

*Change and progress in Canadian teacher
education: Research on recent innovations in
teacher preparation in Canada*

Lynn Thomas & Mark Hirschhorn, (Eds.)



CATE/ACFE

Canadian Association for Teacher Education

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Introduction

This book is the third volume in a series of publications that have come out of working conferences organised to bring together members of the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE) and other scholars interested in research in teacher education in Canada. These working conference sessions were inspired by the work of Thomas Falkenberg of the University of Manitoba and Hans Smits of the University of Calgary who initiated the idea of bringing together Canadian scholars in teacher education to discuss and debate key issues in the field of teacher education research, and then publish the resulting papers in an attempt to build a corpus of research that is distinctly Canadian. After four years of inspiring and impressing us all, Thomas and Hans passed on the torch to CATE in 2011 and we have been attempting to carry on the legacy.

The CATE working conferences were held on an annual basis from 2011 to 2013, and henceforth will be held biannually, with the next one scheduled to take place at the University of Toronto in the fall of 2015. In 2011 the working conference took place at York University and the resulting publication, Thomas, L. (Ed.), (2013). *What is Canadian about Teacher Education in Canada? Multiple Perspectives on Canadian Teacher Education in the Twenty-First Century* can be found at

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwVGDOGBDzJdOVdJYmNFRl9KYm8/edit?pli=1> The 2012 working conference was held at McGill University and resulted in a publication in 2014 entitled *Becoming teacher: Sites for teacher development in Canadian Teacher Education*, also edited by Lynn Thomas, and available at

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwVGDOGBDzJdR1R2VGZvakZjUDQ/edit?pli=1>

This volume is a result of the collaboration of participants at the 2013 CATE working conference, which was held at the University of Saskatchewan from October 31 to November 2 with the theme of *Change and progress in Canadian Teacher Education*. The conference followed the usual format, that is, participants were asked to submit a three-page summary of their current research in response to one of four questions related to the above mentioned theme in advance of the conference. The four questions were:

1. The traditional foundations of education, such as sociology, history and philosophy of education are being phased out or reduced in many TE programmes. Is this content still relevant today? How are foundational ideas being explored through current teacher education approaches?
2. How can teacher education programmes best adapt to the rapid rate of change in the educational milieu? What needs to change in practice-based teacher education programmes to prepare teachers for the future as well as the present?
3. What influences have universities as institutions had on teacher education programmes? Is it the type of influence that helps future teachers develop the specialised skills that they need?
4. What drives change in teacher education, and what factors influence the capacity of teacher education programmes to make relevant changes?

The participants were divided into groups according to which question they chose to answer, and the summaries were shared with the members of these smaller discussion groups. Once at the conference, the groups met and discussed each other's work, asking questions and offering feedback and suggestions during the 2 day conference. Participants were then asked to submit their full papers, which were sent out for double blind reviews. The final versions are published here as chapters in this volume.

The first section groups chapters that discuss change and innovation in teacher education programmes across Canada. O'Connor, Nickel and Sterenberg describe the process of setting up a new teacher education programme at Mount Royal University in Calgary, and their efforts to

integrate an “authority of experience” (Mumby & Russell, 1994) approach to learning to teach. Sanford, Starr and Mimick report on an innovative alternative approach that they set up for future teachers in Victoria, integrating complexity thinking, social constructivism, and Indigenous principles of learning. Ntebutse, writing in French, recommends necessary changes to teacher education to take into account the increasingly ubiquitous presence of digital technologies and digital culture in schools. Mulholland and Salm write about the challenges of programme renewal, particularly with respect to well-loved traditions that involve members of the larger educational community. Riches, Wood and Benson describe the process they went through to create a new Masters level teacher education programme and some of the challenges of implementing such a programme. Thomas and Kane examine the relatively recent reform in teacher education in Quebec and the upcoming changes to teacher education in Ontario in the light of Wideen and Grimmett’s (1995) work on the importance of reconceptualising the preparation of teachers, not just restructuring for the sake of administrative or other convenience.

Part II of this volume includes five chapters on change and innovation with particular relation to the practicum in teacher education. Barchuk, Harkins and Hill describe a field experience component that involved a collaborative interdisciplinary project on literacy education in an African Nova Scotian community. Danyluk and Sheppard followed new teachers into their first job experiences in remote, northern and First Nation’s communities after they had completed a practicum in one of these communities. Petit, writing in French, explores practicum supervision at a distance through his study of supervisors who follow their student teachers from their living rooms in an on-line programme for learning to teach. Harkins and Barchuk examined student teachers’ perceptions of their experiences in diverse practicum settings, including international placements and alternative placements outside of schools. The paper by Stewart

Rose, Phaisarnsitthikarn, Broad, Baxan, James, & Wilton has been placed in this section because of the numerous References to learning within practical settings, although it is not strictly about the practicum. This team of researchers questioned newly graduated teachers about their conceptions of theory in an effort to learn more about how student teachers come to understand the theory-practice relationship in teaching.

The two chapters found in Part III examine the place of foundations courses in teacher education. Cappello and Tucker argue for the integration of Foundations content into the fabric of teacher education, and claim that when taken up in an integrative way, these foundations represent an important way to ground anti-oppressive teaching. In their chapter, Lemisko, Svoboda and Hellsten ask (and answer) the question “Is the content of the traditional foundations of education still relevant today and how are foundational ideas being explored through current teacher education approaches?”

Part IV also contains two chapters, this time looking at admissions within the current context of change. Childs and Ferguson study how changes to the admissions process relate to wider changes in programmes, with each having an effect on the other. Hirschhorn and Sears state that current procedures for admitting students to teacher preparation programmes are inadequate for the most part. They then go on to describe a recent innovation in admissions at the University of New Brunswick that serves both pedagogical as well as administrative ends.

The four chapters that make up the final section of this publication, Part V, address the crucial topics of diversity and inclusion. Calder Stegemann and Stevens examine changing practices of inclusion at the university level and advocate for new policies to support diverse learners in teacher education. Lin and Lin carried out a study to discover teachers’ conceptions of

inclusive assessment and make the connection to change in education and the need for teacher candidates to be prepared to assess in inclusive classrooms. Vanthuyne and Byrd Clark claim that there is a critical need to prepare future teachers on how to teach about diversity and incorporate alternative ways of teaching through multiliteracies in the form of digital pedagogies. Wason Ellam explains how responsive pedagogy can help teacher candidates to better understand the needs of all students in order to help them succeed.

This book brings together research from across Canada that examines different facets of change in relation to teacher education. Our hope in facilitating the exchanges and this publication that we have helped to increase communication among scholars in the field of teacher education and continue to build a corpus of literature that relates to the Canadian context.

Lynn Thomas

Sherbrooke, Quebec

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March 2015

Part I

Change and innovation in Canadian teacher education programmes

Back to the future: Revisiting the authority of experience in teacher education

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Abstract

As teacher educators involved in a new four-year Bachelor of Education program, we are interested in the possibilities of an alternative approach to teacher education based on *the authority of experience*. Munby and Russell (1994) suggest that most teacher candidates have been subjected to the authority of reason and the authority of position and are influenced by these authorities that tell them what to do and what to believe. If we wish to prepare our teacher candidates for the present and future, we believe that they must be immersed in the authority of experience, the knowledge-in-action that helps teacher candidates respond critically to change.

In response to a great deal of research confirming that teacher education programs have been relatively ineffective in helping their students not only understand, but above all successfully apply in their field experiences the guidelines for teaching offered to them by their university course work, this paper focuses on the implementation of our department's new teacher education program based on the authority of experience. Specifically we describe preliminary research results of teacher candidates' experiences of pedagogical interventions involving *integration, inquiry, and community*.

Back to the future: Revisiting the authority of experience in teacher education

Teacher educators are considering how their programs can best adapt to the rapid rate of change in the educational milieu. This paper demonstrates how one teacher education practice-based program prepares teachers for the future as well as the present.

As teacher educators involved in a new four-year Bachelor of Education program, we are interested in the possibilities of an alternative approach to teacher education based on the authority of experience. Munby and Russell (1994) suggest that most teacher candidates have been subjected to the authority of reason and the authority of position and are influenced by these authorities that tell them what to do and what to believe. If we wish to prepare our teacher candidates for the present and future, we believe that they must be immersed in the authority of experience, the knowledge-in-action that helps teacher candidates respond critically to change. Many students discredit their own experiences as they place more authority with those who have experience and speak with confidence and assertion about what it takes to teach. Students are hesitant to validate and have faith in their own experiences as a guiding basis for knowledge and professional development in their teaching practice. Learning to trust oneself and one's own wisdom gained through reflection upon experience is critical to a strong sense of professional identity (Munby & Russell, 1994).

Munby and Russell coin the phrase *authority of experience* because of their “concern that students never master learning from experience during preservice programs in a way that gives them direct access to the nature of the authority of experience” (p. 92). They present a challenge to teacher educators:

The basic tension in teacher education derives for us from preservice students wanting to move from being under authority to being in authority, without appreciating the potential that the authority of experience can give to their learning to teach. The challenge for teacher education is to help new teachers recognize and identify the place and function of the authority of experience. (p. 94)

In response to this challenge and to a great deal of research confirming that teacher education programs have been relatively ineffective in helping their students not only understand, but above all successfully apply in their field experiences the guidelines for teaching offered to them by their university course work (Clift & Brady 2005; Grisham, Laguardia, & Brink, 2000), this paper focuses on the implementation of our department's new teacher education program based on the authority of experience. Specifically we describe preliminary research results of teacher candidates' experiences of pedagogical interventions involving integration, inquiry, and community.

Theoretical framework

The development of teacher candidates' professional practice during practicum and field experiences is of critical importance, yet our understanding of its development and its relationship to teacher candidates' learning in education courses is extremely limited (Segall, 2002). What little we do know about teacher candidates' development during practicum and field experiences suggests that education courses have little influence on their practice (Clift & Brady, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Wideen et al., 1998). Teacher candidates tend to be socialized into the status quo of school practice or reproduce their own school experiences (Tigchelaar & Korthagen, 2004; Tillema, 1998). As teacher educators, we question the traditional teacher education process of exposing teacher candidates to theory (coursework at

university) and then practice (K-12 classroom practicum) as sufficient in promoting Schön's (1983, 1987) epistemology of practice. We posit that Schön's *reflection-in-action* is often unachievable within traditional teacher education programs as teacher candidates rarely master learning from experience during teacher education programs in a transformative way (Mezirow 1991, 1995, 1997) that gives them direct access to the experience, specifically an *authority of experience* (Munby & Russell, 1994) in developing knowledge from analysis of that experience.

Theory and Practice Integration

In our work researching better opportunities for theory-practice integration, we discovered an article published in 1976 that highlighted the problems for teacher educators “to bring about that focussing and reflection so that theory and practice in individual decision-making can come together” (Allen, 1976, p. 45). We believe that this lack of integration of theory and practice can often be explained by the fact that theoretical/campus-based courses and school-based student teaching tend to be completely divided into different time periods, different staff, and different places. As a consequence, our teacher candidates “quite appropriately divide their professional education into two unrelated parts as they are expected effectively to change discourses and cross culturally determined borders in order to learn” (Rosean & Florio-Ruane, 2008, p. 712). Such conclusions have prompted the need to explore alternate approaches to teacher education that foster transformative learning (Mezirow, 1995) and practice among teacher candidates in order to help them move beyond these typical limitations in their development as teachers. We use the term *transformative learning* as articulated by Mezirow (1995): “to redress an apparent oversight in adult learning theory that has resulted from a failure to recognize the central roles played by an individual’s frame of reference, through which meaning is construed and all learning takes place, and by the transformation of these habits of

expectation during the learning process” (p. 4). Thus, we link Munby and Russell’s (1994) concept of the *authority of experience* as teacher candidates’ reluctance to listen to or to trust their own experiences as an authoritative source of knowledge in their teaching development.

Partnerships

There seems to be a growing acknowledgement of the potential benefits of partnerships. Researchers have investigated the potential of school and university teachers learning from each other, particularly through participatory classroom research (Bacharach & Hasslen, 2001) and reflective collaborations (Loughran, 2002). However, there is also widespread recognition of the challenges and difficulties in establishing and maintaining school-university partnerships, starting with the Holmes Group (1986). Verbeke and Richards (2001) list a daunting array of issues that face partnerships—shared versus conflicting goals, institutional differences, assessment and accountability, individual differences, communication, time, resources, roles and responsibilities, and evaluation. Breault (2013) makes four recommendations for the implementation of school-university partnerships based on her extensive and long-term research of the challenges experienced by teacher educators. It is these challenges that our current research seeks to investigate.

The perspective of learning as increasing participation in communities of practice is embedded in a relational understanding of knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This socio-constructivist theory of learning defines communities of practice as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). According to Wenger, participation in communities of practice is where learning takes place. Similarly, Beck and Kosnik (2006) state, “In a socio-constructivist

view, community is not just a frill; it is fundamental to effective learning” (p. 74). It is in community that preservice teachers might begin to share and achieve validation from others for their learning from experience.

Place-based and Experiential Learning

We seek to expose teacher candidates’ assumptions and beliefs about their learning through more effective practices based on experiential and place-based education. We also strive to analyze the key features of deliberate pedagogical interventions intended to better integrate theory and practice. Using terminology from Donald Schön (1983, 1987 & 1995), goals for the interventions are that teacher candidates become consciously aware of tacit principles that drive their practice (*theories-in-action*), but also begin to learn to *reflect-on-action* (post-practice) and eventually to *reflect-in-action* (during practice) in order to confront the *authority of experience* and begin to transform their practice as teachers.

Our program design seeks to embrace the authority of experience and is broadly rooted in a long tradition of experiential and place-based education, first articulated by Dewey (1938). In experiential learning, learners are first immersed in the experience of the targeted learning and then are asked to reflect on and analyze their experience in order to make sense of it. Experiential education provides a purpose to the knowledge and reasoning taught in schools, provides a contextual framework for much of the curriculum (i.e., it gives meaning to school studies), and engages students in the conditions of their own reality. Kolb (1984) offers a working definition of experiential learning. “Learning is the process by which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” (p. 38) In this view, learning is viewed as a continuous process grounded in experience as opposed to simple content or outcomes, knowledge is seen as a

continuous transformation process of creation and re-creation rather than an independent and objective entity to be acquired or transmitted, and ultimately learning is seen as a process that transforms experience.

Place-based education is an approach to teaching that is grounded in the context of community, both natural and social (Raffan, 1995; Theobald & Curtiss, 2000). It connects place with self and community (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). The delivery of our teacher education programming might be best characterized as the pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003): the integration of the student into their home school (practice) and the reinforcement of the essential links between the student, their peers, and place through targeted course work (theory). Through this integrated process, preservice teachers make connections between their experiences in the schools and the theoretical course work and in doing so learn to trust the authority of these integrated sets of experiences. The goal is to have the teacher candidates not only see the relevance and importance of their studies, but also reflect critically since those studies have immediate causal effect on their present pedagogical context as professional teachers and, ultimately, the well-being of themselves and their students.

Despite research documenting the weak influence of teacher education courses on candidates' subsequent practice, recent analyses of effective teacher education programs offer promising ways forward using teacher candidates' teaching experiences as a basis for learning through critical reflection and socio-constructivist dialogue (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Dillon & O'Connor, 2010; Korthagen, 2001; Loughran, 2002, 2006, 2010) and a recognition of the significance of the authority of experience (Munby & Russell, 1994). We know little about incorporating such pedagogical approaches to practicum learning into

traditional education program structures. It is this significant gap in our professional knowledge as teacher educators that this paper addresses.

We feel very fortunate to be active practitioners in a field that has shown a renewed interest and special focus on the examination of effective teacher education programs. Current research conducted by both Darling Hammond (2006), Beck & Kosnik (2006) and Kosnik and Beck (2009) has yielded considerable insight into the “how” of better preparing teachers for the changing field of education.

Beck and Kosnik (2006) surveyed eight teacher education programs from three different countries (United States, Australia and Canada) in which the authors claim each program provides a “progressive alternative” (p. 1) to the traditional “theory to practice” transmission approach in teacher education. The survey identifies three common characteristics of the programs: *integration*, *inquiry* and *community*. Integration responds to not only an espoused theory and practice approach but also addresses a holistic pedagogy that responds to all aspects of a teacher candidate’s learning experience. Inquiry encourages the learner in an experiential process that connects prior knowledge to observations and utilizes experiences to benefit knowledge construction while developing critical investigation skills and professional habits that ultimately help them explain how the classroom works. Lastly, community privileges a socio-constructivist approach that recognizes not only intellectual acumen but also emotional and social components to education that support teacher candidates in transformative learning and towards innovative and rewarding pedagogy.

These recommendations were echoed by Darling-Hammond’s (2006) survey of seven American teacher education programs that despite their differences in size, structure, and location, were all judged to be exemplary. In her analysis, she identifies three key common

features that make them effective. First, there needs to be a very deliberate and continuous approach to planning and curriculum development that is founded on the *integration* of the theoretical perspectives and research interwoven with the practical experiences of the students (e.g., practicum, prior experiences, etc.). Second, pedagogical approaches need to support teacher candidates as they *inquire* into ways in which theories apply in practice. Finally, *community* is established through strong school-university partnerships that support collaborative educational approaches that are authentic and inclusive. Together with her colleagues (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), she argues that these features are key to school development and reform.

In summary, the surveys of progressive and effective teacher education programs identify some strikingly common themes. They are:

- The need for a deliberate and extensive integration of both curriculum and pedagogy as it relates to the areas of theory and practice in teacher education programs.
- A learning environment that is supportive and representative of all the complex areas of education. This is achieved through experiential, inquiry and place-based initiatives that support the teacher candidate to take risks and develop a critical and responsive pedagogy.
- An essential need for partnerships between participating communities of practice that support social constructivism. These professional communities support diverse learners through “proactive relationships” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 30) that assist the teacher candidate to experience, reflect and develop strong and responsive educational practice.

As teacher educators involved in a new four-year Bachelor of Education program, we are interested in the possibilities of an alternative approach to teacher education based on an

authority of experience that prepares teacher candidates for the complex and ever-changing educational environment. If previous research shows that teacher education programs have been relatively ineffective in helping their teacher candidates successfully apply in their field experiences the guidelines for teaching offered to them by their university course work, we present some preliminary findings that seek to disrupt this previous research through our focus on the authority of experience.

This paper focuses on the implementation of our department's new teacher education program and preliminary findings of a recently awarded programmatic SSHRC-funded research project. Specifically we consider pedagogical interventions focused on course integration with place-based learning, the development of teacher inquirers, and engagement in communities of practice.

Methodology

This paper is informed by the initial results of a longitudinal qualitative study (currently in Year 2 of a 6 Year SSHRC funded study) that is designed to investigate the impact of transformative pedagogies by mentor teachers and teacher educators throughout teacher candidates' field experiences (i.e. weekly half-day school visits each semester) in years one and two of the program, practica experiences in years three (5 weeks) and four (9 or 15 weeks) of the program, and their initial year of teaching after graduation. Central to this research is the investigation of how transformative pedagogies provide sustained realistic experiences within field-based, integrated education courses that contribute to a more realistic theory-and-practice approach to teacher education. This paper is based on the first year of the study and specifically

presents findings based on teacher candidates' experiences of one of our transformative pedagogies: school-based seminars.

The first phase of the project took place in fall 2013. In our existing four-year Bachelor of Education program, teacher candidates in their first year spend one half-day per week in a field experience and three hours per week in an on-campus education lecture. One type of transformative pedagogy that we introduced in the first year of the study was a bi-weekly school-based seminar to complement the on-campus classes. Teacher candidates were placed in sixteen elementary schools and were engaged in conversations explicitly focused on theory-and-practice integration. During school-based seminars, teacher candidates were invited to reflect on readings and discussion prompts within the context of their practice.

Qualitative research methodologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) were used to address the research question. By deliberately integrating on-campus classes and school-based experiences, we hoped to gather data on teacher candidates' experiences of school-based seminars. Evidence of sixty-one participants' experiences was documented from class assignments (reflective journal entries, responses to discussion prompts, and a portfolio) and from recorded seminar conversations. After the completion of the course, we conducted individual interviews with a convenience sample of ten participants. Researcher notes on conversations among teacher educators and research assistants were included in the data.

For the purpose of this paper, we have included student participant responses from the journal entries, recorded seminars and individual interviews that have guided the research to date. As part of the research, the original students' names have been removed to protect their identity. We also include portfolio reflections documenting their learning and professional goals.

Pedagogical Interventions

In the midst of our implementation of a new four-year teacher education program, we are developing our program with an eye to build on the key features identified in the literature. Our program has many features that support *integration, inquiry* and *community*.

Integration. We are seeking to build a strong sense of coherence in our degree by explicitly integrating program outcomes in all our courses through a comprehensive departmental course outcome mapping exercise. We believe these outcomes communicate our priorities -- a set of “core ideas and broad understanding of teaching and learning” (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 3). The program outcomes are based in practical and theoretical perspectives on teacher competencies and are informed by our provincial Teaching Quality Standard (Alberta Education, 1997) and teaching effectiveness frameworks authored by Danielson (2007) and Friesen (2009). We are cognizant of the danger that such outcomes can result in a coverage approach to teacher education that further exacerbates the traditional theory-practice divide. Kosnik and Beck (2009) caution:

We teacher educators certainly must be forthright in saying what we think about educational priorities, otherwise student teachers will be deprived of crucial expert input. But equally we must establish a highly respectful, dialogical culture in the preservice program so student teachers can critique our suggestions and develop their own distinctive approach (p. 4).

To help establish their own “distinctive approach” to teaching and learning, teacher candidates create a program portfolio where they provide artifacts that show evidence of their emerging competence in each of the five major program outcome areas (i.e. Planning for Learning; Facilitating Learning; Assessment; Environment, and; Professional Responsibilities)

and also set goals to guide their future growth. We believe this helps them to enter future learning experiences with a personalized “need to know”. Furthermore, the curricular integration and portfolio process helps teacher candidates to truly integrate all of their experiences including those outside the teacher education program as they articulate their own emerging professional identity.

Each artifact is accompanied by a reflective caption that describes what this artifact demonstrated about their learning. The portfolio also includes a general reflection titled “my story”. This reflection is intended to help the teacher candidates to reflect upon their learning so far and identify goals for future learning. At the end of first year, their reflections were often quite general and aspirational such as this statement by a teacher candidate:

My portfolio helped me identify my strength in recognizing and reflecting on what I have learned in class. For example when I learned about the UDL (Universal Design for Learning) in class, I recognized it happening in the class I volunteered in. I think being aware of the types of learning experiences and environment happening in the classroom allowed me to reflect on it in my journals and in my portfolio. This reflection really helped me understand what my philosophy for teaching is at this point.

By the end of second year, she began to articulate prospective challenges and goals based on the course work and from her time in the school through the weekly half-day field experience:

If each child is working individually on a different task how am I able to assess their learning?

She moved from a general observation regarding differentiation to identifying practical challenges related to this goal.

Another teacher candidate expressed similar goals and concerns about juggling the demands of diverse learners when she set this goal.

I think that a goal for facilitating for learning is more understanding of how to actually manage different needs in a classroom when you are one teacher and you have to accommodate many needs.

Both of these teacher candidates were able to integrate their field experiences with their theoretical learning in classes to identify challenges they anticipate in their upcoming Year 3 and 4 practicums.

Undoubtedly, these aspiring teachers will encounter challenges in practicum as they seek to resolve these important questions. To support them in addressing these challenges, the program has several key features. The instructors for their curriculum courses are also their practicum supervisors. These practicum supervisors lead the teacher candidates in weekly seminars with other teacher candidates and mentor teachers. Weekly seminars are integrated in field experiences (Year 1 & 2) and practicum (Year 3 and 4). The seminars occur in partnership schools where the schools share with us a common vision for teacher education. Rather than exacerbating the theory-practice divide so often found in teacher education, these place-based seminars break down the divide, bringing together the theoreticians and the practitioners to thoughtfully address the everyday challenges of teaching. Each seminar is linked with seminal readings (based on the five major program outcomes) and an online discussion board that includes prompts to encourage personal reflection and foster critical debate. These features help the teacher candidates begin to trust the authority of their own experience.

