a process whereby all psychological structures contribute to transformation as a person becomes aware of her unconscious inhibitions. She described Mezirow’s approach as a cognitive approach whereby the ego alone takes control so a person can identify unconscious constraints. Dirkx (2006) is also referenced in her writing as someone who saw the importance of individuation in transformative learning. Cranton (2013) described Dirkx’s work as contributing “to the beyond-rational interpretation of transformative learning theory” (p. 270) as Dirkx stressed the role of emotion to link the unconscious thoughts of humans to the conscious.

Adult learning is complex, personal and relative to the context of the learner. Kilgore (2001) suggested that singling out one theory to attach to adult learning was impossible. At the very least, concepts of andragogy caused adult educators to think about adult learners as independent, social beings with a range of life experiences that can impact their learning. These models and ideas have contributed valuable insight into modern day understanding of adult learning and support the notions of such scholars such as Hoggan (2016), Nohl (2015), Cranton (2013), Jarvis (2007), Dirx (2006) and Merriam (2001) who have moved beyond the discussion of adult education to broader discussions of adult learning. Kang (2007), in his review of adult learning theories, found that adjectives, such as experiential and transformative, have been used to describe specific ways of learning. Although the adjectives may be
useful to discover the fundamentals behind certain types of learning, they also produce a “binary trap” (p. 212), meaning the language terms used in the various learning theories compete for superiority. In turn, the desire for controlling terms results in divisiveness of learning theories, and

if theory provides a lens to construct reality, then the adult learner produced by a particular adjective-plus-learning theory is seldom understood by the other theories. Adult educators appropriate this fragmented image of the learner into their teaching practices. Some comprehensive tools have been proposed to overcome the fragmented image. … However, as Jarvis (2006) suggests, it is unlikely that we can produce a comprehensive theory of human learning out of given theories. (Kang, 2007, p. 212)

Rhizoanalysis offers an alternative approach to learn more about adult learning through lines of flight that connect various theories. By mapping the unlikely becoming of these adults as they return to a formal learning space, new ways of thinking about adult learning occurs through exploration of the (un)likely return, after years of absenteeism from a formal learning space, of adults that society views as uneducated and lacking. For example, when I asked Cam if he felt he had missed something in leaving high school prematurely or if it had impacted him in a negative way. He responded:

Cam: Um, I don’t think it has affected me too much since I’ve got the job that I’m making $55,000.00 a year. If I didn’t have that job I can absolutely say it was impacting me by having to be in a minimum wage job working at Tim Horton’s the entire time. Barely make ends meet. There was a few days before
I got this job when I was working at Walmart that I was stuck in a debt cycle where I had a credit card that I had maxed out and then to make the payments on that I would have to go to a pay day advance place then to pay that off I would have to put my check in and then it’s just a cycle. I definitely say that if I didn’t have the job I do now I would have definitely crashed and burned through that one. But, that didn’t happen...

The something that Cam may have missed after dropping out of high school was money. Fortunately, he explained that he was still able to secure a well-paying job. The minimum wage job was not allowing him to service his debt. The lines of flight producing his assemblages reterritorialized him to another plane.

**The Dropout Phenomenon**

Reinertsen (2016) described the rate of dropout from Nordic schools as problematic ranging from a 22% pre-mature exit rate in Norway to 51% in Iceland. However, she also recognized the complexity that exists in the making up of an individual. In her reflections of a dropout named Jasmine, she described her in the following way:

Jasmine is a matter, human, biology, femininity, masculinity, culture, languages, discourses, family, sister, daughter, friend, student, class, victim, agent, failures, victories, citizen, color, body, shape, weight, appearances, age, ethnicity, pain, temper, feelings, mood, motivations, interests, place, space, dreams, fears, strengths, forces, wishes … poetic nodal point. All kinds of elements and lines come – Jasmine - together and make up more … her … always, visible invisible virtual together in moments. (p. 265)
Her description implies a multiple ‘make up’ of an individual; individuals are not singularly composed. There is more than one way to ‘think’ about a person’s existence/becoming.

Conversely, literature around the individual who drops out of high school can be rather encompassing and linear. Described as a “pervasive” problem by Bowers and Sprott (2012), students who do not complete high school have lower overall expected life outcomes, including lower lifetime earnings, lower rates of employment, decreased health, and higher incarceration rates” (p. 176). Campbell (2015) confirmed, “The belief that dropping out of high school causes ubiquitous and persistent socioeconomic disadvantage is widespread” (p. 108). O’Neill Dillon, Liem, and Gore (2003) also contended, “existing research suggests that young people who drop out of school face substantial economic, psychological, and social difficulties” (p. 429). Dupere, Leventhal, Dion, & Crosnoe (2015) also confirmed this claim saying:

Without a high school diploma, young people’s long-term prospects are severely diminished for virtually every valued life outcome, including mental and physical health as well as employment stability and lifetime productivity (p. 615).

The “drop out” label carries characteristics of ‘lacking’ and ‘social reliance’ or ‘burdensome’. The literature tends to focus on the ‘assured’ negative outcomes of dropping out of school, but the lived experiences of such individuals carries the potential of learning something more about the complexities that can exist within their assemblages.
The adults in this study are much like Jasmine in Reinertsen’s (2016) research. They are people who are multiple in their existence, complex in their becoming. Randy spoke to me about his own complex becoming as he explained his family’s move from Kiev to Toronto. It occurred at a time when both his engineering parents felt it was unsafe to remain in Kiev after the country’s mishap at a major nuclear plant. Our conversation unfolded:

**Randy:** Because he [his father] was a very well known engineer he was picked up by a company very quickly. Like he was published in articles. He was actually very proficient in what he did and so yeah, he got a job very quickly and my Mom stayed at home with us. Took care of us but within out first year; like this is the way that we found out he was sick, right? Because he was driving down the streets of [location deleted] one day. I was very young, so all I know is what my Mom told me at this point. But he was driving one day, passed out behind the wheel. Struck a person on a bicycle. The person survived. They weren’t seriously injured. So, he passed out, struck a person. Woke up in the hospital. They did a CAT scan and an MRI and found out he had a massive tumour. So, it took him about; yeah, he spent about a

As I think back to this conversation, I think that this family was literally reterritorialized across the globe. The catastrophic event that occurred so very far away created a line of flight that affected the entire family. The rhizome moved out across many paths and “very drastic change” was/is experienced by all, not all in the same way, differently.
year in hospital before he died. Then after he died the person that he hit on the bicycle waited until he died and then he sued my Mom. Yeah, so right now think like a single parent, lost her husband. Doesn’t speak English. Doesn’t have a job, being sued for possibly millions of dollars and that’s when the slow decline began. It was also like a very weird dynamic because back in Europe we were like a more affluent family. Both of my grandparents were professors at the University of Kiev. My Mom was an engineer, my Dad was an engineer so we were pretty well off. It was a very sharp, very drastic change from the career life in Europe to being a single Mom in a foreign country, no income, three kids, different country, don’t speak the language, right? She started going to night school and I think his [dad’s] company actually took care of the legal fees and eventually the case was dropped. So, we were fortunate in that regard. But yeah, she started to go to night school and working at the same time so we would see her maybe like once a week. She would leave like, the typical $10 on the table. That’s food for you guys until whenever, right? So, we did that for a couple years and I think eventually she just started to break down from that and that’s when it started

“Sometimes it just takes all our effort just to survive. I wonder how many of my students were simply on focusing on surviving during my career. Did I help or hinder? We can never see what lays under the surface of a student who is underachieving. We just kick them out into the world. I am amazed that they even come back”.

(Shelley Intra-view journal, June 2, 2018)
to affect our…well, I’m not sure maybe so much my older sister, but that’s when it started to affect me and my twin sister the most. We were both very young and we were dependant on each other. Very innocent at this point and it was just so weird to us to have, because she started to like blame, like honestly completely irrational, woman grieving. But she started to blame me eventually for my father’s death which kind of started to make me not care so much about my education and maybe focus a lot more on just like finding that escape from it … It’s very hard to focus on your education when you’re more concerned about surviving and finding food and shelter. The very basic necessities of life, right? I was not paying attention in class whatsoever. I wasn’t doing my homework, I wasn’t studying. I was more so just focused on surviving for those five years. Once I turned 19 they kicked me out of the group home and they told me, ‘Syonara, you’re on your own.’ Yeah, so I got a job. I got my place. I did construction which started off as a labourer.

Researcher: So, in time you came to the military?

Randy: I think the military definitely taught me the discipline and almost like the confidence as well. Because when you are a child and you go through all that it kind of destroys your sense of worth, right? So, I think the military played a big factor in that.

Researcher: What do you remember about joining the military? What do you think was the best about your decision? Can you remember moments or people?
Randy: I found that I’ve always [liked] the mental and physical challenge of it. But I found that it was completing things that you didn’t think were possible and having that sense of pride after. Some people can’t handle it and they fall apart very quickly. But there was always that very select group of us that would almost feed off that. Almost feed off the weakness of other people failing and that would motivate us to do more and once we finished it, it just gave us that very; that sense of accomplishment. That sense of pride. Like most of because a lot of people in the military, especially the people that end up joining the infantry we had very similar backgrounds. It was mostly people that came from broken homes, you know abusive parents, whatever. It was very common. I guarantee you I could sit 10 infantry guys in front of you and at least half of them would come from single-parent homes, abusive dads, abusive moms, whatever. It’s like a ragtag bunch of misfits and eventually we all just bonded and became the cohesive group that went to do the job. I go to Afghanistan.

“Pride is an important component to what people chose to do. Perhaps it is part of the human condition to do something that we feel we are proud to do. How influenced was Randy by his parents to feel like he would do something important? They sound like important professionals in their home country. How does this impact? Affect? How has the military contributed to affect? What about the events that occurred while being part of the military? He describes the military as a second family/chance that allowed him to show his strengths with people who were maybe
Did some things for six and a half months, come back. It was obviously kind of weird coming back for the first little bit.

My conversation with Randy continued, and he had much more to talk about his life after dropping out of school. The lines of flight in his life have been multiple, and I feel privileged to have a glimpse into the complex becoming of his life and the others in my study. Reinertsen (2016) said, “We are many and complex elements and lines of consisting of many and complex elements. Jasmine, the school, the interview, my observations, and I, and sometimes lines get stuck” (p. 265). It is interesting to see what happens with the lines. Do they meet? Do they pause? Do some lines get lost along the way as various moments of eruptions occur?

Lara spoke about her lines this way:

I think I was 17 when I stopped [going to school]. School wasn’t there for me.

There was no interest in it at all and yeah, at 17; I think it was 17 when I stopped because I got pregnant. Then I miscarried and all hell broke loose.

Then 18 came around. I think my mom passed away at 18. I tried to go back to an adult schooling in [location deleted], that’s where I’m from and again no interest. Just couldn’t sit there and do the work. After my mom passed away, it was like, “I don’t care to go to school anymore.” No bother, start looking for jobs and doing odd jobs. I was working in a bar, working in a restaurant. Alcohol was a big part of my life at that young age. So, 18 I was drunk all the time and having fun (laughing). Then moved to [location deleted] at 19 and met a guy and had 2 kids. My daughter is actually going to be 15 this month. She is in high school and I tell her to stay in high school.
She is with her dad in [location deleted]. She is going to school but she’s excited and I said, “Yes, graduate at 18. Do it now.” And my son is 10 and I think he is going to be like his Mom. Poor kid (laughing). We broke up 6 six years ago and I moved back to [location deleted] and then again alcohol was a big thing again. So, I got out of there and moved to [location deleted] and here I went to work at [location deleted] in 2012 and that’s when I met my husband and we got married in 2013.

And life was all happy, glory (laughing) and then he told me he didn’t want me working at [location deleted] anymore. I said, “Well I don’t really have an education.” He’s like, “Go back to school.” I’m like, “But I’m old.” He’s like, “No, you’re not old. Go back to school.” I was like “OK”. So, I procrastinated for the longest time and I came in October of 2015 to do that test or whatever and I was so scared. I was like, “Oh my God no! I am so dumb. I can’t do this, I just feel stupid.” I was at home studying for this test or whatever and I did good. It was grade 10 math and all that. I was like, “Oh, Ok good” (laughing). My husband is a big part of my coming back to school because he wants me to get a better education and do better and better and be better and he helped me quit

“Sometimes we just need another person to help us dig deep and find the courage to get passed ‘ourselves’ - the part that makes us believe we cannot accomplish, or even to dream ... because sometimes we just don’t believe we can actually become any more than we already are”. (Shelley’s Intra-view notes, May 26, 2018)
drinking. I actually quit smoking for him and he just made my life so much better ... So, I came back to school and I actually really liked it. I was more focused and the people around me were more helpful and they would talk and tell me, “You need to do this”. And the teachers are helpful and I enjoyed it ... and I graduated 2017. ... I went back to college. I am going to do the Industrial Metals Fabrication, welding. I did the machine part and I am really enjoying it. It’s different, like something random I’m liking. I like working with my hands. It never hurts to try new things, that’s for sure.

Chen (2014) defined adult learners, such as the ones in this study (aged 25 and over) as non-traditional learners. He described them as “developmentally distinct from traditional-aged students” (p. 407) and claimed that between 2000 and 2009 enrolment of this group increased by 43% in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, while traditional-aged students 18 to 24 increased by only 27%. Chen also projected that between 2010 and 2019, a further rise of 23% in the non-traditional group would occur. Despite their reasons for returning to formal education, institutions must be ready to meet the needs of these non-traditional re-entry learners. He described their needs as learners to be distinct from the more traditional group of learners below the age of 25. Chen noted that the banking model (Freire, 1970) commanded the terrains in education for many years, and this model does not necessarily reflect an ideal approach for adult learning. Furthermore, given the idea that educational spaces are often youth-oriented, the non-traditional adult learners may experience inadequate supports in their endeavours. The differences recognized in this group of learners should be reflected in adult learning spaces. They
come with different life experiences and different responsibilities than those that are
typical of younger students. They often have different expectations in their learning
and feel like they are making the conscious choice to be in school. Ella alludes to this
choice in the following excerpt:

I’ve always had this feeling that I should go into women’s ministries and
Bible School and I always keep putting it off. Life kept getting in the road
and I kept putting God off. When I came to the church where I am going now,
and they started this Bible school, like a study, it was just meant to be. So, I
thought… I better do this! When you are in high school, you have to be in high
school. You don’t want to be there and as soon as I was able to get out and be
on my own when I turned 16 I got out. Because I just never wanted school. I
didn’t see the benefit of it. I was young and immature and stupid. I’m [in her
50’s] years old now. I think I just fell into the habit of not doing my
homework when I was
younger. I think of school
way differently now. I used
to do whatever I wanted
and thought it was cool I
guess (laughing). But, I
wasn’t! But when you’re an
adult, you are coming back
for yourself and you want
to be here, so you put in

I wonder why it takes us so long, sometimes, to
see the benefit/value in something. Whose
responsibility is it that young people see value
in their high school education? Are they all
capable of seeing it? What does this mean for
me as an educator? How do I contribute to
thinking ‘value’ in education? What does it even
imply? (Shelley’s Intra-view notes, May 28,
2017)
effort. That’s the way I see it. It’s different when you’re an adult because you are not forced to go because you want to be here. I need to be here now, for me. I love reading now and coming back with these adults isn’t like it was teenagers in those schools.

The American Council on Education (ACE) (2007) found that at a time when North American society might suggest that mature adults aged 55 to 79 should be planning or considering retirement, many adults in this age category embark on a different journey, a return to high school. “In short, the term retired is being retired, or at least redefined. Instead, increasing numbers of adults aged 55 to 79 are entering the third age of life - a stage in recent years defined by personal achievement and learning for self-development - with new plans for their later years in mind” (p. 4).

In addition to this third age group of learners, younger adults are also finding their way back to the classroom. Adult education has traditionally focused on creating an employable work force (Field, 2010), and education spaces for adults are often viewed as places to prepare them for their lives as contributing citizens in society. Policy makers understand that adult learning centers possess the capacity to improve the skills of uneducated adults and shape them into contributing members of society by way of entering the job market. As a result, target groups for adult education often become at risk populations such as the unemployed, migrants, single mothers, and individuals on social benefits, as well as those at risk of losing their jobs or are in need of training (Sandberg et al., 2016).
Ella: I am sorry I didn’t come back to school sooner. My life could have taken a whole different direction if I had just stayed in school when I was younger. .... Because they think they know everything, because a lot of teenagers drop out of school. I think; I don’t know for sure. But, schools don’t do much to try to help you stay there either. Make them see reason in some way. I am sure; I don’t know how many people you interviewed but I’m sure they will all tell you, “If I could have done it differently when I was younger, I would have”. And I would have done it differently. I would have went to school when I would have went for something that I wanted to be when I was a child. Because I know had bigger dreams when I was a kid. I was a health care aide for a number of years and then I injured my shoulders and injured my back. So, I just can’t do that type of work anymore. I want to try something else.

In Reinertsen’s (2016) description of the drop out challenges in the Nordic countries, she summarized common characteristics associated with learners who drop out of school in many nations around the world. These include social background, academic scores, individual interests, social engagement, general relations to school, the local educational context, and much more. She concluded that the list of explanatory statistical factors was long. But, I wonder, as does Reinertsen, more about the experiences of those that drop out. What does daily life look like for the
people behind the statistics? What is to be said about the critique of dropping out?

Many lines and elements converge in the enfolding of subjectivities as researcher and participants come together in the research process. Bear, Kortering, and Braziel (2006) spoke about the risk of premature school exits facing learners with disabilities; having expressed similar concerns to those of Reinertsen (2016), Mercieca and Mercieca (2010) noted that no research can capture ‘all’. The need to expand the knowledge landscapes in disability research exists as well:

We are concerned that what emancipatory disability research tries to capture, and therefore represent, may be restrictive of the understanding of disability rather than emancipatory. The dynamic forces of the individuals the research represents are closed into stable identities that represent a lesser experience. The ‘always more’ is lost to representation. Deleuze wants to make sense of or orient thought toward the ‘always more’ and perhaps even find a way to represent it. (p. 83)

The elements and lines of people’s lives are complex. Rhizoanalysis strives to open up as many elements and lines as possible to affect and be affected. Rheinertsen (2016) explained the process in this way:

To liberate lines having coagulated in order to make them float again and float together with other elements, lines, and nodal points. And to underline; to open up is to suspend any categorizations and understandings of ‘the other,’ the moment they are done. … To make new see new … new eyes new worlds in every event in every moment and word. (p. 271)
The *becoming* participants in this study found their way back to school to attain their high school diploma. Not all people follow those lines of flight. This distinction is the focus of the created assemblages in the analysis of this research project.

Rheinertsen (2016) said, “all questions are [theirs] and mine together” (p. 272). As *becoming researcher*, I am in conversation alongside *becoming participants*.

Territories merge. They deterritorialize, and they reterritorialize. The rhizome emerges, and new understanding of the drop-out adult learners’ experiences in this study becomes possible.

**Issues in Education**

Education and literacy importance are readily accepted in North America. Most often education is thought of as the way to lessening poverty and providing a means to economic independence in society. Education is an issue within political platforms and entails a large portion of a government’s budget, as well as its time in the development of policy. The well known document, “No Child Left Behind” (Goodman, 2004) is one such document that emerged in an attempt to ensure the literacy of all students in the United States. Such policies put a tremendous amount of responsibility on an education system, but they also propose unrealistic expectations of a system and describe a less than ideal definition of what education means. Honan (2004), Honan (2005), and Honan & Sellers (2006) suggested that these policies are often infused with utopian ideals of graduating students, ideals that are often not realized in all students. Cole (2005) proposed that societies and the citizens of these societies are legitimized through their own education and literacy, while dominant notions of what it means to be educated are adopted as truth by its citizens. Massumi
(2015) pushed against social classifications saying, “whether you are male or female, child or adult, rich or poor, employed or unemployed … none of those conditions or definitions are boxes that completely contain a person’s potential” (p. 41). Certainly, legitimization or human potential should not simply be found in social classification of educated or uneducated.

Aspects of legitimization and self-efficacy become problematic in relation to society’s citizens that may not be educated or considered literate. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2011) reported that 28 million children in conflict-affected countries were not attending school. On a worldwide level, this number only represented 40% of all children. Closer to home, the Government of Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Education, 2017) and the Government of Manitoba (Manitoba Education, 2017) respectively reported that 76.5% and 78.9% of their students graduated from high school in 2017. Across various cultures, in particular, Indigenous populations, the rates were considerably lower. A review of literacy and numeracy scores also vary, but numbers indicate that students are leaving high schools without having attained numeracy and literacy skills that would be considered acceptable scores for graduating students. These less than literate and (un)educated individuals remain at the margins of an ideal education and are not representative of the ideal person that the system of education wishes to produce.

Leaving school at the margins of an education system means that these individuals enter society at its margins also. The uneducated body loses its legitimacy and its voice; in some respects, it loses its rights. The intent of an education system to
provide an equal education for all its students, to produce the “ideal” graduated body, now becomes a means of exclusion. The notion that the uneducated body remains at the margins of society provides little hope and creates disturbing disparity.

**Cam:** It’s difficult for me to see spending excess amounts of time with people.

When she [his girlfriend] broke up with me she listed one of the reasons being that I don’t have any extra school; I didn’t have my grade 12. I didn’t have any extra schooling so if she gets a job out in [location deleted] or wherever she is going to get a job what would I do? I wouldn’t have anything to do. I get a minimum wage restaurant job and that really hurt because it was; she was dating me for my potential and not for who I was. And it sparked a little bit of anger in me and it was cold and just smouldered for the longest time and that was my big drive to come back to get my grade 12 and kind of like to spite her. It’s not a huge thing to go back and finish. The push to get me back to school was her judgement. I mean I have fantasies about showing up at her place and being like, “These are the things that you listed out that were wrong with me. This is everything I’ve fixed. You’re a bitch.”