Inquiry. These school-based seminars are also a venue for *inquiry*, the second key feature of exemplary teacher education. In this context, teacher candidates and their faculty

supervisors connect prior knowledge to observations while developing critical investigation skills and professional habits that ultimately help them explain how the classroom works. As teacher educators, we have experienced traditional “theory-to-practice” (Carlson, 1999) teacher education programs and, like most other programs (Wideen et al., 1998), have faced the challenge—and frustration—of trying to have much of an impact on the later teaching practice of our teacher candidates, or to foster what Argyris and Schön (1974) call “double-loop” learning, vis-a-vis the powerful impact that student teaching has on teacher candidates. Teacher education programs tend to be ineffective (Segall, 2002; Wideen et al., 1998). That is, teacher candidates tend not to use the research-based guidelines offered to them in their courses when they subsequently engage in their practicum placements (Clift & Brady, 2005). Instead, they tend either to be socialized into typical practices of school or to teach as they were taught themselves, due to the powerful influence of their “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) as pupils in school. The evidence is enduring (Zeichner & Tabatchnik, 1981) and extensive (Clift & Brady, 2005; Wideen et al., 1998). The only exceptions to this general trend appear to be programs that can provide a high degree of congruence between the content of course work and the models provided by associate or cooperating teachers in their practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

School-based seminars begin in the teacher candidates’ very first semester when their professors visit them in schools to discuss the intersection between key course concepts and their experiences in schools as part of their introductory course. Mentor teachers and school administrators participate in the weekly school-based seminars and have access to the readings and discussion board prompts. Based on their input, a Googlesite linked to the seminar process was created to provide a platform for the school educators to share ideas and resources as a result of the field experiences and practicum. Conducting these seminars in schools is contributing to

the recommended congruence between course work and school practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Dillon & O'Connor, 2010). The value of these conversations is noted by one teacher candidate:

Today's last seminar with my peers was really helpful for me to gain an understanding and insight into where other student teachers are taking their experiences in the classroom and growing in their understanding of teaching. One of my favorite parts of the entire semester has been whenever I get to talk to my peers about their school placements; what they did, saw, and thought about everything. I like hearing people's stories and being able to affirm each other as we progress toward our own teaching careers.

During in-school seminars, teacher candidates are invited to reflect on the discussion prompts within the context of their practice. Integrated assignments require teacher candidates to reflect on their own roles and responsibilities within the teaching profession. Class assignments have included reflective journal entries, responses to discussion prompts, the midterm exam, and a portfolio. These assignments and seminars specifically ask teacher candidates, through a problem-posing pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2005), to consider their teaching and learning as they link theory-and-practice through examples from their practicum placements. In addition to the weekly seminar, we incorporate discussions between critical friends every week during on-campus classes.

A common theme was the integration of theory and practice, as represented by one teacher candidate: “[Critical friend discussions] pushed me to connect theory to practice and my journal was the destination to integrate all of my learning and connections.” For many teacher candidates, strong links between theory and practice are evident:

In my first journal entry I wrote, 'I hope that my experiences working with students of diverse ages and abilities will lead me to become a well-rounded and flexible instructor with the knowledge to identify the fluctuating needs of students and the patience necessary to lead and interact with a diverse classroom.' This statement is all fine and well but as it was written before I ever stepped into an elementary classroom as a teacher candidate, I feel it lacked personal meaning when I first wrote it. I feel that I am able to find more meaning in the things I have previously written.

The emergence of a professional identity was noted by many teacher candidates:

Through the lectures, discussions with my critical friend group, seminars, and practicum I feel that I have gained a much deeper understanding of both myself and what it means to be a teacher. After this term, I definitely feel that teaching is the right career for me and I feel confident that I will be able to develop the skills necessary to teach with integrity.

Another wrote:

One of the things that stood out to me this week when I was in my placement was the fact that the students do view me as their teacher...This development ties into the one question my Critical Friends Group discussion tackled from November 18th's class ("Teaching – is it for you?"). When we talked about it, I said that yes, I believe so, and then having the students reaffirm that idea two days later made it solidify in my mind.

Community. In the fourth year of the program, we rely even more heavily upon the *community* we have established with our partner schools. We have begun to pilot an extended

semester with partner schools that consists of a capstone research project and two curriculum and instruction courses that are fully integrated into a fifteen-week practicum placement for teacher candidates in their final year of the program. Research on Professional Development Schools (PDSs) suggests that teacher candidates who have experienced PDS-based approaches utilize more varied pedagogical methods and practices, are more reflective, feel more confident in their knowledge and skill, and have lower attrition rates during the first few years of teaching (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). However, other researchers have found less positive results. Hopkins, Hoffman, and Moss (1997) found that PDS teacher candidates experience higher levels of stress than their peers in traditional settings. In addition, it has been shown that intense and long-term immersion in school settings can lead to socialization into the existing culture of the school (Wideen et al., 1998) and an accompanying dislike for reflection and theory (Cole, 1997), thus working against reform. It is our intent to examine the effectiveness and also the barriers to effective PDS.

In addition, the final semester practicum involves an action research inquiry project where mentor teachers and teacher candidates work together to puzzle over some teaching issue in the classroom. This capstone research project aims to equip teacher candidates as future teacher researchers and build the research capacity of practicing teachers as well. The inquiry questions are clearly place-based emerging from the local concerns of that school and classroom. Rather than an approach to teacher education where “we cover, they select and apply,” these research projects model a “together we figure it out” approach (Kosnik & Beck, 2009, p. 4). Faculty supervisors guiding the process become intimately involved in the life of the schools as they together puzzle over the research issue with the teacher candidates and classroom teachers.

Collaborative research projects and in-school seminars are pedagogical strategies for building a sense of community and strong school-university partnerships. One consideration of

our program design is to investigate the barriers and strategic approaches to supporting relationships through the development of robust communities of practice that enhance teacher candidate professional learning. We decided to place our first year teacher candidates in cohorts of at least four in each school and to group two or three schools together for the in-school seminars. Teacher candidates across both sections of the course were assigned to cohorts, providing an opportunity for all first year students to become familiar with each other. Relationships among teacher candidates organized in cohorts have received attention by researchers. Although studies indicate generally positive outcomes for student cohorts, a substantial body of work reveals mixed results (Radencich et al., 1998; Sapon-Shevin & Chandler-Olcott, 2001; Mandzuk et al., 2003). Recently, researchers have begun to inquire into how cohorts become communities (Beck & Kosnik, 2001, 2006; Bullough et al., 2001; Connor & Killmer, 2001; Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Rainer & Guyton, 1998). It is evident that almost all successful cohorts are based on teacher candidates' experiences of communities of practice.

While much of the literature emphasizes the importance of becoming part of the community's practice, this focus seems to limit the impact of new pedagogical practices based on emerging educational theory. By attending to the overlapping communities where theory-and-practice merged, we hoped to better understand how cohorts could support the authority of experience. One teacher candidate explains how she is able to respond to new theoretical ideas in her practice by engaging in such communities:

I am noticing that I am very open to trying new theories and ideas that are arising in the education field. For example, in class we read Alfie Kohn's article "The Case against Grades," which argues how narrative assessment is superior over letter or number grades. I observed in my field placement how my mentor teacher evaluates

her students and I reflected in my journal. I discussed with my critical friend, on discussion board, and in a research paper regarding my views on this topic and how I am open to eliminating grades to determine if it is a beneficial change. I think that my openness to try new methods of teaching is transforming me into a very versatile teacher. Since society and curriculum is ever changing, I will test theories about learning and teaching so I can provide my students with the best education I possibly can. I constantly reflect on my experiences so I can learn from them and improve. I think my reflective approach to learning and teaching is a very important trait I bestow as I am developing into a teacher.

Seminars take on greater import in the practica experience in years three and four where the school-based seminar groups function as professional learning communities (Dillon & O'Connor, 2010; Sterenberg & O'Connor, 2014). Teacher candidates who are struggling to achieve their goals have the support of this community as they reflect upon their teaching and develop responsive educational practices and “adaptive expertise” (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness, 2005, p. 49).

Conclusion: Revisiting the Authority of Experience

Do these pedagogical interventions equip teacher candidates to meet the needs of a changing educational milieu? Alberta Education (2010), in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, produced a document called *Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans* in which they articulate a renewed vision for education in the province. They question the adequacy of an industrial model of education and advocate for an education system that better prepares students for a knowledge-based society. They describe educated Albertans as:

- Engaged thinkers who collaborate to create new knowledge,

- Ethical citizens who do the right thing, and with
- Entrepreneurial spirits: motivated, resourceful and resilient.

Current consultations on teaching excellence explore the qualities of teachers who might help achieve this vision. This vision cannot be achieved as long as teachers continue to work in isolation, delivering a traditional curriculum to passive students. Such teachers lack the knowledge, flexibility and resourcefulness to inquire into the teaching challenges that our rapidly changing society presents. However, it may be achieved by teachers who have experienced a seamless integration between their classroom experiences and the most effective theories of teaching and learning and who have collaborated in communities of inquiry to support the enactment of best practices. This is not a simple recipe for success, as Allen (1976) made a similar call to action almost 40 years ago: “Theory and practice integration must be effectively integrated in individual decision-making, in instruction in teacher education, and in the design and improvement of programs” (p. 44). Our preliminary research results indicate promise for the authority of experience through pedagogical interventions of integration, inquiry, and community. We believe these will help foster teachers who can inspire the students of the future.

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New Approaches to Cross-Context Teacher Education: Opening Collaborative Learning Spaces and Places for Community-Building and Meaning-Making

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Abstract

This chapter presents a qualitative case study drawing on the shared experiences of five instructors about the Transforming UVic (TRUVic) program innovation and the students in the program. Their collaborative efforts focused on developing an alternative approach to teacher education programs, acknowledging the complexities, challenges, and the resistance to change on the part of both pre-service teachers and faculty. The descriptive insights here are developed from interview data with 15 students, video-recordings and photographs of events throughout the term, and meeting notes kept during instructors' planning sessions as well as instructors' personal anecdotal accounts of interactions with students and individual reflections. This study draws on complexity thinking, social constructivism, and Indigenous principles of learning.

New Approaches to Cross-Context Teacher Education: Opening Collaborative Learning Spaces and Places for Community-Building and Meaning-Making

Given the traditions that structure current teacher education programs, the education of prospective teachers often continues to offer a fragmented, direct-instruction, out-of-context training model that is disconnected from the reality of our children/youth's complex lives, and/or the lives of teachers and administrators in schools. Canada's system of education, similar to many education systems globally, emphasizes a "discipline-based, grade-defined, compartmentalized and time-bound" approach that does little to promote the type of inquiry based, integrated and interdisciplinary learning that is currently being called for across Canada (Hurley, 2013, p. 3). Nothing confirms this more than spending time in classrooms. In our roles as teacher educators, we have spent hours quietly observing the often uninterested stares of adolescents as pre-service teachers use strategies deemed tried and true. Yet those pre-service teachers struggle with engaging students in their learning. Those once effective approaches to teaching come from an antiquated, formulaic model of teacher training that results in the production of teachers that while technically sound planners are woefully unprepared to engage in the real complexity, uncertainty, and messiness of their profession. In response to this disconnect, alternative pedagogical approaches and strategies are discussed and sometimes modeled in teacher education programs, but we have wondered what sense our new teachers make of the disparate array of ideas, approaches, and beliefs that we offer them throughout their teacher education programs? Who should they believe about appropriate strategies and structure? What course of action should they take, knowing that the stakes for them are high as they attempt to enter an incredibly complex teaching profession?

Methodology

This chapter presents a qualitative, intrinsic case study (Stake, 2005), drawing on the shared experiences of five instructors about the Transforming UVic (TRUVic) program innovation and the students in the program. Their collaborative efforts focused on developing an alternative approach to teacher education programs, acknowledging the complexities, challenges, and the resistance to change on the part of both pre-service teachers and faculty. These efforts are underpinned by a desire to personalize each prospective teacher's learning experiences. The descriptive insights here are developed from interview data with 15 of the students following their first term in the program, video-recordings and photographs of events throughout the term, and meeting notes kept during instructors' planning sessions. Additionally, instructors' personal anecdotal accounts for setting up the program, instructors' accounts of student responses, common principles used by instructors in integrating courses and field experiences, planned actions interpreted in light of features of a complex system, and storied accounts and examples shared by instructors about the project were used.

Drawing on complexity thinking, social constructivism, and Indigenous principles of learning, the alternative approach to teacher education presented here attempts to make space for "rich pedagogy to unfold in the midst of chaos" (Miller & Saxton, 2009), acknowledging alternative world views and perspectives for educating our children and youth. Our goal in this paper is not to represent a generalized account, or even the objective account, rather to describe an alternative approach to existing teacher education at this institution, informed by observations, interviews, and visual artifacts collected throughout the term which acted as stimulus for reflection and analysis.

Context: Teacher Education in the 21st Century

Across Canada and throughout the Western world, Ministries of Education, educational scholars, and educators themselves are calling for new ways to understand education and learning. One response being taken up is *21st century learning*, a recent educational phenomena based on the belief that education needs to shift away from learning as a primarily cognitive/rational endeavor that focuses on the reproduction of content knowledge. 21st century learning instead emphasizes learning as a life-long process rather than measurable product determined at the end of one's formal schooling (Partnership for 21st century skills, 2014). Embedded in 21st century learning is strong support for "personalized learning" (i.e., the tailoring of pedagogy, curriculum, and learning environments) to meet the needs and aspirations of individual learners as they work and learn together within a classroom community. Personalized learning also emphasizes increased time to reflect, collaborate, and extend learning outside of the classroom (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2014). Alberta Education characterizes personalized learning as "the provision of high quality and engaging learning opportunities that meet students' diverse learning needs, through flexible timing and pacing, in a range of learning environments with learning supports and services tailored to meet their needs" (Alberta Education, 2010, p. 14). Drawing explicitly on the OECD's Innovative Learning Environments Report (2013), the Ontario Ministry of Education (2014) recommends seven learning principles that are important to 21st century learning: 1) Make learning and learner engagement central; 2) ensure that learning is social and often collaborative; 3) be highly attuned to learners' motivations and emotions; 4) be acutely sensitive to individual differences including in prior knowledge; 5) be demanding for each learner but without excessive overload; 6) recognize

assessment as critical, but needing to underpin learning aims and strong emphasis on formative feedback; 7) promote horizontal connectedness across activities and subjects, in and out of school.

Although there continues to be debate regarding the precise nature and characteristics of personalized learning, that discussion is not our focus. We accept that personalized learning is a concept driving a shift toward learner-centered inquiry as well as a curricular and assessment-related policy change, and one that offers opportunity to confront the current Eurocentric patriarchal hegemony of educational systems. One of the challenges in building a rich learning environment that is underpinned by a foundation of personalized learning is in navigating the complexity of such an interconnected system. On the surface, “personalized” and “interconnected” do not seem complementary – how can both not just coexist but inform each other? The two are not mutually exclusive if one maintains the belief that at its core, education is “a human enterprise, a social, relational, creative and diverse representative of the multiplicities of human experience” (Bodone, 2005, p. 235). Past educational reforms of the tried and true variety mentioned earlier diminish the social and relational and dilute creativity and diversity (Bodone, 2005). We know that classrooms and schools are communities. The learning forged within those communities is taken up by individuals committed to a common goal of learning, and how we facilitate that learning in meaningfully contextual ways is what we are addressing in our approach to teacher education.

Within learning communities are relationships that form or structure interactions, but what we are really talking about is relationality. Ideologically, relationality requires educators to become weavers of a fabric “fashioned by transforming divisive incompatibilities into creative tensions” (Allan & Evans, 2006, p. 9). Pedagogically, we must learn to see from multiple,

simultaneous perspectives, develop empathy that leads to action not sympathy, and foster collaboration more than competition (Allan & Evans, 2006). If we expect pre-service teachers to be able to transform these ideals into practice, then we must offer and model relational alternatives.

We know we are not alone in challenging individualistic hegemonic structures that guide teacher education practices, as well as the functioning of schools. As is the case with other changes in teaching and learning, a metaphoric brick wall exists that can impede progress in classrooms. Many of the pre-service teachers in our classes are inspired when they see the RSA Animate video of Sir Ken Robinson's speech, *Changing Education Paradigms*, as he eloquently makes the call for change in our educational system. The image of students emerging from the industrial conveyor belt in the video (Robinson, 2010) is one that powerfully drives home the point that a status quo emphasizing individuality over relationality and informing over understanding doesn't make as much sense as it once did. However, the problem remains that Robinson's video, and others of its kind, do not present the alternative, the tangible piece that will help our pre-service teachers make sense of the educational milieu so they can walk into classrooms and meet the needs of those learners. As a result, our pre-service teachers run head long into that brick wall that they clearly see but cannot avoid. The brick wall represents the same teaching styles that they experienced in their years as K-12 students as well as the direct or indirect messages from teachers that there is little time to be innovative or creative because, in the words of our pre-service teachers, there is too much curriculum to cover.

We recognize that change and innovation in education is neither simple nor fast-paced but this sentiment does little to serve our pre-service teachers. Knowing the slow pace of educational change is a reality but also understanding that the pre-service teachers we work with

need more, we revisit our earlier questions: what sense are our new teachers to make of the disparate array of ideas, approaches, and beliefs that we offer them throughout their teacher education programs? Who should they believe? What course of action should they take, knowing that the stakes for them are high as they attempt to enter the teaching profession? In response, the approach we are developing re-positions K-12 schools as central learning spaces in teacher education and, therefore, K-12 teachers, so that they are equal contributors to the learning partnerships that unfold, to the creation of meaning as they interrogate their practice alongside pre-service teachers, and university instructors so that we become a larger community of practice.

Theoretical Framework

In keeping with our rejection of educational hegemony, we turn to complexity thinking as foundational to not only generate understanding of the current educational climate, but also as the impetus of the teacher education experience that we have developed. Education, like many complex ecosystems, cannot be truly understood by mechanistically breaking down into its components parts. Complex systems are “spontaneous, unpredictable, irreducible, contextual, and vibrantly sufficient” (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2007, p. 77). We could replace the phrase complex systems with classrooms and have the description be equally applicable. Further, Davis et al. (2008) define complex systems as “systems that learn” (p. 78), and our approach to teacher education is an example of a system where learning takes place across time, space, contexts and discipline through the connections formed and honoured.

Complexity theory replaces the simple cause-and-effect approaches of linear predictability with an organic, non-linear and holistic approach stressing the interconnectedness

of diverse components. Complexity theory has a significant descriptive and explanatory value in understanding teaching and learning. Morrison (2008) explains that “learning is dynamic, active, experiential and participatory, open-ended, unpredictable and uncertain” (p. 26). Further, in complexity theory “learning becomes a joint voyage of exploration, not simply of recycling given knowledge” (Morrison, 2008, p. 26). Specific to education, Opfer and Pedder (2011) call for a complex view of teacher professional learning. Based on a critique of the process-product logic in dominant literature on teacher education and ongoing development, the authors discussed how complexity theory contributes to an understanding and enhancement of teacher education. Opfer and Pedder (2011) point to a direction of reconceptualizing learning as relational, holistic and complex where education is an organic system forever in motion. The rhizome as a metaphor for learning and as an example of complexity is helpful here:

A rhizomatic plant has no center and no defined boundary; rather, it is made up of a number of semi-independent nodes, each of which is capable of growing and spreading on its own, bounded only by the limits of its habitat. In the rhizomatic view, knowledge can only be negotiated, and the contextual, collaborative learning experience shared by constructivist and connectivist pedagogies is a social as well as a personal knowledge-creation process with mutable goals and constantly negotiated premises. (Cormier, 2008, para. 3)

As is the case in the kinds of learning environments in today’s classrooms, knowledge emerges from connections and interconnections that we, as teachers, cannot predict, but that is arguably meaningful. A focus of the teacher education project that we describe in this paper was to task pre-service teachers with observing and interrogating these complexities to not only make sense of the learning that was taking place, but also to prepare them to engage learners in these classrooms.

Another important characteristic of complexity within systems is the concept of emergence or self-organization. By emergence we mean responsive, generative and/or creative site-specific, or contextually modified responses, rather than a blanket or single pathway towards enactment. Self-organization refers to the patterns or approaches that emerge as participants within a system seek to organize themselves and apply their thinking across an organizational component. Emergence and complexity also inform the ways in which we think about learning and teaching. Both processes are dynamic, active, often experiential and participatory, open ended and a product of “exploration” rather than “presentation”. And there are not pre-determined pathways or routes to effecting change in teaching practice. Teacher education often appears messy and complicated, with multiple layers and potential opportunities for individual and group efforts. In summary, the framework of complexity and its concomitant processes of emergence and self-organization provide a useful way of thinking about the processes of learning, teaching, change, and adaptation (Mason, 2008; Morrison, 2008).

What does “Transforming UVic” (TRUVic) look like? As education becomes increasingly complex and demanding, the imperative for teacher education programs is to provide opportunities for prospective teachers to be as prepared as possible to take up a role as professionals. With this in mind, our TRUVic project grew out of a desire to better integrate two primary learning spaces in teacher education programs – the university and the school – and to better integrate the principles of 21st century teaching and learning into the UVic teacher education program. The integration of these systems featured complex and emergent learning described above that took place across time, space, contexts (scheduled course work, school visits, classroom experiences, and field trips). Developed with two cohorts of Secondary Education students in their post-degree professional program, we have sought to: a) redefine

their conceptions of education, teaching, and learning; b) to make connections between theories of learning/education and practice; c) learn from experienced teachers who themselves are exploring how to shift their practice in order to better support their learners in schools and university; and d) gain greater perspective on the needs, interests, and expectations of today's youth – youth that likely face different societal, economic, and environmental realities than their teachers did many years ago. The philosophy of the program is strongly based on three Indigenous principles of learning, that are inherently relational: 1) recognizing the importance of focusing on the learning of our peers before our own, enabling learning opportunities exponentially greater than if we focus only on our own learning; 2) considering how our work will benefit the next seven generations to come (i.e. how our class work will influence future generations of students and teachers); and 3) finding our passion for learning and then investing this passion in our work to energize ourselves and our colleagues, as well as the learning of the pre-service teachers with whom we work (Sanford, Williams, Hopper & McGregor, 2012; Hopper, 2013).

As a design, the TRUVic Teacher Education program acknowledges that the school is the hub of the program. This means breaking down hierarchies and silos among institutions as we collectively build an integrated curriculum and a learning community that includes pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, graduate students, school teachers, and university instructors. By creating what we saw as a third space between the institutions of university and school, pre-service teachers had opportunities to intertwine theory and practice in authentic, natural, rhizomatic ways, drawing on theoretical conversations with each other, mentor teachers, and university instructors to understand what they are seeing in the school and practical experiences to more deeply understand theory.

The focus of TRUVic is on understanding 21st century learners (i.e., both teacher education students and secondary high school students), developing a professional learning community among instructors and students, and documenting process/progress of the pre-service teachers and the TRUVic program. As a result of the meaningful relationships created between the pre-service teachers and high school teachers, pre-service teachers had multiple emergent opportunities to develop their teaching skills through a range of strategies such as one-on-one tutoring, small group teaching, team-teaching, and whole class instruction supported by the classroom teachers. The TRUVic program modeled and practiced the development of a Professional Learning Community, drawing on the Indigenous principles of learning identified previously. The connections that emerged naturally throughout the project established and modeled a contextual understanding for the TRUVic students that we are always learning, thinking, trying, and reflecting on our processes.

Throughout this project, the pre-service teachers had weekly full-day opportunities to immerse themselves into school/classroom life, be mentored by experienced teachers, and meet a range of educators working in a variety of education contexts. In doing so, they observed diverse pedagogical approaches, including various ways that technology can be used, assessment practices, and collaborative/constructivist approaches to learning and teaching. As prospective high school teachers, they engaged with the curriculum and teachers in the school, and had opportunities to visit a range of classrooms (the Teaching and Learning Centre, Psychology, Photography, Social Studies, Mathematics, Flex Program, Contemporary English classes). This provided an essential window into thinking about how to integrate curricula, with a focus on learning, meeting diverse needs, and student engagement. They were supported by peers and instructors in reflecting authentically on their learning experiences, both on campus and in the

school. In addition to working with their campus-based course instructors, the group worked with three high school teachers who were also hired as university instructors to teach TRUVic's seminar course, which took place within the high school. Additionally, the pre-service teachers engaged in conversations with representatives of the school administration, school district, and Ministry of Education that emerged in response to context-specific events. They also had opportunities to visit other schools with alternative configurations and in different school districts. Further, they were also able to engage in teaching approaches and experiences with a variety of on-campus instructors, sharing expertise in, for example, learning about pedagogical technologies, story drama, and teaching Shakespeare. Additionally, they had opportunities to take part in a variety of other field trips, to the public library, a community farm, a salmon spawn, local cemetery, and the Boys' and Girls' club. All these opportunities enabled the students to experience the importance of collaboration, alternative learning spaces and conditions, deep learning, relationships, and vulnerability, as well as better understand concepts such as lived curriculum, formative assessment, and professional praxis. A TRUVic student commented about the importance of taking their learning beyond university or school walls: *"I really liked the field trips, it was helpful to get a different sense of what other places were doing and compare it to Reynolds; it showed me how important it is to utilize what's in your community."*

TRUVic students also had access to technological innovations, and guidance in using a variety of technology programs and applications (e.g. Prezi, Camtasia, YouTube, Moodle, ePortfolio). They observed the use of Smart Boards and smartphones for pedagogical purposes in high school classrooms with teachers and students.

Modeling a collaborative and team-teaching approach, the seven instructors who taught TRUVic students' first term courses connected regularly about next steps, directions, and outcomes. They co-lead community meetings with the students, and regularly sought their feedback and input into the learning process. Where possible in their schedules, the instructors attended, and sometimes co-taught, each other's classes in order to support and inform how future classes were designed in interconnected ways. The following description outlines what instructors observed during the weekly school-based days.

A Typical (School-centred) TRUVic Day – First Week

Wednesday morning, 7:30 a.m.