“I have never thought about these adults feeling judged by others ... what does this feeling have to do with their decision to come back to school? Why is that the amount of education someone has, or what someone does for a ‘living’, somehow, legitimizes that person in someone else’s eyes? How do we come to see ourselves? Do I ever come across as judgemental?” (Shelley’s Journal, June 2, 2018)
Wallin (2014) elaborated on the intentions of a school system that attaches a negative stigma to the student who drops because this student simply does not reflect the graduated student that the education system aims to produce. In his reflection on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), Wallin (2014) discussed the production of a molar public within the molar institution called school. Molar tendencies are described as singularities, homogenized desires, and majoritarian thoughts that continue to be reproduced through standardization within a planned curriculum. Deleuze’s (1983) “plane of organization” (p. 80) is associated with the molar line and is described as rigid and segmented. The “becoming molecular line” (p. 81) is the supple and segmented line. The rhizome merges in the middle and pushes out in all directions. The molar institution “presumes an image of how life ought to go” (Wallin, 2014, p. 136). Molar lines work as sedimentary powers to maintain the deeply rooted and constrained thinking of the molar segment. Youdell (2011) said, “the molar lines of the education .. assemblage are scored deeply in the classroom and the children’s lives outside school” (p. 100). However, the supple lines also exist to differentiate from that molar segment, and they become important to reterritorialize molar tendencies that tend to outgrow their usefulness, eventually resulting in lines of flight that can create a molecular revolution (Wallin, 2014). One such example is found in the work of Deborah Youdell (2010, 2011) in her research to better understand how pedagogies of becoming could “open up education to those who have been deemed to go beyond the bounds of intelligibility and been excluded and expelled to education’s margins” (Youdell, 2010, p. 323). Youdell (2011)
described the abject student as hovering “at the edge of education” (p. 82), but the school system “must continue to contain them, continue to correct them and, indeed, continue to educate them” (p. 82). Although the learning space that constituted her observations did not launch students back into mainstream classrooms, she recognized that an unsettling in an education assemblage could be useful in moving it towards a conversion worthy of keeping a potentially marginalized group of learners from being lost in its fringes. Much like the practices of the students that Youdell studied, some people who drop out of high school also “find the gaps in the discourses, regimes and practices of the education assemblage and follow lines of flight” (p. 84). Their line of flight results in an exit from the system.

Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987) described lines of flight as the kinds of connections that can create a tendency towards change where something new might be created. The resulting assemblage is an “interconnection of wildly diverse things” (Adkins, 2015, p. 24). Through molecular revolution, new ways of thinking can emerge. Deleuze and Guatarri (1980/1987) referred to this new way of thinking as the materialization of outside thought that is produced as a result of affective forces that are out-of-sync with the orderly given ways of the molar institution. Wallin (2014) discussed this creation of outside thought as a production of “conditions for a nomadic war-machine” (p. 133) because outside thought challenges and wars against the long-standing homogeneous thinking of the molar institution. The machine is nomadic in lines of flight because long-standing ways of thinking in the molar institution become deterritorialized and reterritorialized.
How might these ideas be linked to thinking differently about adult learners and high school ‘drop outs’? Using the student dropout as an example, Wallin (2014) suggested that the individual who drops out of school might be considered “one of contemporary education’s greatest political problems” (p. 133) because of the image that is created. This image grates against “a well-adapted and homogenous and institutional subject” (p. 133). The dropping out simply diverges from the image to which the system aspires. In the choice to resist integration, a new line of flight is being plotted that fulminates a (dis)(re)ruption in the system, and the person makes a move elsewhere. The individual (dis)identifies with formal education, and the newness that potentially can be created is found in “an open landscape of multiplicity” (Aoki, 1993; 2004, p. 207) where the nomadic process of becoming continues. Therefore, “the dropout is no longer thought of in perjorative terms, but, rather, as a potential expression of para-academic, outlander and nomadic forces through which the molar institution might be confronted with what it is incapable of thinking” (Wallin, 2014, p.133). This dissertation is born of the notion that the nomadic forces surrounding the lives of these re-emerging adult learners can assist the researcher in reaching new insights into students who drop out of school that extend beyond the empirical data that shape one of the greatest political problems in education. It is an attempt to learn more about the experiences of those who made a conscious decision to go missing from their expected route to traditional high school graduation.

Part of the problem is that educators often seek evidence-based approaches to the understanding of best practices. Lundsman (2006) was brave enough to ask,
“What evidence, Whose evidence?” in her investigation into physical therapy treatments for children with disabilities. She claimed, “while to some extent authority and power affect the range of knowledge that can be transferred into evidence, the more significant restraints may be the rules of evidence we value” (p. 2670). The same can be said of education. Traditional approaches to conducting research and results from standardized tests often define ‘best’ practices/praxis and drive program funding (“Council for Exceptional Children,” 2014). If researchers are to seek and desire the ‘always more’, then rethinking the approaches to research becomes necessary. Positivist and modernist research methods that have produced binary categories of students such as learners/non-learners, learning abled/disabled, doers/non-doers, gifted/delayed and modernist approaches to research in this area have perpetuated a lull in the finding of ‘always more’. Research that uses the coded structures simply perpetuates the structures and constructs something “that comes already made” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). The ‘always more’ cannot be sought through something that comes already made. Therefore, in addressing the limitations of linear thinking found in traditional modes of research, I engaged in Deleuze’s concept of the war machine to deploy (dis)(re)traction around the topics of dropping in and out of school, adult learning, and re-entry adult programming.

**Intra-mesa**

Reinertsen (2017) described the need for new types of data and methodologies as a “democratization of the research process [and] ultimately an increase of its relevance” (p. 248). I attempted to present a theoretical and empirical review of the literature in three areas that are connected and intra-related to the topic
of my dissertation. At this point, an exit from the literature rhizome occurs, but the connections will continue to multiply as the dissertation unfolds and refolds. The learning is not ‘concluded’. Long after the final word is spoken in the dissertation, reading will continue, more learning will emerge in the continual process of *becoming*. The molar tendencies in education, the statistics around high school drop out and the theories around adult learning are much more than just numbers and theories designed for analysis. The *desire* to learn more about the *becoming* human lives within this study drives the *becoming* of the study. All aspects, human and non-human, form the assemblages that are constantly being (de)(re)territorialized within the experimenting research process. Mesa 5 takes up the transgressive data, maps these encounters, and takes up the *lines of flight* that make way for the *something different* that may be felt/seen/heard.

**MESA 5**

*Rhizoing Affect ⇔ De-Re-Territorialization ⇔ (Dis)(Re)traction*

*Can data set things in motion? How can responsibility and data be connected and/or create productive tensions? What can be data beyond presence-for example, data as an illusion, a vision, a dream, hope, silence, no data, resistance, a moment, or an absence? Furthermore, what can be data that exceed our capacity to know them? If we choose not to simply ‘interpret’ what else can we do with data, and what do they do to us?* (Rheinertsen, 2017, p. 243).
Analysis … and Lines of Flight

Literature around the topic of high school dropout has contributed to greater understanding as to why students might leave school prematurely and also describes the difficulties and stresses attached to uneducated bodies.

“We know what we are, but not what we may be” (Shakespeare, 2003, Act 4, scene 5, lines 42-43).

My drawing to this topic was not found in a desire to dispute the sensible/common thinking that supports the potential importance and benefits that education can offer to all human beings. Let me be clear that I believe all people should have the opportunity to go to school. The value that I seek in this dissertation is found in the opportunity to nudge, (dis)(re)tract the dominant beliefs, often influenced by subjectivity, that desire to place (un)graduated adults in a preferred static mode of being (lacking and unproductive) rather than becoming. The pre-adult learner who takes up a line of flight outside of the pre-established pathway to graduation becomes absent from one territorialized space but reterritorializes to another. Potential of the human becoming is not lost. The mapping of the assemblages in Mesa 5 allows
immanent thinking to disrupt the stigma that is often associated with unschooled people. The representational knowledge in the literature serves to structure the thinking; lines of flight that can happen in cartography create a space of interjection amid the knowledge. Experimentation in the mapping involves a continual process of cartographic creation; it does not trace or represent. Tracing is dangerous because “it injects redundancies and propagates them” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 13).

The philosophers further explained:

> What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented towards an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself. ; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections. … The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. … It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action, or as a meditation. … A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back “to the same.” (p. 12)

The territory in which I began my own pursuit of research has been reterritorialized many times. In the same way that wild animals migrate to new territories for life’s sustenance, I too have been nourished in research through reterritorializing my own ideas and perspectives about thinking and doing research. I have come to understand that there are many ways of coming to know about something. Since beginning my journey in philosophy six years ago, I have navigated my way through vast and copious reading materials, wandered in academic space,
not knowing where I might
eventually arrive. I remember
thinking when I started that I had a
plan to take the required courses,
had a clear topic to investigate, and I
had a clear idea for a method to take
up that topic; the production of
becoming researcher was much
more chaotic. It was not the straight
line that I had planned. I was
reterritorialized many times before
arriving at Deleuze’s threshold.
Masny (2013) described
deterritorialization as “moments that
create ruptures and differences that
allows for creation to take off along
various directions” (p. 341). The
subject is not an active controller but
rather becomes an effect of the
events in life. “The mind, one mode
of becoming, is a site that connects
and transforms the individual,
thereby becoming Other” (p. 341).

The discussions with the participants are over,
I find myself thinking about their lives. Their
journeys have not been easy ones. Their
perseverance in many situations is really quite
remarkable. Jimmy’s positive outlook, and his
desire to serve others is quite inspiring. His
emotional description of the ‘turns’ in his life
is heartfelt and causes me to reconsider my
own priorities. Cam’s admission of his
teacher’s ‘belittling’ reminds me of the power
a teacher holds over a student and how much
influence we have. And Lara’s recollection of
coming to live with her adopted family… I
have never known what it is like to be ‘given
away’. And when was the last time that I
didn’t feel like I felt someone’s mould? Ella
still remembers that. And, Randy’s family was
a victim of a nuclear disaster in Chernobyl. I
have a lot to think about. All of a sudden, the
notion of a dropout returning to school got
much bigger. (Shelley’s Research Journal,
June 2018)
The individual is part of an assemblage. At the point of deterritorialization, the system (the researcher) becomes momentarily unstable but will reterritorialize into a stable one. Instability of systems and thoughts create openings to think about systems differently. In an assemblage, there is a continual process of (de)(re)territorialization (Nail, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, a substantial amount of research exists to explain school dropout, but minimal literature is found that focuses on the mature adult who returns to high school. Is it possible that education researchers prefer to keep this group of learners embedded in a territory of ‘gone and forgotten’? Although the re-entry of adult learners to high school was the entry point for this rhizome, I anticipated many paths would merge to build thinking around the topic, and the participants took the discussions in numerous directions. I was not tempted to avoid the messiness or complexities that surrounded the real-life experiences of my participants, but affective moments alerted cognitive responses in myself. As researcher, I remained in the middle of the data (the readings, the discussions, the journals, the memories, etc.). Quite literally, I felt in the middle of the (non)data over and over. But, in doing so, it allowed me to create my own (im) plausible text (Honan, 2004; 2005).

Allow me to explain … When I completed the individual discussions and the group discussion, I (re)thought the experiences. I re-read the discussions several times and referred to them on many occasions during the rhizome creation. They were all in the past, but each one haled amazing moments of affect. I was motivated to start mapping the assemblages. These assemblages would also allow the inclusion
of my own deterritorializing moments, and I realized that this study was much more than a quest to learn more about and complicate the topic of adult re-entry to high school. I, as researcher, would map my own *becomings* within the rhizome. The endeavour would be as much an encounter with the topic as it would be with self. Embarking in the research using rhizoanalysis created discussions around questions that were not even first imagined by the researcher. That is the messiness of the methodology…it allows for the “unthoughtable” to be (re)thought.

In this mesa, I use the transgressive data in a rhizoanalytic approach to continue the creation of a *becoming* cartography that maps the affective moments arising within the study. Even during the discussions with the participants, connections were already occurring as I thought about the experiences that were being told to me. In addition, the memories in my teaching journal and casual moments expressed in classroom conversations and various assignments provided other crucial pieces that contributed to the rhizoanalytic process that was/is happening. These happenings/events serve to address the purpose and questions of the study related to the experiences of adults living without a high school diploma.

Parts of the story emerge through various modes: memories, journals, discussions, notes, assignments, dramatic vignettes. Selections are made based on their ability/power to affect, perhaps to disrupt and de/re/territorialize the reader as they did me. But, each rhizome may be read differently each time that it is read. Deleuze and Guattari (1994) said that “affects … traverse … like the beam of light that draws a hidden universe out of the shadow” (p. 66). The unknown is never known until it is shown or *becomes* known. Semetsky (2013) said that it as though
something is becoming visible to the inner eye, “even if as yet unthought of consciously, that informs our immediate practical actions” (p. 80). Deleuze (1993) said, “knowledge is known only where it is folded” (p. 49), and sometimes this knowledge or these ideas are encased “in the soul that we can’t always unfold or develop them” (p. 49) by our own cognition. Saturating our own experience with affect (Semetsky, 2013) can often help in making the unknown known. In this mesa, I try to “undo the folds … that pass through every one of my thresholds … that surround me and separate me from the deep” (Deleuze, 1993, p. 93). I think of the deep as the things that are still not perceived, under the ground where the rhizome lays constantly in motion … waiting patiently to come to the surface to be seen. I chose to bring the selected intensifying moments to the page through the unfolding of mini drama scenes.

The scenes created in Mesa 5 reflect the questions identified in Mesa 4 that have guided the undertaking of this research. As the dissertation moves into Mesa 6, the overarching wondering about how affect theory can possibly influence thinking around dropping out and dropping in to high school will be considered for further discussion. Rhizoanalysis maps the mind connections that happen within the researcher as the (non)data is read and reread. The first scene in Mesa 5 sets the stage for the participants to speak about the events in their lives that they believe may have had significance for them. They were also invited in email communication to bring any artefacts or pictures that they may want to include in the meetings, but there were no expectations or pre-conceived notions about the (un)foldings of the discussions. The hope was to free up a space for affect (the power to affect and be affected) to
exist and be experienced. What lines of flight might be opened to think something new?

**Scene 1 Getting Started**

“Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.3).

The time is set. The location is agreed upon. A meeting has been arranged. Looking into the room, two people could be seen. The room was small. There were no windows. Inside the room was a desk with a computer on it and a number of book shelves behind the desk chair. In front of the desk was a small round table with two chairs. It was late afternoon for all of the meetings, but each was on a different day. It is a typical office setting. Refreshments sit at the table as a hospitable gesture and an attempt to provide a relaxed atmosphere for participants to speak freely. The people in the room sit around the table partaking of the refreshments, and conversation ensues.

**Production 1**


[Enter Becoming Researcher.] She carries a brief case in one hand and a hand held Smart Phone in the other loaded with an audio application to document the anticipated conversation. Ethics forms awaiting signatures rest in the brief case. Proposed ‘starting’ questions are prepared … ready to begin … ready to collect (non)data, begin *intra-views* … just listen, respond, no agenda, no themes, no agenda, seek the ‘something new’ … anticipation abounds. The most uncomfortable moments are the signing of the forms. Somehow, this seems to take away from the
authenticity of just wanting to listen to a person’s story. The researcher thinks about the briefcase. Why did she bring it? Now, it just sits on the floor and screams a position of importance or power. It is difficult to let go of traditional ways of doing things. The researcher will not bring the briefcase next time. She is learning…she is becoming. Do not stand outside, looking in. Become intra-related. Let the discussion unfold, let go the control. Next time, think about a more inviting space to talk. Ask the people where they would like to talk, what they might like to do in place of just sitting and talking. Maybe, they would be more comfortable doing talking somewhere else, some other way. Why did the researcher not consider that previously? She steps into the space and feels the formalness of its smell, its space, its furniture, its four walls. She is affected in the reality of that moment, she wishes she had thought something else sooner. But, it is alright. She is becoming... Think Deleuze... Experiment, Escape tradition, Be brave …

[Enter Becoming Participant.] Thoughts become words. Words come from memories, dreams, journals, lived moments.

[Enter ‘Becoming’ and … and … and …] Following an explanation of the research, a response to questions and the signatures of consent forms, some casual conversation occurs:

Researcher: Can you tell me about your life journey so far? Tell me about some of the things that stand out vividly in life that you have encountered so far … the things that are important, the people that are important in your life, events that sit in your memory bank. Maybe you would like to start with some memories of your original high school days. You decide.
**Randy:** I have my mom and two sisters. But for a while now, the military has been family. I excelled when I was in elementary school but after my father passed away it’s like my home dynamic changed quite a bit. So, it became very difficult to focus on school and it was about that time that I got into high school that it started to kind of like; I started my gradual descent into dropping out of school. (Intra-view, May 10, 2018)

[Insert]: *It is interesting that an event in Chernobyl many years before Randy was even brought to Canada by his family served as a moment of affect in his own becoming. After the nuclear accident in their home country, Randy’s father made the decision to take his family to Canada to avoid nuclear fallout. Assemblages are created out of the desire born of life events gone by, and they can be placed on a cartographic map to create intriguing life stories. The deterritorializing moment in Randy’s father to leave a home country, in time, became part of the story in Randy’s deterritorializing moment to leave school and join the military. This is an example of the connection of assemblages in rhizomatic production.*

**Lara:** When I think of high school … I was falling behind. I wasn’t attending and just wasn’t there. School wasn’t there for me. There was no interest in it at all and yeah at 17; I think it was 17 when I stopped because I got pregnant. Then I miscarried and all hell broke loose and school was over (laughing). Then 18 came around, I think my mom passed away when I was 18. (Intra-view, May 3, 2018)

**Jimmy:** Who is Jimmy? Jimmy is a married guy with 3 kids. Born in (date deleted). A good family, 2 sisters and one older brother. The 2 sisters are
younger. We lived all over Manitoba. At 17 I had cash in my pocket. I was working a job. I don’t really need school, right? It was just the mentality of ‘what’s this going to do for me?’ and personally I had no future, I had no plans. Had never really discussed it and never had a lot of conversation about my future with my parents. I had failed other grades and even in those other grades they came and talked to me but never punished me or said, “Hey you did bad.” And to this day it still astounds me that my parents never talked to me, never asked me, never said nothing. I just wanted to not go to school and they never questioned it and that was that. (Intra-view, May 5, 2018)

Ella: I was hoping that I would get an idea of what I wanted to do while I was in school. But I’ve tried nursing before. I went as an adult student, a mature student so I didn’t need my grade 12. But my husband wanted me to do that. I didn’t want to do it. So, I plugged through it for a while and then I just didn’t like it. It was too much responsibility for me. I don’t want nobody’s life in my hands and the nurse was always talking about medication or how people die. I didn’t like it, I didn’t want to do that. (Intra-view, May 18, 2018)

Cam: I made friends with the ‘drama’ people in a school where I transferred, my new high school. There was a girl I really liked who strung me along for the most part. So, that was a big consumption of my attention and the drama that came between her and the other guy that she was with, you know. It was a triangle almost. It was her, then me and another guy. And it just made my life really stressful and frustrating and I just stopped going to school. It was easier to skip than to deal with the awkward situation of being around these
people that were making my life uncomfortable and difficult. (Intra-view, May 10, 2018)

[Insert]: Life experiences can disrupt the way people think about things or the way they may believe the direction their lives are taking. Each of the participants speak about something that deterritorialized their early education experiences. Various events/people contribute to the assemblages that are created, deterritorialized and reterritorialized. Each of the participants spoke about family members or significant relationships. Figure 6 depicts these events.

Figure 6. Life Events

Production 2

**Researcher:** What do you think are some key events that might have been part of your life that have had an impact on how you see yourself?

**Ella:** I got to spend quite a bit of time thinking about this on one of my assignments a year or so ago. I remember when you asked us to think about
the book we read in class and to pick out one or two quotes that made me think. Then I made a slide on the power point that I chose to do for the class. I would like to show it to you because I think it was one of the assignments that helped me think about some key moments in my life … The passing of people in my life and the opportunities that I have had make a big difference to me. I connect to animals also. They help me move out of my comfort zone, battle some of the bad things that I had in my life for too long. That is passed now. Brought me back to finish high school. (Ella’s slide from her assignment is pictured below in Figure 7.) (Intra-view, May 18, 2018)

Figure 7. Ella’s Slide

Randy: The military has had a big impact on me. I am trying very hard to be more open and I think I made great strides in that … to being more open to other people’s opinions and being less like; just less rigid about things. Understanding that there is a grey area sometimes to things. In the military
everyone has a very similar viewpoint and even if they don’t, if they are below me in some way I make them believe my viewpoint. Because, the military is not a democracy, right? (Intra-view, May 10, 2018)

**Lara:** One thing that stands out for me is my graduation. I am better me being educated, knowing more. It was a big step in my life. I never thought I was going back to school ever. I just never thought I could accomplish anything like that. I never thought I was good enough. I think I was trapped in my own self worthlessness. (She pauses for several seconds to think, and I see a tear in her eyes.) … But then she smiles … And I actually got my niece to come back and she did it. She came to my graduation and when she saw me graduate, she said, “I’m going back to school!” because she was a drop out too. I was proud of that moment. I felt like maybe I was an example to help her make a good choice. And my cousin, she is the same as age as me. She was a drop out too but she told me she wanted to graduate too. I told her to go write the test and see where you fit in with the classes and just go from there. She finally did it. (Intra-view, May 3, 2018)

**[Insert]:** *I am intrigued by the intrinsic motivation of adult participants to “make themselves better”. Where do they get the idea that the body is not ‘good enough’? How is ‘good enough’ defined? I think the same way, but I never stop to wonder why. I am probably my biggest critic. I set my bar high. Why? How have I come to think this way? I work hard, and so does Lara. She is giving to others and encourages young people not to make the same ‘mistakes’ that she has. Why does she think of her*
past this way? Maybe it feels different to be famous than unschooled. Whatever it is, I am glad that she is happy. Happiness is important for all of us I am sure.