35 students in the Secondary Teacher Education program gather in a classroom in a local high school, greeted by the seminar instructors who are also teachers in the school. One of the campus-based instructors is also present, and several instructors come to the school throughout the day. After a warm welcome, encouragement to take advantage of any opportunities the school and teachers might offer them, the seminar instructors provide a focus for observations during the day, a focus that will be revisited at the end of the day. The students then select classes to attend for the four blocks of the day, making sure they are evenly dispersed throughout the school. They are encouraged to take part in lunch-hour activities as well, such as a Spoken Word Club, noon hour ping pong, leadership meetings, etc.

Wednesday, 8:20 a.m.

Students all locate their classes for the first 80 minutes. Today all the English teachers are meeting during the morning to discuss their assessment practices, so there are substitute teachers

in several classrooms. One happens to be a substitute teacher who graduated from this class two years ago, and who completed his practicum experience in the school.

Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.

At the beginning of the second block, one of the university students talks to the campus-based instructor about not feeling well, needing to leave for something to eat. As there were already indications that the student was not feeling comfortable in the school/program, we made a meeting for the noon hour to discuss her program decisions.

Wednesday, 12:14 p.m.

The class I was part of during this day was a Contemporary English 11-12 class, comprised of 29 high school students, eight university students, one student who was visiting from another school, and a graduate of the high school who is helping to teach the class. The room was full, and the teacher was facilitating interactions between all of the groups, as the university students pulled up chairs in between the high school students, taking every opportunity to talk with them, ask them questions, and listen to their conversations about the class.

Wednesday afternoon, 3:20 p.m.

Classes have been dismissed for the day, and the 35 university students again gather for their seminar class. They are greeted by the seminar instructors, as well as three of the campus-based instructors, and they revisit the focus question during the morning meeting. The school principal stops by to welcome them and invite them to take advantage of any opportunities the school offers. They then discuss the focus of the day 'Relationships', which is a concept stressed throughout the discussion. At the end of the seminar, a student addressed two of the instructors,

indicating that she did not feel she had the energy for this program and wanted to defer until another year.

Although each week offered unique opportunities that emerged through the dynamic life of a school, as well as the interests and requests of the university students, several recurring conditions became apparent to the instructors/researchers.

Emergent Conditions and Findings of the TRUVic program

Throughout the term, the following interconnected conditions and findings were constantly unfolding and strengthening: a) collaborative learning partnerships grounded in trusting relationships; b) an emergent learning community comprised of interwoven sub-communities that learned with and in relation to each other; c) the courage of all participants (including instructors) to engage in reflective praxis and to not know; d) the secondary school as the central learning hub for all participants; and e) Indigenous Principles of Learning in the ways that we worked and learned together.

Collaborative learning partnerships and the courage to “not know”. After spending an immersive time with members of the TRUVic instructional team, planning for months ahead of the fall term, and then working with TRUVic students during the term, we began to recognize the qualitative differences of working in TRUVic in a new way. We recognized that relationships were critical for all of us to embrace the risky business of changing how teacher education was done – relationships with each other as instructors, with the students, and with other teachers, administrators at university, and in schools, and with the ideas being presented in the courses.

An important aspect of the TRUVic program included cross-context learning partnerships. While all members of the TRUVic instructional team were employed by the

Faculty of Education, several as sessional instructors and each with formal responsibility for one or more course in the program, some instructors were also co-situated within education partner organizations (e.g., school district, education ministry). The seminar, for instance, which was taught at the secondary school by secondary school teachers who were also members of the TRUVic instructional team, occurred every Wednesday after the TRUVic students had spent the entire day working with secondary teachers in various capacities within the school. In addition, two employees from the Ministry of Education taught as sessional co-instructors for one of the TRUVic courses. They often interconnected their teaching with another TRUVic instructor whose course timeslot occurred right before theirs. This created opportunities for shared learning spaces, co-teaching, and cross-course assessment frameworks. These examples of cross-institution and cross-pollinating learning partnerships brought together different perspectives and enabled collaborative professional inquiry, which was grounded in social constructivist and complexity theory assumptions.

As an instructional team, we grew into a strong and trusting collaborative professional learning community in which we could make sense, together, of our ongoing learning. We trusted and depended on each other, to reveal our uncertainties, to let go of “how I’ve always done it” and “what has always worked for me in the past”. It took courage for each of us to embrace this dissonance, be willing to “not know”, to make mistakes (and receive constructive feedback from each other), to see anew, and to resonate together in that place of intersection between instructor and learner. And thus new complex narratives began to emerge – new narratives on growth mindsets, job-embedded learning, reflexive praxis, and learning across contexts. These new narratives naturally rippled into dialogues with TRUVic students about what it means to teach in today’s society where knowledge is rapidly becoming democratized

and easily accessible (although still corporate and elite). However secondary schools often still require students to memorize/recall information and embodied learning experiences can too frequently be constrained by status quo policies and organizational structures. Out of these inclusive new narratives grew a multi-layered and collectively owned story – a story in which we trusted it was okay to figure it out as we built it together. We became a community in which we were all teachers-that-learn; it was okay to approach teacher education as an inquiry instead of an outcome. We were all engaged in an enticing complexity.

Relationality is key: The secondary school as the hub of TRUVic’s learning community. A true learning community creates “safe places and spaces” to support the development of each person’s individual gifts and expertise in a holistic manner. To create meaning in personalizing learning, we actively recognized everyone’s right to learn in ways that were valid for them, and, drawing on Indigenous principles, a responsibility to share their expertise with others – using oral language, voice, visual representations, embodied and experiential ways of learning.

We also encouraged students to explore and express what they were learning in a variety of different ways and contexts, rather than relying on university classrooms as the primary physical location for learning. This meant that students could demonstrate their learning to/with a variety of learning partners: TRUVic instructors, each other (reflective peers), as well as teachers within the secondary school with whom they enjoyed working. TRUVic instructors spent much time on-site at the secondary school witnessing, supporting, and de-briefing student learning. Relationships among TRUVic instructors and teachers at the secondary school developed, learning partnerships unfolded, and the secondary school became a natural central learning site or hub, for everyone involved in the program. In order to work more directly with those TRUVic

seminar instructors who taught secondary school classes during school hours, we held instructional team meetings at the secondary school. This ensured that all TRUVic instructors were part of the emergent learning, planning, and de-briefing. In more conventional teacher education programs, school-based mentor/supporting teachers are often left out of collaboration time with faculty members because they are situated in different locations. By shifting the central space and place of collaboration to the secondary school, inclusivity was privileged and a strong bridge between theory and practice in teacher education was created. The secondary school thus became the richest site for everyone's learning, a hub of lively and emergent interactions.

On Wednesdays, the school was often buzzing with TRUVic students, TRUVic instructors, and secondary school teachers/principals who would meet to share/de-brief their teaching and learning experiences. Staff sometimes commented about how they looked forward to Wednesdays; some also talked about what they were learning from the TRUVic students. These types of reciprocal and complex learning exchanges unfolded naturally. The case study assignment (see Appendix A) was intended to develop authentic understandings of adolescents; by observing actual students in high school students over a period of time, the TRUVic students were able to develop a realistic picture of the youth that would be central to their future teaching careers. They were also reminded of the need to invest time in knowing who their students are. As one TRUVic participant commented,

the case study forced us to get to know some of the high school students; so instead of sitting at the back and not putting yourself out there, that was how I started chatting to the students, in trying to find out who they were.” Another said, “Just getting more familiar with the students, I know I did work with the students, and I did build those relationships with them.

Another student's comment echoed that sentiment: *"The case study assignment was intriguing because it was so linked to what was going on in the schools, it made sense to do those back-and-forth assignments."* Yet another said, *"I could take everything that we were learning in the other classes and apply it to real students."*

Findings: What We Discovered about 21st Century Teacher Education

Collaboration/Connection is Key

The collaborative nature of this approach to teacher education enabled connections to be made in complex ways – students connected to their instructors, to each other, to teachers and students in the school, and to ideas across courses. As one student commented:

I really loved the collaborative nature of working with others, because I wouldn't have known who they were, to start, and I wouldn't have been very comfortable to know where to start on my own – it was good to have someone else there to bounce ideas off of and be able to support each other in our decisions of where we were going with the lessons and the unit.

The on-line forum discussion assignment offers a great example. It provided a space for the TRUVic students to explore ideas, develop relationships with each other and with their instructors, and to challenge their assumptions and the practices they were seeing on campus and in the schools. One student commented: *"I really liked the forum because you feel like you can post a response to something without it being formal – more like having a conversation with your peers and instructors."* Another student commented:

I really connected to the others through the forum, and ended up writing so much, that really developed a lot of good thoughts and thinking, especially just right in the moment, that was really valuable, just for an alternative way to be discussing things.

Collectively, across courses, the TRUVic assignments were aimed at collaborative and cross-context sensemaking, both socially and personally. For example, the online forum discussion enabled ongoing connections and supported professional relationships to be created. The case study assignment prepared the TRUVic students to build their units and lessons based on the students they had observed and interacted with in the school, rather than drawing on past memories and imagined students. The unit plan enabled learning from various sources to come together in a more concrete form as groups of TRUVic students shaped thematic approaches to learning. One student commented:

The best thing was just sort of developing that sense of community and sense of togetherness, even with our professors, just knowing that our professors kind of all knew what each other was doing, and worked together, it just enriched our learning in that things we would learn in Kathy's class would then be learned in my transformative inquiry journal. A great example was that we had to do a unit plan for Alison's class, and my unit plan was based directly on a workshop we'd done in Kathy's class, which was bringing Shakespeare into the classroom. So that was what I based my lesson plan on, and then the professor from English came and spoke to us on Shakespeare and taught us how to bring it to life. So it was really good that they all lent themselves to each other and that there was communication.

In addition, the relationships developed among the TRUVic students enabled meaningful collaborations among them. One student remarked:

I loved the collaboration, the two girls I worked with, we got to choose our groups, which was awesome, we had a really good relationship, and I used to hate group work, I just hated working with other people, I found it really frustrating and I didn't trust them, but all the group work we did last term caused me to revisit my ideas and to show me that the group work is a really powerful thing, you get a much more dynamic product when you combine different peoples thoughts and ideas, when you have people collaborating on the same thing, what you create is so much richer than what I could have created on my own – it seems like it's common sense, to ask people for help, work in a group, you get a better result, but it really wasn't to me but now I know that and I think as a teacher I'm excited to bring people from the community and work with my fellow teachers, just create that sort of relationship that I saw that my professors had, and that I experienced when I was working with peers.

Another student commented:

Collaborating on the unit plan made it a lot less daunting, and that's also a skill that needs to be developed more early on in teacher education, because we have this wealth of knowledge available to us in our colleagues, but we're not necessarily that willing to go and seek it out.

In addition, the collaborative nature of their work enabled depth of thought and meaningful engagement:

I've noticed in education in the past is that it's segmented off, so you're thinking about one particular topic for a couple of hours in the morning, and then you have to shut those ideas down and switch your brain onto a different kind of topic and start thinking about a different kind of idea, one of the things that the program allowed me to do is to take an idea or train

of thought and play with it, in different kinds of circumstances, and kind of tease it out in different kinds of environments, it gave me a chance to do things at a level of depth that school doesn't oftentimes afford you.... Most people divide themselves up, they go into a school situation prepared to use their brain, and a little bit of talking about heated social issues, but they leave themselves at the door to a certain extent and so that kind of intelligence, those skills of being able to look introspectively, to examine what's going on inside, those skills aren't valued, and there's not a lot of places where developing those skills or being eloquent about that is seen as being a great resource.

As a student commented,

The way that the classes were integrated, I have to say I can't really differentiate when I think back, that integrated approach was ultimately better, and created more of a sense of community, if we're all going to be teachers teaching each other, shouldn't that be more of a community than, you know, everybody's off in their own little corner?

Another continued:

I loved the connections – it made me recognize that this is a post-degree program; it's not just your typical... like you're preparing us for a career – by making everything so integrated, and not only with the three classes but also with the practical experience, that was definitely a useful structure because it wasn't just jargon and theory for this class, jargon and theory for that class.

The Necessity of a Cohort Model

In addition to fostering our own TRUVic instructor learning community, we focused our practice on generating a sense of community among the TRUVic student cohort. The cohort model enabled us to develop authentic learning relationships both with and among the students. It was our goal for the TRUVic students to discover that they were indeed each others' best resources and to let go of their initial desire for this teacher education program to provide them with a recipe book for being a teacher. For the instructional team, this demanded a philosophical and epistemological shift. We had to be both facilitators and co-learners in order to support students in making sense of their own lived learning experiences, as prospective teachers within the secondary school every Wednesday. This "making sense" needed to happen collectively within the cohort, as much as possible. Student learning was, in essence, socially constructed by and for each other (while facilitated by us), as they actively connected cognitive processes with the physical, emotional, and spiritual.

As a cohort, the students quickly bonded together and created a support structure for themselves as they learned to take risks, embrace discomfort, and think about learning in new ways. As one student noted, "*by having all of us in every class together, by kind of breaking the ice, and making us feel comfortable around each other, I think everyone participated a lot more.*" Through the seminar, conducted at the school site by practicing teachers, the school visits, and the various field trips, the TRUVic students had many opportunities to get to know each other. Carpooling, sharing coffee, meeting outside of class, all enabled strong supportive relationships to develop. One student commented that

the opportunity to engage or process with a group of people was really great; not being from Victoria or ever having lived here before, that was really great for me because I didn't know anyone, so it was just a really powerful experience.

Another said: *"I can definitely see certain friendships that have developed even further than just the school setting, even continuing on from there and being good support as we all get out and start teaching."* The difference between the cohorts' integrated field experiences in their first term and subsequent practicum was also noted: *"we had the chance to be in the high school together, supported as a cohort, so unlike practicum."*

The cohort was one of the most significant parts of the TRUVic program, as they all attested to. Despite their different backgrounds, interests, and perspectives, they were all very closely connected and encouraging of each other. Not only were they supported, but they also learned to work with a range of people and to recognize the value of working together:

Because we had that kind of relationship established amongst everyone in the cohort you could work with anyone; like I'm working with so many different people this term on various projects, and it's not like oh, I don't get to work with my friends, this is awkward – anyone can really work with anyone.

The uniqueness of the TRUVic model was noticed:

another thing that was really unique was that as a resource, the cohort members became extraordinarily valuable in the sense that they were a support network, and we learned from each other, it was really good to see everybody come together and find common ground and be able to work together every day.

Most importantly, the group looked forward to each day, no one missed classes, and many attended several optional field trips, *“everybody had fun together, there was a really neat dynamic that was created in the cohort”*.

Modeling Collaborative Practice

The TRUVic approach was in large part based on modeling – as instructors we initially modeled for each other when we collaborated on assignments and activities. We met regularly, learned to communicate effectively, and negotiated with each other. Our understanding of each other was evident to the students as we began working with them. We all knew what each other was doing; we visited each others’ classes throughout the term, regularly attended the school with our students, planned and problem-solved together, and genuinely enjoyed working together. The students noticed:

I really appreciated the fact that most of our instructors would be around, and kind of cycling through all of the classes to make sure that they were there to ask questions or be of assistance, everyone seemed to be in on what everyone else was doing, I liked that there was a lot of collaboration between instructors.

One TRUVic student commented

that modeling behavior is something that is incredibly important, not only the modeling, but also being able to imitate that behavior, and being given a space to try and imitate some of those behaviours I think is really important – that’s what being in the school allowed, we could watch, and we could also do.

It makes so much sense to be collaborative, model practices, and support each other and yet it is seldom seen in teacher education programs:

It seems like it's common sense, to ask people for help, work in a group, you get a better result, but it really wasn't to me but now I know that and I think as a teacher I'm excited to bring people from the community and work with my fellow teachers, just create that sort of relationship that I saw that my professors had, and that I experienced when I was working with peers.

As students were observing teachers model their practice, they were continually reflective in meaningful ways, thinking about ways they were becoming effective teachers: “*when I was observing the lessons in the school, I was able to see it in practice and think about how it worked, how I could do it.*”

Shifting Assessment Practices

A community of learners that supports each other in authentic ways can occur only when its members are not competing with each other for grades and recognition. As a result, the TRUVic instructional team also had to unpack our own assumptions about assessment. Given that we were working within the conventional structures of a Faculty of Education, the question of how we could create a collaborative assessment framework that supported the personalized needs of each learner, and while also prompting them to contribute to the learning for their cohort members, had to be addressed. As a result, we each opted to use an alternative form of course-based grading, called contract grading, in order to mitigate any students concern about taking risks, and to eliminate the need to hierarchically rank the students. Through contract grading, TRUVic students were recognized as having already been successful as university

students, and were assumed to be committed to developing as professionals in their teacher education program. As such, all students would achieve a B+ level for completing the formal requirements of the courses. Those who wanted to attain a higher grade could negotiate further projects or activities that (in keeping with the Indigenous principles underpinning the TRUVic approach) enhanced the learning of the community as well as their own. These took the form of creating further resources, developing handbooks of potential fieldtrips, and preparing workshops for peers, to name a few. These assessment practices enabled TRUVic students to share ideas, give each other feedback, and work together on projects, aware that they would not be judged against each other or ranked in the class. We were, in essence, attempting to move from a *sorting* system to a *collaborative learning* system.

Examples of formal requirements (negotiated among the instructional team to avoid duplication across courses) included:

- E-portfolios;
- student posts of reflective questions and responses for each other on weekly on-line forums (that could be accessed by all instructors);
- students acting as ‘critical friends’ to each other during practice teaching opportunities on their Wednesday school visits;
- reflective writing based on practice teaching experiences;
- “leading learning” assignments (that could be attended by any of the instructors);
- lesson/unit planning, professional growth plans (developed throughout the term);
- engagement in a professional inquiry process, and - not to be underestimated –
- “showing up” to class ready to contribute physically, socially, and emotionally.

In addition, a celebration of learning (Gallery Walk) was the final formal requirement in which students shared their term-long inquiry projects and professional growth plans during a community showcase event at the secondary school. This event welcomed all partners and interested audiences – including faculty members, community members, guest educators who had worked with the students throughout the term, the Dean of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education, the School District Superintendent and other district staff, as well as many members of the secondary school community including the principal, vice, principal, teacher librarian, students, educators and parents.

By implementing an assessment framework of contract grading, personalized learning, peer collaboration and feedback, and a focus on celebrating learning (rather than norm-referenced judgment), everyone involved (instructors included) could appreciate the positive contributions of each member of the learning community. As instructors, we were free from the traditional need to provide (negative) feedback in order to justify differentiated grades. We could instead acknowledge and encourage each student’s ability to take risks, to contribute professional knowledge, and to extend understanding through extension assignments if they chose.

Developing Confidence

The regular school visits, working in cohorts, and being collaborative rather than competitive, all enabled the TRUVic students to grow and develop as professionals. They were required to engage in teaching at the school throughout the term, not only thinking about what teaching was like, but also “trying it on” with support from their cohort members, their university instructors, and the in-service teachers they were working with in the school. Through this “doing” they were able to make holistic, social-emotional and embodied connections to what it means to be a teacher in the 21st century. Upon reflection, one student said:

going into the practicum, I am way more calm about it, kind of like I've been in a classroom, I know how it works. I can adjust to what I need to adjust to and it's going to be okay.

Another said, *"I was very chill, I felt very relaxed."*

The Gallery Walk, as the culminating activity for the term, enabled the TRUVIC students to showcase the professional inquiry projects they had been exploring throughout the term, synthesizing and articulating their learning from the previous three months. Through this experience, they learned that they were able to articulate their learning, talk with administrators, members of the Ministry of Education, and other professionals about their new professional understandings. This encouragement gave them confidence to continue their professional learning.

Discussion

The TRUVic project was born of recurring conversations amongst university instructors, in-service teachers and pre-service teachers around the genuine yet simple desire to create a model of teacher education that would better serve the increasingly complex educational needs of students. The vision that guided the creation of the TRUVic project intended to enable pre-service teachers to confidently enter into Canadian classrooms ready to respond to the diverse needs of today's students, not the students of the past. We acknowledge that we are not alone in recognizing the need to change the way in which schools, and those responsible for schooling, approach the education of Canadian children. In 2013, the Canadian Educational Association sponsored the Calgary Workshop, a forum bringing together teachers, students, administrators, parents, aboriginal leaders, teacher association and Ministry of Education representatives, not-

for-profit leaders, policymakers, Faculty of Education deans, and university researchers to have a conversation addressing one question: what's standing in the way of change in education?

The message that was delivered as a result of that conversation was clear: the kind of education we need in schools must include more authentic and meaningful learning experiences rich with deep intellectual engagement, stronger connections between the inside and outside worlds of school and opportunities for new sources of knowledge, expertise and wisdom to become an integral part of the learning experience (Hurley, 2013). Though we were not part of that conversation, the purpose and outcomes of the TRUVic project addressed the beliefs brought forward in that workshop, but more importantly, created a structure to empower pre-service teachers to respond.

As teacher educators, our motivation to be part of the TRUVic experience was to walk our own talk; not just criticize the educational hegemony but to be part of the change and to present pre-service teachers, high school teachers, and students with the opportunity to walk that journey with us. As we opened this chapter, we presented several questions intended to represent some of the challenges faced by pre-service teachers. We cannot say with certainty that each TRUVic participant can answer each of those questions. The purpose of the TRUVic endeavour, and the sharing of that experience, was never to further the linearity of question and answer. We can, however, state with confidence that for us, as authors and members of that learning community, we were true to the indigenous learning principles that served as our foundation. The learning needs of students and pre-service teachers guided decision making at multiple junctures. As a result, the learning that took place profoundly shifted how the TRUVic pre-service teachers approached their practice as teachers and how we as teacher educators consider our own practice. Finally, and perhaps the most important was the deep learning for everyone involved –

instructors and students alike – learning that blended theory and practice into collaborative learning spaces, finding a “third space” (the TRUVic learning hub in the high school) that enabling the bridging of previously distinct courses within the Faculty of Education. The energy derived from this learning experience continues to inform what we and teacher educators do and motivates us to further this collaborative teaching and learning endeavour, continually seeking spaces and places where knowledge is negotiated and where learning is dynamic and emergent.

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APPENDIX A

TRUVic Project Assignments

1. Ongoing Professional Forum

Initially, instructors will lead the forum, with pairs of students taking leadership for one week, providing thoughtful contributions to encourage discussion and engagement. Other class members will respond at least once a week. Responses can include comments, questions, links to websites and videos, images, podcasts, etc.

This assignment is to help you recognize, connect, integrate and interpret your own learning, and to challenge others' thinking in the class to further your own and their thoughts related to teaching and learning.

You are expected to begin new discussions and/or add to another's discussion. These discussions will either be carried over from class discussions and activities, or focus on a topic you need to discuss that has not yet been addressed. The entries should be thoughtful and well crafted. Your entries will be successful if they demonstrate thoughtfulness, analysis, ability to engage others in discussion, ability to adapt to an alternative professional dialogue and your ongoing participation.

This assignment is complete when you have:

- led discussion (with a partner) for one week
- made weekly contributions to the Forum
- contributed thoughtful, analytical and engaging comments/ideas/concepts to the Forum

2. Case Study

PART I—Who are your students?

How will you find out? Use at least three sources, including observations, course readings, texts that youth engage in, and interviews to determine ways in which you can become better acquainted with 21st century youth, specifically those who will likely be in classrooms.

Identify students in a class you are observing who seems unlike you and students who seem more like you. Focus on these students over a period of time. Describe the students in as detailed a way as possible, considering:

- appearance
- location in class
- attitude as can be ascertained by her/his responses to peers, teacher, etc
- body language
- quality and quantity of work completed during the class

You may also have the opportunity to talk with the student individually, either informally or formally. Identify strategies you might use to teach this student effectively, ensuring success for the student.

Consider: What general observations can you make about student success and learning?

From the strategies you have thought useful to teach this student, develop an activity that would address the needs, interests, and abilities of the student you have described (using the attached planning format). Consider which of the language and literacy abilities this student seems to have best developed and how you can best develop the student's confidence, skills, and attitudes about language and literacy learning.

PART II—Who is a teacher?

Observe at least three different teachers teaching - two of whom should teach outside of English Language Arts. Create a compilation of these teachers, in as detailed a way as possible, considering: appearance, movement while teaching, attitude towards teaching and student learning as can be ascertained by her/his responses to colleagues, students, etc., body language, and meeting learning outcomes set out during the class.

Observe the extent to which they incorporate the principles of learning into their lessons:

- Learning requires the active participation of the student.
- Students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates.
- Learning is both an individual and group process.

You may also have the opportunity to talk with the teachers individually, either informally or formally.

Prepare a 6 to 8 minute multimodal presentation to deliver in class to your peers which outlines your observations.

3. Creating a Unit Plan and Teaching Sequence

Working in threes, you will select and develop a theme/focus around which you will create a unit, and a series of three sequential lessons (80 minutes each), incorporating significant learning outcomes into the plan, considering what you know about adolescents. The plan should reflect and model in an integrated way some or all of the language and literacy strands of speaking/listening, viewing/representing, and reading/writing.