**Jimmy:** I believe nothing happens by accident. (Jimmy pauses, he looks down and I notice he is crying. I am quiet. I give him time. After a few seconds, he looks up and he smiles. He continues ...) There is a purpose behind every part of life. I am so thankful for everything in my life, even the things that others might see as difficulty. For example, there is no way I would have finished my grade 12 this late in life if I hadn’t lost my business, moved here and had the availability now to just cycle from work to downtown to my classes and do a course twice a week. Then pass the courses and get my grade 12. There would have been no way. We never know what can happen, even when people might think the world is falling apart around them. But, I am faithful too, and I believe in God. He sustains me. He has given me so much in the people that I love and who love me … what else is there? “Things” do not matter. Actually, the less we have, the less we have to worry about. There is freedom in having less “stuff”. It is too bad more people couldn’t see that. People might actually live a whole lot happier. (He still speaks with tears in his eyes; yet, he is smiling.) (Intra-view, May 5, 2018)

**[Insert]:** One cannot ever know in advance how sense might emerge out of an assemblage of events. Jimmy’s perspective of the loss of his business provides a different way of thinking about something, an event, that might otherwise be perceived as negative. He describes the event as having a purpose in the creation of an opportunity. In the face of adversity, Jimmy is the becoming-warrior, resistant to
society’s lure into wealth and materialistic prosperity. He becomes a force that “places the war machine in the service of peace” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1908/1987, p. 490). The peace that is created enables him the opportunity to see the simpleness/greatness in relocating somewhere else and cycling to school to finish his education. A line of flight/escape emerged in the event and reterritorialization occurs. Some readers of Jimmy’s comments might suggest that linking his experience to that of Deleuze and Guattari’s war machine may be the researcher’s unconscious fall back into traditional interpretive research. However, the researcher is not drawing on interpretation; rather, a close reading of Jimmy’s comments reflects his own understanding of the event that has affected him. He is the one that suggests his experiences be thought of as being difficult; yet, he is the one who sees his own becoming as something else, something that brings peace, something different. That is precisely how Deleuze (1990/1995) describes the concept of war machine that is comprised of transformative becoming (puissance) affecting the bodies in the research assemblage.

Ella discussed overcoming her comfort zone. The reading of the text in the English class (creatively displayed in her assignment) causes moments of affect in her life. The text is a disruption to her thinking, causing a transformative experience, desire serves in the production of her becoming. For Randy, it was the resistance to a training, a system, that demanded rigid ways of thinking that never considers other options. Lara had to battle her own sense of worthlessness. But, she sees herself as conqueror of all that negativity, and can recognize the positive influence that her becoming warrior has had on others around her. She is proud of that.
Cam described a different event/moment in his life. He spoke about a time of self-reflecting that caused him to think about his own flaws. After I thought we had concluded the intra-view and the tape was shut off, he continued to speak to me and explained how he wanted to work on his ability to reciprocate the support that he has experienced from people around him. We agreed to turn the recording device on again.

**Cam:** Recognizing a lot of my flaws and not necessarily accepting them but accepting that I need to work on them. So, the lack of emotion that I show people. The connections that I feel I don’t make. I’ve noticed that I’m very distant with the people that are close in my life and that is a very shady thing to do because they are great people. They are there to support me when I need them and I’m not giving them that back in return. I’m realizing that I may not want to spend time with people. I may just want to sit there on my own and do my own thing but as much as your life is your own, your life is not your own. But, maybe I am just different that way, you know? Doesn’t everybody want to be with somebody? I don’t always think that way. I guess, your life is the effort that you put into the relationships around you as well. (Intra-view, May 10, 2018)

After we had concluded the taping of our conversation, Cam explained:

I have not put in much effort with my relationships really. But, for a long time I have felt very used by people. It has only been in the last few years that I have come to see another side of people. It is too bad because I may have lost some very good people by the time it took me this long. But, coming back to
school, for example … you know … maybe because people are older and have more experience, but they seem more real to me now, more like they really are interested in my journey too and not just their own. Their support is real. I should not just push everyone away. I have to battle through this wall of doom that I probably have created.

**[Insert]:** *What is the wall of doom that he speaks about? Does that battle (war machine, Deleuze & Guattari, 1908/1987) disrupt ‘something’ that leads to peace? He reminisces in his thinking. He says he has not put much effort into his relationships, but something is also being produced when he says that people seem more real to him now. He says he does not want to push people away any more. The intra-views are allowing the participants to speak their thinking. The researcher does not interject meaning or interpretation to their words. All that is left for me to do is pay attention, listen, and let my thinking/wondering emerge. What events have contributed to the change? Something has deterritorialized his wall of doom. Is he fostering an acceptance of difference? It is possible to understand the differences in ourselves and to think about something differently than someone else. Moments of deterritorialization are different for each participant, for the researcher. In the research process, they are mapped; they are relational.*

*[Momentary Exit]*
death and birth

crisis and opportunity

circle of life events

relationships

... (un) comfort zone
“It became very difficult to focus on school.” (Randy)

“I was falling behind. I wasn’t attending and just wasn’t there.” (Lara)

“I had failed other grades.” (Jimmy)

“I excelled when I was in elementary school but after my father passed away it’s like my home dynamic changed quite a bit.” (Randy)

“The passing of people in my life and the opportunities that I have had make a big difference to me.” (Ella)

“My husband wanted me to do that.” (Ella)

“The military has had a big impact on me.” (Randy)

“One thing that stands out for me is my graduation…. I just never thought I could accomplish anything like that.” (Lara)

“I just stopped going to school. It was easier to skip than to deal with the awkward situation of being around these people that were making my life uncomfortable and difficult.” (Cam)

“To this day it still astounds me that my parents never talked to me, never asked me, never said nothing. I just wanted to not go to school and they never questioned it and that was that.” (Jimmy)

“Actually, the less we have, the less we have to worry about. There is freedom in having less stuff.” (Jimmy)
Intra-mesa

Guided by the “logic of affects” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 9), Deleuze’s philosophy is “not a question of intellectual understanding … but of intensity, resonance, musical harmony” (p. 86) that connects experiment and experience, consciousness and unconsciousness. Deleuze used the story of the swimmer and the sea to explain this connectedness. The swimmer learns by swimming in the sea because swimmer and sea are defined “by their mutual solidarity, and neither of them can be identified otherwise” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 45). This solidarity is described as bodymind learning. The swimmer becomes able to “free life from where it is trapped” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 141) because the swimmer constructs new cartographies that are formed through the bodily experience of interacting with the sea and finding its way to swim through the waves. The physical and the mental come together, and the body’s power is changed (Semetsky, 2013) as it is able to multiply and intensify its connections.

Bodies of becoming researcher, becoming reader, and becoming participant also experience the changing of the body’s power in their practical manoeuvring with one another. This is where (new)(non)sense is able to emerge, not the common sense, but the sense that can transform in unpredictable ways. Scene 1 reflects the power to affect and be affected; affects are revealed. Scene 2 is devoted to the disruption of the literature that depicts the uneducated adult as a ‘lacking’ individual. This cartography will focus on the moments of affect that might serve to transform the negativity associated with thinking around individuals who drop out of high school.
Scene 2 Wandering a War Machine

Production 1

The setting is the same. This scene also includes some moments from the focus group discussion. Not all of the participants are present at the focus group, unfortunately. But, the discussion is still rich and full, and the people who are present are eager to speak about their experiences. Each person is introduced and welcomed. Scene 2 begins with some discussion from the focus group where the two participants that are present provide a past recollection of how they made a decision to leave their high schools.

Cam: I left high school because I got a job opportunity. Several factors led up to this … Poor social interactions coupled with a drive to make money and be successful financially and the lack of work ethic and drive to put in for completing high school. And once I left high school it just seemed pretty normal just to work, you know spend your day 9-to-5 at a job and go home. It’s like that country song I heard once. It’s a lady that sings about working 9 to 5 as a way to make a living. (He smiles). I think I have it downloaded on my phone here actually… let me see (He searches for the country song by artist, Dolly Parton, on the phone, he plays a bit of the song and we listen.

After a few moments, we get back to the conversation.)

Researcher: Some people might tell you that staying in school actually provides more opportunity for making money, that an education provides a pathway to increasing your odds of being financially stable. What do you think?
Cam: I think that maybe that is what certain people in society might want you to believe but I don’t know… I hear of a lot of people coming out of colleges and universities with a lot of debt and how long does it take before that gets paid off? Maybe there is more than one path to being financially stable. Maybe it isn’t all about education. Not that education is a bad thing. I mean I did come back and finish my grade 12, right? But, I just don’t know why it’s just “assumed” that education is the only way to do it. And, if it’s not the path you choose, lots of people just don’t think much of you. That’s just the way it goes. What do you think? I guess you are a teacher, you are probably biased on this one. (He laughs)

[Insert]: This scene is an example of an event that connected the lyrics from a song, the listening to the song together, a job, a participant, a researcher, and life experiences. What is actualized from this virtual potential (Deleuze, 1968/1994)? Supports for education as a positive avenue towards success and economic sustenance are possibly being reterritorialized for researcher as something else or something different. The common discourses around schooling are disrupted for the moment. Literature that depicts the dropout as ‘lacking’ is also challenged. At some point in his life, Cam heard a song that spoke about going to work every day and making money. He also worked at a job during his high school years, and he began to think something different about staying in school. He does not suggest that this was a ‘turning point’ or the actual moment where he chose to leave school, but it was part of the events that caused a disruption to his continued attendance in school. And now, his life event is brought into the discussion and building of this rhizome
research. Might this be an example of Deleuze’s war machine (Deleuze, 1990/1995; Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987)? The machine produces a return to school for Cam. His alternative pathway to high school completion was not lacking. It was simply a path of difference. It is how Cam live(s)(d).

The other interesting thing that arises for me in this discussion is Cam’s question asking me about my own opinion, then further commenting that I was “probably biased on this one” since I was an educator. But, just before he asks the question, he makes a comment about people “not thinking much about you” when someone leaves school prematurely. He is aware of a stigma that is associated with such a choice and then asks a question of me about the matter. I remember feeling uncomfortable during that moment. How do I answer his question? I think about ethics and maintaining a positive relationship with my participant. How is becoming researcher affected in this moment? How is the learning of the researcher/former instructor being reterritorialized by participant/former student? Cam asked me a question … I thought about an answer. These are difficult questions to answer. Am I one of the people who don’t think much about people who drop out of school? Do I believe that education is the only path to success? Probably at one time I did, but not any longer. The becomings of my participants and other adult learners that I have come to know over the years of teaching have transformed my thinking. I respect my participants, my students. I have come to learn that there are no two journeys alike. Difference is part of becoming.
Intra-mesa

As I think back to this particular conversation with Cam and review my notes, I remember feeling like the role of researcher and participant had been reversed for a few moments. All of a sudden, a question was posed to me; I wrote in my notes that I felt a split second of judgement as Cam also suggested that I might be biased in my response to his question about the importance of an education to someone’s success. It was a fairly significant moment in my discussions with participants. I described in my journal that I also felt a sense of vulnerability in that moment. For many years I have been part of the molarized system of education that Wallin (2014) described. I lived within a molarized state for a long time. I am an educator. I believe in education. It has served me well. It has served many people well. But, I realize that it has not served everyone well. Education is not the thing that everyone must do...must live. There are other ways to live, and there is much merit in learning about them. O'Donnell (2017) said, “Experiences of hesitation that force us to think are part of educational experiences, that is, of the encounter with the unknown” (p. 38). This, perhaps, was one of those moments. Being situated in a poststructural paradigm, “ethical practice emerges here as a response to the not-yet-known of the present moment” (Davies, 2009, p. 627). How do I respond to Cam’s question? How does he see me as he looks at me waiting for my answer? He waits. I tell him. I am honest. I believe in the importance of education and the opportunities it can provide for people. I also believe that it has failed in these attempts on many occasions. I am glad that the students who have returned to high school have found their own paths of success, and I am learning that success can be found on different paths.
The immanent ethics of Deleuze (discussed earlier) “requires an ethics that is sensitive to the singularity of the other in all situations” (O’Donnell, 2017, p. 44). Some of the things that Cam had already spoken about regarding his school experiences were not pleasant for him. His encounters with past teachers had not always been the most encouraging. He told me that he remembers one of his teachers telling him that he would “never amount to much” (Cam Intra-view, May 10, 2018). He did not have good memories of teachers and could not recall one that may have had a positive impact on him. I knew that he had made a conscious choice to become part of my study, despite his past experiences with other teachers. Was he waiting for me to prove myself differently? O’Donnell (2017) explained:

We sense when someone is in the same landscape and when they are not: for example, the teacher who scans the room and only half listens to a child’s answer to the question that she or he has directed towards the child. Likewise when a child is prejudged on the basis of his or her background or family, he or she can feel that they exist in different universes from their teachers. (p. 45)

In the moment of Cam’s question, I felt a bit like the child that O’Donnell described. I was faced with a question, and Cam waited for an answer. The response would be a function of the event that was being produced (May, 2005).

In the moment/event of my discussion with Cam, my own experiences were coming into the relationship with the assemblage. Complexity exists as each part of the assemblage come together within the relational construction. Each part of the assemblage connect and affect one another in the process. As part of the assemblage
of experiences, desire (described in Mesa 2) also exists. I wanted to acknowledge Cam’s own viewpoint about education, but I also support the role that education can have in the life of a person. After all, I was living that viewpoint as a doctoral student. I wanted to maintain some common ground with Cam, and I did not want to further alienate or break down the rapport that we had developed with one another. He had expressed very early in his discussions with me that it was an unusual decision for him to support a teacher in a task. So, I asked him why he agreed to speak with me and be part of the study. When I reminded him that he could chose not to participate, he simply said admitted that he ‘liked’ me and he had enjoyed my classes with him prior to his graduation. Although there was a moment where our worldviews may have been colliding (and connecting at the same time), there was a flow of power in the struggle/assemblage, within the war machine (Deleuze, 1990/1995). Something was produced.

I affirmed Cam in his question. I said:

I think you make a good point, and it gives me something to think about. I have benefitted from an education, and I am a teacher. But, we all have our own story, our own experiences. There is not always one way to do something.

I wasn’t sure if I had answered sufficiently. I wished I had more time in that moment to ponder. I wonder if there was a better one that may have described more clearly what I was thinking. After I said it, I felt that I was being a bit vague. I didn’t want to shut down the conversation. He had taken a chance to ask me a question. I wanted to be honest and find language to encourage more discussion. Immanent ethical
responses have the capacity to increase a body’s *potentia*, and to take an event and turn it into a movement of flow (Colebrook, 2002). I wasn’t sure if I had closed down potential lines of flight in the response that may have led to further conversation about the purpose/importance of education with Cam. But, the research relationship remained in tact and the conversation continued, opening up other lines of flight. Different perspectives were present in the conversation with Cam, but they merged in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1987) war machine – not to create violence, but rather “in a service of peace” (p. 490) to seek *difference* or new ways of thinking about something.
It seemed normal to work a 9 to 5 job. (Cam)

I was told I would never amount to much. (Cam)

I felt judged for a moment. (Researcher)

Maybe it isn’t all about education. (Cam)

I did not want to further alienate. (Researcher)

What do you think? (Cam)

Experiences of hesitation that cause us to think. (O’Donnell)

Connections happen, but they might happen differently for each reader. A war machine’s power is taken up by soldiers (researcher and participant) using affect like a weapon to possibly bring about change or at least new ways to think about something.
Production 2

Production 2 evolved out of conversation that took place after the recording of the formal part of the intra-view occurred with Lara. When we first met each other, I noted in my journal that she seemed nervous to begin, maybe a bit shy. She was happy to participate; she just seemed a bit unsure of herself as we began. But, as the conversation continued, talk between the two of us seemed easy, and I felt we were both quite comfortable in the process. By the end of the conversation, she was smiling and appeared much more relaxed. Our cars were both parked in the same area so we decided to walk together. As we walked, she talked, and when we arrived at our cars, we spent several more moments together just talking. When we were both ready to leave, I asked her permission to make some notes on our ‘post meeting’ and she agreed. Immediately upon arriving home, I sat at my computer and began my journal notes while the conversation was fresh in my memory. The following excerpt was taken from my research journal:

*Lara told me about her grudge with her biological family because they chose to just “give her away”. She remembers when her adopted mother visited her and her family in their home. Lara climbed up on her adopted mother’s knee and her grandmother said, “You might as well just take her. I can’t look after her.” Her biological mother was an alcoholic and she was so happy to be taken off the reserve and come to her grandmother. Lara says she “hated” it on the reserve. Her adopted father was a white man and her adopted mother was Metis. Her adopted mother had been part of the 60’s scoop and she had also attended a residential school. [Lara also explained to me that she has a*
missing Indigenous sister who has been missing for 2 years now.] She recalled that her family did a lot of hunting and trapping but she was treated like a typical girl with dresses and pony tails. As an adult, she says that she chooses not to be ‘placed’ in a traditional gender role. She said that the also thought it was important for more women to be trained in the trades. But, she admitted that when her own daughter was quite young, she treated her in the typical female way also, but one day just asked herself “why”. She decided to let her dress the way she wanted and to be who she wanted to be. She told me her daughter got her period when she was 15, and she was worried she would get pregnant. She didn’t want that for her. I wanted a better life for her, and I wanted to be a good mother to her. I could never just “give her away to her grandmother, only to see her be given to someone else later ... I have some resentment about that, even though my adopted parents treated me OK”.

I was very interested in hearing more from Lara. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet again to extend our conversation. I would have liked to hear more about her life and the kinds of affects that may have been created in the assemblages around colonialism, but that conversation would not occur within the time frame of this dissertation. The conversation with Lara triggered memories of my own childhood memories.

Like Lara, I grew up in a family where my father did a lot of hunting and trapping, but I do not have any Indigenous background. Like her, my parents did not foster gender norms. I grew up working on the farm, driving a tractor, hunting and trapping with my father, while also participating in household chores alongside my
own brother and sister. But, I grew up connected to the land, whether it was through farming the land, checking the trap lines, or taking regular walks in wooded areas picking wild flowers and berry picking. Like Lara, my own father had been an abuser of alcohol until he made the decision to abstain when I was 12 years old. It was life changing moment in my childhood life – one that reduced anxiety and stress living in a home that held tension between my parents over a father’s choices. But, I also watched the destructive forces of alcohol abuse in one of my Indigenous friend’s home who lived close to me. She lost her mother to alcohol poisoning and then lost contact with her siblings after they were moved to foster homes far apart from one another. I never met her father and she never spoke of him. I wonder if he may have not been alive. We lost contact after that happened, and it was terribly sad to see my friend taken away.

The post-conversation ‘walk’ with Lara was a moment of affect. The assemblage of experiences (the haecceity) became relational with other assemblages. Lara, myself, the fresh evening air, the walk, the songs of the spring birds, the traffic-free streets, our memories, the realization that we have some common life experiences, and the absence of the recorder worked together to produce a raw and honest conversation, unplanned and unthought. I also realized that the two of us were not too far apart in age, and as we departed each to our own homes that evening, I felt like we had known each other for a long time. Yet, that was not the case. Lara had not even been a student in my class during her return to school. She had a different instructor. It was the first time we had met, but I felt a strong connection to
her story. We have not met outside the parameters of this research. I wonder if we ever will see one another in the future?

Lara’s adult life began with her mom passing away shortly after she turned 18. Despite her struggles in her late teens and a pre-mature departure from high school, ending in an unplanned pregnancy, Lara has defied the odds. She has completed her high school. She is working on her welding ticket and was elected by the collegiate to be a spokesperson for the adult high school program. Her children are both in school and doing well, “despite the struggle they have with math … just like their mother” (She laughs). She says that her kids are proud of her, and she is happy in her relationship with her husband. She told me that she “has come out of her shell” and enjoys talking to people. She volunteers her time in the community at sporting events and she describes herself as “[Lara] the learner” (Intra-view, May 3, 2018). She explained how she stressed safety when she was doing her welding courses. She realized she was the oldest student in the class, and she tried to help the younger students in whatever they were doing in the class.

Lara: If somebody needs help then I try and help them. I am very safety oriented. I have bad anxiety. I am in school with all these kids that are 18 and 19. So I’m always “Safety First” (laughing). I am so bad. They call me Momma. ‘I’ll teach you guys some stuff.’ I don’t know, I’m teaching them more about life I think than anything else. … I tell them to get their stuff done and do their homework. The thing is we never know how life unfolds. When you are 16 or 17 you couldn’t know what you think today. … I had nobody to push me to go to school. Mom was like “yea go to school” but it wasn’t like
“you need to go to school”. My dad was pretty good. He was there, he was my dad. A big part of my life.

Researcher: Did they see you graduate?

Lara: No, they passed away. My dad would have been 100 years old this year. My dad passed when I was 13, my mom when I was 18.

Researcher: So your dad wasn’t there for your high school days?

Lara: No, I wish he was. He would have kicked my ass! But, you know I have always been able to work at a job. I started with small jobs waitressing or bartending. I worked in the hardware store also. Then I worked at a clinic as a receptionist. That was a good job. I also worked for Canada Post for several years. Then I worked at Maple Leaf. And, I also had a couple summer government jobs on different occasions. Now I am doing my apprenticeship for welding with the Trans-Canada Pipelines.

Lara was pleased with her life. Proud of her accomplishments and her ability to overcome adversity; she is always becoming in her journey. Her limited education has not hindered her life experiences, and like anyone else who might have some regrets in life, she does express some things that might have been different for her. But, she does not describe a life of ‘lack’ or despair, and she does not define her happiness or ability to impact others based on wealth or power. Proud of her accomplishments and her completion of grade 12 (even though it came much later in her life), she is enjoying life. Despite some of the hardships that she described, she finds purpose in sharing her story with those around her, encouraging her children, and continuing to learn new things, such as her welding skills.
Production 3

When Jimmy expressed interest in participating in my research, I had a brief memory of him from attending my class prior to his graduation. He was one of the most positive people that I had encountered. He was always smiling, and was the type of person who always tried to see the good in everything. I remember him telling me that he had never actually read a complete book cover to cover and he was so exited to have read two during the months of his course work. In his reading journals, he consistently made deep connections with text and was eagerly participated in small and large group discussions about the contents of the texts. I found one of his assignments on a unit that we had completed entitled ‘Our Lives and Media’. Many rousing discussions occurred during that unit, particularly around advertising and mass consumerism within our society. In one of his reflections on an article that the class had read which encouraged consumers to take one day and just “buy nothing”, Jimmy wrote:

What would actually happen in our society if every person decided not to buy anything for one day? Is that even possible? I am not sure I can get my brain around the concept as to how that would even work. I could easily not buy anything in a day. There are actually days that go by and I never buy anything. It is actually very liberating. I like to live without a lot of stuff. There is no stress in that. My wife and my kids, we have learned to live that way and we like it. We don’t worry about the stress of debt. I don’t have a big house. We have one car and we make it work. I probably could get rid of that one day too. I always bike everywhere in the city. I have a strong faith. I love
people. I invest my time and energy in people, not stuff. That is what life is really all about. It is such a shame…it saddens me to think how most people have bought into the whole idea of more and more and bigger is better. It is not actually. (Jimmy, Journal Response, Spring 2016)

When Jimmy and I had our discussion, I reminded him about this assignment and what he had said. I asked him if he still believed what he wrote. He said:

With all my heart. More so even now. And you know…because we are talking about my life and dropping out of school, I was thinking before I came here today that maybe if I had not dropped out of school, I would never have come to live a life like I do. I have been very comfortable, my family has been comfortable. We have not lived a life of extravagance and we have not been able to get everything that our neighbours have and we have had to make sacrifices. But, that is all OK because I do not have all the stress that some other people do. And my family is strong because we work together and we are thankful for what we have. Our faith is important to us and God looks after us. We are blessed. I am not rich, but I am not poor either. I can’t even imagine my life any other way. Sure, I came back and got my grade 12, but not for money. I’d like to be a fireman and get into the fire college. But, not for the money … I think I could do well at a job like that because I think I could save lives and do something good to help others. That is really what life is all about … In firefighting you’re helping a person and it’s taking a really bad situation and making it better. Not necessarily going to save a person’s life every time, but you are changing that, just that bad situation from one
area and just taking the curve and throwing it a different way. And you are
dealing with people’s lives instead of their stuff. That is what is different
from being a mechanic. (Jimmy Intra-view, May 5, 2018)

I was interested in what Jimmy said when he commented, “taking the curve and
throwing it a different way”. He described his thoughts as developing lines of flight.
One gets on a certain directional path, and in time, a new direction is taken up … one
that produces new assemblages of experiences that contribute to flows of desire and
influence sense.

**Scene 3 Transformative Puissance**

Rhizomatic connections multiply as each participant’s words are read. Each
reader of the connections will experience affects differently, and each participant has
also experienced the unfolding affects differently. Affects will have varying
transformative powers on participants/researcher/reader. How do these affect
responses open lines of flight? How does becoming unfold? Scene 3 in this mesa
takes a look at the transformative powers that exist within the
assemblages of each of the
participants. One of the
questions in this study probes the
assemblages that affect the
participants’ lines of flight in
their return to high school.
During the discussions,

I once again marvel at the deep reflective processes that these adult learners grab
hold of. They reflect the full and complicated lives that exist and the
becoming that is constantly occurring.

What new learning emerges? How are
researcher and participant experiencing
becoming? (Shelley’s Research Journal Entry, June 10, 2018)
participants were asked if they had any assignments from their classes that they wanted to share or discuss. One assignment that three participants shared involved an assignment from their English class. They selected specific quotations from a text they had read in class and had to discuss why they had chosen them.

The assignment included a reflective presentation. Often, students discuss quotations with which they make personal connections. They have life experiences they want to share, and they learn to explore text in deeper ways. Jimmy told me in his intra-view, “The reflective journals and assignments that we did in class with the stuff that we read was more than just an assignment for me. Not only had I never read a complete book in my life from start to finish, I really learned a lot about myself … things I would never have thought about otherwise.” Reading and reflective processes allowed for lines of power to emerge – disruptive lines known as puissance and striating lines of pouvoir (Colebrook, 2002; Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). These lines shoot through and among the texts and the created assignments. There is complexity and unpredictability in these lines. Their trajectories and intersections are unpredictable, but for some re-entry adults, the intensity of the reading and reflecting may cause a disruption that can affect/produce individual transformations and a constant becoming. These selections are examples that are part of the assemblages that are producing.
“I have made lots of mistakes in my younger days. But those mistakes, and the good decisions, all work together somehow.” (Lara)

“My dad taught me something really important, made me see the good.” (Jimmy)

“The assignment sure made me look at where I have come from and all the possibilities that can still happen.” (Randy)

“I didn’t have a high opinion of myself.” (Cam)

“Before I was quiet and kept to myself.” (Lara)

“With a positive nature, I can change a negative box into a positive one and it cleans up a space for me. My faith will continue to keep me on track.” (Jimmy)

“I am unmotivated. I regurgitate and learn knowledge easily. Over time it slips away. But I don’t want this job I have forever. I want to learn to stay motivated” (Cam)

“I am too hard on myself. I fail myself. I sabotage my own future and cripple myself. I must let that go.” (Cam)

“I will probably do more in my life yet. I was thinking about accounting, but I also feel a real calling to women’s ministries in a church.” (Ella)

“The concept of time hit me 3 years ago. What do I do with myself? What happened to time? I am in my 40’s already. When did all this happen?” (Lara)

“One day maybe my own story will help some other poor misfits in the future.” (Randy)

“My family and my supports are so vital to me. Every day I am thankful for them, especially my husband.” (Ella)

“We never know the effect that we have on others. Every day I can sense an angel in somebody, I want to be like that for others too.” (Jimmy)

“She took an academic path and she regrets it.” (Cam)
Each story is *becoming* differently. The assemblage of participants, the assemblage of each participant, unfold on its own plane of immanence. Virtual becomes reality in an untimely and unpredictable fashion. Affect informs desire at each point of *(dis)(re)traction*. Attention is taken elsewhere, to a new plane, always moving nomadically in unpredictable ways. The stories do not end here. The journeys continue, even as the research process finds a space for exit. Virtual becoming still awaits in the unconscious playing out of the continuing assemblages.

**Intra-mesa**

Scene 3 in Mesa 5 has produced an assemblage of the *becomings* of participants and researcher. Randy iterated that he hoped his own story would “help some other poor misfits in the future”. During the intra-view, we never really talked more about his thoughts about the concept of “poor misfit” or why he chose that language, and it makes me wonder now what he was thinking about at that moment. As I read the transcripts several times, the words seem to ‘jump’ at me every time as a disruption. I am bothered about his reference to “poor misfit” and it creates a line of tension for me in the reading. How might this disruption affect the assemblages that are being produced? How is power as *puissance* opening a smooth space for thinking? I read the text immanently and intensely. I think about it, but it only leads me to think more questions… What haecceities have worked to produce the self-reflection of being a “poor misfit”? Why does he include “other poor misfits” in his thinking? Perhaps these are lines of flight that can be followed at another time.

Cam thought that he sabotaged his own future, but expressed his willingness to “let that go” and push through his lack of motivation. Lara is aware of her age and
the quickness of how life seems to pass by. She expressed sadness about how fast the days have gone by, and she said, “Sometimes it takes too long to really appreciate life … maybe that comes with age” (She smiles). I wonder if the language around “misfit”, “sabotage”, and the “passing by of life” are signs of reterritorialization for the individuals. What kind of learning/thinking is produced in these moments? Is there a kind of self-reading taking place in these moments? How do these moments create transformative becoming? Lines of flight emerge once again. The power to affect and be affected exists. Self-reflection and intrinsic motivation are forces that inspire becoming and perhaps build resilience. How are these adults becoming warriors in a war machine that challenges a molarized system of education? How do the lines of flight become lines of escape from the world that seems to be “passing by too quickly” … where they once felt “sabotaged”, “misfit(ted)”? What new ways of living can be created?

Jimmy maintains a positive outlook and harbours a deep religious faith that he attributes his complete sense of satisfaction as he moves through life. And Ella looks forward to her future, expressing aspirations for accounting or perhaps women’s ministries. All five of these adults have maintained independent journeys. They know hardship and they know success. They all recognize the impact that education can play in opening up life options, as the completion of their high school diploma is proving. As researcher, I think something new each time I read the transcripts. Different things affect the reading process, and I am reminded of the complexity that exists among the lived stories. Moving into Scene 4 of this mesa, I reflect on the transgressive data around a molarized/stratified education body.
Scene 4 Disrupting a Molarized/Stratified, Territorialized Education Body

Enter An education body whose aim is to regulate and standardize and promote common sense (Wallin, 2014).

Jackson (2010) explained that becoming and difference are key themes in Deleuze’s work:

They serve as his response to western philosophy’s preoccupation with becoming as a transcendent, linear response and difference being diluted to difference-from-the-same, which relies on a stable identity (or sameness) for external comparisons and relations, as in grouping. That is, traditional philosophy emphasizes universal characteristics to a group. (p. 580)

Jackson used the categories of woman, working class, and whiteness as examples of social categories that possess “coherent essences that might be easily and readily recognizable and predictable” (p. 581). She also defined molar as “something well-defined, massive, and governing” (p. 581) which is how Wallin (2014) described western education. The line of flight taken by the student who drops out of this system is a step taken in another direction, away from that which is molar.

Something else is now beginning to be produced known as the molecular (Jackson, 2010). It is a small movement in a different direction that destabilizes the molar. Massumi (1992) claimed that molarity is a mode of desire, but leaving molarity is also desire, and it is embodied by those students who abandon their high school education. Jackson (2010) explained:
The molecular is a deterritorialization of the molar, obviously, but more-so
the molecular relates to singularities, to individual response, to becoming.

And molecular becomings are the very substance of events. (p. 582)

The student who drops out of high school escapes the molar, the sameness, but the escape still “takes place in the World As We Know It … Bodies in flight do not leave the world behind … they take the world with them – into the future” (Massumi, 1992, p. 105). A line of becoming something different commences, but it is not necessarily a straight line connecting linear points. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) used the wasp and the orchid to describe this process. The in-between events that occur between wasp and orchid is where the becoming occurs:

The line of becoming that unites the wasp and the orchid produces a shared deterritorialization: of the wasp, in that it becomes a liberated piece of the orchid’s reproductive system, but also of the orchid, in that it becomes the object of an orgasm in the wasp, also liberated from its own reproduction. (P. 293)

Prior to the line of flight that liberates the exiting student, Snir (2018) says this about common sense and education:

The common sense … in which education can take place, … determining what is meaningful and valuable, what is right and wrong. … It educates in every act of recognition and communication, thereby laying the ground for ‘reasonable’ experience and action, binding life and thought to a predetermined order. (p. 301-302)
In Deleuze’s rejection of common sense, he is encouraging alternative ways to thinking about problems. Common sense, on its own, is not a completely bad thing. It helps us move along through everyday life. But, “the problem for Deleuze lies in the imperialism of common sense, in the way it takes over thought and action, casting them in conformist patterns” (Snir, 2018, p. 302). He is challenging the hierarchical tendencies of traditional education that have naturalized our thinking about the self-evidential aspect of specialists/teachers. Deleuze and Guattari (1996) stressed that anyone can become a teacher and cause someone else to think. Learning is a relational process that involves a teacher and a learner, but the teacher does not always possess a degree and stand in the formal space of a classroom. And sometimes, maybe teacher is not human.

The participants in this study made a decision in their high school life to move away from the ground of reasonable experience and action, from top-down learning. They reterritorialized to the unknown, away from an ordered and hierarchical structured system of education (Bazzul & Kayumova, 2016). In an effort to reconceptualize science education as critical and oriented in social justice, Bazzul and Kayumova began by describing education as “aborescent … and (over)coded by discourses that work to keep practices, boundaries, and a particular distribution of materials in place” (p. 289). They challenged educators to think about institutions that are highly structured and to consider the possibilities that could exist by deterritorializing the system to “enable discontinuity and ruptures” (p. 291). In listening to the participants in my own study, I was struck by their own descriptions of controlled and mitigated actions that existed within their own education.
experiences. Are these examples of conformist patterns that are born of common sense?

**Researcher:** Although this is not a project about finding out why you left high school, I suppose a discussion about your life after leaving school cannot omit some discussion about what life was like for you in high school and the things that perhaps contributed to your leaving. Can you talk about some of those things?

[Enter Production 1]

**Randy:** Basically, I dropped out of school because I had to start working. Remember I told you that when I got to grade 11, I started to show some violent tendencies and the government got involved with our family. They called it protective custody. They split me and my sister up. They put me with a very abusive family I was just a very young little innocent Ukrainian boy. … They put me in one of the worst neighbourhoods in the city and took my sister to another province. I am not sure why they thought that was a good idea. A few weeks after the abusive home and two other home tries, I got put into an “observation house”. I stayed in a basement with very little food. The school sent work to me, then I just shut down. I got moved to a group home; it was pretty decent, but by that time it was too late. The damage had been done. I got more aggressive at school and the policy was zero tolerance for any aggression, so the police got called every time. It seemed like the principal didn’t really care about me. He just had a policy book that he followed all the rules by. If I showed any aggression, the response by the
school was to call the police. Oh yea, they sent me to a school councillor, but she was just scared of me I think. After I turned 19, I had to leave the group home so I had to work to stay alive. It is hard to focus on education when you’re more concerned about surviving and finding food and shelter. I could not go to school and work at the same time. My school timetable had no flexibility for me to accommodate any kind of job. I tried to get classes later in the day, but I could never get enough credits. What would you do? School happens at certain time, they are usually the same as work hours. I don’t know of any teachers who teach night school at high school, do you? (Interview, May 10, 2018)

[Enter Production 2]

**Lara:** I don’t think the school really knew what to do with me. I had a pretty rough teenage life, drinking lots and then I got pregnant. I didn’t really apply myself, but nobody really cared. One counsellor just told me straight up one day, “Just wait until you come of age and just drop out. You don’t really fit school anyways. Maybe you will find something better”. I know that schools have counsellor and stuff still today, but teachers don’t really want to help you if you cause trouble. It is too hard for them. It takes too much of their time. There are more kids than just troubled ones that deserve an education, so it is probably easier for the system to just to let us go so the easy kids can get a better education. They have a curriculum to teach in
a certain time while you are in a subject, so if a student is taking too much
time and slowing things down, it is probably better she just leaves. I don’t
think anybody really tried to keep me there. (Intra-view, May 3, 2018)

[Enter Production 3]

Jimmy: When I was in younger grades, I repeated a couple grades. School
wasn’t the easiest thing for me. So when I got older I got a job and just started
making money. That is really why I left. Nobody questioned me. Today I
might be called A.D.D. or something would have been slapped on me or
some initials, some label they would have thrown on me. When school was
hard, I didn’t want to do anything. Let me go climb the jungle gym. Let me
go play somewhere. Let me go do something physical instead of actually
learning. Things never connected. It was just how the school was marking
and how the teachers were grading students and what they expected and some
was to do with the principal I guess. How he wanted the school to function.
… I would have been close to 18 when I quit because I started when I was 4
because my birthday was in January. I started early which may have been a
factor in my learning in primary grades, right? But then because I failed, I
finally got into the age group where I was with my peers and then finished or
(didn’t finish) school at 18. … I don’t know why schools don’t do more for
kids who don’t do so well with book learning. I could do lots with my hands
you know, like carpentry and mechanics. Everything in life … there is a
bombardment of education, you always have to learn new systems. I think the
school system needs to look and say, “Okay what are kids actually; what’s
their future? What are they going into”? And keep current or flexible to where they are at. That would be a big factor in keeping kids in school. … They should see you are not an idiot because you dropped out of school, because they could see where I got from life to this day.

**Researcher:** Interesting choice of words…Did you see yourself as an idiot when you dropped out of school?

**Jimmy:** At the time no but some of the influence from my in-laws made it that way. My mother-in-law is a teacher and I think she looked down on me not having a grade 12. The public; you keep it very quiet because a dropout generally means, yea, you’re going to be a low-income earner. You ain’t going nowhere in life. You are never going to go to university. They don’t even think you can get to college if you are a dropout which today might be a little tougher, you might need some kind of grade 12. I think all of your trades do need grade 12 now but at the same time; and that’s the province’s fault because they should still keep it at grade 10 or 11 or something. Because there is a lot of people that yes, they don’t need Calculus. They don’t need higher education for certain trades, why do we insist on grade 12? We are kicking ourselves in our foot and don’t consider what all students might want to do. I’ve worked with people who have very minimal education and you know, sometimes they are the best at a job. We should rethink what we are doing with education. … I’d like to bring something else up as well. My son is 6’4” tall and weighs 240 pounds. When he walked into his school, everyone was like “Wow” and he started playing rugby. Instantly, he became
a social figure and was invited to play every single sport. It was easy for him to connect into the sport group. … As long as you can half ass play the game, you are with that team. So, you immediately have a social network. If you don’t play sports, … your music clubs, you might hang out, you might not. Some literature club or chess club or something like that. … I wouldn’t say it’s about academics that people drop out. … My youngest son went to a private school. In the private school everyone is connected. You know the families; your socializing is groups already. In the public school setting, they have events to bring people together. Otherwise it is up to the kids and the kids can get lost inside such big numbers and you won’t even see it on your own child. They will come home with a straight face, happy face; whatever face they need to face to let mom and dad know that “Yeah, I’ve made it through life again”. You get to a place where literally you walk into school and you know you are not going to make a good friend and you don’t intend to make friends with your class. You are just a number. You are coming there, you are going. You don’t engage. It isn’t healthy, it really isn’t healthy. Later in your life it is the same with the friendships that you lead because you know you can walk away. But now as an adult we have great friends in two other families. We go camping and see each other on other random occasions at least twice a year. We don’t all live in the same area as our jobs have caused us to move, but once a year we get together as a group and it just takes off like yesterday. There is just a difference in your relationships later in life. When you are in school you are there every day and you meet them every
day. We can only sustain 3 to 7 really good friends I think…I mean to really keep good relationships. When you find a group that someone either opens up and leaves that room for you and you can enter in with your family or yourself, single or plural, get in there and be part of it. That’s an amazing thing. You suddenly respect that relationship in a whole different way because you suddenly see how that person responds back to you and you respond to them. That they’ve made an opening for you and that’s huge because most people have been in a community for a long time with cemented relationships. But, then they let you in. It is nice to feel like you are being let in by people who really don’t have to let you in. Schools should pay more attention to kids who are not being let in. I think sometimes teachers are just too busy teaching their curriculum. Many of them don’t get it. What is the purpose of school anyways? Don’t they realize ‘real’ people sit in the desks? *(He has tears in his eyes, but he is smiling.*) *(Group Discussion, May 22, 2018)*

**Cam:** I think social is much bigger than academic. In school, relationships are just relationships of convenience. Or maybe lack of reinforcement to put the work in for classes. It’s like you show up, you get a piece of paper, you read a chapter or a book and you regurgitate information. It’s not engaging.

*This was an emotional moment during our focus group discussion. Relationships were important to both Jimmy and Cam. I could tell that past and present relationships had impact on their lives. They were eager to talk about relationships that had been and continue to affect their assemblages.*
It’s not particularly interesting but you look at it and ask yourself, “Why do I need to be here for this?” Then you go and wander around town for half the day. … But, our responsibilities and focus shifts later in life. When you have a job and have money to do things and go to different events, it’s like a trade off happens. Do I value cash or experiences more? As a kid, I personally was like “No, I’d rather have the cash because I can pay for other experiences other than this experience with these people that I’ve grown with or have connection with”. But now, older, there is no pressure when I walk in a room. My age, my ability, it doesn’t matter. I can relax. I have nothing to prove socially. I find myself in places knowing what I have to do and if I make a friend, that is a bonus. But the thing is I can focus more on those connections now with people. It is like I appreciate those connections more now for authentic relationships, not like in school I felt like I had to be around people just to be a somebody. But, that never happened for me anyways, so … ya. But schools do not exist to help with relationships. They have a one track focus to get through their curriculum so their test scores can be good and they can be validated in their existence. That didn’t help me much. *(Several seconds tick by on the clock and silence fills the air.)* *(Focus Group Discussion, May 22, 2018)*

[Enter Production 4]

**Ella:** I was a bad kid. After my dad passed away, my mom had to go to work and I was left by myself most of the time … left alone really since I was about 12. … As soon as I turned 16 I quit. I really only finished grade 8. I
moved away from my reserve and tried to go to school in the city and pick up my courses that were really only about part way through grade 9 when I was 14 or 15. But the school told me there was a tuition I would have to pay. It was $585.00. I don’t know what that was for. My sister lived in the city and told me I could live with her if I helped with babysitting and I jumped at the chance. I was really alone on my reserve. I was from [location deleted] and they would not pay the tuition to the city school because the division had an existing high school for me to attend. But, they just didn’t understand how I was all by myself there on my reserve and I wanted to go live with my sister. My reserve or my division would not sponsor me to go to school in the city. In time I got my GED but nobody would recognize that either. Nobody made much of an effort to help me in the school system when I was in my teens. I was really lost you know. I just didn’t fit their mould. But when I came back to the adult collegiate, the teachers were excellent. Nobody judged me. They helped me as much as they could and they made things understandable. I graduated with pretty good marks. If I could have done it differently when I was younger, I would have. I remember that I wanted to be a teacher or an accountant when I was really young. I had bigger dreams when I was a kid, but somewhere along the way, my dreams kind of faded from my mind and it seems like anybody I met when I was a teen just assumed I never had any dreams. Small things and supports are important for kids that have tough lives. Mostly, I don’t think it is kids’ faults but the system does not really support difficult cases very effectively. (Intra-view, May 18, 2018)
[Enter Production 5]

**Cam:** I had no motivation when I was in high school. Any class I passed it was like 50% only. I failed Grade 12 English. I actually found school easy. It has always been easy for me. It’s easy to fluff my way through a lot of the stuff. But, it’s the motivation to keep at it at a consistent rate that’s always been the issue. I think it’s mostly about the lack of being challenged. Math is the only course that I’ve ever had difficulty with. Lack of understanding for that made it very frustrating and that was one that I was trying much harder in. I was trying to get as high a mark as I could, not just 50%. Math really isn’t my subject. But, I can regurgitate things. But, that isn’t interesting for me. I like to be challenged and engage in conversations with some controversy. At the adult collegiate in your English class, we got to do that. I liked that…but I had to learn to see other people’s points of views because lots of people don’t think the same way I do. But, in your class, we could have different views and talk about them, and write about them. I found that interesting. In my old high school, it was just like telling the teacher what he or she wanted to hear. They had an answer in mind always before a question was ever asked. Think what you are told, maybe that was the most frustrating thing. Some students can play that game. They even complain about it at breaks and stuff, but they just want to graduate so they put up with it. Some of us can’t… I was not a robot in high school and I’m still not a robot. I’ve also spent a lot of time thinking about how hard I am on myself and I am not easy on myself and it really puts me into a rut when I get thinking about
that… I cripple myself and it spirals and I need to do better. I can do better too. I can let things go, but when I see myself as worthless … and lots of my teachers told me I was worthless in their own ways. You can tell when they think that way about you just by the way they interact with other students who are easier to teach and tell them everything they want to hear. They just make their jobs easier. But, I did have one teacher who told me straight up that I would never amount to anything.