Your unit and lesson sequences should be multimodal and include:

- a rationale, including your goals/intents for the unit (and show a clear connection between the rationale and the goals)
- Prescribed Learning Outcomes from the curriculum (linked to the rationale, assessment and learning)
- assessment ‘for’, ‘as’, and ‘of’ learning strategies
- students actively engaged in meaningful learning through a variety of strategies and activities
- ways you are addressing diverse student needs and interests

Prepare and teach the first 30 minute segment to your peers; peer/partner will videotape your lesson and watch with you, providing feedback; write reflective response and revise the plan.

With the support and guidance of your classroom teacher mentor, prepare to teach a lesson to a class at the high school; peer/partner will videotape your lesson and watch with you, providing feedback; write reflective response and revise the plan.

4. Professional Growth Plan

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to explore an aspect of classroom teaching in more depth and detail, both through a review of academic literature and in the context of a working classroom.

Your professional growth plan will be an extension of a question and/or interest you develop during your time in classrooms during ED-P 780. As professionals, teachers are always examining their practice and looking for ways to improve in ways that feel authentic to them as

teachers. This assignment will help you to examine one aspect of classroom teaching and explain how they will incorporate what they learn into their professional practice.

Research Component

Develop a guiding question related to classroom teaching. An example could be “How can I effectively use formative assessment in an English classroom?” Another example could be “How do relationships between students and their teacher affect classroom learning?” Once you have a guiding question developed, consult with an ED-P 780 instructor to refine it.

After consulting with an ED-P 780 instructor, the student should begin a LITERATURE REVIEW on the topic. The expectations of the instructors are that students will find at least five relevant academic journal articles to help develop, shape, and deepen their understanding of their guiding question.

In concert with the literature review, CONSULT AND INTERVIEW practicing teachers about their views and the way they approach your guiding question. You can do this with a static set of interview questions, or you can do this in a more informal, conversational manner. The purpose is to hear the views of practicing teachers as they pertain to your question. The expectation is that students will speak to at least three practicing teachers.

As well, OBSERVE classrooms, looking for evidence and answers to your question. With permission of the classroom teacher and of students, you may ask students for their thoughts about your guiding question. The expectations are that students, through the lens of their guiding questions, will mindfully observe at least three different classrooms at least twice.

Upon completion of the research, students will be required to share their findings and ideas with their instructors, their peers, and other education professionals.

Demonstration of Understanding Component

Upon completion of research, you will begin to consider how you will incorporate your findings into your own teaching practice. Consider examples of what you observed in classrooms, anecdotes shared by students, what the literature says about your guiding question. Do these match? How are you going to take what you have read, seen, and heard and incorporate it into your own teaching practice and your identity as a teacher?

This plan will become part of your e-portfolio that will be valuable to share with school districts when applying for jobs.

A public display of your research and your plan will occur during Gallery Walk/Celebration. You will have an opportunity to share your plan with your instructors and your peers. Additionally, we are working to have two vice-principals, a principal, and the deputy superintendent come to the Gallery Walk/Celebration where they will conduct a ‘mock interview’ of sorts, having the student answer questions about the topic explored in their professional growth plan.

5. ePortfolio Component

You will create a professional ePortfolio which is a digitized collection of artifacts including demonstrations, resources, and accomplishments that can be text-based, graphic, or multimodal. The ePortfolio is a valuable learning and assessment tool that enables personal/professional reflection and enables the exchange of ideas and feedback of your professional learning.

6. *Extension Assignments*

These will be discussed on an individual basis with those of you who are interested in completing extension assignments/projects.

**Former pour le développement de la compétence numérique des élèves à
l'ère des technologies de type web 2.0 :
enjeux, défis et perspectives de changement**

Jean Gabin Ntebutse

Université de Sherbrooke

Résumé

En partant du contexte actuel marqué par l'omniprésence des technologies numériques de type web 2.0 dans la vie quotidienne des jeunes, nous discutons des enjeux posés à l'institution scolaire par la culture numérique des élèves. Dans un premier temps, nous exposons les aspects contextuels qui circonscrivent l'enjeu de la préparation des enseignants à former les jeunes en prenant en considération leurs acquis et leurs intérêts en matière de technologie. Dans un deuxième temps, nous présentons les contours de l'enjeu du développement de la compétence numérique des jeunes dits natifs du numérique. Nous terminons notre réflexion par la formulation des pistes de changement.

Abstract

Starting from the current context of the ubiquitous Web 2.0 digital technologies in the lives of young people, this chapter discusses some of the issues raised in the school system by the presence of the digital culture of students. First, the contextual aspects that circumscribe the challenge of preparing teachers to train youth taking into consideration their skills and interests in technology are outlined. Secondly, the contours of the issue of digital competence development in students who are so-called digital natives are presented. The chapter concludes with some recommendations for changes to teacher education to address these issues.

Former pour le développement de la compétence numérique des élèves à l'ère des technologies de type web 2.0 : enjeux, défis et perspectives de changement

Un contexte marqué par l'omniprésence des technologies numériques de type web 2.0 dans la vie des jeunes

En ce début du 21^e siècle, l'école est fréquentée par des jeunes qui sont nés et ont grandi à l'ère de développements technologiques importants dominés par les technologies numériques de type web 2.0; terme qui est utilisé, selon l'Université de Melbourne¹, pour décrire une variété de sites web et d'applications qui permettent à quiconque de créer et de partager en ligne des informations ou du matériel. La caractéristique majeure des technologies de type web 2.0 est l'appropriation des contenus et des modes de diffusion par les internautes eux-mêmes, via des applications souples et légères (Société Digimind, 2007). On peut donc inclure dans les technologies numériques de type web 2.0 les différentes technologies utilisées couramment par les jeunes (téléphones mobiles intelligents, ipads, ipods, réseaux sociaux comme Facebook ou Tweeter, les sites de partage de vidéo comme YouTube, les sites de partage de photo comme Instagram, etc. Différentes appellations données aux jeunes colorent cette nouvelle donne technologique: *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001a), *new millennium learners* (Pedro, 2007), *net generation* (Tapscott, 1998, Oblinger et Oblinger, 2005), *homo zappiens* (Veen et Vrakking, 2006), *petite poucette* (Michel Serre, 2012), *génération des enfants numériques mutants* (Fournier, 2013) ou *App generation* (Gadner et Davis, 2013).

¹ <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/copyright/information/guides/wikiblogsweb2blue.pdf>

Une enquête réalisée dans 25 pays d'Europe par Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig et Ólafsson (2011) auprès de 25 142 jeunes âgés entre 9 et 16 ans rapporte que 85 % utilisent Internet pour des travaux scolaires, 83% pour jouer, 76% pour visionner des vidéos clips et 76% pour envoyer des messages instantanés. L'enquête révèle aussi qu'un compte sur un réseau social est possédé par 26% des jeunes de 9-10 ans, 49% de 11-12 ans, 73% de 13-14 et 82 % de 15-16 ans. Aux États-Unis, un rapport publié par la Kaiser Family Foundation (Rideout, Foehr et Roberts, 2010) montre qu'en 2009 les enfants et les jeunes âgés entre 8 et 18 ans passaient en moyenne 90 minutes par jour à texter des messages, 82 minutes à parler, écouter la musique, jouer et visionner d'autres médias sur leurs téléphones mobiles. Ils passaient aussi une heure et demie par jour à l'ordinateur principalement pour visiter les sites de réseaux sociaux (comme MySpace et Facebook), participer à des jeux et visionner des sites de vidéos comme YouTube.

Ainsi, les technologies de type web 2.0 teintent l'univers de la vie des jeunes et induisent chez eux le développement d'une culture numérique (Fluckiger, 2008; Lardellier, 2006). Elles offrent aux jeunes des environnements d'apprentissage attrayants qui brouillent les frontières entre l'éducation formelle et l'éducation informelle (UNESCO, 2011) et tendent à faire tomber les frontières institutionnelles classiques entre la maison, l'école et les loisirs (Furlong et Davis, 2012; Lai, Khaddage et Knezek (2013). Cependant, l'école n'aurait pas encore pris la mesure de l'écart existant entre ce qu'elle propose comme plateformes d'apprentissage et les habitudes et les attentes des jeunes développées en contexte informel avec les usages des technologies numériques, ce qui amène des auteurs comme Clark, Logan, Luckin, Mee et Oliver (2009) à parler de dissonance numérique. Ainsi, la culture numérique des jeunes, largement construite hors des murs de l'école (Fluckiger, 2008), pose à l'institution scolaire deux enjeux fondamentaux liés à sa mission de formation. Le premier enjeu concerne la préparation des

enseignants à l'intégration des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement-apprentissage pour rejoindre les acquis et les intérêts des élèves en matière de technologie (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (CSÉ), 2009; CEFRIO, 2011; OCDE, 2013). Le deuxième enjeu, quant à lui, concerne la responsabilité de faire développer chez la nouvelle génération d'apprenants et la nouvelle génération d'enseignants la compétence numérique pour exploiter à bon escient l'environnement numérique qui non seulement est en constante évolution mais est aussi en complexification croissante. Cela est d'autant plus important que les possibilités infinies de connectivité desdites technologies numériques à l'internet ne sont pas sans risques pour les jeunes. Selon l'OCDE,

Malgré l'énorme potentiel de l'Internet pour remodeler notre monde, la connectivité infinie a ses inconvénients. De nouveaux défis tels que l'augmentation de la fraude sur Internet, les préoccupations en matière de protection de la vie privée en ligne et l'usurpation d'identité font également partie intégrante de ce nouveau monde virtuel globalisé et connecté. Pour les parents et les enfants, il existe aussi des préoccupations spécifiques : le cyber-harcèlement et les craintes au niveau de la protection de nos jeunes contre les contenus explicites et les prédateurs virtuels. Les étudiants d'aujourd'hui, volontairement ou involontairement, sont exposés à toute une nouvelle série de dangers, et les parents et les éducateurs ne savent pas toujours exactement quelle est la meilleure façon de les en protéger. (OCDE, 2013, p.104)

Voyons en détail sur quoi reposent ces enjeux et les défis qui s'y rattachent.

1. L'institution scolaire face à la culture numérique des élèves : Les enseignants sont-ils bien préparés à intégrer les technologies numériques dans l'enseignement-apprentissage?

La question de la prise en compte du contexte technologique dans lequel évoluent les nouvelles générations d'apprenants et la préparation des enseignants à cette nouvelle donne mobilise de plus en plus l'attention des décideurs politiques et des organisations ayant l'éducation dans leurs attributions. Pour s'en convaincre, nous pouvons citer comme exemples au Québec deux rapports du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation : le Rapport 1999-2000 portant sur l'état et les besoins de l'éducation et ayant pour titre «Éducation et nouvelles technologies: pour une intégration réussie dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage» et le Rapport 2009 intitulé «Une école qui s'adapte aux besoins des jeunes pour soutenir la réussite. » Nous pouvons aussi parler, en France, de deux rapports «Réussir l'école numérique» et «Apprendre autrement à l'ère numérique : Se former, collaborer, innover : Un nouveau modèle éducatif pour une égalité des chances» respectivement produits en 2010 et en 2012 par la première mission parlementaire conduite par le député Jean-Michel Fourgous sur la modernisation de l'école par le numérique et la deuxième mission parlementaire conduite par le même député sur l'innovation des pratiques pédagogiques par le numérique et la formation des enseignants. Mentionnons enfin le Référentiel des compétences des enseignants en matière d'intégration des TIC produit par l'UNESCO en 2011 et le Rapport de l'OCDE (2013) intitulé «Les grandes mutations qui transforment l'éducation.»

Si nous focalisons l'attention sur le cas spécifique du Québec, force est de constater que le renouveau pédagogique accorde une place importante au développement des compétences transversales dédiées à la maîtrise des TIC par les élèves et à l'intégration de ces TIC dans les pratiques pédagogiques des enseignants. En effet, au sujet de la maîtrise des TIC par les élèves,

le programme de formation de l'école québécoise pour les niveaux primaire et secondaire (MÉQ, 2001; MÉQ, 2006) comporte des compétences transversales que les élèves doivent développer : la compétence «Exploiter les TIC» parmi les compétences d'ordre méthodologique et les compétences «Exploiter l'information» et «Exercer son jugement critique» parmi les compétences d'ordre intellectuel. Quant à la maîtrise des TIC par les enseignants, le référentiel des compétences professionnelles à l'enseignement (MEQ, 2001) consacre la compétence 8 à l'intégration des TIC : «Intégrer les technologies de l'information et des communications aux fins de préparation et de pilotages d'activités d'enseignement-apprentissage, de gestion de l'enseignement et de développement professionnel»). Les composantes de cette compétence explicitent clairement les responsabilités qui incombent aux enseignants tant au niveau de leur développement professionnel que de la formation des élèves à l'utilisation pertinente et critique des TIC. On leur demande d'« anticiper les enjeux et estimer les potentialités et les limites des technologies de l'information et des communications », d'« évaluer le potentiel didactique des outils informatiques et des réseaux », de « communiquer à l'aide d'outils multimédias », d'« utiliser efficacement les technologies de l'information et des communications pour chercher de l'information et résoudre des problèmes » et d'« aider les élèves à s'approprier les TIC, à les utiliser pour mener à bien des activités d'apprentissage, à évaluer leur utilisation de la technologie et à juger de manière critique l'information recueillie sur les réseaux » (MEQ, 2001, p. 107 à 113).

Par ailleurs, la compétence 3 du même référentiel des compétences professionnelles à l'enseignement demande aux enseignants de « concevoir des situations d'enseignement-apprentissage pour les contenus à faire apprendre, et ce, en fonction des élèves concernés et du

développement des compétences visées dans le programme de formation » (MEQ, 2001, p. 75). Une des composantes de cette compétence invite explicitement les enseignants à « prendre en considération les préalables, les représentations, les différences sociales (genre, origine ethnique, socioéconomique et culturelle), les besoins et les champs d'intérêt particuliers des élèves dans l'élaboration des situations d'enseignement-apprentissage » (MEQ, 2001, p. 81). La culture numérique des élèves devrait donc faire partie des éléments à prendre en compte dans l'élaboration, par les enseignants, des situations d'enseignement-apprentissage. Mais est-ce que c'est le cas? Qu'en disent les résultats de recherches?

Depuis que le renouveau pédagogique a été introduit, l'environnement numérique, marqué par une culture de la participation chez les jeunes, n'a cessé de se complexifier. Malgré l'importance de prendre en considération dans la formation les intérêts et les acquis des élèves en matière de technologie (CSÉ, 2009; CEFRIO, 2011), les recherches évoquent une faible intégration des TIC dans les pratiques des enseignants. D'ailleurs, même sans évoquer la complexification de l'environnement numérique, l'intégration des TIC dans les pratiques pédagogiques reste un immense défi pour les écoles car peu d'enseignants les intègrent, et cela, malgré des impacts confirmés par la recherche sur la réussite éducative des élèves et malgré l'ampleur des investissements consentis par les gouvernements pour doter les écoles des moyens technologiques pour l'enseignement-apprentissage (Larose, 2012; Karsenti, Raby, Villeneuve, 2008; Cleary, Akkari et Corti, 2008). Parmi les facteurs qui influencent l'intégration des TIC dans les pratiques d'enseignement, la littérature scientifique relève les croyances des enseignants (Ertmer et al., 2012; Ertmer, 2005). À l'issue d'une méta-analyse des obstacles à l'intégration des TIC de 48 études empiriques conduites entre 1995 et 2006, Hew et Brush (2007) rapportent que

les trois premières barrières les plus citées sont les ressources (40%), les connaissances et les habiletés technologiques des enseignants (23%) et les attitudes et les croyances des enseignants à l'égard de l'apprentissage des élèves au moyen des TIC (13%). D'autres études aboutissent à la conclusion que ce sont les enseignants ayant des croyances constructivistes qui tendent à utiliser la technologie pour supporter le programme centré sur l'apprenant alors que les enseignants ayant des croyances traditionnelles tendent à utiliser la technologie pour supporter le programme centré sur l'enseignant (Van Braak et Valcke, 2008). On voit alors que les croyances constituent de meilleurs indicateurs des décisions (Rokeach, 1968; Bandura, 1986) et des attitudes (Bodur, Brinberg et Coupey, 2000) prises par les enseignants.

Concernant les futurs enseignants, Prensky, un des auteurs les plus optimistes au sujet de la maîtrise des technologies numériques par les *digital natives*, avançait déjà au début des années 2000 que l'intégration des technologies numériques en classe allait cesser d'être un problème lorsque les *digital natives* commenceraient à exercer la profession enseignante (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b). Cependant, les résultats de certaines recherches faites auprès des étudiants en début de leur formation initiale en enseignement nuancent le portrait optimiste des digital natives. À l'issue d'une étude menée auprès de 55 étudiants en début de leur formation initiale à l'enseignement dans une université américaine, étude ayant pour objectif d'examiner leurs croyances, et leurs attitudes, leurs expérience et expertise technologiques, Lei (2009) conclut (1) que ces *digital natives* sont certes à l'aise avec les technologies de base et les technologies de communication mais que leur maîtrise technologique est très limitée tant en portée qu'en profondeur et (2) qu'il existe une grande variabilité à l'intérieur de cette génération explicable notamment par les inégalités socioéconomiques qui limitent les opportunités d'accès à la technologie. À l'issue des résultats d'une autre étude qualitative menée auprès de 190 étudiants en

enseignement à la Midwestern University à propos de leurs croyances à l'égard de l'intégration des technologies de type web 2.0 dans leur future carrière, Sadaf, Newby et Ertmer (2012) rapportent que même si ces futurs enseignants ont une attitude favorable à l'intégration de ces technologies dans l'enseignement et qu'ils les trouvent faciles d'utilisation pour leurs usages personnels, ils affirment du même coup envisager des difficultés au niveau de leurs compétences à les intégrer dans les leçons. Au Québec, une étude menée récemment par Dumouchel et Karsenti (2013) auprès de 153 futurs enseignants de l'Université de Montréal conclut à l'existence de lacunes importantes en matière de compétences TIC et informationnelles. Il se dégage des résultats de ces quelques études que l'intégration des TIC en général, et les technologies numériques de type web 2.0 en particulier, dans l'enseignement est loin d'être un acquis chez les enseignants en exercice, mais également chez les futurs enseignants *digital natives*. Pourtant, ces enseignants et futurs enseignants constituent des acteurs incontournables si l'on veut réussir l'intégration des TIC dans l'enseignement-apprentissage et le développement de la compétence numérique chez les élèves.

1. L'enjeu du développement de la compétence numérique chez les élèves dits *digital natives*

Avant de parler des défis entourant le développement de la compétence numérique chez les *digital natives*, clarifions d'abord le concept de compétence numérique.

2.1 Qu'entend-on par compétence numérique?

L'analyse des écrits sur le concept montre que sa définition a évolué à travers le temps. Plusieurs auteurs reconnaissent à Gilster (1997) le rôle de précurseur dans la définition de la

compétence numérique. Il a d'abord proposé le concept de littéracie numérique qu'il a défini en mettant l'accent sur les habiletés de pensée critique plutôt que les habiletés purement techniques. Plus tard, d'autres auteurs ont précisé davantage les dimensions de la littéracie numérique et mis en évidence son caractère complexe. Ainsi, Tornero (2004) considère qu'elle comprend à la fois des aspects purement techniques, des compétences intellectuelles et des compétences reliées à la citoyenneté responsable. De la même manière, Martin (2005) envisage la littéracie numérique comme « la conscience, l'attitude et l'habileté des individus à utiliser, de façon appropriée, les outils et les facilités numériques pour identifier, accéder, gérer, intégrer, évaluer, analyser et synthétiser les ressources numériques, construire de nouvelles connaissances, créer des expressions médiatiques et communiquer avec les autres dans des situations spécifiques de la vie, en vue de susciter une action sociale constructive et de réfléchir sur ce processus.» (p.135) Avec l'avènement du Web 2.0, qui a permis aux utilisateurs d'exploiter les applications variées du web pour communiquer, produire, échanger et partager l'information avec d'autres en utilisant différents médias comme les réseaux sociaux, les blogs, les wikis, les sites de partage, etc. (Cheon, Song, Jones et Nam, 2010), la définition du concept s'est enrichie d'aspects socio-éthiques (James et al., 2009). La complexité du concept est encore plus explicite dans la définition proposée par Calvani, Fini et Ranieri (2009, p.161): « l'habileté à explorer et à faire face à de nouvelles situations technologiques de manière flexible; à analyser, sélectionner et évaluer l'information de manière critique; à exploiter les potentialités de la technologie afin de se représenter et résoudre des problèmes; à construire des connaissances partagées de manière collaborative, tout en étant conscient de ses propres responsabilités et en respectant les droits et les obligations de tous ». À partir de cette définition, un modèle intégrateur de la compétence numérique articulé autour de trois dimensions est proposé: la dimension technologique, la

dimension cognitive et la dimension éthique. La dimension technologique réfère au fait d'être capable d'explorer et de faire face à des problèmes et à de nouveaux contextes technologiques de manière flexible; la dimension cognitive implique la capacité de lire, sélectionner, interpréter et évaluer l'information en tenant compte de sa pertinence et de sa fiabilité; la dimension éthique implique, quant à elle, la capacité d'interagir avec les autres, de façon constructive et avec un sens des responsabilités envers soi-même et envers les autres. La figure 1 présente les dimensions de la compétence numérique.

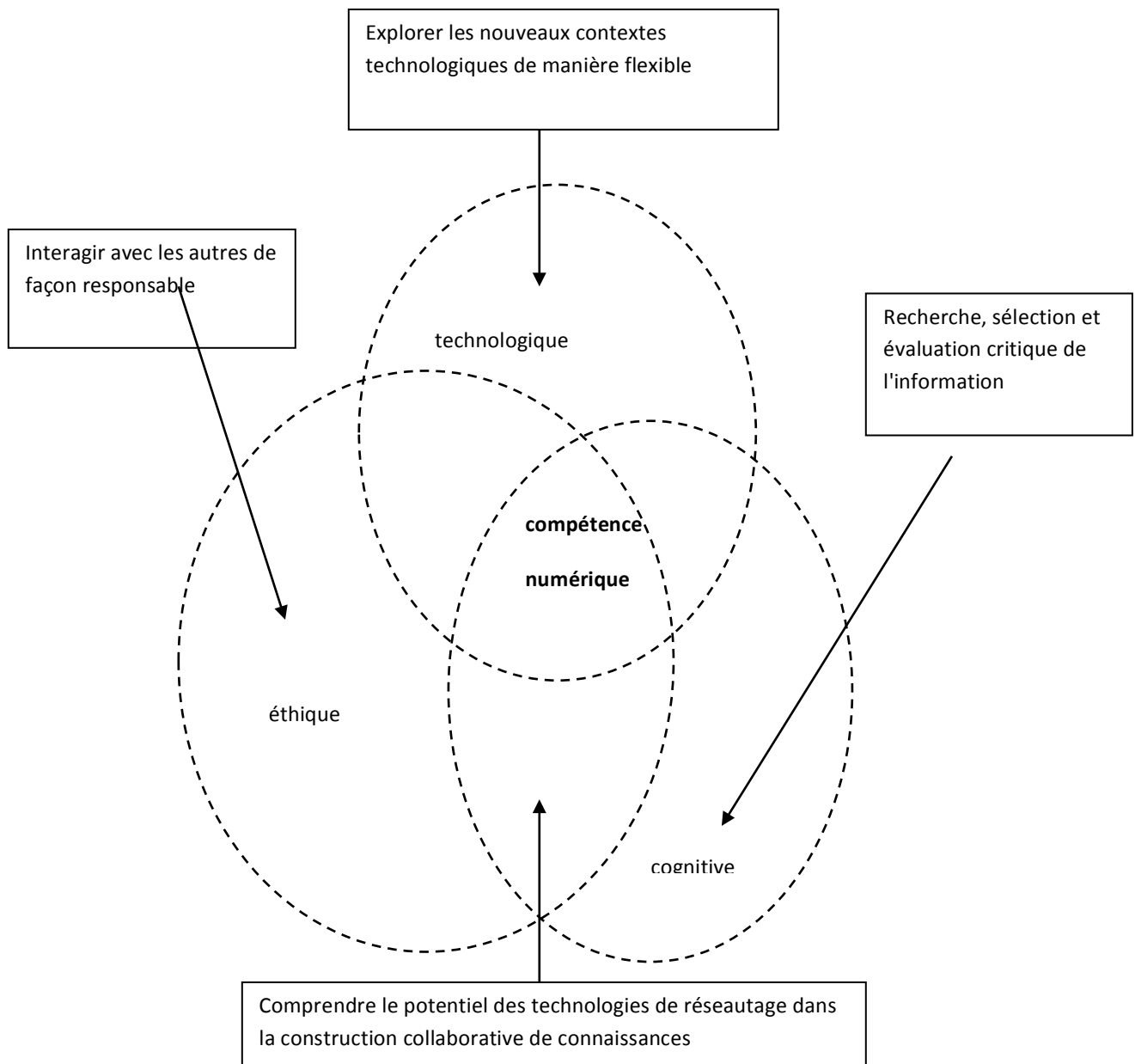


Figure 1. Composantes de la compétence numérique (adapté de Calvani et al., 2009)

À la suite d'une recherche effectuée auprès de 95 experts issus de différents domaines, Janssen et al. (2013) définissent la compétence numérique comme « un conglomerat de connaissances, d'habiletés et d'attitudes reliées à diverses finalités (communication, expression créative, gestion de l'information, développement personnel, etc.), à divers domaines (vie quotidienne, travail, vie privée et sécurité, aspects légaux) et différents niveaux» (p.479, traduction libre). Cette compétence numérique s'exercerait dans les 12 sphères présentées dans la figure 2 et expliquées dans le tableau 2.