The productions that arise out of Scene 4 arise out of the moments that trouble something in the researcher. Another reader of the transcripts may assemble them differently, but for now they have troubled/disrupted the researcher to map them according to her experience. I cannot know how sense will emerge for others who might read the transcripts or view the assemblage. To me it is an assemblage that personifies the system.
Jimmy
“It was just how the school was marking and how the teachers were grading students and what they expected and some was to do with the principal I guess. How he wanted the school to function.”

“We should rethink what we are doing with education.”

“I wouldn’t say it’s about academics that people drop out.”

Lara
“I don’t think the school really knew what to do with me.”

“You don’t really fit school anyways.”

“They have a curriculum to teach.”

“School wasn’t there for me.”

Cam
“It’s like you show up, you get a piece of paper, you read a chapter or a book and you regurgitate information. It’s not engaging.”

“They have a one track focus to get through their curriculum so their test scores can be good and they can be validated in their existence. That didn’t help me.”

Ella
“I don’t think it is kids’ faults but the system does not really support difficult cases very effectively.”

“I just didn’t fit their mould.”

Randy
“He just had a policy book that he followed all the rules by.”

“My school timetable had no flexibility for me.”

“School happens at certain time.”
**Intra-mesa**

The cartographies in Mesa 5 trace a patterned or cohesive territory that create an assemblage that opens lines of flight for thinking and questioning. The research questions served to orient the mapping in order to deterritorialize “common sense” or common thinking around the lived experiences of adults who have dropped out of high school. At times, the reader may have a sense of unease as rhizoanalysis can seem messy and disjointed (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2010). As much as the participants are *becoming* in their own assemblages, the researcher and the reader enter into the space of movement in the rhizome that is being created. We get in the middle of it. Davies (2009) said:

> Deleuze sought to prize us loose from a fixation on individual egos and to entice us into the ongoing practice of *becoming* – opening ourselves to difference in ourselves and in the other, the other being not just other human beings, but the physical objects, landscapes and other materialities with which and in which we take up our existence. The practical space in which a different set of practices might unfold, he referred to as the *in-between*. (p. 630)

As researcher, I find myself in the middle of things. I pick up at a point, and I move along from that point. With this movement, this speed, the point turns into a line (Deluze & Guattari, 1980/1987). These lines of flight become the focus for Mesa 6, the final mesa of this dissertation.
So what then can be learned from the experiences of these participants? From the experiences in completing a dissertation using post qualitative (non)methods - while attempting to embody a philosophy inspired by Deleuze and Guattari?

Becoming-researcher

The point of entry for this rhizome began with wondering about why someone chooses to do research. How does one choose? What was MY impetus to become researcher? My curiosity around the lives of the adult learners in my teaching space triggered my choice of topic, but equally important was my choice of research approach. A rhizomatic approach enables a researcher to make the epistemological claim that knowledge is partial, not complete. Conclusions are never fixed, so the lines of flight that emerge in this dissertation serve to further peak curiosity and provoke ongoing thought around the topic.

When I first began my PhD journey, I wandered around in reading and eventually became territorialized in rhizonalys. Masny (2012) said that reading transforms the research event, and as my own research becomes, I come to understand how that transformation occurs and occurs and occurs. Mazzei (2013) talked about the forces and entanglements that are involved as the researcher is “enmeshed in this assemblage of researcher-data-participants-theory-analysis” (p. 734). She continued to describe how she was “being produced in the making and
Nordstrom (2013) described her own relatedness during the process of interviewing her participants:

I also made connections to my family’s history and other participants’ ancestors. I inserted comments in the transcripts to denote such connections.

Those connections helped me to understand that a person’s ensemble of life is always open to new and different connections, even after death. The ensemble of life, then, is about connections that entangle lives. (p. 252)

She admitted that in her post qualitative intra-view process she realized that such inquiry opened possibilities for thinking about how ‘else’ research might be conducted and how knowledge is produced about the complex lives that people lead.

Rhizoanalysis is an approach to research that is highly relational. As the research is produced, the researcher is also (re)produced.

As such, the writing of the dissertation becomes part of the schizoanalytic process for me, researcher. The memories, the journals, and the (re)assembling of the rhizome all coincide and contribute to my own learning of my own life. The dissertation process evolved over several years, and long before my enrolment in the graduate program, life events were already shaping its rhizomatic offshoots. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) explained the goal of schizoanalysis:

To analyze the specific nature of the libidinal investment in the economic and political spheres, and thereby to show how, in the subject who desires, desire can be made to desire its own repression. (p. 105)

What is being repressed in the researcher’s desire? When I started to read the work of Deleuze, I came to understand the implications of an over-territorialized existence.
Perhaps existence remains stagnant when desire is repressed because no new thought emerges to reterritorialize to new spheres. My intent is not to represent a psychoanalytic journey into my past or derive meaning from my experiences, but I have been a part of the molarized system (Wallin, 2014) of schooling my entire life. I am a cog in the wheel of ‘best practices’, ‘evidence-based’ practices and ‘standardized’ testing. My attitude to be a life-long learner has perpetuated my thinking because I continue to be schooled through professional development activities that are offered by the same system of molarization and colonization (Stronach et al, 2013; Shahjahan, 2011). Near the end of my writing, I also experienced the molarizing processes involved in applying for tenure at my employing university. The categories for which one must provide evidence are stringent and clearly defined. An entire life career must be somehow articulated in such a way that proves one’s worth in academic spaces. I must prove my worth based on prescribed categories that reflect scholarly value. These categories have stood the test of time; they have not evolved. One’s academic status, worth, and job security hangs in the balance of these categories. There is no room for difference that might also be worthy of this academic status. This is yet another example of stratifying processes within the system of education. The system demands rigor in research, teaching, service, and professional preparation in order to secure the status of the institution going forward. These categories are clearly defined, and the governing bodies that guard the process do not tolerate straying bodies. Tenured faculty must demonstrate potential in this pursuit of status. I must conform or be removed …
The cycle continues … until a line of flight emerges that causes a change in thinking, a move away from the ‘common sense’ notions that have been a part of my thinking for nearly an entire career. My experiences as a teacher, and even as a student have shaped my thinking and my attitudes, both on conscious and subconscious levels. My encounters with unschooled adults caused a certain disruption in my thinking. I had not expected these learners to be quite so engaged and relational in their studies. I was surprised at my seemingly pre-determined condemnation. I was coming to the instructor role with bias, assuming the students would embody limited motivation to classroom discussion, self-reflection and responses to texts. However, I did not come to really know the stratified body until I became that body in the tenure process. The becoming research caused me to think differently about something that I was personally experiencing; the research event was part of a deterritorializing assemblage. What will I do with this disruption? I have much to learn …

Transcendence (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) occurred in the moment of disillusionment with my students. I recognized my bias, my prejudice as educator. Deleuze and Guattari wrote about the social and political roles that various individuals in history have played in bringing visibility and voice to marginal groups. However, the philosophers described these attempts as often reaffirming the marginal condition through reinforcements of identity and overcoding (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983; 1987/1980; Massumi, 2002b). Deleuze and Guattari argued that individuals in political and social spaces who have the privilege of narration through memoire bring attention to marginalization, but the narrative rarely does anything to bring about
change. I occupy many spaces, but in that transcending moment, I occupied school/education space. I do not seek to write a memoire in the dissertation process. In a conscious effort not to use memories as a means to explore my own ego or search for meaning of the experiences, I attempt to use memories as an expression of the intensities that accompanied my career experiences. The tension of these experiences transcends thinking allowing the researcher to think beyond what has consciously been thought so far.

As becoming researcher, I had no real experience as an ‘official’ researcher. Other than the quantitative research that I conducted many years ago in my M. Ed., I have devoted most of my professional educator existence to that of a classroom teacher. This dissertation journey has been as much about self-reflection and researcher becoming as it has been about the seeking of new knowledge around my topic and the adult learners in my study. It was/is a journey of human decentring-theirs and mine.

In a study that looked at teachers’ responses to Student Achievement Tests (SATs) scores, Atkinson (2012) found that low scores:

underscored the deficit discourses appropriated by the teachers and school leadership that placed responsibility for low test scores on the students and their families rather than on structural inequalities or schools’ indifference.

(p. 207)

Teachers wanted students to take ownership for their scores. They pointed to matters of low socio-economic existences and cultural deficiencies that contributed to lower
scores. But, more importantly these students failed to meet the expectations that the school system had placed upon them. Atkinson also reported:

> Teachers’ demands for respect for their professional judgment and knowledge contradict their lack of professional and knowledgeable critique of the validity and use of SAT 10 data. They critique the applicability of SAT 10 norms to their students but compel their students to “take responsibility” for not performing to those norms. Finally, there is the contradiction in teachers assigning responsibility for low test scores to students and their families without reflection on their responsibility to reflect on how their teaching may be contributing to students’ low scores. (p. 209)

Gindi & Erlich (2018) said, “the gap between teachers and students seems to be ever increasing” (p. 59). They were speaking about the relative homogeneous backgrounds of teachers in comparison to the diverse culture differences of students. However, the claim has relevance to teacher attitudes around students who drop out of high school. Students who drop out of school chose to leave. Teachers’ attitudes towards this decision are comparative to those that are formed towards students who simply do not take responsibility for their SAT scores. Student choice, however, is often more complex and “is the culmination of a much longer process of leaving school that began long before the date that a student actually discontinues attendance” (Doll, Eslami, & Walters, 2013, p. 1). Dupere et al. (2015) contended:
For a substantial proportion of students, the decision to leave school comes in response to numerous contemporary stressors or opportunities incompatible with school. (p. 617)

Teachers still tend to simplify those choices and maintain a pejorative stance in their attitude towards the students who drop out of school. The findings of Atkinson (2007) and Gindi & Erlich (2018) reflect teachers’ understanding of students as fixed, an understanding that is somehow grounded in a superior and discriminatory knowledge embodied by teachers. Teachers become territorialized in this understanding. But, an intensive trait exists to shake loose and challenge engrained hegemony (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987). Deterritorialization is imminent in a moment of disruption, a moment of \((dis(re)traction).\)

How have my discussions with my participants and previous adult students about their lives as people who chose to drop out of high school\((de)(re)territorialized\) my own desires and understanding? How have the assemblages that have been created helped to bring about understanding/thinking around adults who return to high school? Deterritorialization for the researcher means that the researcher transforms to becoming-warrior, a resistant force that “places the war machine in the service of peace” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 490) or in this dissertation, in the service of coming to better understand the adult who was once unschooled.

Taylor and Harris-Evans (2018) reconceptualised transition to higher education using Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of assemblages in their work with students transitioning between higher education. The endeavour to do so involved them in “unsettling some established notions about transition” (p. 1254). But, they
fond that “putting some of their key concepts to work will help generate more nuanced understandings of students’ experiences of transition as a more fluid, emergent and multiple process” (p. 1254). The idea of using assemblages to understand the complexities of the transitions of adults who return to high school is equally valuable. The experiences of the participants are densely textured. Rhizoanalysis allowed me to tune into the specifics of their experiences.

Each participant talked about unique encounters living without a high school diploma, and later returning to high school. For Jimmy, he found himself raising a family and operating a small business as a mechanic, and realizing he would like to be a firefighter. But, he suffered financial loss as well in his small business. He talked about his deep spiritual beliefs and living a very satisfying and fulfilling life. As Jimmy recounted the events of his life that brought him back to high school, he noted that he believed everything happened for a reason:

*Nothing happens by accident. There has been a purpose behind every part of it. ... Even if you take it back because we are talking about this grade 12 course [finishing high school], there is no way I would’ve finished grade 12 if I hadn’t lost my business, moved to [city deleted] and had the availability now to be able to just cycle to from work downtown, do a course twice a week. Pass the course to get grade 12. There would have been no way I have... It’s interesting how we have those dips and valleys or someone to push us over the edge or to push us to an uncomfortable spot in order for us to make change. ... My in-laws and brother-in-law were all teachers. So the whole family had teachers and here I am a high school dropout. My wife is a*
teacher and my biological brother became a teacher and a high school principal as well. So, I am surrounded by teachers and here I am a dropout. Feeling the pressure, I guess and yet at a point I received my red seal in mechanics, it was good after that. After that it really was no longer an issue. Because it was like I had attained some kind of education, so get off my back. (Jimmy Intra-view, May 2018)

In the group discussion, he described his experience of returning to school:

The dynamic in here is way different because everybody that comes here wants to come here. Where in high school, yea, it’s a group of friends but they don’t really want to go to class. ... In high school, it makes the classroom time awkward and make sure marks are all different. Yea, you have the high achievers and the low achievers and it makes coming to this ... the teachers seem more relaxed for one. Because they know that everyone coming here is coming to learn. They paid the price to come here. ... So there is no pressure in any way when walk into the room; your age, your ability.

There is no pressure both ways. (Group Discussion, May 22, 2018)

Randy found his way in serving his country and was eager to move onto the next part of his journey in another part of the world. He decided to transition back into civilian life, but he was also frustrated feeling that the military was making it difficult for him to complete his school:

It’s purely transitioning from the military to being a civilian. I had to pull quite a bit of like back door deals and threats and ultimatums to put myself into this position. It took me about a year and a half to get here. So, it wasn’t
like I came up to my boss and I was like ‘Hey man, I want to do this because it’s going to be a complex transition and I’ve been in the military for this amount of time and blah, blah, blah and this is what I need to be able to successfully transition.’ It was like a year and a half of like memos, then losing my paper work, forgetting to tell me. Purposely shredding my paper work and then me making threats like, ‘Okay, if I don’t have this by this date this is what’s going to happen.’ And it’s been like a year and a half battle. It hasn’t been easy. (Randy Intra-view, May 2018)

Lara found great satisfaction in working in areas “outside of the regular type of jobs that most people would expect females to do” (Lara Intra-view, May 5, 2018). She enjoys encouraging other young women to try things out of their regular comfort zones as well. Her return to school was about upgrading her skills. She explained:

*It was more to get educated again. To get back into the role of things. Like math, I had no clue what I was doing. I was like, ‘Holy, I can’t remember I forgot this.’ A grade 3 level and I like, ‘What??’ But now I am more making myself and my life better and my kids. Help them with their schooling and … They couldn’t believe it.* (Lara Intra-view, May 2018)

Ella was happy raising her family and also spoke about her faith and “calling to women ministries” (Ella Intra-view, May 10, 2018). But, she also explained:

*It’s been a long tough road, but I could have made it a lot easier for myself. Sheer stubbornness I guess. … I am thinking of going into accounting. But, I am not good with groups. They stress me out. If I have to go to a bigger city for more school, it will be tough. It is hard to go to Walmart even. Like, I
need one of my daughters with me and I’ll have to leave soon to continue school. It gives me a headache. Same with Superstore. I can’t take it. [She smiles.] If I could do it online it would be perfect. And the other thing holding me back is my grandson. We are very close. But, you know when I came back to the collegiate, the classes were small. That is what I like the best. Whoever comes here, I am sure they will do great because everyone is so willing to help with everything. The teachers are excellent. They stop and pause if anybody has a question. They clear it up right away. (Ella Intra-view, May 2018)

Carl supported himself financially and took time to think about his own relationships and found a “more mature sense of responsibility and commitment” (Carl, Group Discussion). Carl explained his return to high school:

I didn’t feel pressure to come back but it was definitely a point that I was always aware and embarrassed to address in a conversation with people. Like I didn’t want to, you know like, ‘Oh yea, I didn’t finish grade 12.’ If I could I would steer away from that and just build a relationship without that piece of knowledge built in. (Group Discussion)

Deleuze and Guattari allowed me to utilize a methodology and analytical strategy that permitted me a pause for thought about the participants’ rhizomatic encounters reflected in the data, and my own researcher becoming as the research process unfolds. Age and experience play as elements in my own becoming as researcher: I could not write about the topic in the way that I do without having experience as a teacher to think about the dropout in such a way that I bring to this
paper. And, the participants, as well, needed to live and become to be able to share their becoming experiences. … For some reason unknown, I think about the word ‘wisdom’ as I read in this piece of the rhizome. I think about how one is to become wise. Does wisdom become through the living of experiences/events that deterritorialize us? As becoming researcher comes to learn something more about her topic, does she also become wise? These are questions for another time …

“Words are thus living images of the mind of the eye of … and the spectator finishes the unfinished work … We are sense makers all differently and crafting of knowledge is key question. Asking questions with what I think I hear/see/taste/smell/feel and not again and again, that is, asking questions with what I think I know and not again and again; creating languages and practices that think I must. They oscillate, vibrate, and rotate.” (Reinertsen, 2016, p. 264)

Throughout the research, I faced the challenge of thinking about myself as an assemblage, not as a simple subject. The assemblage is a collection of experiences that happen in life that Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) call a haecceity. I was one assemblage connecting with many others in the research event that produced a worldview that continued to shift during the research. I was in the middle of things, the flow of experiences. The experience is transformative, nobody comes out of the research the same – researcher or participant.

The transformation for becoming researcher in this dissertation is in the assemblage of the storied lives of the participants, their lines of flight that emerged in the decision to leave high school without a diploma in hand. Their memories of high
school experiences, social influences, childhood experiences, adult experiences, and their experiences in their return to adult collegiate to complete a high school diploma all contribute to the researcher’s learning. The dropout literature statistically situates lesser educated individuals as ‘lacking’ or ‘burdensome’ on society (Bowers & Sprott, 2012; Campbell, 2015; O’Neill Dillon, Liem, & Gore, 2003). The focus of this study was not to determine if the participants reflected these finding. The focus was not to take the experiences of the participants and prove or disprove the statistics. The researcher wanted to learn more about the experiences of unschooled adults and their eventual return to high school. As their multiple and complex \textit{becoming} existences are told and heard, the researcher comes to think something different about the drop out. The topic becomes much more than economics, literacy, poverty, incarceration, employment, etc. I begin to consider, more personally, the \textit{assemblages} of the individual who drops out of high school. I begin to think more deeply about my own part of the assemblage as educator, and I also think about the molarized education system and its part of the assemblage. Wallin (2014) referred to those who drop out of high school as vagabonds. The participants in this study left their molarized school homes and ventured to new spaces where lines of flight produced something other than the graduated product. Ironically, the re-entry process was a return to the same molarized system. Nothing in the system really had changed except, perhaps, the learner was transforming in the producing assemblages. As researcher, I became part of the process to map the assemblages of these journeys. As I spoke with participants, I asked each of them:
Much of the literature that speaks about people who prematurely leave high school is a dismal picture. You have lived life a number of years away from school. And then you decided to return. You have many experiences since leaving high school. I am very interested in your story. What has life been like for you? What brings you to this place now?

I came to learn about Johnny’s attainment of his red seal in mechanics, the loss of his business, family pressures to finish high school, and his desire to become a firefighter. Randy spoke of his family journey from Kiev, the death of his father, and his desire to return to a civilian lifestyle after leaving the Canadian Armed Forces. Lara reflected on her childhood as someone who was adopted, her interest in welding, her separation from her husband, and her transformation into a person who is much more outgoing after finishing high school. Ella told me about her unsupervised teen life, her health, faith, and her disappointment in not taking advantage of school when she was much younger, even though she just wasn’t able to fit its structures as a young person. Cam spoke about the stress he felt in high school relationships that he described as ‘drama’, and he expressed the importance of economic security. Each of the participants had different experiences. I listened to their departure from molarization and their entry to unknown territory. I learned more about the becoming, once-unschooled, adults before me. In the relational doing of research, I was part of the assemblage. Memories of my own experiences as a teacher and as a learner became part of the assemblage. In the conducting of the research, I too was re-entering a ‘school’ space later in life to complete, not a high school diploma, but a doctoral degree in philosophy. My own struggles, my own
discoveries, my re-entry as a person beginning my fifth life decade became part of the assemblage. The difference for the researcher, however, was that a line of flight had been taken away from the molarizing system that she had always known. She was thinking something different about the system. Assemblages had been produced through numerous readings of academic texts and conversations with graduated professors, colleagues, and classmates. Desire to learn something new took flight, and a research dissertation emerged.

Lee and Burkam (2003) explored the role of high schools’ structures as an influence in students’ decisions to stay in school or drop out of school. As an educator, I would be remiss to dismiss these parts of the assemblage in the exploration of this topic. The war machine that exists in the lines of flight of the drop out disrupts the common sense/thinking that supports the completion of high school. Researcher and reader of the research will each read the data differently, but each of the lived experiences of the participants will add complexity to the topic and disrupt the broadly stated data associated with the negative sureties of dropping out of high school.

*Becoming-dropout*

“*Schools are sites of trouble that students find themselves in ... schools are troubling spaces – they are sites where knowledges, subjectivities and affectivities are produced, regulated and erased and where subjects, both students and educators, are schooled in the acceptable and unacceptable forms that these take.*” (Youdell, 2011, p, 129)
The beginning of the dissertation speaks about the dropout learner and the ‘lacking’ image of the adult who exists without a grade 12 education. Part of the purpose in the engagement in this research was not only to bring newness to the dropout phenomenon, but more importantly to a better understanding of human becoming of individuals who attained high school diplomas later in life. I read through the transcripts of the discussions with my participants many times. The reading helps to keeps the discussions from fading away. Every time I read them, I am mindful of the value that each of their lives has. The value is not in their willingness to discuss their journey to becoming schooled later in life; rather, it is simply in their existence as people. They may have chosen different ways of becoming, ways that might have risked becoming marginalized through avenues such as poverty, unemployment or crime, those things that the literature associates with the dropout. The lives of these participants are valuable and complex assemblages that also affect multiple other assemblages. The lines of flight that reterritorialized them to school were multiple:

**Randy:** *I could have easily gone down a grim path [after leaving school]. I had quite a few very close occasions where I could’ve easily been killed or ended up in jail. … In the military you do have people who come very rough backgrounds and I usually bond very well with those people. And those people are usually fantastic soldiers. But then you have people who come from like, you know the typical very nice family … I don’t get along with them at all. It’s a very weird dynamic. Yea, it’s like a social experiment. That’s what the military is. … One time we got back from Afghanistan and three months off. Grabbed all my army gear that was in my duffle bags and I threw
everything in the my truck and I decided to drive to Toronto and I was going
to drive through the states. First time ever right. Did not think to even check
my duffle bags. ... They searched my car and find a whole bunch of stuff that
obviously is fully legal to have in Afghanistan. Not so much when you’re
crossing the states. Got arrested. ... Going away for two felonies like ten
years in a federal pen. ... I spent five days over a long weekend in holding
and this American detective comes. ... He kind of looks at my file. Looks at
me and doesn’t say anything and then he smirks a bit. ... It turns out he was
an ex US marine that served with my unit overseas. He told me I had to make
a statement, so actually there is a permanent record with my name
somewhere that says “God bless America.” For my life. That was the only
consequence. ... It’s like going from one culture to another, right? It’s like a
culture shock. ... I had to pull quite a bit of back door deals and threats and
ultimatums to put myself back to school to get out of there and into this
position [finished school] but here I am.