Utilisation fluide reflétant un sentiment d'efficacité personnelle					
Aspects éthiques et légaux	Vie privée et sécurité	Choix éclairés quant aux technologies numériques appropriées		Gestion et traitement de l'information	Posture éclairée envers la technologie
		Apprentissage sur et avec les technologies numériques			
	Communication et collaboration à l'aide de la technologie	Choix éclairés quant aux technologies numériques appropriées			
		Utilisation dans la vie quotidienne			
		Connaissances générales et habiletés fonctionnelles			
Compréhension du rôle des TIC dans la société					

Figure 2. Les sphères de la compétence numérique (Adapté de Janssen et al., 2013, p. 478).

Les deux modèles de la compétence numérique se rencontrent sur les grandes dimensions de la compétence numérique: technologique, cognitive et éthique. Par exemples, la sphère gestion et traitement de l'information dans le modèle de Janseen et al., 2013) se rapproche de la dimension cognitive alors que la sphère aspects éthiques et légaux correspond à la dimension éthique dans le modèle de Calvani et al., 2009). Cependant, le modèle de Janseen et al., (2013) a l'avantage d'être explicite sur les finalités, les domaines et les niveaux de la compétence.

Tableau 1. Les sphères de la compétence numérique et leur description (Janssen *et al.*, 2013, p.497, traduction libre)

Sphères de la compétence	Description
1) Connaissances générales et habiletés fonctionnelles	la personne compétente sur le plan numérique connaît les bases (terminologie, la navigation, la fonctionnalité) d'appareils numériques et peut les utiliser à des fins élémentaires
2) Utilisation dans la vie quotidienne :	La personne numériquement compétente est en mesure d'intégrer les technologies dans les activités de la vie quotidienne.
3) Choix éclairés quant aux technologies numériques appropriées	La personne numériquement compétente est en mesure d'utiliser les TIC pour exprimer sa créativité et améliorer sa performance professionnelle
4) Communication et collaboration médiatisée par la technologie	La personne compétente sur le plan numérique est capable de se connecter, partager, communiquer et collaborer efficacement avec les autres dans des environnements numériques.
5) Gestion et traitement de	La personne compétente sur le plan numérique utilise la technologie pour améliorer sa capacité à rassembler, organiser, analyser et juger de

l'information	la pertinence et la finalité de l'information
6) Vie privée et sécurité	La personne compétente sur le plan numérique a la capacité de protéger les données personnelles et de prendre les mesures de sécurité appropriées
7) Aspects éthiques et légaux	La personne se comporte correctement et d'une manière socialement responsable dans des environnements numériques et elle, démontre de la sensibilité et de la connaissance des aspects juridiques et éthiques reliées à l'utilisation des TIC et du contenu numérique
8) Posture éclairée envers la technologie	La personne démontre une attitude éclairée, ouverte et équilibrée à l'égard de la société de l'information et de l'utilisation des technologies numériques. Elle est curieuse, consciente des opportunités et nouveaux développements et elle est confortable pour les explorer et les exploiter
9) Compréhension et la prise de conscience du rôle des TIC dans la société	La personne numériquement compétente comprend le contexte plus large de l'utilisation et du développement des TIC
10) Apprendre sur et avec les technologies numériques :	La personne compétente sur le plan numérique explore activement et constamment les nouvelles technologies, les intègre dans son environnement et les utilise pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie
11) Choix éclairés quant aux technologies numériques appropriées	La personne numériquement compétente connaît les technologies les plus pertinentes ou courantes et est en mesure de choisir la technologie la plus appropriée aux objectifs poursuivis
12) Utilisation fluide de la	La personne numériquement compétente applique les technologies

technologie qui met en évidence de l'auto-efficacité	avec confiance et créativité pour accroître son efficacité et son efficience personnelles et professionnelles
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2.2 *Que sait-on sur la compétence numérique des élèves?*

Pour certains auteurs, l'expérience des nouvelles technologies numériques aurait non seulement changé la façon dont les jeunes communiquent, socialisent et discutent, mais aurait aussi fondamentalement transformé leurs façons d'apprendre (Dede, 2005; Ito *et al.*, 2008; Prensky, 2010). Face à l'environnement numérique en constante évolution et dans lequel les jeunes sont très actifs, les compétences qu'ils développent et le rôle que l'école doit jouer pour guider le développement de ces dernières deviennent des enjeux importants et font partie des principaux défis auxquels est confrontée l'école d'aujourd'hui (Calvani, Fini, Ranieri et Picci, 2012; Li et Ranieri, 2010). Selon l'UNESCO (2011), dans le contexte actuel de développements technologiques importants, la société du savoir commande que les programmes de formation aillent au-delà des savoirs disciplinaires pour viser des compétences de haut niveau comme, par exemple, l'aptitude à résoudre des problèmes, à communiquer, à travailler en collaboration et à exercer un esprit critique. Quant à l'OCDE, elle est non seulement préoccupée par le développement de la compétence numérique mais aussi par la fracture numérique pouvant exister entre les jeunes:

La possibilité d'accéder à un ordinateur ne signifie pas que celui-ci est effectivement utilisé, et encore moins qu'il est utilisé de façon productive. Compte tenu de la quasi universalité de l'accès à

l'informatique dans le cadre familial et de son utilisation par les jeunes des pays de l'OCDE, il semble que la fracture numérique se situe désormais entre ceux qui savent tirer parti des possibilités offertes par les ordinateurs et les autres, les élèves déjà dotés d'un degré élevé de capital humain étant les mieux placés pour accroître ce capital à l'aide des TIC. Cela suggère également que l'école a toujours un rôle clé à jouer pour niveler les inégalités aggravées par le fossé numérique. (2010, p. 81)

Quelles sont alors les compétences que les élèves développent avec les technologies numériques de type web 2.0? Certains commentateurs, sans s'appuyer sur des études empiriques sérieuses, considèrent que les nouvelles générations développent, avec l'utilisation intensive des technologies numériques, des habiletés qui font appel à des processus cognitifs de haut niveau et à de nouveaux styles d'apprentissage à telle enseigne que les systèmes éducatifs seraient actuellement dépassés face à leurs besoins (Prensky, 2001a; 2001b; Oblinger et Oblinger, 2005; Dede, 2005). Il y aurait également un écart entre les élèves et les enseignants au niveau de l'appropriation des usages des nouveaux médias numériques (Prensky, 2010; Bertrand, 2010). Cependant, d'autres auteurs remettent en question, théoriquement et empiriquement, ce portrait très optimiste des *digital natives* à l'égard de la compétence développée avec les nouveaux médias numériques (Bennet, Maton et Kervin, 2008; Selwyn, 2009; Guichon, 2012). Au niveau théorique, on souligne le caractère complexe et multidimensionnel de la compétence numérique puisqu'elle intègre à la fois des aspects technologiques, cognitifs et éthiques (Calvani, Fini et

Ranieri, 2009). On conteste aussi la légitimité de caractériser toute une génération de numérique alors que l'accès et l'usage des technologies numériques sont largement influencés par des facteurs socioéconomiques et culturels (Hargittai, 2010; Nasah, Da costa, Kinsell et Seok, 2010). Au niveau empirique, les études conduites en Italie (Calvani, Fini, Ranieri et Picci, 2012) et en Chine (Li et Ranieri, 2010) pour évaluer la compétence numérique des élèves adolescents âgés entre 14 et 16 ans concluent que ces élèves développent davantage un ensemble d'habiletés procédurales de base que des compétences de haut niveau sur le plan technologique, cognitif et éthique. La conclusion de ces deux recherches est sans équivoque : vivre dans un environnement numérique n'implique pas d'être compétent sur le plan numérique. Les deux études soulignent cependant le rôle important que les écoles doivent assumer pour mettre en place des dispositifs de formation permettant de développer la compétence numérique des élèves. En bout de ligne, on peut dire que la compétence numérique des élèves est à développer et que la responsabilité de l'école est engagée.

3. Perspectives de changement

Sans nul doute, le paysage numérique va continuer à se complexifier et à influencer le comportement des jeunes. L'école peut-elle faire fi de cette réalité? Deux avenues tirées de nos lectures nous semblent être des avenues qu'il importe d'explorer : l'intégration des technologies mobiles dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage et la révision des programmes de formation des enseignants en accordant une place importante à la formation à l'intégration des technologies, particulièrement les technologies de type web 2.0.

3.1 L'intégration des technologies mobiles dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage.

Plusieurs auteurs considèrent que les technologies numériques de type web 2.0 offrent des possibilités de faire des liens entre les apprentissages formels et informels (Lai, Khaddage et Knezek ; 2013; Hamilton, 2011; Khaddage et Knezek, 2011). Dans leur *Mobile-Blended Collaborative Model*, Lai, Khaddage et Knezek (2013) considèrent que les technologies mobiles peuvent servir comme pont entre les apprentissages formel et informel en offrant, d'une part, un environnement d'apprentissage portable, flexible, collaboratif et créatif et, d'autre part, les occasions d'améliorer la qualité des expériences d'apprentissage. L'information est donc à portée de main, en tout temps et n'importe où. Avec ces technologies, les apprenants peuvent collaborer et interagir avec leurs pairs et leurs enseignants en classe face à face, ils peuvent aussi accéder à des ressources et des contenus et les partager, ils peuvent capter des images et des textes, enregistrer des présentations, communiquer avec les élèves d'autres classes et même avec d'autres communautés grâce à l'accès internet par Wi-Fi. Les différentes applications qui les accompagnent offrent des outils de collaboration (par exemple les applications de Google pour le partage des documents et de fichiers entre les élèves et les enseignants en classe comme en dehors de la classe), des outils de coordination (par exemple Tweeter pour informer les élèves sur les changements aux horaires ou le rappel des dates de remise des travaux) et des outils de communication (comme Skype et Facebook pour des communications synchrones et asynchrones ou les discussions entre les élèves en dehors de l'école). L'apprentissage devient plaisant, intéressant, stimulant et porteur de défis pour les apprenants. La réalité devient donc fondamentalement différente de la classe traditionnelle où l'apprentissage formel est planifié et structuré, statique et pré-organisé, suit des stratégies prescrites, est prévisible et parfois ennuyeux. La figure présente l'intégralité du modèle. On peut néanmoins reprocher au modèle qu'elle ne prend pas compte des facteurs de contrainte par exemple la disponibilité du réseau

internet haute vitesse partout et des diverses technologies mobiles, la gestion de l'usage de ces dernières en classe, etc. Il y a lieu de reconnaître cependant le potentiel qu'offrent les technologies mobiles de type web 2.0 pour l'enseignement-apprentissage. À titre exemplatif, les résultats d'une recherche expérimentale menée par Martin et Ertzberger (2013) auprès des étudiants dans le cadre d'un cours d'art montrent que l'utilisation de l'IPAD et de l'Ipod suscitaient plus d'attitude positive envers l'apprentissage que lors de l'utilisation d'un ordinateur.

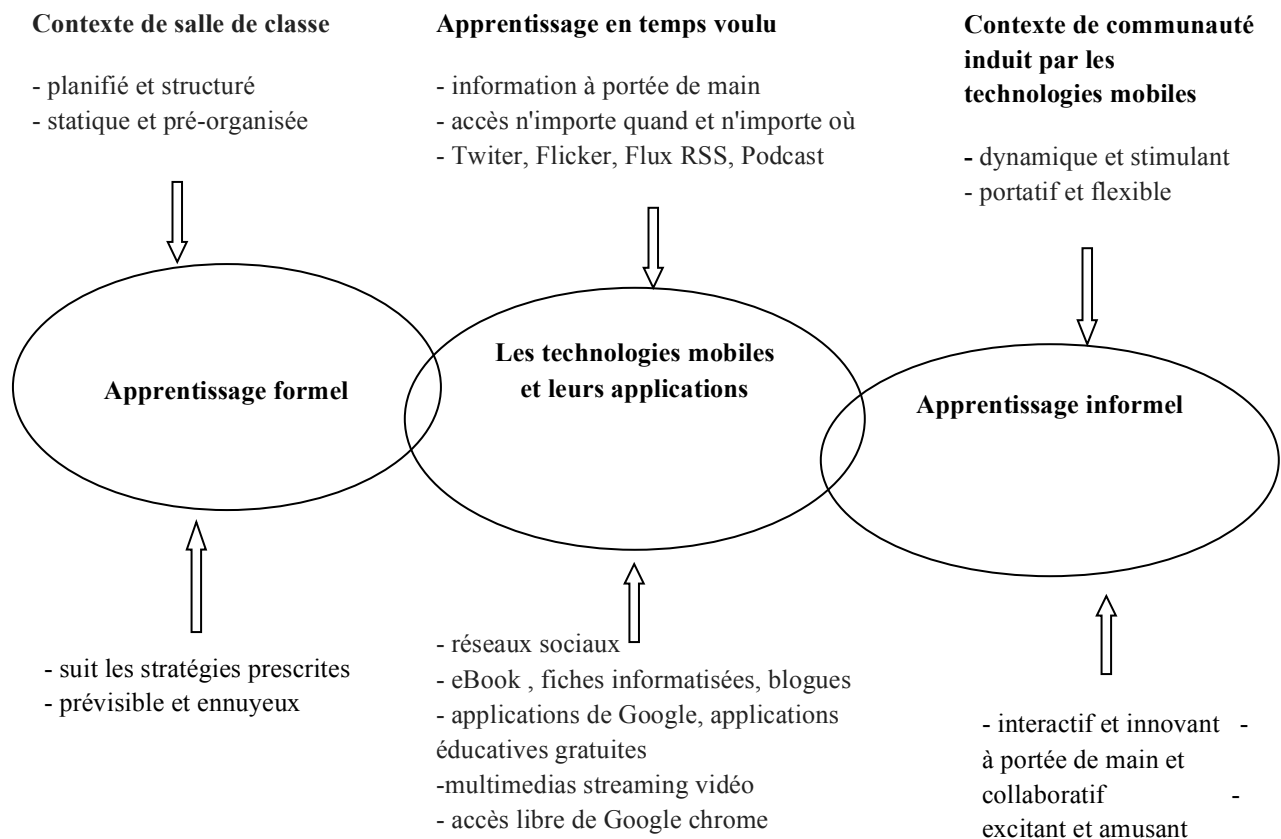


Figure 3. Modèle hybride d'apprentissage collaboratif intégrant les technologies mobiles (adapté de Lai et al., 2013, p.478)

3.2 De la révision en profondeur de la formation des enseignants à l'intégration des technologies dans l'enseignement-apprentissage.

Alors que l'enseignant est la clé de la réussite de l'intégration des technologies dans les systèmes éducatifs (Teo, 2013), plusieurs recherches relèvent le fait que les nouveaux enseignants qui sortent de universités ne sont pas suffisamment préparés à intégrer les technologies dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage (Tordeur, Van Braak, Sang, Voogt, Fisser et Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2012; Sang, Walcke, Van Braak et Tordeur, 2010). Que faudrait-il pour changer la situation? Il nous paraît important de partir des données probantes issues de résultats de recherches ayant porté sur la formation des enseignants à l'intégration des technologies.

À la suite d'une méta-analyse de 19 recherches qualitatives ayant porté sur la formation des enseignants en matière d'intégration des technologies, Tordeur et al. (2012) ont dégagé 12 facteurs autour desquels cette formation devrait s'articuler.

Sept facteurs reliés explicitement à la préparation des enseignants: un alignement de la théorie sur la pratique, des formateurs qui servent de modèles pour les futurs enseignants en intégrant les technologies dans leur enseignement, une réflexion sur les attitudes à l'égard du rôle des technologies en éducation, un apprentissage de la technologie par la conception, une collaboration avec les pairs, un échafaudage d'expériences technologiques authentiques et le passage de l'évaluation traditionnelle à la rétroaction continue.

Cinq facteurs reliés aux conditions requises pour asseoir la formation au niveau institutionnel : le leadership et une planification stratégique de l'intégration de la technologie, une coopération intra et interinstitutionnelles, la formation du personnel enseignant, l'accès aux ressources et les efforts de changement systématique et systémique.

À partir de ces 12 facteurs, les auteurs ont élaboré un modèle (voir figure 2) pour encadrer la préparation des futurs enseignants à l'utilisation des technologies dans leur future carrière. Ce modèle nous apparaît pertinent pour inspirer les responsables des programmes de formation dans la révision des programmes de formation pour intégrer les nouvelles technologies en général et les technologies du web 2.0 en particulier.

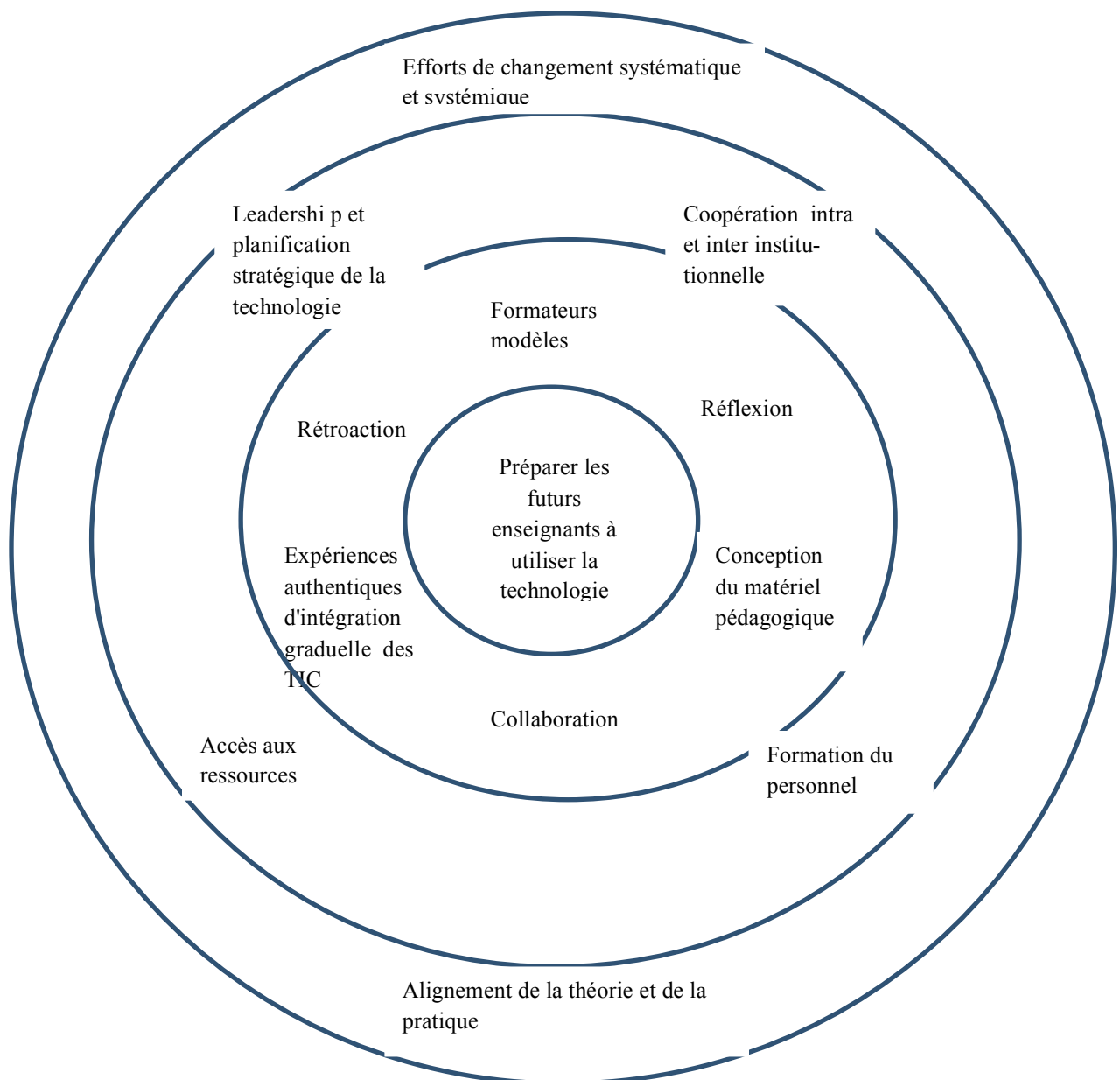


Figure 4. Modèle de formation des futurs enseignants à l'utilisation de la technologie (adapté de Tordeur *et al.*, 2012, p.141)

Conclusion

Nous pouvons affirmer, sans risque de nous tromper, qu'à l'heure où le paysage numérique se transforme constamment, le développement de la compétence numérique des jeunes devrait être au centre des préoccupations des différents acteurs impliqués dans l'éducation, en particulier les institutions de formation des enseignants. Étant donné que la problématique d'intégration des TIC dans les pratiques de formation se pose avec acuité, l'adaptation des programmes actuels de formation devient incontournable. Un des chantiers d'innovations pédagogiques des formateurs de futurs enseignants devrait être consacré au dossier développement de la compétence numérique des futurs enseignants. Il s'agira également accorder une place de choix à l'analyse et à la réflexion critiques des usages des TIC, notamment au regard des facteurs qui les influencent, des apprentissages qu'ils permettent et des enjeux qui y sont reliés. Ceci nous apparaît comme une condition préalable à une possible intégration ultérieure par les futurs enseignants dans leurs pratiques de formation.

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**Looking backward to look forward: The story of interpreting program
renewal through the Internship Seminar**

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Abstract

This chapter records, but also theorizes, the story of program renewal in a Faculty of Education, University of Regina with a specific focus on the Internship Seminar (IS). Under the umbrella of “teaching for a better world,” the theoretical framework draws on the literatures of social justice pedagogy, self-study and collective action theory. Written as a case study, our story of renewal is structured using personal reflective narrative artifacts. By working to change the expectations of the cooperating teachers to accept both the philosophy that informs the renewed teacher education program, and the teachers produced by the change, we are working to transform classrooms where our students are interns, and to influence their future classrooms.

Looking backward to look forward: The story of interpreting program renewal
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An Opening Vignette

Another three-day internship summer seminar comprised of 150 co-operating teachers and pre-service interns has drawn to a close. Our disheveled seminar room is littered with abandoned coffee cups, the chairs deserted in a loosely formed circle, and we are left behind, shuffling our notes, forms and hand-outs. Time to take a deep breath? Not exactly. Most sports teams do not schedule a practice after the big game, but we do. When we embarked on the four-year process to substantively alter a venerated element of our teacher education program, the resistance we anticipated and encountered has made us hyper-vigilant about assessing whether the seminar curriculum we have tried to change is actually changing. Consequently, on this day, we moved from being seminar facilitators to researchers at the ready to analyze the previous days' events.

“How did your ‘teaching for a better world’ session go?” asks Twyla.

“Pretty well. Dexter has done so much reading that he could write a curriculum on anti-oppressive pedagogy, if he weren’t retired.” Val slugs back the last of her cold tea.

“Then let’s look at the feedback. See what the participants have to say this year.”

And so we begin the work of reviewing the evaluation forms that the co-ops and interns completed before leaving for the day. A first reading of the written feedback is encouraging.

“This seems positive, Twyla.”

“It’s easy to forget how far we’ve come. Almost like we need to we need to look backward to look forward.”

In this paper, we address the question, “What drives change in teacher education, and what factors influence the capacity of teacher education programs to make relevant changes?” For four years, we have worked to change the curriculum of an element of our teacher education program, the Internship Seminar (IS), that our faculty colleagues had little interest in changing, and our stakeholders in the field did not want to change (authors, 2010). Why were we drawn to an apparently hopeless enterprise? There were a number of factors that contributed to our willingness to take a calculated risk to intentionally disrupt the respected seminar. First, we were invested in making the ‘changes’ work because of our alliance with anti-oppressive work in teacher education. We trusted that our stakeholders would be open to our ideas because of our work in the field as teachers and researchers had credibility with our stakeholders because of ongoing work we have done in classroom contexts. However; we knew to avoid at all costs any appearance of ‘shoving change down anyone’s throat.’ Furthermore, we contend that without the active informed support of field partners, especially co-operating teachers, reforms made to teacher education programs through a recent renewal are unlikely to be fully realized. In this case study, we interpret several years of active, ongoing interaction with co-operating teachers and internship seminar facilitators, and offer an insiders’ view of the cautious, intentional steps we took to change a key element an established teacher education program.

A Bit of Context to Understand our Change

After a lengthy period of negotiation (1999-2006), the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina embarked on substantive changes to four undergraduate teacher education programs under the rubric of “teaching for a better world.” Several new Education Core Studies (ECS) with a distinct social justice orientation were developed (2007-2009) to realize the changes envisioned by faculty in the renewal process. When the renewed programs were finally

passed by the University Senate, some may have thought that the period of heavy intellectual lifting was complete, leaving the faculty free to devote their considerable energies to researching, teaching and preparing new teachers for a new, more diverse world. It is one thing for a faculty to reach consensus (or an ideological truce) on program renewal, and quite another to convince the vital partners in the field to ‘buy in’ to a new vision for teacher education and the attendant upheaval of field components that no partners wanted to change (Mulholland, Nolan & Salm, 2010). As our research in this case study shows, the renewal process did not end with new courses and revised program templates. Although the renewed program was implemented in 2009, the IS, an integral element bridging the program with the field, had not been adjusted to reflect the philosophical shift in the teacher education programs.

Developed 40 years ago, the IS is a very popular element of our teacher education program. The IS takes the form of a three-day intensive seminar at the beginning of internship which in all programs, is a 16 week practicum in the fall semester. Co-operating teachers, interns, and seminar leaders work together to build a professional working relationship and to prepare for a successful internship. The IS is a joint project of the Faculty, the Saskatchewan Teacher’s Federation (STF), the Ministry of Education, and the school divisions in southern Saskatchewan. Therefore, changes made to the seminar necessarily required the approval of all field partners.

Our account of what factors influence the capacity of teacher education programs to make relevant changes in teacher education is written in two sections. First, we tell the story of how the changes were conceived and implemented. The second section theorizes the initial resistance to changes made to the IS, particularly related to the issues of Social Justice imbedded in every aspect of the renewed program; the negotiations that led to acceptance of the changes;

and finally, the embrace of the renewed program by the faculty's partners in the field. It fell to the faculty members who were responsible for working with cooperating teachers to interpret the changes imagined by the faculty, and to describe what the new vision of teacher education would look like in various classrooms during internship. In other words, the paper is about how we came to live together, productively, in the imagined "better world" contemplated by changes made at the university level.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Under the umbrella of "teaching for a better world," the theoretical framework of this paper draws on the literatures of social justice (anti-oppressive, anti-racist) pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2009; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012), self-study (Hamilton, 2002) and to some extent, collective action theory. Although we do not claim that there is a uniform definition of social justice accepted by the entire faculty, there has been some affinity to Cochrane Smith(2004)) definition:

Social justice approaches in education refer to standpoints and scholarly traditions that actively address the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and isms, recognizing that society is the product of historically rooted, institutionally sanctioned stratification along socially constructed group lines that include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.
(p. 350)

This generous definition provides room for a variety of approaches to providing more just and equitable teacher education and research, and accommodates the spectrum of specific interests taken up by faculty, including us. Furthermore, we concur with Cochran-Smith (2004) who writes: "Prospective teachers need to know from the start that they are part of a larger struggle and that they have a responsibility to reform, not to replicate, standard school practices" (p.24). We posit that the teacher education programs in which we teach are an aspect of the systems that

produce “standard school practices” and should be subject to the same scrutiny. Pre-service teacher education is a vital part of the whole, then, of teaching for social justice more broadly.

We concur with Kumashiro’s (2009) contention that:

Were we define teaching as a process that not only gives students the knowledge and skills that matter in society, but also asks students to examine the political implications of that knowledge and skills, then we should expect that there will always be more to our teaching than what we intended. (p.41)

Furthermore, we see the IS as a bridge between the vision of the faculty and the lived experience of co-operating teachers and interns in preparation for internship and in their careers.

Written as a bound case study (Stake, 2005), our story of the development and implementation of the IS relies upon personal reflections and narrative artifacts (including our ‘lesson plans’ for the pilot internship seminars; the teaching materials developed to train the seminar leaders in the subsequent expanded pilot groups and finally, our reflective field notes). Therefore, a qualitative bound case study is an appropriate methodology to represent the complex work of changing teacher education programs to align with social justice pedagogy (Seidl & Conley, 2009).

We have also used a self-study method, relying on our reflections on experiences of leading the renewed IS over a period of three years to illustrate the theorizing of our actions to revise and implement the IS. In advocating for self-study as a way to understand change, Hamilton (2002) writes, “I discovered that there are many factors involved in the reform of a program that do not arise until you are in the middle of the process” (p.187). She argues that implementing change requires that the key actors pay attention to their use of power in the process, to ensure that their actions are not unjust. In effect, she challenges those engaged in

change to pay attention to their actions and intentions to understand how private theories are put to use in a public way. For that reason we draw on our personal reflections written in real time as points of change in our own understanding of the change we initiated. Journal entries appear in italics with the tag phrase identifying the writer by the initials T or V referencing the authors, Twyla and Val. Former high school teachers, we are currently tenured Associate Professors and have worked in the Faculty of Education for approximately 17 years. Twyla is the Director of the Professional Development and Field Placement Office and Val is the Associate Dean of Student Service and Undergraduate Programs. Supervising interns, participating in internship seminar and participating in program renewal are important parts of our teacher educator identities.

Of particular use in this study is Chaliés, Escalié, Bertone & Clarke's (2012) notion of 'rules of practice,' an interpretation of Wittgenstein's (1996) framework of collective action theory, which we have used to theorize the initial resistance to and more recent adoption of the changes in the renewed IS by the various actors in this case study. The concept of 'ostensive teaching' is particularly valuable for understanding the process we implemented to introduce, interpret and refine the ideas that originated in program renewal in the very 'practical' work of the internship seminar.

Factors Influencing the Capacity for Making Change: Faculty Involvement

A sub-committee of the Program Development Committee was struck to develop a renewed IS; all interested faculty members were invited to participate. A series of monthly meetings began to review the goals of the IS, to make recommendations for changes to reflect the renewed program and render concrete the goals of renewal for a professional audience beyond the faculty.

The sub-committee was comprised of both new and veteran faculty members, some of whom had been involved in the development of the IS in the 1970s, as well as others who had never actually attended a seminar. Consequently, with the gamut of experience and philosophy gathered at the table, there was no shortage of strongly held opinions to complicate, but also enrich, the work of the sub-committee. Discussions continued for two years. In looking back, we were long on ideas, and short on practical ideas to implement change. Describing this arduous consultative process is relevant because it reflects the methodical deliberations used throughout program renewal. Eventually, the calendar determined that the sub-committee's work must conclude. The committee's recommendations included: an arts-based approach to communication; a rotating series of professional development workshops for returning co-operating teachers; an enhanced mentoring model; and a half-day workshop devoted to key social justice concepts, a session that began as "critical reflective practice" and has since become known as "teaching for a better world." In addition, the sub-committee recommended that a number of 'tried and true' IS components be maintained; some elements considered out-of-date or irrelevant were dropped. The responsibility for translating two-years of discussion into a deliverable plan was left to the authors as part of their role in the Professional Development and Field Experience Office. We also agreed to deliver a pilot seminar, collect feedback from participants and report findings to faculty, with a long-term plan to offer the seminar to ten groups in the following year, and ultimately, after training seminar leaders, establish a fully renewed IS aligned with the vision of social justice we had recently adopted.

In summary, once the grand bargain was cast, those faculty members responsible for field liaison were left to clean up after the ideological banquet of ideas delivered through the new program. In effect, the IS became a space where the constituent groups, could wrestle with ideas

with which they were not necessarily familiar to committed to with the same vigor as the faculty members who created the program.

Piloting with Caution: The Renewed Internship Seminar

In retrospect, we see now that we approached the first pilot with trepidation.

Journal entry V: *I am not looking forward to this.*

Journal entry T: *All the co-ops said they enjoyed meeting with other teachers and expected to learn something new at every seminar. Hope we can deliver! No pressure.*

We had already experienced some push-back from seminar leaders but, we assumed that co-operating teachers would resist the changes, too. To some degree, our very cautious approach is a reflection of our personalities. We were also nursing psychological wounds acquired in the struggle to get the renewed program passed through several layers of collegial governance. Although we were confident in our reputations among partners in the field, we were not keen to undermine those relationships either. We were eager to have the new seminar accepted and were invested in making this seminar work.

We piloted the inaugural internship seminar with four pairs of secondary interns and co-operating teachers whom we selected primarily based on our prior experiences working with them. Three of the co-ops had more than 10 years of experience, including multiple experiences mentoring interns, and all were graduates of the University of Regina, either from the B.Ed. or M.Ed. program, or both. In our view, the perspectives and experience of the co-ops provided multiple points of view to consider the renewed internship seminar. Above all, we trusted them to provide candid, incisive and informed feedback.

. In our reflective field notes, we recorded our predications and reactions to the feedback. Based on our extensive experience working with pre-service teachers we were not surprise that

the interns were focused on establishing a good relationship with the co-op and understanding the expectations of the university during internship.

Journal entry V: *The co-ops know how important it is to have the difficult conversations before difficulties arise, probably drawing from their previous experiences as co-ops. The interns are working entirely from what they imagine internship to be.*

However, we noted important differences in the co-ops' expectations.

Journal entry T: *I was not startled by the co-ops' desire to work on developing a professional relationship with the intern during the seminar. We hear that year after year. I wonder what the word 'professional' actually means in this context."*

The co-ops and interns knew that they had been 'hand-picked' so we anticipated benefitting from the residual glow of exclusivity from being the chosen ones. Our working notes from the first two days provide indicators of that effect:

Journal entry T: *The co-ops appear engaged and grateful for having something new to chew on in the IS. No doubt, they are also flattered to have been chosen to be the first teachers to be consulted in this aspect of renewal.*

We also saw (or looked for) indication that they were committed to the process.

Journal entry T: *There's a spirit of optimism at work in the opening sessions. They seem committed to building something positive to prepare them for the work ahead.*

We cannot state the perennial goals of the IS more clearly than that.

In advance of the pilot seminar, we planned the detailed itinerary with scrupulous attention to the sub-committee's recommendations, paying particularly close attention to the inaugural "teacher for a better world" half-day workshop which we anticipated would be the most contentious terrain. These were long days. Ever the compulsive planners, we had broken

each of the three days into 30 minute segments, a plan we shared with the participants on the first day, but which we of course revised each night. We arrived early to fine tune our plans, and stayed late to debrief and revise plans for the following day. Whether this degree of action was necessary is debatable; our fear of the plans failing may have concentrated our efforts to appear as exemplary instructors. What we lacked in confidence we were prepared to compensate with hard work. In retrospect, we may have been too cautious about implementing changes to the seminar, but this is said three years later, after the seminar has been lauded by some, and accepted with guarded enthusiasm by many of the early critics. It turns out that others were ready for a change, too.

Narrative Case Studies: Prompts for Meaningful Conversation

On the second day of seminar case studies were added to the renewed seminar with the intention to enhance communication and contribute to the development of the professional relationship between the co-operating teacher and the intern.. Written as narratives on topics ranging from culturally responsive instruction to classroom management, the case studies represented problems or dilemmas that challenged interns and their co-operating teachers. We included discussion questions to spark conversations. As an example, one case study that provoked animated discussion concerned an intern who suspects that a student about to leave on a field trip had used an illegal drug. The ensuing discussions revealed a range of opinions and values, a spectrum from permissive to authoritarian, and were not predicted by role distributed equally among interns and co-ops.

Journal entry V: *The feedback on the case studies was overwhelmingly positive, perhaps because they saw the cases as useful vehicle to examine teacher values and responsibilities.*

Our intention was to generate meaningful discussion about the role of values in teaching.

The case study element made the cut in the subsequent pilot, and is used to this day. In considering why this element was so well received, we reckon that the accessible language, the lack of easy resolution to the problem described, and the simultaneously provocative and prosaic topics mirrored the experiences teachers encounter on a daily basis. They saw themselves and their world represented in a familiar way in the case study narratives. For the interns, the genre made the dilemmas and problems of an intern's life manageable since case studies focus on one main issue. They not only glimpsed aspects of their imagined futures, but had the chance to talk about the complexity of teachers' decision-making in a safe environment.

In contrast, then, the concluding session of the three days, proved to be less comfortable than the case studies. Titled, Teaching for a Better World, this 3 hour session used a variety of techniques to explore the language and ideology of Social Justice pedagogy, culminating in a jigsaw that required each co-op intern pair to read and discuss one of four selections from *Everyday Antiracism* (Pollock, 2008). We learned from all of the feedback, but by far, the responses to the item asking about the final workshop were most helpful in getting a read on the prevailing attitudes to teaching for social justice. Recall that the participants were all known to us in some professional capacity, and therefore we relied on their knowledge of us as teacher educators to trust us with honest feedback. The feedback fulfilled expectations.

Journal entry V: *I know that this part should be included in future seminars. Learning doesn't have to be comfortable and familiar. What I noticed was a wide range of attitudes, just like in the drug case study. Some said the session was excellent – exactly what was needed. I noticed also that the word engaging was used a lot in the debrief session.*

We think that the verb “to engage” can be used to cover a great deal of terrain in education; in this case, we accept at face value that the participant was absorbed by the content

and ensuing discussion. Several participants told us that they really enjoyed the conversation that developed in the concluding session. We were heartened by the recognition that the interns came to the session with prior knowledge that was valued; however, we have no way of knowing whether this consensus was genuine or what the participants thought we might want to hear. Nevertheless, our intention was to create an opportunity for the interns to be perceived as colleagues and for the seminar to be a meaningful professional development opportunity for the teacher, the interns, and dare we say, the facilitators, too.

We and all of the participants were white and the texts we selected advocated ways to recognize and act in response to racist attitudes, practise, and institutions in Education. Regardless of the tensions created by the session, our perception was that the participants acknowledged that the conversation was important.

Journal entry T: *I was really interested in the tone of the de-brief. Lots of References to deep, heavy and meaningful. Don't know if that's a code word, or a reflection of their opinions. The conversation around 'walking on egg shells' reflected either resistance or tension. Not sure which. Just like with the previous day where there was no 'easy' answer in the case studies, the group didn't jump onto one-way to act in response to the article scenarios.*

We can assume that the topic of institutional racism was not new to the interns, since anti-oppressive and anti-racist pedagogies were embedded in the core courses of the renewed program. Nevertheless, the co-ops did express some concern that the article topics were 'too heavy' for interns. Better to focus on teaching, some suggested. We wonder how much of the expressed concern for the interns' inability to cope with the social justice concepts was motivated by a lack of confidence in the interns' maturity or preparedness or possibly a reflection of the teachers not being open to the 'everyday' critique the articles provided. Race is

a difficult topic in our context. Introducing a ‘heavy topic’ may have led us to the heart of the resistance the faculty has fomented by renewing the program and by changing the beloved IS. We are close to the situation, so it is possible that we are projecting our lived experience through our reactions to the participants’ honest feedback.

Journal entry T: *I don’t think Penny liked doing this activity. She seemed tired, and more interested in chatting about the week. It’s like the default button takes us to technical issues, like classroom management or record keeping, if the tone shifts from ‘light’ to ‘heavy’.*

As we reviewed the feedback at the end of the pilot seminar we were somewhat rankled by even a remnant of resistance; perhaps we were tired, too or being overly sensitive. We imagined that there was a great deal riding on the IS being successful. With the passage of time, we now see this feedback as being extremely useful because subsequent readings of our reflections served to crystallize either our intentions or insights. Hamilton (2002) might describe this experience as “public or private theory” as this passage captures the views of many teachers and seminar facilitators that we encountered in subsequent years of renewal. We noted that our first openly, overt, in-your-face anti-racist pedagogy session was referred to in de-briefing as a “cultural sensitivity session.” Another suggestion was to cover anti-racism earlier in the intern’s program. Leaving it out of the IS confirms our observation that when uncomfortable information or perspectives are raised, those experiencing discomfort divert the responsibility to teacher education. In other words, course work in the regular program should cover the difficult content and spare the cooperating teachers the experience of uncomfortable tension. The move away from technical approaches (Cappello, 2012) to culturally-responsive pedagogies did not represent a change for interns. It is a change for co-ops, the majority of whom were educated in our institution albeit several years ago.

It was evident that much of the content was new to the co-operating teachers in the teaching for a better world session. The discussion around the history of the word Caucasian seemed to uncover some genuine surprise, as did the Bell article on misinterpretation of cultural norms (Pollock, 2008).

Journal entry V: *It still seemed like some preferred to talk about classroom management and lesson planning, and found the talk about cultural difference as separate from 'real teaching.'*

From the feedback in general, and in the response of the interns in the session, we saw that the topic of institutional racism was a concern to them, and furthermore, that they saw culturally responsive pedagogy as a form of classroom management. What we apparently achieved (but did not necessarily intend to) was to disrupt the power relations of the intern-co-operating teacher relationship, by providing a safe environment to wrestle with one of the most serious, and contentious issues facing contemporary teachers, both in-service and pre-service as equals.

Apparently the cooperating teachers did not fully appreciate that the “fairly deep topic” of racism in schools was not new information for the interns. When we debriefed the jigsaw activity some of the participants drew our attention to the disparity in reading levels of the articles. We had chosen the readings based on the participants’ teaching assignments, but our failure to pay attention to the complexity of the texts was experienced as an inequity. Hamilton (2002) would identify this as unjust behaviour on our part; she writes, “As visible change agents, white scholars must ask questions and confront issues that are too easily overlooked in a privileged environment” (p.187) Few environments are more privileged than a university campus, but we had also made an error in judgment, not least because equity was a central theme

of the session. Our choices had advantaged some pairs over others by making some look like less able readers than others. In a setting where high-level literacy is de facto a form of currency, we had prevented some from having equal access to power.

Journal entry V: *I'm glad we did this activity at the end so we could speak more freely. The intimacy of the group was partly from having a pre-existing relationship, but also because of the work we did over the three days.*”

But the fact remains that we were afraid to start with the difficult content, the part of the seminar we expected to be fraught with tension. From our reflections at that time, it is not clear whether we considered waiting for day three to take up racism in schools because we expected to trade on established relationships in the first two days or whether we were simply nervous about adding something contentious to the seminar . The previous 40 years had offered a diet of ‘neutral’ activities geared towards enhanced communication and relationship-building. That said, the journal entry suggesting that on day three participants “could speak more freely” was certainly borne out in our observations then and in the subsequent iterations of the seminar which followed. The discussions have been intense, somewhat heated, and raw. It seems safe to say that the co-operating teachers’ attitudes have ranged from open acceptance, to awareness of the anti-oppressive approach to racial issues that we named and were advocating, and to covert subversion. Significantly, no one suggested that we drop the ‘teaching for a better world’ session, however troubling, and good suggestions have been offered to improve its structure. Specifically, we have been encouraged repeatedly to show ways to teach a lesson on social justice. Although we believe that the session we developed does precisely that, which is to show how a teacher might approach the topic of institutional racism using co-operative learning methods, the feedback has served to get us thinking more deeply about an important purpose of

the IS apart from relationship building. Co-operating teachers, we have discovered, have an appetite to “see” anti-oppressive teaching in action. We learned that when we were told by participants to, in effect, name it. So we own it.

Looking Forward

In the subsequent seminars following the first pilot, and with the benefit of feedback and analysis from our partners, ten groups of four to five pairs of co-ops and interns were engaged in round two of piloting the revised “renewed” internship seminar. The seminar leaders invited to participate were largely experienced with a record of success among peers, co-ops and interns. The authors again lead one seminar. For the most part the seminar leaders embraced the renewed IS in good faith, which is not to say that there were no glitches. Suspicions lingered, and rumors were fueled by first-hand accounts that the university ‘didn’t teach them how to teach.’ No deep analysis was acquired to understand that critique; a belief, a private theory, was at work, that we had abandoned the technical approach.

In the large-group debriefing sessions, as the figure heads of the new seminar, we were challenged by other seminar leaders about the emphasis on race, and lack of attention to gender and class issues. We took up this critique seriously, as evidenced by a more broadly based anti-oppressive approach to achieving social justice principles in succeeding seminars. We infused the broadest vision of diversity we could translate into each new version of the IS curriculum. We considered taking as our title for this paper a comment from one of the debriefing sessions in which queries regarding ‘ableism’ surfaced. One facilitator agreed that the group had been stumped by that one, and said, “I think it means giving the handicapped a leg up.” We want to be very clear that our intention is not to reiterate this comment in a derisive, mocking way; rather, we see this as a tangible indicator of where we started in this process of altering the scope of the

IS, of where we were before we started ‘looking backward to look forward.’ As we eluded in the opening vignette, when immersed in the work of implementation, it is easy to lose sight of the beginning of a process as each milestone is met, hence the necessity of reflection.

Seminar leaders are an integral component of teacher education at the University of Regina, valued for their experience, knowledge and willingness to work with pre-service teachers in schools and in the IS. Essentially, they operationalized the directives of the faculty in a small group structure during seminar. The vast majority of seminar leaders are retired teachers, although recently an effort has been made to attract classroom teachers, including recent graduates in the early years of their career, to act as leaders. Many teachers say that acting as a coop and participating in the seminar is extremely valuable professional development. Others report that they not only learn how much they know (how much of their tacit knowledge is acquired) but also how much they learn from the interns. That’s not peculiar to this teacher education program (widely reported in the literature). What *is* peculiar is the opportunity for the teacher and intern, with the guidance of experienced facilitators, to spend three days away from the classroom and its attendant distractions to focus on developing their professional relationship.

Looking Backward to Look Forward: Making Sense of Program Changes

We have come to see that part of the operationalizing of the theory which informed the changes to our teacher education programs required translation into practice for interns, co-operating teachers and facilitators. We were determined to develop a way to make the language and ideology of the academic world part of the discourse of the field. The IS was a site of translation. Ideas that rock the academic world may not cause a ripple in the schools. We do not suggest that the field is backward or ill-informed, but we are acknowledging that some bridging

was required to implement the ideas advocated by faculty, which necessarily required disruption of what Kumashiro (2009) has called the case “against common sense” in ways that were accessible, and acceptable to the partners in the field who ultimately live with our decisions in real contexts. Cooperating teachers, after all, upon whom we depend to deliver the 16 week internship mandated by our programs, had to be conversant with ways of approaching teaching that were unfamiliar to them based on *their own previous* experience in the program. Many may have come to the seminar feeling confident and competent in their professional knowledge and skills, their practical “know how” and experienced discomfort when they recognized that the familiar seminar had shifted, and that even more importantly, the program that informed the seminar had changed even more significantly. We continue to see the IS as a factor in achieving change in teacher education in our context.

Upon reflection, we see that the challenge our original participants leveled after experiencing the renewed seminar, that ‘the social justice stuff’ should have been acquired during the degree and not tacked on at the end, was justified. Our initial defensive attitude faded when we knew we were faced with a complex challenge of cultural translation. Chaliés, Escalié, Bertone & Clarke’s (2012) notion of ‘ostensive teaching’ is defined as how “trainers teach the meaning of professional acts and actions that are presented as exemplary. ... the hope is that they establish for each stated rule a ‘meaningful connection’ between the concept and its practiced use” (Chaliés, Escalié, Bertone & Clarke, 2012, p.7) . Through reconstructing *the story*, we came to see that the model of learning ‘at work’ in the IS began “to move past simple acculturation” (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008, p.316), to build capacity for change in the classrooms, school districts and *even* the university where new teachers are educated.

First, the participants saw the primary goal of the seminar as ‘intern and co-op bonding’

and the ‘teaching for a better world’ session was seen as a last-minute effort to inculcate anti-oppressive attitudes and understandings upon the interns. Teachers were inclined to believe that what may have been new to them was also new to the interns, when in fact the pre-service teachers in the renewed program are immersed in and taught explicitly about these ideas over four years. Second, perhaps we had been too subtle, too respectful of the perceived prior knowledge of the co-operating teachers. We expected the session to be as beneficial to the co-ops, and a recap of familiar ideas for the interns. We did not fully realize the work necessary to manage that gap, which in turn, we see as a significant factor in “the capacity of teacher education programs to make relevant changes.”

Likewise, the seminar leaders were not necessarily invested in the change the faculty had struggled to create, particularly if their previous experiences had been affirming. For them, the IS in the late summer and early fall, when the weather is beautiful and the year still full of promise, may have been experienced as a reunion, a summer camp, or trip down memory lane – an opportunity to relive their glory days as teachers (the majority of facilitators are retired) and for those who’ve acted as facilitators for more than 20 years, an opportunity to reminisce. The affective domain was violated in other words. Therefore, although the faculty was the ‘driver’ of the change, full participation of our stakeholders and adjunct partners continues to be required in order to fully realize the major work we undertook to change teacher education almost ten years ago.

We reject that notion that the new program is more concerned with ‘brain-washing’ than with ‘learning to teach.’ Attending to other factors than the dominant narrative of neutrality in schools is part of the larger conversation that faculty members, as public intellectuals and knowledge workers, must necessarily participate. Hamilton (2002), who states, “Experience may

be a powerful teacher, but it reinforces or contradicts private, not public theory.” (p. 179) is useful in this analysis. Our devotion to changing the IS to reflect the renewed program is recognition that for the coursework of teacher education to garner the respect of stakeholders it is necessary for the learning to be reaffirmed in the field experience. In other words, if the coop is not on board with the approach, the work of the program can be undone rapidly as the new teacher is socialized to however ‘reality’ is constructed in the field school.