Lara: When you are young you want to be more, doing more stuff. You do not
want to be stuck in school. ... Reading was a big part of it. I didn’t like
reading. I hated reading. ... It was a big step in my life. I never thought I was
going to go back to school ever. But you know I started to read to my kids and
I thought, ‘this isn’t so bad’. I want to be an example to my kids to stay in
school. I did it, then they can too. Do what you gotta’ do to make your life
better. ... My relationship with my ex was one reason I came back here. He
got me a job at Maple Leaf. I realized I couldn’t do that forever.
Ella: I’ve always felt bad about my school so I took those match books; international schools or whatever on the match books. I took my GED through them. ... A lot of places don’t take GED anymore for what I wanted. So, I decided to come back to the adult collegiate and get my high school. When I got sick I couldn’t keep doing my job in health care. I had to find something else and I needed high school.

There is value in all life. I am reminded of this as I reminisce my journal:

I was just about to leave class this evening when one of my students came to see me. Earlier that evening our class had been discussing a short story about an 11 year old girl who had noticed a homeless person eating a meal that had been given to him. The homeless person had eaten the meal slowly, savouring every bite. The young girl in the story approached the man and asked him why he was taking so long to eat, given that he was so hungry. He explained that he wanted to savour every bite because he did not always have an opportunity to have a meal every day. Later in the story, the young girl’s mother took her for a slice of cheese pizza and she ate it slowly, thinking about each bite and the homeless man she had met earlier. When her mother asked her why she was eating so slowly, she explained what had happened and told her mom that she would think about her own food differently after that day. Her perspective about food had changed. She was no longer going to take it for granted ...and ... and ... now my student stood before me. She said, “I wanted you to know that when we spoke about perspective tonight and we had to speak about a moment where we all might have had a change
in perspective, I couldn’t talk about mine out loud. I was quite rattled in that moment. I just didn’t know what to say, but I want to tell you about my moment now … may I? … She told me it had been 11 years since she dropped out of high school. She never cared about anything. Over the years, she was involved in a lot of bad things. She drank too much, she tried so many different types of drugs, and nothing ever mattered to her. But then she met someone, a really nice guy. He helped her turn her life around. She got pregnant before they got married and she wasn’t happy about the pregnancy. They got married and a week before their wedding she started to be happy about the baby, but at the end of her fourth month she lost the baby. She was in a bad depression.” (I listened carefully to her…). “I thought I was going to die too. But then, I started to feel better and I realized that it was time for me to get better and do something with my life. The next time I would be pregnant, I would have my grade 12, and hopefully have more education, maybe college or university. And now here I am. My miscarriage ‘happened’ me.” She said she want to be better. She loves school now. She wished she could be in school all day long. She loves learning. She was so proud of her marks, not just in my English class, but even in her math. She never thought she could do it. But she was doing it. She never thought she had any human worth for a long time. Her mom was never much of a mom to her, but her dad was a good man, and her grandma has had lots of influence on her. The other day she was doing some homework and her dad came to visit. He read what she was writing in her short story for my class and he realized it was a
memoire about him and her and their dog going out to check the cattle fencing on the farm when she was 14. He was so proud of her. He started to cry. She has to go to her dad’s place to do her homework because she doesn’t have Wifi. Her dad’s new wife told her that he found another piece of her writing on the computer later after she left, a poem that she had also written for our class. He printed it off and put it in his wallet. He carries it with him. She never told her dad that she knows he carries, but she says, “the thing is I know. It makes me proud. The hardest thing in my life, losing my baby; it ended up being my perspective changing moment. It made me want to be better for the children that I will have some day. I do have worth as a human being, you know?” Then she assured me that was not done, she has more to do, more to become, it’s like she is a whole different person than she once was.” ... (Shelley’s Teaching Journal, January 14, 2019)

Research that allows researcher to see human becoming is liberating. It sees difference. It feels and hears difference.

It is on the basis of the reality of the outside, of the unthought and the unconscious, that all existence, including ourselves, is produced. The outside has its own style as a means to communicate, to bring into existence that of which we were scarcely aware. (Semetsky, 2013, p. 88)

The becoming of the participants in this dissertation tells a complex tale of each person’s past, present, and future. The events of each of their own assemblages are unique. Transformation that has occurred with each participant in between their dropping out and dropping back in. I am reminded of something that Jimmy said in
one of our class discussion while he was still a student. It went something like this:

_This book takes me out of my comfort zone. It makes me sad. I was sitting here crying when I read this chapter. I don’t normally read things like this or watch the news because it scares me and makes me sad, but it’s OK. It made me think._ Various events, people, books they read, various _things_ have all been part of these life transformations. They have had their struggles in between dropping out and dropping back in, but through various events of reterritorialization, they have found their way back to graduate. They have talked about certain life challenges, but they mostly like to talk about their successes and the happiness that they have experienced throughout their lives. They are also proud of their return to school to complete a high school diploma and speak confidently about their futures.

As an instructor who teaches re-entry adults in the adult collegiate, I am regularly amazed at their desire to read, to study, and to learn. Their life experiences contribute significantly to their formal learning experiences; they seem ‘deeper’ to me – maybe age and experience are factors that enable them to read text more intensely and personally. Some of the participants also expressed that they were able to understand their math and science classes better than they had remembered doing so in high school as teens:

**Jimmy:** I am not sure how to explain what it was like for me to come back to the adult collegiate, but I know that it seemed like the courses were easier. They made more sense to me. Math, especially, seemed to make more sense. I always had trouble with math when I was younger. … I don’t know, um maybe it’s just after doing mechanic work and stuff that numbers make more
sense to me. And, like I said before …. It was the first time I ever read a whole book front to back when I came back to school. I never thought I would do that. And, you know, I actually do read more now than I ever did before. I find enjoyment in it actually. I never ‘got’ that before.

**Ella:** The biggest surprise for me coming back to school was actually passing physics. I even got a good mark. I never would have done that back then. I could barely do multiplication when I was 16. Now, I passed my Grade 12 math and physics (*She laughs*). That just seems crazy to me. I don’t really know what I will do with physics, but it sits on my transcript.

**Randy:** You know it was never that I really found school hard. I just never made it a priority. I guess I never put much value in it. But, I guess as an adult I could make more connections to what was being taught when I came back to school. The stuff we read in the English class was what surprised me the most I think. It’s funny how the things in a book can make you think about your own life. It’s like a part of your soul gets woken up that you didn’t even know was sleeping.

As I come close to the point of exiting this rhizome, I review my own research journal one more time. I come across something I wrote early in the research, even before participants were ever selected:

> Once again my students amazed me this evening. I can’t believe the impact the novel is having. A man in his fifties told me tonight that after he completed his journal response this past weekend, he picked up the phone and made contact with his father who has been estranged with for almost 30
years. They have not spoken. Something in the booked caused him to re-
evaluate his relationship with his father and his family, and he decided that
too much time had passed already. Not only did he call his aging father, he
has booked a plane ticket and is going to fly to another province at the end of
the course to spend time with his dad. He did not book a return ticket because
he is waiting to see what will happen. He says he may even relocate. These
students seem so much more immersed in their texts than regular high school
students. It is like their school experience is much more than just getting a
course credit. Their lives are really personally affected by the things they
read and learn. … I wonder if it is a healing process for them of some kind. It
seems like there is much more happening than just a completion of credits for
a piece of paper called a diploma. (Researcher Journal, May 9, 2016)

Even though the rhizome does not bring a researcher to any conclusions,
some readers may find its productions to be interesting and thought provoking. Yet,
others may determine that little value is found in the taking up of research that
produces no ‘results’. O’Donnell (2017) left educational researchers something to
think about when she made a comment about education:

The argument that … we need to think about experience rather than visible or
measurable outputs will be challenging for some. The suggestion that
educational experience involves chance and encounters, even if such chance
and encounters can be programmed to some extent, will no doubt cause
further difficulty, as it leads one from the sense that being a diligent teacher
will ensure that students will learn – instead the reverse is the case,
sometimes students learn, indicating that perhaps you have managed to teach something … not a prescriptive position but rather a descriptive one that tries to communicate something of the experience of what it is like to learn something. (p. 40)

The taking up of rhizomatic research was a brave and uncertain move for me. Being a non-prescriptive (non)methodology challenged my zone of comfort and quite frankly, caused a great deal of anxiety. Yet, the choice to take up something different was one of the reasons I was de/re/territorialized to Deleuzian philosophy and all that is rhizome relational. What is the point of thinking the same always? If one is to study philosophy, do philosophy, embody and become researcher, one should learn to think deeply and differently. One must jump into the middle of something and become always. In bringing the experiences of the participants to the pages of this research, I have also tried to “communicate something of the experience of what it is like to learn something” (O’Donnell, 2017, p. 40) and still knowing there is more to learn. That is the puissance or power of becoming (Massumi, 1987; Deleuze, 1995).

Deleuze and Guattari concepts create the possibility to think in a productive and nuanced capacity around dropping out of high school and journeying life without a high school diploma. The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari gives way for complexity to be thought around the assemblages that existed in the desire of participants to return to an adult collegiate to attain a high school diploma that was abandoned many years prior. Although this dissertation involved a small number of participants, the (non)data has generated an opportunity to come to know more about the lived experiences of five unschooled adults. As I was working on finalizing the
writing of the dissertation, I had to put the writing aside for a few hours while I went to teach my class at the adult collegiate. After a class where we were discussing individual responses and connections to a passage from a novel that we were reading, one of my students commented to me on his way out, “You sure do get to know us in these assignments, don’t you?” I asked him if it bothered him, if our discussions were becoming too personal for him, and I suggested that he could choose to complete an alternative assignment if that would better suit him. This student had told me earlier that he was living with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) since his deployment to Afghanistan several years ago. I did not want the class to become a place of stress or discomfort for him. He responded by saying, “Oh no, it is fine. As we share, you share as well. It is not like the teacher asking students to reveal everything about themselves. I think you become pretty vulnerable in the class with us. Maybe that is why I am ok with it all.” As I came home that evening and returned to my writing, I wanted to include this memory of the evening because it was a perfect example of the \textit{intra-relational} assemblage that is created in rhizomatic research using \textit{intra-view} as an approach to learn about the events in people’s lives. Intra-relational (non)methods create space for vulnerability between participants and researcher because the researcher is in the middle of things with the participants. Perhaps that sense of \textit{intra-}vulnerability contributes to the willingness of participants to share their very personal thoughts. Researchers do not only come to know their participants better, but participants also come to know the researcher.

The complexities that exist in these assemblages, allowing for moments of affective \textit{(dis)(re)tractions}, cause me to think about the diversity of human
experiences that exist in schooling spaces. This diversity sits in stark contrast to the notion of *molarity* that also exists within these schooling spaces. Certainly, the recognition of *difference* that exists among people who move on a *line of flight* away from high school graduation and experience life without completing high school bolsters notions around the heterogeneity of people’s experiences. It allows us to understand drop out from high school … and life beyond … in a new way that extends beyond the negativity that exists in much of the literature around this topic. Finding *something new* to think about should be a good thing. Perhaps the newness of thinking can also encourage education stakeholders to (re)consider aspects of *molarity* in education that may be stifling to learners. Traditional epistemologies often discuss the implications of research findings in terms of how to proceed after knowing the results of research. The implications of a Deleuzian immanent experiment causes us to think ethically about how we might live thinking what we know for now…

From a scholarly perspective, the value in this research is to create fidelity for the voices of the participants by avoiding coding and tracing of already established realities that lead to interpretation. The idea is to map connections that may not have been previously made around a topic and to see established connections *differently*, while possibly creating *affective moments* for the readers of the research. As Mesa 6 draws to an end, the questions that acted as a compass in the research are thought and (re)thought. What new lines of flight are still to be created? What *(dis)(re)tractions* will occur in the certainty of continued thinking? Since, “one does not think without becoming something else” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 42), the challenge is
to go forward bravely knowing that transformation occurs in the becoming journey. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) probably said it best when they stated, “Voyaging smoothly is a becoming, and a difficult, uncertain becoming at that” (p. 482).

**Wandering Back to Wondering?**

I began this research in a space of wonder, and as I seek a place for exit, I wander back to the thinking that inspired the entry to the rhizome:

1. I begin with the *Affective* assemblages that affect the (de)(re)territorialization of the participants beyond course work in their dropping back in to high school - the sense making of the virtual.

Williams (2013) described how Deleuze sees multiple times as asymmetrical:

Time flows for Deleuze and has an irreversible quality. Unlike traditional concepts of the irreversible flow of time from past to future, Deleuze time has multiple dimensions that cannot be reversed, including from future to past, present to future and present to past. For Deleuze, the present is defined as a prior selection. It is a determination of time by a selection in the present highlighting a path in the past, by increasing its significance, and altering possibilities in the future, by reassigning their possibilities. … The present is therefore a reassignment of the past in degrees of significance … a concentration of the past and of the future. … The present is not only passive to a calling into the past. It is also passive in relation to the future … because new presents will replay the past present by transforming its original passing away and selections. (p. 237-238)
When I think of the assemblages created in the lives of the participants (and researcher), consideration of Deleuze’s ideas around time is important. The present conditions of the participants that are described in the assemblages concentrate the past and the future. The question then becomes … how does each participant select events of the past to affect present and future? Are they conscious decisions? Williams (2013) asked, “What is the connection between different possible lines and different intense investments and experiences?” (p. 242). Past, present, and future lines of flight are intensified in the selection of the values held by participants. They shape their becoming, their transformations, their life events are all different. They cannot know the future because “the condition of the future erases all marks of identity as either necessary or settled since all can be reassembled and set into new series” (p. 238). They are only bound by their own absolute thinking about themselves and their life events. They are not limited to the things that have happened in the past or the events that are occurring in the present. Williams (2013) explained, “There is neither ‘is’ nor ‘ought’ in this philosophy of time, only a more speculative set of guidelines in relation to an essentially problematic and event-led frame” (p. 238). Led by various events, these participants could not have known when they left high school many years prior, that they would return as an affective response to the events that have played out in their lifetime. They have come to know school differently. They apprenticed (Williams, 2013) life events ‘unschooled’ and reterritorialized back to a school space ‘educated’ in these life events, now desiring a high school diploma.
Participants in this study pursued lines of flight away from a molar school system (Wallin, 2014), but they continue to live in a society with norms and expectations that also form a molar public (Wallin, 2014). Williams (2013) said that learning for Deleuze “always involves knowledge and apprenticeship, but to differing degrees. … These degrees … are discovered at a later time when learning is put into practice again” (p. 247). When the participants left high school, they did not consciously consider the molar lines of a system that may have contributed to their decision to leave. Even in the decision to return to high school, they may not have considered the molar lines that exist within society that may have influenced their decision to return. The molar lines continue in familiar paths and sustain the discourses that dictate how adult bodies ‘should’ live in the world. For example, social norms prefer an educated body, one that is productive in terms of economic and moral contribution to society. Socioeconomic status and positive self-efficacy often serve as the motivating factors behind the quest for more schooling. Lu (2018) said, “Education (the accumulation of human capital) is very important for a country to enhance economic growth” (p. 425). Some countries have even increased the required number of years for compulsory education, but people often exceed the stipulated requirements. The amount of time required to prepare and become certified in various professions has increased over the years, and in some cases, costly post-secondary degrees are not guaranteeing gainful employment in chosen fields of study. Social discourses have colonized adult bodies into thinking that formal ‘schooling’ is a necessary component to social status and a measure of success in one’s life journey. Education costs continue to grow internationally (Valadkhani,
Worthington, & Layton, 2005), and accountability to governing bodies is maintained through such practices as standardized testing.

These discourses are further enforced through the planning and saving for a child’s future education very early in life. Parents believe that responsible parenting bodies purchase Registered Educational Saving Plans (RESPs) for their children, and they begin investing large amounts of money into a child’s future education long before their can walk and talk. Who benefits from these investments? What happens if these same children do not attend post-secondary school? Life events are already being produced that will become part of the assemblages in their own desires and lines of flight and their own narrative around the society’s expectations for extended schooling paths. Lu (2018) claimed, “public education contributes to growth not only by building human capital but also by instilling common norms that increase social cohesion” (p. 426). Human bodies perpetuate these norms until they do not.

Schooling of human bodies continues in its same norms until new thinking, new ideas about what bodies can do differently. The unschooled bodies in this research project journeyed life differently, not having a high school diploma. The aim of the study is not to evaluate the success of their journeys, rather we come to learn more about their experiences and the events that brought them back to a ‘still molarized’ schooling space.

Some of the rhetoric of the discourses around schooled/educated bodies surface in the discussions with the participants. They speak about the pressures placed on them by others to finish high school, the need they place on themselves to make something more of their lives, the goal to make more money, the ‘common
sense’ ideals that occupy most people’s minds. Yet, they also speak of the desire to help others, be examples to others, live with ‘less’ to be free of the economic demands and time constraining pressures of “keeping up with the Joneses” (Jimmy Intra-view, May, 2018). While I do not believe that education is not important for society’s continued becoming, perhaps a shift in thinking might emerge about how the education of people can occur. More importantly, people should not have to feel any less proud of their own becoming if their lines of flight take them to unusual places of production. People’s lives are complex. Is it possible that current discourses that position the educated body in places of privilege might also serve to marginalize other bodies whose lines of flight take them in a different direction. Surely, the path to socioeconomic sustenance can be experienced differently, more complexly. It should not have to reflect a stratified binary state of being educated/schooled or not being educated/schooled. Human becoming embodies much more value than is simply determined by its level or amount of schooling. Is it possible to rethink what life-long learning might look like outside the perspective of stratified education systems?

The lines of flight for each participant have been affected by various means. Many elements have arisen out of each nomadic journey including children, partners, other relationships, texts they have read, homework assignments, animals, jobs, employers, teachers, health issues, physical relocations, addictions, and much more. All things play a force in their own becoming. Earlier mesas in the dissertation address these elements, but a review of the questions is an opportunity to revisit these journeys.
Jimmy’s forces included his marriage to his wife and the pressures he felt from her family to complete high school, the loss of his business that perhaps reterritorialized him to think about fire fighting, and the deep-seeded spiritual faith that enables him to think that “having less in life might actually mean more”. Material things do not drive his desire. His values draw him to think about a body that can be of service to others. His return to high school becomes a step in his ability to become a fire fighter and serve others in this capacity. Along the way, he attained his red seal ticket in mechanics, and together he and his wife, a teacher, grew and supported their family. Interestingly, the red seal ticket did not satisfy the legitimacy of his education, and his extended family still wanted to see him obtain the high school diploma. Colonizing processes remained at work as long as he did not complete high school, finally affirming his ‘worthiness’ in the family.

Randy’s loss of his father, the estrangement with his mother, his construction experience, his life with the military, his experiences in Afghanistan, and his close encounters with the justice system, have all been part of the production of his (de)(re)territorializing assemblages. Randy’s father was a nuclear engineer in the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl. Out of fear, he relocated the family to Canada. Described as a certain kind of culture shock by Randy, a series of events occurred that eventually required his mother to go back to night school. His father died after an unexpected bicycle accident, and when he and his sister were taken from their mother and put into protective care, Randy eventually left school to earn money as a construction
worker. Two years later Randy joined the military where he was told, “You are part of the family now” (Randy Intra-view, May 2018). He admitted that it was like family to him for a while. At the point of returning to high school though, Randy told me:

*I see it [the military] like a stepping stone to a more professional career. So, maybe dental, medical, something. In the military, I had medical training. Before deploying to Afghanistan, I was trained up to one level below the medics. Again, it’s still very early for me to make those decisions right now. But I know definitely it’s going to lead to something higher. I have no desire to be a researcher. I’ll put myself in a position where I can either run my own clinic; Like I want to gain skills that will allow me to be an entrepreneur in that regard but working in the medical sector. ... I am very analytical and again that’s why I think that’s why I would fit in the medical sector. I am a professionalist. That’s what it comes down to and I have always been very good with numbers. ... I feel like my past doesn’t

Randy seems to find school easy.
His abilities for academics were not a factor in leaving high school.
In knowing his ability, he sets his standards high for future career possibilities. He is a disciplined body and does not let his past define him. But, I think his past is part of his becoming. He might not let it ‘define’ him, but surely we can give credit to the haecceities from the past that were/are part of his becoming.
define me. Drive, integrity, discipline. I believe in myself. Starting off on a bad path in life doesn’t mean you have to stay on it.

Randy has aspirations for furthering his formal education. He says he is not ready to be married and have a family, but maybe someday. He is determined. He understands his abilities, and he has a plan. Yet, his experiences and training in the military still did not count enough for moving along in his education. The system still required that he complete the high school diploma. There is no path around this requirement. The molarizing standards are still a force in his return to high school.