The IS is part of a collective mythology of success and commitment to public education. What the new program seeks to do is prepare teachers for a different world, the microcosm of which is represented by the contemporary classroom. We struggle to move from the technical base that so many stakeholders have valued, to build on that structure to create highly adaptive generation of inclusive educators ready to meet the complex challenges of the globalized world.

While the internship seminar has never been simply about interns ‘acquiring the rules of practice’ and building successful professional relationships (Trautwein & Ammerman, 2010), we came to see through intensive self-study practices that the renewed IS is about supporting the cooperating teachers to understand and to accept the changes in the renewed teacher education program. By transforming the expectations of the cooperating teachers and by helping them to accept the vision of teaching that the renewed program advocates and of the teachers it produces we are opening up new spaces for transformative teaching. In the IS we are working to transform classrooms where our students are interns, and to influence the classrooms in their future.

“Our program” is not the only one in Canada that has responded to the complexities of demographic change with comprehensive program renewal. Most teacher educators recognize that a different kind of teacher preparation is needed to support new teachers (Kutsyuruba, 2012; Lombardozzi & Casey, 2008) to teach in schools with increasingly diverse student populations.

Even seemingly sacred practices such as the field experience are subject to interrogation, too (Spooner, Flowers, Lambert, & Algozzine, 2008). Our study is set in the larger context of the change surrounding contemporary teacher education. The first graduating class of our renewed program graduated in the spring of 2013. We have already begun to see some residual effects of the changes we began to implement in the fall of 2009. For example, several graduate students are currently engaged in research related to teaching for social justice, sparked, at least in part, by the changes they experienced in our renewed program. We are all, always, in the process of “teaching for a better world.” Without the active informed support of field partners, especially co-operating teachers, reforms made to teacher education programs are unlikely to be realized. In this case, several years of active, ongoing interaction with co-operating teachers and internship seminar facilitators was necessary to launch the renewed teacher education program. Metaphorically speaking, if we abandon newly minted pre-service teachers at the factory gate, the existing mechanisms will dictate how the work will be done, how ideas will be operationalized in schools.

A Return to the Opening Vignette

Fall 2013 We’re tearing down large sheets of chart paper used in an earlier activity, and reviewing the index cards used for a free-write about incidents of oppression either observed or experiences that were used to spark the opening activity in the “Teaching for a Better World” session that had just concluded.

“ Do we really need to review the evaluation forms now or can we wait until Monday?”

“Let’s wait. We can get started on responding to Question Four for CATE, though. Now is the time to think about “what factors influence the capacity of teacher education programs to make relevant changes?”

“The factors must include energy, tenacity, vision and ...”

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Three lenses on teacher education programme change

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Abstract

Through three lenses, this paper presents and explores factors that influence, promote and drive change in teacher education programs at a particular university in Quebec. External and internal governance factors are discussed from reference to criteria for program design and accreditation to institutional procedures and constraints that promote or constrain change. The need to be open and transparent in communication and maintain responsive relationships with the field are presented as an essential component for positive and relevant change. Finally the influence and effect of faculty leadership, priorities and support are discussed as a necessary component for programs to have the freedom to evolve and change. These components interact and create a synergy and capacity that allows for and sustains program change.

Three lenses on teacher education programme change

“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” Winston Churchill

The drive for change in teacher education and the factors that influence the capacity for change are diverse. Change can be reactive or proactive, can be in response to internal and external pressures and can be subdued or nurtured in any given climate. No matter the origin though, as Churchill’s adage suggests, change is a necessary force if we are to move toward our goals. As teacher educators, we are charged with providing society with competent, prepared, effective, engaged and caring teachers. With excellence in teacher education as our key goal, in order to operationalize this and to provide society with exceptional teachers, we continually seek to improve our teaching education programs. In this paper, employing a narrative case study approach (Creswell, 2007; Snow, 2009) using our own teacher education programs as examples, we discuss through three different lenses what in our experience has driven, or continues to drive, change in these programs. First, with respect to governance and institutional factors, we provide an overview of the opportunities and constraints that change can provide. Second, we discuss how the state of the field drives change and is key to our implementation of relevant revisions and responses. Finally, we narrate how a climate that fosters and encourages creativity can support innovation and improvement, and therein engender positive change. We suggest that positive interactions and connections between these levels are essential to achieving and sustaining program change (Fullan, 2006).

The Influence of Governance and Institutional Factors

As our mission falls squarely within the realm of public service, we are responsible to a variety of governance and institutional bodies – both internal and external to the university.

External Governance

Education and the teaching profession are central to our society for developing moral and ethical citizens and for advancing knowledge. In countries such as Canada, with public and mandatory schooling, the criteria as to who can be a teacher fall under the purview of each province (Grimmett, 2009; Nuland, 2011). In our context in the province of Quebec, the design and delivery of teacher education programs is overseen by three governing bodies – the university, the ministry, and the accreditation body. This creates a rather complex governance structure which can both constrain and precipitate change. While universities in Canada are generally autonomous in terms of program content for professional programs, including teacher education programs, accreditation authority rests with provincial governments – resulting in an external degree of control (Connelly & Clandinin, 2001). Below we highlight the main directives from the perspective of these formal bodies, which have influenced or demanded change to teacher education programs at a particular university in Quebec.

Prior to the fall of 2012, the ministry of education in Quebec (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS)²) was responsible for all levels of educational institutions from primary and secondary schooling to CEGEP³ and university level programs. In the fall of 2012, the provincial government at the time (*Le Parti Québécois*) divided the MELS into two distinct ministries: the MELS, which was responsible for primary and secondary education; and the newly created Ministère d'Enseignement supérieur, Recherche, Science et Technologie (MESRST)⁴ which was responsible for post-secondary education. As teacher education programs

² <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/en/home/>

³ Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel. An optional college system unique to Quebec, at a level between secondary school and university.

⁴ <http://www.mesrst.gouv.qc.ca/>

are offered at the university level, these programs temporarily fell under the jurisdiction of the newly formed MESRST. However as the MELS is still responsible for teacher certification (as it pertains to elementary and secondary schooling), candidates, upon completion of their accredited teacher education programs, are recommended by the university to the MELS for teacher certification⁵.

The MELS-mandated school curriculum, the Quebec Education Program (QEP) (Quebec (province), 2001, 2004), implemented in 2001, is currently in place at all grade levels. The QEP is a competency-based curriculum, with subject-specific as well as cross-curricular competencies, and broad areas of learning which apply across curricular programs and levels. The MELS also mandates 12 professional competencies (Quebec (Province), Martinet, Raymond & Gauthier, 2001) which are to be developed within all university programs leading to teacher certification. These professional competencies, in tandem with the QEP competencies, determine to a large extent the direction and content of teacher education courses and programs in Quebec.

Until recently, the only path to teacher certification in Quebec was through four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs. In 2007, mainly in response to teacher shortages in mathematics and science subject areas, and a large number of uncertified teachers on contract in the province's schools, the MELS sanctioned the development of 60-credit graduate level teacher education programs leading to teacher certification at the secondary level. In keeping with the mandate of these new programs, admission was restricted to certain disciplinary areas (mathematics and science & technology) and to candidates who currently had a teaching contract. A number of universities in Quebec created Master's level programs within these

⁵ On February 27, 2015 the MELS and MESRST were reorganized by the Liberal government into one ministry: ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche <http://www.mesrs.gouv.qc.ca/ministere-de-leducation-de-lenseignement-superieur-et-de-la-recherche/>

parameters. At our university we delayed our option to create this program until the disciplinary constraints were relaxed. In 2010 we launched our Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (MATL) program for all subject areas at the secondary school level (see Riches, Benson & Wood, 2013). Shortly after our first cohort started in this program, the MELS removed the condition that students admitted to the program needed to have a teaching contract. As of 2011, our MATL program is offered unrestricted. As the above program evolution illustrates, the length and entry points of our teacher education programs are set by the ministry and provide the structures within which we are obliged to operate and to effect change.

As professional programs, all programs leading to teacher certification are also overseen by an arms-length committee of the MELS – the Comité d’agrément des programmes de formation à l’enseignement (CAPFE)⁶. CAPFE’s mandate is to monitor Quebec’s teacher education programs and to recommend accreditation of said programs to the MELS and, as of 2012 also to the MESRST. In fact, the split of the MELS into MELS and MESRST precipitated a discussion across the education milieu as to which Ministry CAPFE should answer to. Currently, the practice is that CAPFE makes recommendations to the MELS who is then required to consult with the MESRST in situations involving higher education.

CAPFE’s main concerns, with respect to the design and content of university teacher education programs leading to certification, are that these programs incorporate, embody and demonstrate the following aspects in order to be recommended for accreditation: 1) evidence of the effective development and assessment of the 12 professional competencies in program courses and field experiences; 2) implementation of *l’approche programme* (integrated program

⁶ <http://www.capfe.gouv.qc.ca/>

approach)⁷ at all levels; 3) positive and effective relationships with the field; and 4) appropriate preparation for the teaching of the QEP. The decision to grant or renew accreditation is based on university-generated reports in response to CAPFE guidelines, followed by CAPFE site visits designed to gather candid and first-hand feedback and information from stakeholders involved in the programs. This process results in a thorough assessment of the programs – and in addition to providing the basis for accreditation, also makes recommendations for program improvement and change with the expectation that these be underway and/or achieved by the next re-accreditation process. Recommendations for our university following our most recent re-accreditation visit in Fall 2012 included the need for: a clearer demonstration of how the 12 professional competencies are developed and assessed through courses; better and concerted efforts with respect to course and program coordination; and inclusion of part-time instructors in the conversations and decisions regarding programs. Overall, we were charged with more effectively achieving *l'approche programme* – not a small order. While writing extensively about our efforts to realize these recommendations is beyond the scope of this paper – a few examples provided here demonstrate how this aspect of governance can effect change. Firstly, recommendations made by the accreditation body carry weight and are taken seriously by the faculty, thus the motivation (Fullan 2006; Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005) to make the changes necessary was in place. We have experienced, to some extent, a re-prioritization of faculty responsibilities giving teaching in our teacher education programs a higher profile. A curriculum mapping project, with a view to strengthening the quality of sequencing and eliminating overlap in our programs, has been completed providing a starting point for better coordination and

⁷ Fostering a horizontal approach to curriculum rather than a vertical one *l'approche programme* requires that instructors of individual elements within a program work together rather than functioning as separate cells delivering material. The emphasis is on a 'program approach' rather than on the delivery of self-contained units or courses.

collaboration. Workshops on the inclusion and assessment of professional competencies in courses, and on competency-based professional portfolios have allowed opportunities for interaction between colleagues and promoted a better understanding of how to weave the professional competencies into all aspects of teaching and learning. With a view to achieving our mandate of better and increased communication, collaboration and coordination across our programs, we have recently assigned each and every faculty member to a disciplinary ‘pod’ (e.g. literacies, foundations and philosophies, second language education). These ‘pods’ are already contributing to further semester, year and program coordination. While none of these initiatives and projects is new, the accreditation process gave us the mandate to motivate and the capacity to effect change (Fullan, 2006; Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005) in these regards.

Internal Governance

Situated within university structures, teacher education programs benefit from the governance, administration and academic structure provided by the institution. At the university under discussion, a number of internal governance issues affect (or constrain) change in teacher education. The approval process for course and program change consists of approximately six or seven levels. For administrative purposes, course scheduling timetables need to be submitted at least a year in advance. This means that planning for change needs to be deliberate and with a view to the future. More recently, budgetary restrictions have limited course and program change with an unofficial moratorium on course creation. Functioning within our governance structure often entails reconciling competing priorities.

Scholarship and research in teacher education provides a framework within which we can imagine change and go beyond what exists. Seminal volumes have reported on models of excellence in teacher education (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006)

and often echo feedback from our various stakeholders in teacher education. While we endeavor to be responsive to stakeholders' feedback which we recognize as key to gauging the effectiveness of our teacher education programs (Benson & Riches, 2006; Riches & Benson, 2011), we are at times constrained and limited in our ability to respond. In many cases, this feedback has proven to be a rich source of suggestions, ideas and momentum for innovation and change (Riches & Benson, 2010). In other cases, we have needed to draw on our reserves of patience. For example, while matching admissions numbers with available field placement and employment possibilities are priorities for program administrators, admissions quotas at the university level are tied to budgetary considerations and constraints and cannot necessarily be adjusted. Another example is our efforts to implement a letter of intent to improve the B.Ed. admissions process. While approved at the highest level of governance, the implementation was stalled for two years at the IT level due to budgetary cutbacks causing delays in making the necessary system changes to online admissions procedures. Happily, at the time of writing, a letter of intent is part of the admissions process for the fall of 2015.

Interestingly, the mandate we were given to create our new MATL program with a clean slate, provided the opportunity to incorporate key elements of exemplary program design that have sometimes eluded us in the management of our larger and more entrenched undergraduate programs. The following are a few examples of these inclusions. In keeping with other graduate level programs, application criteria include a letter of intent and reference letters – allowing for more selective admissions. A lower admissions quota has allowed the creation and sustainment of cohort groups from program launch in 2010. Anecdotal evidence from students and instructors alike support the benefits of this model (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). The importance of preparing teachers to be action-researchers in their own classrooms (Kitchen &

Stevens, 2008) is addressed in a more robust manner through the requirement of a capstone project. Finally, the manner of program delivery - certain courses scheduled in the evening to accommodate students teaching on contract – has naturally allowed the development of ‘embedded methods’ courses, successfully bridging the theory to practice gap (Goodnough et al., 2012).

The State of the Field

Professional programs by their very nature involve a relationship with the targeted professional field or context. Teacher education programs specifically need to cultivate and maintain strong relationships with school partners in order to carry out the practical component of their programs. Any program change in this regard needs to be both responsive and transparent.

Capacity. The reality or state of the field (what the field needs and can assume) is a major driver of change in teacher education. Within the institution it is the Office of Student Teaching (OST), responsible as it is for securing field placements for pre-service teachers across the B.Ed. and Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (MATL) Programs, that acts as the critical liaison between programs and the field, and more broadly, serves as the first line of communication between the field partners and the university. This balancing act is common to field placement offices across universities and other professional programs – and while we all share common challenges such as a lack of resources and a changing student demographic, so too do we all experience our own unique set of challenges that reflect our particular contexts. In the following paragraphs, significant challenges facing the OST are presented, and the responses to those challenges are shared as a picture emerges of the current state of the field.

Language. The OST serves six 4-year undergraduate programs from Kindergarten / Elementary to Secondary (including cross-sector specialty programs such as Music and Teaching English as a Second Language) – all of which have a field component of a minimum 800 hours spread over four field experiences, one per year. Since 2010 the OST has also been responsible for two 350 hour minimum MATL Program internships in which there are multiple secondary disciplinary streams. Our pre-service teachers, whether undertaking an undergraduate field experience or a graduate internship, are required to demonstrate acceptable levels of attainment of the MELS-mandated 12 professional competencies in order to succeed in their program of study and be recommended for teacher certification. In 2013-2014 the OST was responsible for finding placements for approximately 1600 pre-service teachers (of which 120 were in the MATL Program) - said figure is projected to reach 1900 by 2017-2018. Declining enrolment in Quebec's English schools (Bourhis & Foucher, 2012), and the resulting shrinking number of English schools means that the single biggest challenge facing the OST is that of securing sufficient placements for our pre-service teachers. Further to this, French immersion programming in Quebec is ever increasing, thus transforming the professional/language requirements for beginning teacher professionals. Currently in Montreal-area school boards, for example, almost 90% of elementary schools are French immersion schools (from Early French Immersion to Bilingual programs). Our pre-service teachers are asked to self-report whether or not they are comfortable teaching in French (approximately 35% respond 'yes') in order to help us secure sufficient student teaching placements . As the delivery of French immersion programming is more than simply teaching subject matter in French (Lyster, 2007), this has had a backwash effect on revisions to our teacher education programs. We have recently re-instituted and are very actively promoting our 'Pédagogie de l'Immersion Française' option in our B.Ed.

Kindergarten and Elementary program. Furthermore, as French Immersion programming is also increasing at the secondary school level, we are actively investigating ways to infuse our teacher education programs leading to certification at the secondary level with French Immersion pedagogy. Finally, we have recently developed a 15-credit graduate certificate in French Immersion teaching, designed as professional development for certified teachers. This is a multi-faceted challenge in that while many of our students see the advantage to speaking a second language and the necessity of being able to work in French in Quebec, the vast majority of our pre-service teachers lack the confidence to be assessed in a French language field placement. Still others do not plan on staying in Quebec and feel strongly that as they are enrolled in an English institution that certifies them to teach in English in Quebec, they are entitled to English field placements.

The OST is responding to these challenges by placing students in cohorts in host schools, and pairing students with varying levels of French language skill to support one another in the field. The OST works closely with schools to encourage opportunities for student teachers to do more solo planning and teaching in English language classrooms and more co-planning and teaching in French immersion classrooms. As well, the OST works closely with its French immersion partner schools to ask for their support and understanding around a pre-service teacher's developing French language competency. Another important and more recent undertaking of the OST has been to work closely with recruitment efforts to make sure that the requirement for French across Quebec schools is better understood by potential applicants to our programs.

Mentors. By the end of the 2013-2014 academic year the OST will have called upon the mentoring skills of 1026 cooperating or associate teachers and 110 university field supervisors in 325 schools within Quebec, and 20 schools exterior to the province. These host schools include

alternative schools, adult sector schools, schools in hospitals and psychiatric facilities – and schools so far flung as to require that the OST find, train and communicate with university supervisors from that community. Within the past 5 years in Quebec there has been a flood of teachers leaving the profession as they reached retirement age. School boards, reeling from severe cuts to their budgets, are not replacing every departing teacher. The current face of the profession is that of a younger teacher, likely with fewer than the requisite 5 years of full time teaching that qualifies them to act as a cooperating teacher, working on a contract of less than 100% workload – teaching larger classes and in subject areas for which they were not prepared. These novice teachers, themselves deserving of early career mentoring , are being urged by their school boards and schools administrators to take on student teachers – often several times in a year to help support Quebec universities with teacher preparation programs – all of which vie for classrooms and cooperating teachers for their pre-service teachers .

The OST's response to this landscape has been to seek ever more responsive ways to work in supportive collaboration with its partner schools. OST field supervisors (many themselves retired master teachers and school administrators) are tasked with helping school administrators schedule student teachers in their school to optimize the experience for the entire community of the school whilst minimizing disruption. Experienced cooperating teachers are invited to mentor less experienced colleagues, while school administrators are asked to oversee neophyte cooperating teachers by sitting in on evaluations and signing off on formative and summative assessment reports. The OST works diligently to provide all necessary communication and updated materials and specific guidelines to the field to enable both veteran and novice cooperating teachers, and supervisors, to understand and flourish in their critical role in the preparation of the next generation of educators. Despite severely limited resources, the OST

offers two professional development workshops per year on topics suggested by and for stakeholders in the field. Since 2012, the OST has collaborated with another English Quebec university teacher education program to develop and facilitate several such workshops. This collaboration will continue and evolve as it has resulted in larger events, a richer exchange of ideas, a cohered message of the place and importance of the field component of pre-service teacher preparation in our respective institutions, and a better grasp and appreciation of why we also choose to do things a little differently.

Transitions. In just the past five years, Québec's post-secondary institutions have seen an increase of 143% in students with learning disabilities, attention deficits, mental health issues, or with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2012). The OST has seen a subsequent upsurge in the number of pre-service students with disclosed and undisclosed disabilities placed in field experiences and internships which are largely evaluated by school partners who may or may not be familiar with, or receptive to, the needs of these students, who often encounter seemingly insurmountable hurdles when placed in these professional environments. This phenomenon is mainly due to a paucity of information regarding how best to accommodate these more nuanced and flexible skills in the field, if at all (Flanagan, Benson & Fovet, 2014). There is an irony at play here in that schools in Quebec embrace inclusion - and are proactive and supportive of children and youth who present a spectrum of exceptionalities. The OST however, is engaging in more frequent and difficult conversations with critical partners with regard to student teachers who present with disabilities. In response the OST has found it both essential and informative to deepen and expand its collaboration with the Office for Students with Disabilities in order to better serve student teachers, the field and by extension, learners in schools. The OST has also been instrumental in

designing and facilitating workshops for pre-service teachers with disabilities, and their allies, on transitioning to the field. These workshops have garnered attention and support across the university – and are now offered to students in other professional programs with a field component. The OST is also keenly aware of, and proactive in responding to, the requirement for the provision of professional development within school communities to integrate and support increasing numbers of student teachers who present with a range of disability and difference (Watkinson & Chalmers, 2008).

An Evolving Picture. In the endeavour of teacher education it is often the field that spurs on the evolution of stronger, more responsive and more effective programs. Of course, there must be a willingness to listen, to be open-minded and open-hearted. There must also be the courage to accept that there will always be complexities and challenges associated with the critical partnership between the program, the field and the governance structures that instigate change.

A Climate for Change

Change as a concrete entity can be difficult to ‘manage’ (Mintzberg, 2010). Often, despite an organization’s best efforts at strategic planning, intended outcomes can be elusive, belated, or entirely lacking. Conversely, in our experience we have also observed in very concrete ways that change can be engendered in a context in which the alignment of contributing factors could not have been predicted or planned. In this section of the paper we map out the nascent features of one such instance of momentum-building toward eventual change in our teacher education programs. We have found that – at least in this particular university context – change has come about in a context resembling the ‘perfect storm’. As a number of specific precursor factors or actions came together creating a type of momentum, each additional factor supported, fuelled, and we believe eventually compounded the positive force of each of the others. As a result, a

Department, and indeed an entire Faculty, has found itself rerouted in a positive way. These factors will be identified here and briefly described. Our goal is not to highlight any one factor specifically, but rather to identify that change has come about as a result of a string of pearls, and as this string - pieces of the puzzle - comes together, we anticipate its potential to effect positive, permanent change in a holistic and organic manner.

Priorities

An administration does, of course, set the tone and course for a Faculty, and this is manifest in different ways, from the specific articulation of strategic directions, to prioritizing a given discipline through things like program development. It is also present in the values reflected in the physical space itself. In our case, for an extended period of time our Faculty of Education had been overseen by an administration with a very strong science focus. Although we are a Faculty with a strong teacher education and research component, and an impressive range of teaching and scholarship initiatives in the socio-cultural and arts spheres, core decisions around priorities repeatedly lined up in favour of and support of the sciences in a range of ways, from the disproportionate allocation of meagre human resources, to the general prioritizing of focus and support to the sciences. While many of these decisions took place behind the scenes, as in the tours of science research labs offered to philanthropists interested in supporting school success, some were more visible, for example the removal of all exhibitions of student art, with the argument that these were not reflective of the Faculty's mission.

Leadership: A Core Factor in Pre-empting Change

The ecosystem that is a Faculty of Education led as indicated above by its senior administration is, like all delicate webs, particularly vulnerable to change at the helm. In this instance, the top administration changed suddenly and unexpectedly. Although not clearly

understood at the time, this precipitous change in a key administrative element was the first of several factors contributing to the creation of the “perfect storm” environment. It was also the critical initial step in launching the course for change.

Emergence of the Arts Education and Healing Research Group (AEHR)

Other parallel factors then began to take shape. In a climate of introspection, an un-related phenomenon was building. At a spring retreat whose goal was to connect colleagues around shared yet previously unacknowledged and unexplored research interests, and define emerging core themes, it became decidedly apparent that a large number were interested in the arts in some form or another. From visual artists to writing specialists to arts methodology experts (working, for example, with photo voice, collage, or theatre) to science educators – a significant number iterated a strong commitment to working with the arts in some form in their teaching and research. In an effort to regain disciplinary equilibrium in a Department bereft of all but minimal visible evidence of the creative, a number of colleagues expressed core interest in the arts. Through this process, a typical administrative activity resulted unexpectedly in a group being formalized as an entity. The spontaneous gathering of like-minded individuals, coming together to discern shared research questions, shared interests, and above all to support each other and the Faculty, the Arts, Education, and Healing Research group was born. As this group met regularly over the following months, ideas flowed in support of ways that the Faculty could renew its commitment to supporting teaching, research, and community initiatives in the arts. These included, not surprisingly, a range of symbolic yet significant acts such as the reclaiming of all bulletin boards in the building for the presentation of art. Plans emerged to refurbish and relocate these to central locations for the display of visual work from undergraduate and graduate classes. Other suggestions included moving a piano into the lobby to foster impromptu music events

(thus liberating the piano from its two-year hibernation in a closet after the music room was allocated to a top science researcher for expanded lab space). These and other such initiatives are presently in the final stages of planning and will be implemented in a matter of weeks.