Lara lived as an adopted child in a family that she described as poor. She had no interest in high school because she preferred to have more “fun” when she was younger. At the age of 17, she became pregnant and left school. She tried returning when she was 18, but she still found it difficult to stay focused on her studies. She also talked about alcohol having a negative impact on her life for several years. When she separated from her partner, alcohol was a problem. After meeting her new partner and getting married, he helped her to beat her addiction. She got a labour job at a factory and decided she wanted more in life. She woke up one morning and looked at her bills and thought to herself, “When did this happen?” She decided it was time to get serious about her life and do something more. What was being deterritorialized at that moment? She did not elaborate any further than simply saying she just knew it was time for a change. She wanted to make more money and do better for herself and be an example to her children. She told me, “I want to make more money than [her husband]. Hell, I want to make more money than you!” She laughed and added:
But really, it’s not about the money. It is about just doing better for myself. I can do that now. Math was really tough for me coming back to school, but the school was really supportive. They help you lots here. And they don’t make you feel stupid. I only tested at a grade 10 level when I came back, but I did it. I graduated. I didn’t feel judged like I had to be as good as everybody else. They just figured out where I needed to get started and get help, and I started my courses. I got into welding after I graduated too, and I tell my kids not to quit school. They are going to graduate. ... And you know, my face is on the back of a semi now. I am kind of famous. There was a photographer at the school taking pictures for advertising for the college, and they picked me to be part of that. [She smiles.] School helped me come out of my shell. I talk to people more now, and I am happier. I am not sure what my next step will be, but I will be good. I know that. ... If somebody needs help then I try and help them. I have bad anxiety. I was in welding school with these kids that are 18 and 19, they call me Momma. ‘I’ll teach you guys some stuff. I’m always ‘safety first’. ’ They get stressed but I know about anxiety. And when I help them, my anxiety seems to get better, I don’t know. I’m teaching them more about life I think than anyone else – more of age wise than school wise because that’s why they’re in school. But I tell them to get their stuff done. ‘Do your homework.’ The thing is we never know how our life unfolds. So when you are 16 or 17 you couldn’t know what you would think today. If I had somebody like me pushing me at 17 I’d be like ‘Okay I’m listening to that
"lady. ' Because yea, I didn’t have that. I had nobody to push me to go to school." (Lara Intra-view, May 2018)

Ella was born and lived in the North for the majority of her life. She was not motivated to be in school when she was a teenager. Her father died when she was young; she failed grade 5 and grade 6. When she reached high school age, she had to leave her home on the reservation to attend high school in a city. She went back to her home community. This was a very difficult transition for her, and she got pregnant around the age of 17. Over a period of time, she came to southern Manitoba with her husband because he wanted to go to university. After he graduated from the Faculty of Education, he took a job in the north, and they eventually were divorced.

Ella suffers from poor health that causes her to have difficulties swallowing because of a problem with her trachea. The doctors are challenged by her condition. But, Ella enjoys a close relationship with her grandson and was glad that she made the decision to return to high school. She is very involved with her church and says her church family “was very supportive when I went back to high school.” She wanted me to know that nobody forced her to return:

I did it on my own because I was divorced by then so he doesn’t really have a say what I do. He sometimes thinks he does but ‘no’. I didn’t feel forced at all. I did it for myself. I think that’s why I...
enjoyed it. I missed a lot of classes but I have a lot of health problems. People understood that at the school though. I have so many health problems you would think I was 80 years old or something. [She laughs.] Considering where I am with all my health problems and stuff, I am very blessed because it’s the least amount of everything. I think He [God] lets you go through so much and then carries you the rest of the way. (Ella Intra-view, May 2018)

Ella has a strong spiritual faith. She might like to go to Bible School and become involved with women’s ministries as a pastor. She attained her GED prior to her high school diploma but found that it did not provide enough options for her for certain jobs or education programs. She added that she has not always been good in large groups but her faith and her work with elders and her church family is helping her to become more comfortable in group settings. She added, “I have a calling somewhere in my faith. I am listening closely to where that will be.”

Cam grew up not knowing his father. He told me he met him once when he was 8, but the family objected to his presence since he had not been a part of his life for so many years. Cam did not speak much more about his family other than to say he left them when he was 17 or 18 to move to another city where his aunt lived. The city where she lived had a baking class in the high school and it interested him. He said he found school boring, always learning the same thing; teachers expected him to simply “regurgitate knowledge” and he has no motivation to be there. Even the baking class was disappointing because “they spent more time teaching about types of bake ware and safety equipment than actually doing any baking. … Still as many tests and ‘modules’ that you had to complete and write more tests about.” He started
to notice that many students skipped school and eventually he fell into the same patterns, also experimenting with different drugs. He did not enjoy the high school ‘drama’ with peers as well. He left school and found jobs that he was able to support himself financially. After nine years of being away from school, he decided to return.

_School has always been easy for me. It’s easy to fluff my way through a lot of the stuff. But the motivation to keep at it at a constant rate that’s always been the issue. ... Money is important to me. I never want to feel stressed about not being able to support myself. ... Math is the only course that I have ever had difficulty with. Lack of understanding for that made it very frustrating and that was the only one that I was trying not to get 50% for, I was trying to get as good a mark as I could. But I did only get 50%. ... Math is not my subject._

When I asked him why he finally returned to school, he replied:

_Embarrassing. I didn’t have a high opinion of myself. I’m 25 years old and I’m coming back to high school. I should’ve finished seven years ago and it was a real sore point between me and my current girlfriend. Once I was done, she said, ‘I’m so proud of you for finishing. It’s great that you did this.’ It rubbed me the wrong way. I’m 25 years old and I should be passed this point in my life. This is not something to be proud of._
When I hear Cam say that finishing high school at 25 is not something to be proud of, I think about myself finishing a Ph.D. program in my mid 50’s. I feel disappointment in myself for taking so long also. I get it. But, why do we think this way? I know all about life-long learning but somehow that doesn’t apply to me. Social norms lead me to think that I should have completed this degree long ago perhaps so I could utilize its privileges much earlier in my career. I am not even planning on attending my graduation. Mail delivery is sufficient. At my age, I think perhaps the pomp and circumstance is over-rated. Will I live long enough to have made it worthwhile, how long is that? Have I satisfied the requirements of becoming a life-long learner? Why does Cam think finishing high school at 25 is an embarrassment? What makes him think that way? What makes me think I am too old to complete a PhD?

Social norms affect the self-efficacy of participants to return to school as Lu (2018) reported, “education encourages people to develop social status norms related to their education level” (p. 426). Some participants in this study felt the pressure from family members to go back to high school. Some participants were embarrassed that they had not finished earlier. As Lara expressed, “It was time to get serious”. However, each participant’s assemblage is affected by different lines of flight. So are mine. The lines are like children’s building blocks. The structures that are created are not always linear, and sometimes the structures fall, and children rearrange the blocks for the creation of the next structure. The becoming of each of the participants are much like building blocks. Their assemblages are multi-
dimensional, and each block in the structure is different, affecting the other blocks in a variety of ways. Their structures are not complete, just because this rhizome is finding an exit. Their structures continue to become. The people in this study are in the world becoming some/body/thing else. I am still curious about their continued becoming. I wonder what they are doing now. Perhaps that curiosity might be satisfied and reterritorialized in another rhizome production.

2. I also wondered about the concepts that might emerge out of the rhizome that mobilize processes of social and individual growth to dropping back into school. This turns to the actual, to see how something can actually become.

As discussed earlier, a certain rigidness exists within the education system. Wallin (2014) clearly explained the goals of a system to ‘produce’ the ideal graduating student. This quest to graduate this product begins from the early years when the child first enters the doors of a school. The ideal child become shaped into the ideal graduate, designed to become the ideal adult. Predetermined rules govern children’s behaviour. Curriculum is regulated and neatly packaged for teachers to deliver to students. Best practices, based in evidence-based approaches for optimal learning are adopted for praxis. Provincial exams and regular assessments occur to measure students’ development and skill levels. Interventions occur as achievement results deem necessary. The system is destined and designed to produce a carefully crafted product, one that embodies the ideal graduate.

But, the machine is disrupted when the product disrupts the process and prematurely leaves. A Deleuzian revolutionary war machine is created, and it resists by deterritorializing the molarizing tendencies of the school system. The system’s
product goes ‘missing’. The product is now constructed to be at the fringes of society, invisible now to the system that marches forward in the process for those that remain. In light of the description of Generation Z in its resistance to rigid structures, and the instant sourcing of knowledge through the Internet (Ramani, 2015), thinking something different about education and schooling, disrupting the paradigm’s current existence might be beneficial to some students who just do not see themselves as ‘fitting in with school’. Technology provides opportunity to think differently about the purpose of schooling and what ‘school’ can look like. Is it possible to see difference between the purpose of schooling and the purpose of education? Perhaps the current system of education does not have to serve as the basis for the production of the graduated body into the adult world. Or perhaps, the system can provide options, lines of flight, that lead to the becoming educated body. Perhaps there are more ways than one to navigate one’s becoming in the world. Perhaps a paradigm shift that disrupts the binaries of the either/or path of educated/non-educated would be useful. The participants in this study traversed various and complex paths. Eventually, the dominant social norms that ‘legitimize’ an individual through the holding of a high school diploma played a role in the return to school of these participants. Their life experiences that were gained through various occupations and places did not ‘count’ in their educational journey. They had to return to high school. There was no option to navigate future choices without the diploma. Despite their abilities, their experiences, their commitment to personal growth, the molarized system does not allow them to bypass the high school diploma.
I recall the experiences of some of my immigrant students in my classes who had spent many years in professional careers such as aviation aeronautics, medicine, education, and engineering before coming to Canada. The ‘system’ requires them to upgrade to be certified/colonized to this country’s standards, but it is not enough that they upgrade in their career areas, they have to complete a high school diploma in order to enter some of these education spaces. Years are spent in the completion of this stratifying process. These individuals are capable, motivated and anxious to contribute to their professional fields of study, but they must first satisfy the system’s demands. There is no deviation, no line of flight that might expedite the journey. It seems senseless; yet, the system remains unchanged. This is not a study in the experiences of immigrants to Canada, but the situation serves as another example of stratifying tendencies that disadvantages people.

Neoliberal approaches to education continue to dominate school spaces (Arduin, 2015), and molarized school spaces need to be reterritorialized. The whole notion of life-long learning can be re-thought. What constitutes life-long learning? Can it occur outside of classroom spaces? How has the notion of schooling/learning/upgrading/being trained affected the reterritorialization of the participants/the researcher back to a formal school space?

Earlier in the dissertation I made a personal comparison to my participants as a body who is also returning later in life to complete a degree; in my case it is a degree in philosophy. As I reflect on my own becoming, I realize that I have also been part of a colonizing academic process. The requirements of the degree are clearly defined. It is not a nomadic journey even though I have selected a nomadic
(non)methodology. While completing the process, I have also experienced colonization/molarization in the process of applying for tenure in my academic appointment at my employing faculty. The process has been the same for decades. The standards are clear. My scholarly becoming is defined and stratified, much the same as a standardized exam. Academic rigor is specific, despite any other experiences beyond these standards that might actually qualify as legitimate preparation for the tenured position. I, and any other tenure applicant, must comply accordingly. The process is stratified. I have embodied stratification and colonization. It feels ‘tight’. I manoeuvre to fit the system, just like students who try to fit schools. Why don’t schools move to fit people? In terms of re-entry programs, the wondering that emerges from the learning in this dissertation is one that scrutinizes the sameness of an high school programs for both adult re-entry learners and teen-aged students.

When I think about my participants’ re-entry to high school, I now think more intently on what actually happens when they come back. After dropping out of the system that was shaping and producing a graduating product, they drop back into the same system. Nothing much changes. The curriculum is the same. The amount of credits required to graduate is the same. The only thing that has changed is the setting and the age of the people around them. I can’t help but wonder why the same curriculum must be completed for graduation as the one that teenaged students in the neighbouring public high school are also completing. How is it that the becoming experiences of these re-entry adults is not considered in the completion of their ‘right of passage’? The participants in this study have each experienced various
transforming events in their lives that have contributed to their unique life assemblages. Yet, the system of education continues to demand a stratified completion of certain courses that somehow translates into the completed graduated product, despite the years that have passed between dropping out and dropping in. There has been no (dis)(re)traction in the program of re-entry to think something new. Suddenly the concept of (dis)(re)traction emerges. And suddenly, the problem emerges … at the exit of the rhizome.

St. Pierre (2019) claimed, according to Deleuze and Guattari, that thought is not recognition and representation but creation. It is involuntary and does not originate with human consciousness. The concepts of Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) become “an act of thought … operating at infinite … speed” (p. 2) as we address a real problem and reorient our thinking. Some re-entry adults may continue in their education, and the completion of specific course may be prerequisites for admission to future programs. But, some may return to high school simply to complete that which was never finished. Perhaps the choice to return is simply part of their own becoming journey that fulfills a need to inspire someone else or build upon their own self-efficacy. The reasons for return are multiple and complex. The re-entry program is rigid and fixed. No account is made for life events that are always expanding upon our becoming learning journey. No option to tailor the re-entry process even exists. The curricula is not designed for adult programming; yet, it is the only one available and its completion is mandatory for graduation.

When I first began teaching in the adult re-entry program, I never stopped to think about the lack of curricula option. I simply taught the outcomes and utilized the
strategies that I had always known. It was not long before my (dis)(re)traction moment began new thinking. Re-entry learners embody complex becomings. Some have endeared difficult circumstances, such as the ones described in some of the literature about high school drop out. Some were more fortunate in navigating their life journey having experienced more positive life events. Their interests, their strengths, their desires are all different. Like most humans, their support needs are different. But, their dropping back in to school is often not only about academics. Completion of particular courses is not always the focus of their re-entry time. Is it not possible to provide more tailored options to adults in a re-entry program? Perhaps some may want to grow their computer and technical skills, some may want to focus on language and literacy. Others may want to expand their artistic desires. Possibilities for less striation must certainly dwell somewhere on the plane of immanence in between the virtual and reality. This is the emerging (dis)(re)traction that is born out of the rhizomatic experiment.

**Future Research**

The lines of flight that have been created, and are still to be created, constitute the potential for further research around adults who live with minimal schooling. What is it that brings some adults back to finish high school later in life? Why do some never return? How are some able to find independence and happiness with a minimal education and others endure hardship and rely on outside supports to live day to day (as is expressed in typical literature that discusses the ‘realities’ of high school drop out)? Some of the discourses that exist in the stratifying spaces of schools and society have been identified in this research project. They do not
necessarily serve to answer the questions that continue to exist, but they do
illuminate some injustices and inequities within school systems and within the values
that are held by society. For example, the stratifying processes described by Fong and
Faude (2018) to register children for Kindergarten disadvantage late registrants in the
process of school choice:

> Despite equal access in theory, bureaucratic structures such as timeline-based
lotteries hinder many families, particularly those disadvantaged already, from
full participation. Inequality in school choice outcomes and experiences thus
results not only from families’ selections, the focus of previous research, but
also the misalignment of district bureaucratic processes with family
situations. (p. 242)

Stratifying processes do not work for all people, despite their best intentions. The
policy of a government or an education system to prepare and educate its product for
optimal future life experiences is well intended. It just does not work for everyone.
Dupere et al. (2015) described the enormous attention that policy makers have given
to the “exceedingly complex” (p. 616) matter of high school dropout in the United
States; yet, their graduation rates are slow to improve. But, this project did not set out
to fix a dropout problem. This project set out to discover more about the experiences
of individuals who live as adults with limited schooling, and perhaps to understand
more about the assemblages that brings them back to a schooling space.

Research conducted through a Deleuzian lens should provide opportunity for
new thinking around a topic. The experiences of the participants and researcher in
this research project have produced flight lines to understand the lives of these
participants beyond the descriptions of the literature that tends to describe them in terms of lacking. Societal norms that promote life-long learning and socioeconomic status through education require some critical reflection. Who benefits from these norms and presumptions? They have impact on *becoming* people. They affect self-efficacy, self-sustainability, and self-esteem. Molarizing lines that create colonizing spaces cause people to conform to the stratifying requirements of an education system that dictates forward movement and *becoming*. The system dictates a hierarchical progression that outlines how a person is able to attain training or schooling in various career choices and it begins with a grade 12 diploma. For the participants in this study, the diploma has been the one thing that must be attained in the continuance of their nomadic journey. Society values the status of increased education, and it has importance to their future despite the experiences that they have lived to this point. The experiences are ‘not enough’. They were missing the education that granted privileged entry to their next endeavour. Once unschooled, they are now schooled. Why did it have to remain a binary of two possibilities? How might it look different? Do processes of stratification simply serve those in leadership positions who require hierarchical structure to maintain semblance of order/control?

New directions for education research and practice are vital in the midst of the complexity that we find in a changing world. But, these directions do not have to be prescriptive and should never result in finite possibilities. Semetsky (2008) urges scholars in continued experimentation with nomadic education that will enable the constant generation of *thinking something else* to creatively meet the needs of
complex and *becoming* generations. What will this look like? What kinds of supports will be needed with(in)(out) of schools to reflect the thinking of *something else*. How might we think *something* to have all students remain visible and included?

I have often heard colleagues refer to things in education as ‘coming full circle’. Trends in education come and go. The binary position of what is right or wrong in education is constantly debated among educators who have gravitated to pedagogical approaches popular in their own teaching spaces. Rhizomatic thinking finds itself in the middle or in-between these spaces. It is important to continue journeying among the spaces to learn more of the experiences of individuals who drop out of high school so that we can learn more about the ways that education may better serve learners. In the preface of this dissertation, I quoted Deleuze (1968/1994). He said, “Something in this world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter” (p. 139). Each encounter that researchers have in their nomadic journeys affects the thinking around education and how it is also becomes in an ever-morphing society. Each encounter that learners experience in their nomadic journeys shape the assemblages that rhizoanalysis can map. As has been discussed earlier in this rhizome, evidence-based research cannot tell all that there is ‘to think’ in education. Rhizo methods can dwell in the in-between spaces so that *something different* may be thought. And, those that prefer to journey non-linear paths may take up philosophical discussion and experimentation in ways that extend beyond traditional approaches.

The rhizome that emerges out of the intra-related assemblage of (non)data generates complexity around the adult learner dropping back into high school.
Despite the varying experiences life events that affect these learners, the re-entry program remains unaffected to deliver a curriculum, a right of passage, that validates their life experience and learning that has transpired. They drop back in to the same rigid requirements that define graduation credentials rooted in curricula that was developed for the teen learners in high school spaces. I think of this as a rather unilateral approach to educating a multitude of learners. I think about the concept of multi-schooling and multi-curricula. The re-entry program does not fit the experiences of these adult becoming learners.

Diversity in classrooms exists at all age levels. Notions of differentiated instruction exist to promote learning for all within inclusive classroom spaces. But, when I reflect on the events of the adults in my study, I don’t agree that curricula designed for teenaged learners is relevant to these adult learners. This notion causes me to pause and wonder beyond these learners. I think about the vast diverse populations of learners in schools, and I wonder if differentiated instruction and notions of inclusion are truly meeting the needs of all learners. How is that possible? Are we fooling ourselves? Do we need to be (dis)(re)tracted to something else? As I find an exit in this rhizome, national statistics are being released that puts the province in which I live at the very bottom of performance in science, mathematics and literacy among fifteen year olds in our country. I am becoming (dis)(re)tracted to think about something else. What about the concept of multi-schooling? What might that look like? What might it look like across multi-ages? Could we be doing something better in our education of people – not just re-entry learners, but all learners? Nothing changes until something changes …
Nomadic research can go on forever. “Problems are inexhaustible, while solutions are a particular form of exhaustion” (May, 2005, p. 85). However, closure must be brought to this particular dissertation. The epistemological undertaking within a post qualitative framework does not draw any conclusions around the topic of high school drop out, nor does it contend specific or prescriptive recommendations to that which we call ‘school’. It does disrupt literature that denotes bodies without high school diplomas as ‘lacking’ and burdensome. And, it causes us to think about how learning might become something else in education spaces. What might that look like? How might we think teacher differently? Learner differently? System differently? Pedagogy differently? Curriculum differently?

As I come to the end of the dissertation, I find myself thinking about a phone conversation I had today with a close friend of mine who I have known for many years. As I told her I was about to finish my writing, she said, “Did you know that I never finished high school?” I was surprised to hear her ask me the question and was stunned that I never actually knew that about my good friend. We had never discussed each other’s education, and I had always assumed she had graduated from high school and probably had post-secondary education in the area of financing or marketing as she is a very successful and well known person in on-air advertising and promotion. She is financially independent, having raised two grown children and enjoys a life of travel and personal hobbies. The literature review of the phenomenon of high school drop out for this dissertation is void of success stories. My friend’s
story does not commonly work to create a narrative that describes those who drop out of high school.

Human *becoming* is complex, produced in assemblages of various bodies (living and non-living), and it should be thought through a lens of complexity. Binary labels such as educated/uneducated, good/bad, abled/disabled, etc. simply do not justice in understanding the ever-evolving spirit of human *becoming*. It seems there is more than one way to *become* in the world and that may not involve formal schooling. That being said, the return to school to complete that which was once abandoned can also have dramatic transformative affect on some:

*After having returned to school mid way through my life.. (she closes her eyes and I notice a tear roll down her cheek) I am honestly so proud of myself! Not only did I make it through this little stepping stone (which held me back my entire life even though I was happy and surviving just fine), but I was rewarded with finding myself! I am going to become a nurse which I never thought of, I couldn’t have done it without with this place to come back and finish my school. I am so thankful.* (Researcher’s Journal, June 15, 2018)

I wrote these memories in my journal following the graduation ceremony for the adults who were graduating from the adult collegiate high school program that spring. Although the individual was not one of my participants, her words stuck with me and I recorded them in my journal. Her description of ‘finding herself’ made me think of the journey that we are all on. We find ourselves for a while and then find ourselves somewhere else at some other time. The nomadic journey is remarkably
interesting and filled with surprises, sometimes there are struggles, and sometimes there is conquering. There is no one way to live, no one way to become in life…

“Nobody’s life is perfect regardless of how lucky or happy we are. But all of us are human and we have worth simply in being human. At some point, we will encounter struggles, the best thing we can do for ourselves is to remain stable and function in the face of disruption … then we can move through the disruption and become more than we were before we started this journey of life … what else is there for us in our journey as humans, really? Yea, I came back to school and jumped through the hoops of completing the courses. I don’t know if I will ever use a lot of the ‘stuff’ I learned in Math or Biology. I sure would have liked to learn more about computers, and the phys. ed. hours were really a waste of time. I am very active. I live a lifestyle of fitness. But, I did it. I finished.” (Final thoughts spoken at the focus group discussion)

The ideas in this dissertation do not solve any problems around the topic of drop out. However, I have thought something more about re-entry programs for adults who drop back into school. My nomadic becoming researcher journey (de) territorialized some of my historically embodied knowledge. I have wondered and wandered the vastness of scholarly exploration, away from some of the well-beaten, safe, and sense-making paths that I originally thought I would navigate in my doctoral studies. Franklin-Phipps (2017) said:

We learn how to do the work that is recognizable, to those who must recognize, but we are not given many guides on the other places to be, how to go to outer space. Not outer space in terms of the galaxy (although, maybe)
but out of the space that has previously been cordoned off for educational research. For that, there is no guide. (p. 24)

Like the participants in my study, schooling has been one way for me to find out about the world, and to see where I might fit into it. I have been an educator my entire adult life. My graduate work is intra-related with gender, age, pedagogy, teacher education, and tradition that spans many areas of day-to-day living. For many years, I lived in the recognizable best practices associated with education, both as a teacher and a student. In the confusion of my nomadic journey, (re)territorialisation is occurring. New ways of thinking are emerging. I think about the participants in my study once again.

Their dropping back into school later in life, like mine, was a (de)(re)territorializing experience. None of their/our experiences is the same. The assemblages are different; the affects produce differently, and the experiences are not just about academic learning. They are individual and complex. We transition and transform from our well-trodden territories, but the experiences of pounding on the familiar soil are rich and informative. Re-entry programs that exist for dropping back in adults would do well to open space and opportunity for the telling of these journeys. The telling offers an opportunity to reflect on life events, and the shared knowledge may affect the authentic capacity of dropping back into school. Besides the academic planning of a student’s timetable, the stress (demands of a full time job, family obligations, reorienting to academic demands) of transitioning back into schooling spaces may be reduced through learning more about the lives of these becoming adult learners.
In addition to thinking about possibilities for re-entry programs, the experience of doing rhizomatic research has \((dis)(re)tracted\) me to think more about how these (non)methods might become options in my becoming research agenda. I have received ethics approval to move forward in doing research with teens and adults who live with learning disabilities in literacy and to learn more about the strategies of early years teachers in teaching literacy to children who have disabilities in literacy. The intra-relational dynamic of rhizomatics has tremendous potential associated with this next project. I am thankful for the opportunity to continue dwelling in Deleuzian philosophy. I have heard it said that one never knows what she does not know until she comes to know it. Perhaps that is how I think about experiment in the rhizome. Six years ago, I had no awareness of the possibilities of \textit{other} options for research. I entered the rhizome knowing virtually nothing about the process. I exit the rhizome with some familiarity, but with a tremendous amount of curiosity in wondering what more I can do with future experiments inspired by Deleuzian thinking.

Deleuze is not about universal solutions or practices. I began with a curious prompting to learn more about the nomadic journeys of those who leave school prematurely. Future explorations and larger experiments around this topic and the lives of those who have minimal education will certainly serve to grow the thinking around this topic – not to regulate praxis but to increase our thinking around the relations between situations, events, individuals and affects … and maybe, someday, we might even re-imagine other concepts of schooling/curricula in re-entry programs. Maybe we might even come to imagine something more for the way we do schooling.
on a broader spectrum, say for example, how we continue to groom a product that is worthy of graduation. Perhaps there might become multiple and more complex thinking around this concept of becoming schooled, things that remain in the virtual waiting to merge into reality.

The (in)famous Irish rock band, U2, sang about still not having found what it was looking for …

I have climbed the highest mountains
I have run through the fields
Only to be with you
Only to be with you

I have run I have crawled
I have scaled these city walls
These city walls
Only to be with you

But I still haven't found
What I'm looking for
But I still haven't found
What I'm looking for

I have kissed honey lips
Felt the healing in the fingertips
It burned like fire
This burning desire

I have spoke with the tongue of angels
I have held the hand of a devil
It was warm in the night
I was cold as a stone

But I still haven't found
What I'm looking for
But I still haven't found
What I'm looking for

I believe in the Kingdom come
Then all the colors will bleed into one
Bleed into one
But yes, I'm still…
One of my favourite songs, it makes me think of the rhizomatic researcher’s journey in education. The music artist has gone through great lengths to spend time with ‘someone’, but he still … has not found what he is looking for. The contributing bodies (human and non-human) in this dissertation rhizome created an assemblage that *(dis)(re)*tracted some new thinking about adults who drop back in to re-entry high school programs. I wonder why we are *doing* re-entry, and schooling in general for that matter, the way we do … Nothing changes until it does. New possibilities are thought and imagined. New wonderings emerge. The nomadic journey continues …
References


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Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. NR98245)


Appendix A

University of Regina Ethics Certificate

Research Ethics Board
Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Shelley Kokorudz

DEPARTMENT
Faculty of Education

REB#
2018-020

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Twyla Salm

TITLE: Nomads to Re-entry: A Rhizoanalysis of Adult Journeys in High School Completion

APPROVED ON: February 11, 2018

RENEWAL DATE: February 11, 2019

APPROVAL OF:
Application for Behavioural Research Ethics Review, Recruitment Poster, Consent Form for Group Interview, Consent for Individual Interview, Interview Questions

Full Board Meeting ☐ Delegated Review ☒

The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.uregina.ca/research/for-faculty-staff/ethics-compliance/human/forms1/ethics-forms.html.

Raven Sinclair, BA, CSW, BISW, MSW, PhD
REB Chair

Please send all correspondence to:
Research Office
University of Regina
Machray and Innovation Centre 101
Regina, SK S4S 0A2
Telephone: (306) 585-4775
Fax: (306) 585-4893
research.ethics@uregina.ca
Appendix B

Assiniboine Community College Ethics Letter of Approval

13 March 2018

Shelley Kokorudz
Site 305
RR#3
Box 8
Brandon,
MB
R7A5Y3

kokorudz@brandonu.ca

Dear Ms Kokorudz,

Protocol Title: Nomads to Re-entry: A Rhizoanalysis of Adult Journeys in High School Completion - University of Regina

You have requested permission to conduct a research project using Assiniboine Community College (ACC) students as subjects. As such, the project is subject to ACC's ethics review process.

I have reviewed your research protocol and noted University of Regina Ethics Board approval and Brandon University Ethics Board approval. The board requests a copy of the student interview results prior to any publication. In addition, to avoid the appearance of conflict or undue influence, that none of your current students be included in the study. We note that adequate safeguards are taken in your protocol to ensure that participation is voluntary and participants' personal identity and privacy is protected in the analysis and reporting of data.

You are hereby granted permission to use ACC students, (with the exception of your current students) as the subjects of your research. We request that periodically you keep us informed as to your progress, and on completion supply us with a final report for our files. The research results will be of benefit and interest to others at ACC, so when you complete your research I would like to discuss with you how we might appropriately distribute a summary report to the College staff community.
If you have not completed your research by end of March 2019, you will need to renew your Research Ethics agreement with us. Please contact Karen Banuga at banugak(ci),assiniboine.net, 204 725 8700 x 6199, before end of March 2019, as required.

Feel free to call with any questions. Sincerely,

Chen Yu James Liu Ph.D.,
Chair, Assiniboine Community College Research Ethics
Board Ext. 6619
liuc@assiniboine.net

twyla.salm(a),uregina.ca

Dr. Scott Thompson, Department of Education
Psychology, scott.thompson@uregina.ca
Appendix C

Brandon University Ethics Certificate

Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC)
Ethics Certificate for Research Involving Human Participants

The following ethics proposal has been approved by the BUREC. Ethics Certification is valid for up to five (5) years from the date approved, pending receipt of Annual Progress Reports. As per BUREC Policies and Procedures, section 6.0, “At a minimum, continuing ethics research review shall consist of an Annual Report for multi-year projects and a Final Report at the end of all projects. Failure to fulfill the continuing research ethics review requirements is considered an act of non-compliance and may result in the suspension of active ethics certification, refusal to review and approval any new research ethics submissions, and/or others as outlined in Section 10.0.”

Any changes made to the protocol must be reported to the BUREC prior to implementation. See BUREC Policies and Procedures for more details.

As per BUREC Policies and Procedures, section 10.0, “Brandon University requires that all faculty members, staff, and students adhere to the BUREC Policies and Procedures. The University considers non-compliance and the inappropriate treatment of human participants to be a serious offence, subject to penalties, including, but not limited to, formal written documentation including permanently in one’s personnel file, suspension of ethics certification, withdrawal of privileges to conduct research involving humans, and/or disciplinary action.”

Principal Investigator: Ms. Shelley Kokorudz
Title of Project: Nomads to Re-entry: A Rhizoanalysis of Adult Journeys in High School Completion
Co-Investigators: n/a
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Twyla Salm, University of Regina
Research Ethics File #: 22257
Date of Approval: March 5, 2018
Ethics Expiry Date: March 5, 2023
Authorizing Signature:

Mr. Christopher Hurst
Co-Chair, Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC)

270 18th Street, Brandon MB, Canada R7A 6A9

APPENDIX D
Recruitment Poster

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Regina

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN Adult Learning and the Dropout Phenomenon

**Title of Research:** Nomads to Re-entry: A Rhizoanalysis of Adult Journeys in High School Completion

I am looking for 5 volunteers to take part in a study about adult learners who have entered the adult collegiate at Assiniboine Community College to complete high school.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to enter into discussion about your experiences as an adult who left high school prematurely but has entered an adult collegiate and graduated with a high school diploma or are working toward the completion of the diploma.

Your participation would involve a semi-structured interview of approximately 2 hours at a time and location of your choice. Follow up interviews may occur at the mutual decision of the participants and the researcher. You will also be invited to participate in a one-hour group discussion with other participants in the study to share your experiences.

No remuneration is being offered for your participation in this study, but the researcher is extremely appreciative of the time that you might provide to learn more about your experiences as an adult returning to high school. I will provide a beverage and snack during our conversations and look forward to telling you more about my study.

Please contact Shelley Kokorudz by May 1, 2018 if you are interested in sharing your story and contributing to this important research!

**Email:** kokorudzs@brandonu.ca
**Phone:** 204-724-7273

This study has been reviewed and received approval through the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina.
Appendix E

Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form for Individual Intra-view

**Project Title:** Nomads to Re-entry: A Rhizoanalysis of Adult Journeys in High School Completion

**Researcher(s):**

Shelley Kokorudz (Univeristy of Regina PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction)

Phone: 204-724-7273

Email: kokorudzs@brandonu.ca

**Supervisor:**

Dr. Twyla Salm (Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Programs)

Phone: 306-585-4604

Email: twyla.salm@uregina.ca

Co-Supervisor:

Dr. Scott Thompson (Dept. of Education Psychology)

Phone: 306-520-3223

Email: scott.thompson@uregina.ca

**Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:**

This study aims to learn more about the lives of non-traditional adult learners (over the age of 25) who return to complete their high school education in an adult learning space. The significance and implication of the research rest in this researcher’s attempt to learn more about the learners and their own becoming after departing from the education system without a high school diploma. Much empirical evidence exists to position the uneducated adult as marginalized in society. Yet, the interaction of the researcher with
adults who return to complete their high school diplomas has served to provide a much different image of these learners. The researcher believes that new understandings might emerge to inspire fresh thinking about the interconnectedness in the decision of a learner to prematurely exit high school and the eventual choice to return to the classroom. In doing so, the researcher wishes to learn about the complexities that exist in the becoming (and overcoming) of these learners following their premature departure from high school.

**Procedures:**

Participants will be asked to participate in a discussion / interview that could last up to 2 hours. The discussion will focus on the participants’ experiences after having left high school prematurely and returning to an adult collegiate to complete their high school diploma as a non-traditional learner (over the age of 25). The interview will be conducted at a time and place convenient to participants. Follow up conversations may occur if the participant and researcher see benefit to further discussion. In addition to the one-on-one interviews, participants will be invited to a group meeting / interview to discuss their experiences in returning to high school. With permission, the interview(s) and group session will be audio-taped and notes will be taken. The audio recording may be turned off at any time at the request of the participants. Following the interview and the group discussion, the discussion data will be transcribed, shared with participants for accuracy of content and analyzed.

**Potential Risks:**

At the onset of this dissertation, I do not anticipate risks to the participants. However, in taking up a rhizomatic methodology, the potential for unanticipated risk exists. Rhizomatic methodology is a qualitative approach to research that focuses on conversation in the collection of data. The whole idea of rhizomatic research is to acknowledge that participants and researchers come from different places, that they need different things, and that we can create a map of sorts that help us to learn about the connections that contribute to the ways that our lives become. It is a commitment to multiple paths. Organizing a conversation, a course, a meeting or anything else to be rhizomatic involves creating a context, maybe some boundaries, within which a conversation can grow. For example, as conversations occur, it is possible that in the reflections of the participants, emotional or psychological distress could occur. In such an occurrence where participants may benefit from counselling, the student counselling services at the collegiate would be made available to students. I would do my best to inform participants of the support services available to them.

**Potential Benefits:**

By participating in this research, participants will be contributing to learning more about the lives of non-traditional re-entry adult learners. It is hoped that information from this research may be used to:

1. Arouse fresh thinking about student populations that choose to prematurely exit high school by mapping the paths that emerge after leaving high school;
2. To better understand the complexities of every day life that contribute to those pathways; and
3. To perhaps think differently about current education processes in high school that may be useful in assisting students who may be considering leaving high school before graduating.

**Compensation:**

No compensation will be made in the participation of this research project.

**Confidentiality:**

If the participants request to remain anonymous, names will not be used and a pseudonym will be assigned when the interviews are transcribed and reported. Participants will be given the choice if the wish to remain anonymous as post-qualitative approaches to research suggest that some participants are empowered by revealing personal identity and prefer not to remain anonymous. Care will also be taken to maintain confidentiality when using direct quotes. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the unique nature of the environments that will be described. For example, participants could be identified in speech patterns by colleagues or other individuals within the same context. The research will be presented at conferences and published in academic journals. In addition, due to the group discussion format, other participants in the study will become aware of the identity of fellow participants. All members in the group discussion will be asked to maintain confidentiality surrounding the content of the group discussion.

**Right to Withdraw:**

Participation in the study is voluntary and participants only need to answer questions and discuss experiences with which they feel comfortable. Participants may express their wishes to withdraw verbally or by email. No penalty will incur for withdrawing. Participants do not have to provide a reason or explanation after two weeks of participation or of the interview. Data will be deleted. After two weeks, however, the data may be integrated in the dissertation.

**Follow up:**

A summary of the dissertation will be available by request from the researcher.

**Questions or Concerns:**

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the U of R Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at (306-585-4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca).

Out of town participants may call collect.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.*
Appendix F

Group Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form for Group Interview

**Project Title:** Nomads to Re-entry: A Rhizoaanalysis of Adult Journeys in High School Completion

**Researcher(s):**
Shelley Kokorudz (Univeristy of Regina PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction)

Phone: 204-724-7273

Email: kokorudzs@Brandonu.ca

**Supervisor:**
Dr. Twyla Salm (Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Programs)

Phone: 306-585-4604

Email: twyla.salm@uregina.ca

Co-Supervisor:
Dr. Scott Thompson (Dept. of Education Psychology)

Phone: 306-520-3223

Email: scottthompson@uregina.ca

**Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Group Interview:**

As a participant in this study, you will have had an opportunity to participate in an individual interview with the researcher. The group interview allows participants to come together in a group format to discuss their return to school and hear the experiences of others. Discussion in a group setting offers a second opportunity to take up the topic in a setting supported by others who have taken up a common decision to complete a high school diploma later in life. The researcher’s purpose and objective to conduct a group interview is to gather conversation text that will supplement the individual interview.
texts that might serve to further enrich understanding of the topic being taken up in this research project.

**Procedures:**

Participants will be asked to participate in a group discussion of approximately 1 hour. The discussion will focus on the participants’ experiences after having left high school prematurely and returning to an adult collegiate to complete their high school diploma as a non-traditional learner. The group meeting will be conducted at a time and place convenient to participants. Follow up conversations may occur if the participant and researcher see benefit to further discussion. With permission, the group session will be audio-taped and notes will be taken. The audio recording may be turned off at any time at the request of the participants. Following the group discussion, the discussion data will be transcribed, shared with participants for accuracy of content and analyzed.

**Potential Risks:**

At the onset of this dissertation, I do not anticipate risks to the participants. However, in taking up a rhizomatic methodology, the potential for unanticipated risk exists. Rhizomatic methodology is a qualitative approach to research that focuses on conversation in the collection of data. The whole idea of rhizomatic research is to acknowledge that participants and researchers come from different places, that they need different things, and that we can create a map of sorts that help us to learn about the connections that contribute to the ways that our lives become. It is a commitment to multiple paths. Organizing a conversation, a course, a meeting or anything else to be rhizomatic involves creating a context, maybe some boundaries, within which a conversation can grow. For example, as conversations occur, it is possible that in the reflections of the participants, emotional or psychological distress could occur. In such an occurrence where participants may benefit from counselling, the student counselling services at the collegiate would be made available to students. I would do my best to inform participants of the support services available to them.

**Potential Benefits:**

By participating in this research, participants will be contributing to learning more about the lives of non-traditional re-entry adult learners. It is hoped that information from this research may be used to:

4. Arouse fresh thinking about student populations that choose to prematurely exit high school by mapping the paths that emerge after leaving high school;
5. To better understand the complexities of every day life that contribute to those pathways; and
6. To perhaps think differently about current education processes in high school that may be useful in assisting students who may be considering leaving high school before graduating.

**Compensation:**

No compensation will be made in the participation of this research project.
Confidentiality:

When conducting a group conversation, there are limits to which the researcher can guarantee that the conversation will be kept confidential. The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the members of the group by not disclosing the contents of the discussion outside the group, and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is voluntary and you may answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, you may leave the group at any time. Due to the nature of group meetings, your data cannot be withdrawn from the study after it has been collected as it forms part of the context for the information provided by other participants.

Follow up:

A summary of the dissertation will be available by request from the researcher.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the U of R Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at (306-585-4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca). Out of town participants may call collect.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

______________________________  ________________  ________________
Name of Participant                     Signature                     Date

______________________________  ________________
Researcher’s Signature                     Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.
Appendix G

Participant Intra-view Guide

Proposed Questions for Consideration During Interviews (Guide)

The following questions are designed to be discussion starters. I envision rich discussion with my participants as opposed to sitting down with them and simply asking questions that they will simply answer one at a time. I would like the discussions to take a life of their own and allow the participants to feel safe about speaking about their early exit from high school and their return to an adult learning space to complete high school. The following questions could be utilized to shape the discussions.

1. Tell me about your life journey so far. Tell me about yourself and the things and the people that are important in your life.

2. What interests and aspirations do you have?

3. How do you see yourself when you think about your life in the “past”, “present”, “future”?

4. Talk to me about your earlier high school experiences and what led you to leave school before graduating?

5. What has it been like for you to live your life not having completed grade 12 earlier?

6. What were some struggles that affected your earlier school experiences? How do those experiences compare with your return to school now?

7. What has your life been like since leaving high school?

8. What has your return to this adult learning environment been like for you? What has been the greatest challenge? The greatest reward?

9. How did it feel to be back in an adult high school?

10. What has your return to school been like for you? What has it meant for you?

11. What or who has influenced your return to school?

12. How have others responded to your return to school?

13. How do you view yourself as a learner?

14. Where do you go go from here?

15. What else might you like to talk about when it comes to living an adult life without a high school diploma? And now that you have one, what might you add about what it is like to have one?
Appendix H

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, Transcriber TBA; (hereinafter “the Recipient”) will be required to review certain confidential and proprietary information of the University of Regina (hereinafter “the University”) in connection with the transcription of data collected during interviews and the focus group (hereinafter “the Purpose”);

NOW THEREFORE in consideration of the disclosure of such confidential and proprietary information to the Recipient and for other good and valuable consideration (the sufficiency of which consideration is hereby acknowledged), the Recipient hereby covenants and agrees follows:

1. Definitions

1.1 In this Agreement the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

(a) “Confidential Information” means all knowledge and information, in whatever form, whether factual, interpretive or strategic, furnished by or on behalf of the University hereunder, directly or indirectly to the Recipient, including but not limited to:

(i) reports, knowledge, information, documents, data, computer records or software;

(ii) Intellectual Property and Know-How; and

(iii) any other information which is or may be either applicable to or related in any way to the assets, business, research or affairs of the University;

together with all analyses, compilations, plans or other documents prepared by the Recipient containing or based upon, in whole or in part, information acquired by the Recipient from the University.

(b) “Intellectual Property” means patents, trademarks, industrial designs, copyrights, database rights, design rights, whether registered or unregistered, and including applications for any of the above, and any similar right recognized
from time to time in any jurisdiction relating in any way to the Technology, together with all rights of action in relation to the infringement of any of the above;

(c) “Know-how” means unpatented technical information (including, without limitation, information relating to inventions, discoveries, concepts, methodologies, models, research, development and testing procedures, the results of experiments, tests and trials, manufacturing processes, techniques and specifications, quality control data, analyses, reports and submissions) relating in any way to the Technology that is proprietary to the University and not in the public domain;

(e) “Purpose” means the Recipient’s activities in relation to this research project, as described above;

2. **Use and Non-disclosure**

2.1 The Recipient shall:

(a) except as set out elsewhere in this Agreement keep the Confidential Information in strict confidence and shall ensure that it not be used for any purpose whatsoever other than for the Purpose. For further certainty the Recipient shall not, without the prior written consent of the University, make any academic or commercial use whatsoever of any of the Confidential Information;

(b) be liable for any breach of this Agreement; and

(c) not disclose, without the prior written consent of the University, any Confidential Information to any person other than in accordance with the terms of this Agreement, except in the event that such Recipient is required by law to otherwise disclose any Confidential Information.

3. **Acknowledgment**

3.1 The Recipient acknowledges that:

(a) the Confidential Information is proprietary to the University, and provided to the Recipient solely for the Purpose;

(b) no interest, license or any right respecting the Confidential Information, other than for the Purpose, is granted to the Recipient under this Agreement by implication or otherwise.

4. **Disclosure**

4.1 In the event the Recipient becomes aware of a disclosure of any Confidential Information that fails to comply with this Agreement, the Recipient shall promptly:

(a) give notice to the University with the full particulars of the disclosure; and

(b) take all reasonable steps to mitigate the effects of such disclosure.
5. **Return of Confidential Information**

5.1 Upon completion of the Purpose and/or at any time, upon the written request of the University for any reason whatsoever, and within ten (10) days of such request, the Recipient shall:

(a) return all original copies of the Confidential Information to the University and shall permanently deleted and destroy any and all copies (including electronic copies), versions or other reproductions or extracts thereof; and

(b) destroy such documents, memoranda, notes and other writings whatsoever prepared by such Recipient based on the Confidential Information.

______________________________  __________________
Signature                     Date