Space Reallocation

Although space is always a scarce resource, particularly on the urban campuses of major universities, the tensions between space for different types of research, teaching, and presentation of scholarly outcomes in our context was particularly contentious. As noted above, science took clear precedence over arts in our Faculty when recently a major funded research project trumped the music education program as a Faculty priority, resulting in the specialized music facility being repurposed as a research laboratory, and the Orff collection of musical instruments being relegated to a closet. With growing strain on resources, space again found itself at the centre of our transformation process. The restructuring of the library network and the subsequent removal of all library books from the Education Library led to its designation as a resource space and freeing up the area previously occupied by books. As a Faculty-wide committee was formed to address this new situation, and as smaller consultations sprung up spontaneously (for example a “space use” sub group of AEHR), we found ourselves in the presence of many interwoven conversations regarding views on the priorities for the designation and use of available space. Individuals from diverse areas – curriculum, literacy, arts – found themselves working on common proposals for multi-purpose space with furniture and facilities that could be used for both formal teaching and for experimentation and presentation of creative work. Again, as individuals were united around the use of space, shared interests were discerned: the goal became to create room in the Faculty for arts spaces in addition to the familiar requirements of the various positivistic sciences. Through this process, Faculty members worked

together to find ways to integrate their needs, leading among other things to the much sought after organic collaboration between part-time instructors and non-artists in the act of imagining projects that would span visual art, drama, and science and contribute to teacher education.

Rehabilitating Funding Sources for Arts Priorities

Globally, as university resources are stretched beyond the breaking point, the critical role played by philanthropists is further sharpened. Gifts from donors seeking to support particular disciplines or projects are few and far between, and must be handled with the most respectful of kid gloves. Another challenge and ultimate triumph in our experience of change is tied to the resurrection of a stalled donation opportunity. Under the administration in which science was a stated Faculty priority, a potential gift from a generous former teacher and arts education supporter was inadvertently lost when the administration insisted that the resources be directed to the sciences. When this was not possible, and the donor's enthusiasm faded, the gift was not forthcoming. Several months later, under a new administration, it was possible with great respect and considerable joy to re-open the discussion with the same donor and, after a mere several weeks of meetings, suggestions, drafts, and revisions, to finalize the gift leading to the sustained and considerable funding of a range of arts-related research, creative, and community education activities, including an artist in residence, funding for the presentation of the arts, a seed fund for projects in music education, and of course generous awards in the area of education in the arts: ten scholarships and five substantial fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students working in education in the arts. The receptive climate created a context in which a positive outcome could be experienced by the donor, the Faculty, and of course our students. Again – at the nexus of planned and fortuitous.

The Hidden Gifts of an Accreditation Review

As discussed in the section above on administration and governance, during the year prior to our Faculty's administrative shift, the Faculty underwent its five-year accreditation process for its teacher education programs. The exercise resulted in the accrediting body citing the need for an increased emphasis on *l'approche programme*, and calling for increased support by the institution for teacher education broadly speaking and a deeper engagement in teacher education by faculty members.

While this accreditation requirement was not at all intended as a tool for raising support for the arts, in this instance it created the perfect environment for the necessary articulation of priorities and commitments that, as a secondary outcome, have served to galvanize the Faculty's recognition of the importance of the arts to our programs.

The Perfect Storm

The impact of the above factors, particularly as these occurred within a surprisingly compressed period of time, was intensified and compounded by the *zeitgeist* of their coinciding. Within a matter of weeks after the first shift was perceptible – and extending to the present - there appeared a dynamic yet unforeseen flurry of conversation and activity around the arts. As like-minded researchers and educators found themselves articulating their aims and goals with increasing freedom – in a welcoming and respectful climate - they also found themselves participating in the creation of a climate that fosters change. When that occurs, momentum grows exponentially. To date, this is manifest in a growing shared commitment to improving and increasing space – metaphorical and physical - and new resources allocated to the exploding area of arts and education. It is important to reiterate that throughout this process we did not effect change at the program level in favour of arts education. There are no course revisions, no new

programs being introduced. Rather, we have seen a shift in the valuing of certain types of knowledge, an epistemological quiver and then landslide, which has allowed us to grow the room available – literally and metaphorically - for *Education through the Arts*. We are in the process, gradually and organically, of rebalancing the focus of our general teacher education programs. From instructors to students we are engaged in fostering a growing commitment not to the preparation of arts specialty educators, but rather the integration of a lateral understanding of the critical role of the arts across our Teacher Education programs and in defining the context in which they potentially thrive. In this new environment we are ambitious in our aims, and look forward with hope and enthusiasm to the coming months in which we wholly believe that our efforts will be rewarded.

Closing comments

In this paper we have drawn on our own experience as administrators and educators in a Faculty of Education to identify and illustrate the complex landscape of change. We have shown how, in our experience, three key forces (institutional governance, the state of the field, and Faculty level leadership, priorities and events) play a significant role in inhibiting or fostering change. As we aim to fulfil our goal of creating and sustaining the best possible programs, we have found that the challenge is to navigate the roadblocks and the bridges that we encounter in our necessary partnership with governance and institutional factors, the field, and the ‘climate’ in which this necessarily collaborative work transpires. In reflecting upon the experiences, while recognizing that the profession necessarily evolves with the world, and that there are factors beyond our control, we have nonetheless learned that it is the way in which we are attentive and responsive to the structure, environment, and climate in which we work that determines in great part our capacity to effect positive change.

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Reforms in teacher education in Quebec and Ontario:

Restructuring vs reconceptualization

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Abstract

Teachers are increasingly held to be a highly significant influence on the quality of learning, yet there are recurring and longstanding claims that initial teacher education programs have limited impact on the development of teacher candidates' abilities to teach. Teacher education in Canada and elsewhere appears to be in a continual state of restructuring. However it is questionable if this restructuring results in continuous improvement. We examine the recent teacher education restructuring experiences of Quebec, and argue that these reforms have not brought about any substantial improvement because restructuring needs to be accompanied by a reconceptualization of teacher education (Wideen and Grimmert, 1995) if we are to effect real change in the way we prepare teachers for the future needs of the profession. We also look at the upcoming changes to the Ontario teacher education curriculum and make recommendations for changes that promote positive improvement.

Reforms in teacher education in Quebec and Ontario: Restructuring vs reconceptualization

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its report entitled 'Teachers Matter' (2005) states that "the broad consensus is that 'teacher quality' is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement" (p. 26) and that "the effects of differences in teacher quality are substantial" (p.26). While teacher education programs would appear critical to the quality of teachers there is little consensus on a knowledge base or pedagogy of teacher education (Loughran, 2006; Russell & Loughran, 2007), and, in addition, it has been proposed that current teacher education programs have little impact on the development of teacher candidates' ability to teach. This evidence is longstanding (e.g., Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981) and widespread (e.g., Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon, 1998; Clift & Brady, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). However, there is considerable divergence in opinion as to whether this is due to the quality of the courses offered in universities, the nature of teacher candidates, the structures of university programmes, or a fundamental incompatibility between the university as an institution and the process of learning to teach. Regardless of the reason, teacher education came under intense and ongoing internal and external scrutiny in the decades leading up to and following the OECD report. Recent calls in Canada for "quality education for its children, quality teaching in our school systems, and, by implication, exemplary learning opportunities and evidence of demonstrable competencies for our teacher candidates" (Kelly, 2013, p.167) make it clear that society holds teacher education to account. It is within this context of escalating dissatisfaction with teacher education that there have been ongoing calls for teacher education reform both from policy makers focused on addressing issues in schools, and from teacher educators seeking to reconceptualise teacher education to meet twenty-first century challenges.

The Promise of University-Based Teacher Education

In most parts of Canada, teacher education began in normal schools in the mid 1800's and by the 1960s (100 years later) had moved into universities to join or become Faculties of Education (Henchey & Burgess, 1987; Larabee, 1992). Internationally, university-based teacher education is a more recent phenomenon with Europe following North America in the 1970s; Australia in the 1990s with New Zealand completing the move of its sixth and final College of Education into a university context as recently as 2006. University-based teacher education held great promise of attracting higher calibre students to be taught by professors engaged in systematic research and inquiry into issues facing teachers and schools thereby ensuring that teacher education courses would be research informed. The institutional context of university-based teacher education demands allegiance to (or at the very least compliance with the expectations of) multiple masters: the regulations, policies, procedures, research expectations and intellectual freedoms outlined by the university; the professional expectations of schools; the aspirations of parents for their children's' learning in schools; and the certification requirements of the professional or political body charged with accrediting the program and thus its certifying its graduates as practicing teachers. If this complexity is not enough, bear in mind that teacher education, as in many professional programs, marks just the initial step in professional learning and practice of teachers who will continue to learn throughout their careers.

Whilst university-based teacher education held great promise, it is argued that the move into universities failed to take account of the different cultures of schools and universities and led to teacher educators being marginalized both within academia and in the schools for which they were preparing teachers (Fullan, Wideen & Easterbrook, 1983; Heargraves, 1996; Labaree, 2008). Wideen and Grimmatt (1995) state that the move from teacher's colleges or normal

schools to the university “provided a classic example of administrative restructuring with reconceptualization of what it means to prepare teachers” (p. 8). Tom (1995) describes the typical format of teacher education as general pedagogy courses followed by or in concurrence with methods courses followed by a practicum as being a direct transfer from the normal school model and highly resilient. This resiliency is evident in the fact all these decades later, that format is still the norm for the majority of teacher preparation programmes across Canada. Unable to simultaneously serve both the demands of the academy that requires teacher educators to focus on research and peer-reviewed publications, and the expectations of the schools, the isolation of those who worked in the faculties of education from teachers in schools increased (Zeichner 1995). In the final two decades of the 20th century teacher education across North America faced escalating criticism from teachers and the wider community for its remoteness from real-life classroom situations opened the door for reform-minded policy makers within Ministries of Education to exert external control over teacher education (Wideen, 1995; Grimmett, 2009).

Teacher education reform had been a preoccupation of policy makers for many years in North America although it has apparently had minimal impact on the practice of education in schools. For example Robert Bush (1987) published an overview of 25 major reform movements that had taken place over the past 50 years in the USA. In this article, Bush concludes that despite all of the task forces and committees set up to improve teacher education, and all of the major changes in society that have taken place over time, there were no lasting fundamental reforms in teacher education between 1925 and 1985. He explains that there were few changes in the working conditions of teachers or in the way pupils were taught during that same period. Some ten years later, again in the context of USA but relevant to Canada, Tom (1997) suggests

that the resistance of teacher education to real reform is due in large part to the numerous stakeholders and multiple layers of governance where “everybody is in charge of teacher education, and nobody is” (p.7).

In Canada Sheehan and Fullan suggest that up until the late 1980s “teacher education [was largely] seen as an irrelevant or hopeless player in educational reform” (1995, p. 89). Leading up to the turn of the century, teacher education was facing calls for reform from every quarter and since the late 1980s “... nearly every education reform document released by a provincial or territorial government has included a call for changes to teacher education” (Cole, 2000, p. 139). Teacher education started to be “treated as a policy problem that could be fixed through government intervention” (Walker & von Bergmann, 2013, p. 70). Teacher education reform was proposed predominantly by those outside universities and schools and in 1995 Wideen warned that time might be running out for faculties of education and “they must ‘get their act together’, or see the preparation of teachers taken over by others” (p.5). Teacher educators themselves called for moves away from traditional transmission models to increased partnerships with schools and supported induction into the profession for beginning teachers (Russell, McPherson & Martin, 2001). And from the USA teacher education scholars including Tom (1995) and Zeichner (1995) called for internally-driven reform where teacher educators could build new alliances with classroom teachers, form genuine research collaborations with teachers, and give teacher knowledge the place it deserves in programmes for learning the profession.

Is this still the case in 2015? Are teacher education faculties no further ahead than in the 1990s despite multiple efforts at restructuring? It would appear that some researchers feel this is the case. In their more recent article on re-imagining teacher education, Grossman, Hammerness

and McDonald (2009) recommend that "... [teacher educators] undo a number of historical divisions that underlie the education of teachers. These include the curricular divide between foundations and methods courses, as well as the separation between the university and schools" (p. 273). Grossman and colleagues see this disconnect as detrimental to teacher preparation for a variety of reasons, including widening the gap between theory and practice and undermining the practical knowledge of teachers through an emphasis on conceptual knowledge. Fred Korthagen (2010) argues that the divide between teacher educators and schools is still present in teacher education, making it "a difficult enterprise" (p. 407). He proposes a "realistic approach to teacher education ..., which aims at supporting the bottom-up process starting from experiences and leading to fruitful knowledge about teaching" (p. 407). This approach continues to place teacher preparation in a university setting, but similar to Zeichner's argument, relies on making a much greater connection to the school milieu and the practical experiences of teacher candidates in making sense of theory. Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford with Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and Zeichner (2005) state, "Clearly, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for optimal teaching are not something that can be fully developed in pre-service education programs" (p. 358). Thus contemporary researchers highlight the need for genuine partnerships between university-based teacher education and schools and on-going professional learning opportunities for teachers engaged as they are in a profession that must adapt to the ever-evolving needs of a changing world. However, without a substantial reconceptualization of the role of university-based teacher educators to acknowledge and value the time and effort involved in creating and maintaining these genuine partnerships there is no incentive for professors in faculties of education to invest in such endeavours. In fact, there is a

real disincentive, with new faculty receiving explicit instructions to focus on grant applications and their publication records rather than community partnerships.

The aforementioned OECD 2005 report, together with two other edited works published in the same year out of the USA (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) re-focused the attention of policy makers, teacher educators and teachers on the nature and outcomes of programs charged with the preparation of teachers. Teacher education was squarely in the spotlight and the ensuing decade has witnessed significant reform of teacher education across international jurisdictions which, when situated within the pervasive context of economic rationality, typically means achieving enhanced outcomes with reduced financial means (Loughran, 2007; Stephenson & Ling, 2014). This paper examines recent reforms in university-based teacher education programmes in Ontario and Quebec, two of Canada's largest provinces, where approximately 12,000 students (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008) graduate from university-based teacher education programmes each year. To examine these recent changes we turn to the work of Wideen and Grimmett (1995) that, while published over two decades ago, remains helpful in considering the recent restructuring in Quebec and that which is currently underway in Ontario.

Restructuring and reconceptualization

In the initial chapter of a collected volume published in 1995 (Wideen & Grimmett), Marvin Wideen points out that several studies in the late 20th century (Peterson & Fleming, 1979; Joyce & Clift, 1984; Goodlad, 1990 and Tyson, 1994) express serious problems with teacher education programmes in the US and Canada. The authors also state that due to the substantial and rapid changes in society in the 20th century, “It is difficult to imagine how the old ways of doing

business in faculties of education—critiqued so thoroughly and found so wanting—can possibly survive in this new context. Teacher education may have reached a turning point in its history” (p. 2). The authors go on to state that they envision a major restructuring of teacher education in the next decade, but point out “that if restructuring is not coupled with a reconceptualization of teacher education, little will change” (p. 4).

The work of Wideen and Grimmert (1995) remains relevant today when one seeks to examine the motivations and experiences of teacher education reform through restructuring. At the focus of their work is the question of change within faculties of education; of how it occurs and to what degree changes to teacher education through restructuring are accompanied by reconceptualization of teacher education leading to improvements. Grimmert argues “restructuring without reconceptualization does not lead to genuine change in teacher education” (1995, p.202). He identifies three approaches to restructuring which he argues result in increasingly more positive outcomes for teacher education: restructuring predominantly at a policy level without purposeful reconceptualization; restructuring in advance of reconceptualization at the level of teacher education programs; and the most favoured, where policy and teacher education practice are so well aligned that restructuring arises out of reconceptualization (1995, p. 204). In the first scenario restructuring, initiated by external policy makers such as the Ministry of Education faces resistance from ground level teacher educators and little meaningful reconceptualization is achieved. At the second level restructuring is initiated through policy designed to ‘pave the way’ for reconceptualization but, Grimmert argues, there is little evidence that teacher education will operate any differently. Tom (1995) concurs stating that all too often opportunities are missed as teacher educators focus on tinkering at the edges rather than address deep structures of teacher education which could be a consequence of

timing or lack of time to engage in rich reconceptualization. It is at the third level where policy and action are working in tandem that there is real opportunity for genuine change to occur. In the following discussion we consider ways in which restructuring within Canada and specifically within Quebec and Ontario has been accompanied by reconceptualization and meaningful change in teacher education.

Teacher Education in Canada

In Canada, responsibility for teacher education is in the hands of the individual provinces and territories with over 60 institutions across the ten provinces offering university based initial teacher education leading to a provincial certification to teach (Van Nuland, 2011). Faculties of Education across Canada offer programs of teacher education that vary in terms of structure, duration, content, curricula, and pedagogy. In line with Canada's commitment to bilingualism, and as a reflection of historical linguistic plurality, teacher education programs are offered in both French and English in two of the provinces, Quebec and Ontario.

There are a range of approaches to initial teacher education across Canada, but a majority are consecutive programs where prospective teachers enter a program of teacher education after completing a three or four year undergraduate degree. In Ontario, at least until 2015-2016 when new requirements are to commence (discussed more fully in following sections), two-semester consecutive programs were undertaken by 80% of teacher candidates, while elsewhere consecutive programs are typically three or four semesters in length (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). Concurrent programs, where students take both disciplinary and education courses over a four-year period are the norm in Quebec and are also found in some jurisdictions in western and eastern Canada. While teacher education varies across the ten provinces and three territories of

Canada there is evidence of both internally and externally driven teacher education reform in the decades preceding and following the turn of the century (Grimmett, 2009; Walker, 2013).

Calls for reform of teacher education across Canada have demanded attention to a wide spectrum of possible elements including admission criteria, graduation standards, curriculum, structure, length of practicum, the role of schools in the preparation of teachers and the pedagogy of teacher education (e.g. see Martin, 2007; Russell, McPherson & Martin, 2001; van Nuland, 2011). Falkenberg (2008) argues that calls for teacher education reform are an acknowledgement that education is a key priority for the future well-being of society and therefore how we prepare those who are responsible for education (teachers) is central to concerns about education.

In the last two decades there have been some significant examples of internally driven reform in Canadian teacher education where individual institutions have sought to reconceptualise the ways in which teacher education is conducted within their specific programs. Russell et al. (2001) discuss the different reforms in the late 1990s, which focused on reducing the gaps between university and school-based experiences. These reforms include a two-year professional Master of Teacher program with a full term of field-based practicum in the third semester at the University of Calgary. The eight-month program at Queen's University prioritised early-extended field experience with a fourteen-week practicum, which was preceded by an initial week university orientation. The University of British Columbia had teacher candidates in school one day a week from the beginning with an extended practicum later in the program (Martin, 2007). York University explored early-extended practicum beginning on the first day of school interspersed with opportunities for reflection and guidance on campus. OISE/University of Toronto and University of Manitoba adopted cohort groupings of students which continued during the field experience part of the programs. While these reforms occurred

at different locations and in programs of different durations Russell et al. (2001) suggest that their ultimate success or lack thereof is largely dependent on the degree to which programs “reveal coherence among program elements and an emphasis on collaboration at several levels including school-university collaboration and scaffold induction into the profession” (p. 37). When viewed through the lens of Wideen & Grimmert (1995) one might suggest that these reforms reflect restructuring arising out of a fundamental reconceptualization of how teachers are to be prepared (Grimmett, 1995, p. 209) and they answer calls by Zeichner (1995) and others (e.g. Tom, 1995; Tuinman, 1995) for teacher education to operate as cohorts of student teachers and to reflect close collaboration with schools.

Teacher Education in Quebec. Teachers in French language schools in Quebec were not required to have any particular coursework or training until 1939. In 1940 the examination offices were abolished, and prospective teachers were required to attend Normal School, of which there were over 100 in Quebec in 1962. These Normal Schools were Catholic or Protestant as well as separate for men and women, and of course, operated in either English or French. Only about 10% of these schools were run by the government, the rest were run by religious orders. Universities did not have faculties of education at that time, but they did have institutes that offered graduate degrees in administration and pedagogical theory. The Parent commission published a paper in 1964 recommending that all teacher education take place in universities, and that there be certain amount of standardization around the number of years of study required for certification, the number of days of practice teaching and the overall requirements for a permanent teaching permit. These recommendations were followed, but despite the reforms, a study commissioned by the Ministry of Education in the 1980’s revealed a

number of tensions in the field of teacher education. As a result, teacher education continues to be seen as in need of "fixing".

The province of Quebec underwent a radical change in teacher education in the mid-1990's, moving from a variety of one-year certificates or minor programmes in pedagogy to a four-year undergraduate degree as the only means to teacher certification. This is the case for individuals who already have an undergraduate degree as well as those who enter straight out of the two-year college which replaces grades twelve and thirteen (*Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*, or CÉGEP). The amount of practice teaching increased from five weeks to 25 weeks (125 days) spread out over the four years. The programme is now based on the development of a framework of 12 teaching competencies⁸ (MEQ, 2001), all of which are very practice-oriented. Universities are required to use a programme-based approach, meaning that courses can no longer be taught in isolation, and that there must be strong connections made between the different courses offered as well as the practical elements such as practice teaching. The current four year undergraduate degree has changed the focus of teacher education from an add-on to disciplinary knowledge to an integrative approach, meaning that students learn about the subject(s) they plan to teach while they are learning to teach them. The current models also embrace the competency-based approach to learning to teach, which some researchers (Tardif, 2013) have criticized as a technical model to teaching, with a focus on courses on classroom management, integrating technologies, and methods, rather than the fundamental courses of philosophy and sociology of education, which are consistently absent from current teacher education curricula in Quebec. For a more detailed overview of current teacher education programmes in Quebec see Desjardins and Thomas (in press).

⁸ See appendix I for the complete list of professional competencies.

Has this made a difference? Certainly teacher candidates spend more time in classrooms teaching pupils, and they have more time to reflect on and integrate what they have learned into their practice. However, is the Quebec model any closer to Korthagen's 'realistic approach', for example? Has increasing the amount of time on practice teaching while continuing to offer theory-based courses at the university improved teacher preparation in Quebec? Can it be said that these changes represent a true reconceptualization of teacher education as Wideen and Grimmert (1995) describe as essential? Recent studies examining teacher education in Quebec by Desjardins and Dezutter (2009), Dillon and Thomas (2013) and Tardif (2013) indicate that more changes are needed to ensure that theory and practice are fully integrated, and that new teachers are not simply socialised into established patterns of practice (Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998) during their long periods of practice teaching. In addition, Desjardins and Dezutter (2009), in their examination of twelve teacher education programmes, found that the standard format as described above of foundations and/or general pedagogy courses along with some methods courses followed by a practicum was very much in evidence, and little had been done within any of these twelve programmes to reconceptualise the role of the university in preparing new teachers. The same disconnects between theory and practice and between the university and the school milieu continue to pervade teacher education in Quebec, and may even be exacerbated by the length of time students remain in the programme (Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann 1987; Martin, 2002).

It is clear from the documentation that in Quebec current university-based teacher education is far from the ideal envisaged in the 1960's and 70's when faculties of education were established. In the ten years following the brief described above, a number of studies (Biron, Cividini & Desbiens, 2005; Desjardins & Dezutter, 2009; and Tardif, 2013) have shown that

there is still much to be improved in teacher education in Quebec. New teachers continue to graduate feeling uncertain of their qualifications and unready to take on the multiple challenges of the profession (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Fontaine, Kane, Duquette, & Savoie-Zajc, 2012; Laan, 2014), and teacher educators struggle to offer relevant courses and feedback that will permit pre-service teachers to benefit from their professional programmes (Thomas, Russell, Dillon, Bullock & Martin, 2014). The extent to which teacher educators themselves have engaged in reconceptualization of what teacher education means in practice is still open for debate.

Teacher Education in Ontario. Since the move of teacher education from normal schools into university faculties of education which was completed in North America by the 1960s (Larabee, 1992), Canada's largest province, Ontario, has witnessed reforms that have emerged from within individual teacher education institutions themselves and reforms which have been imposed from external bodies. The majority of teacher education programs in Ontario are currently eight months (September to April) post degree programs that include a minimum of 40 days of school-based evaluated practicum (a major restructuring just underway is set to change this (see discussion that follows). The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) was established in 1996 through the Ontario College of Teachers Act to enable the teaching profession to regulate itself. The OCT licenses, governs and regulates the Ontario teaching profession which includes accrediting all teacher education programs and licensing graduates for teaching in publically funded schools.

Over the past ten years both the Ontario Ministry of Education and the OCT have given extended attention to ways in which teacher education can better serve the increasing demands placed on teachers and the increasing diversity of learners in schools. Consultation with

stakeholders led the OCT to call for changes to the length and content of teacher education programs in 2006 which was followed in 2007 with a series of round tables facilitated by the Ontario Ministry of Education and commissioned research on ‘Teacher preparation and success in Ontario’ (Herbert, 2008). The Ontario labour context presents additional contextual pressures for teacher education reform where over-supply of teachers has been increasing since 2005 following a teacher shortage in the late 1990s. The OCT annual survey of graduates “Transition to Teaching 2013” reveals that first-year teacher unemployment rose from seven percent in 2008 to 37% in 2012 with a further 30% of first-year teachers reporting being under-employed in the 2011-2012 school year (Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), 2013, p.3). The outcome of consultations, increasing unemployment of graduates and in an effort to align teacher education in Ontario with the rest of Canada lead to an announcement in June 2013 that teacher education in Ontario would change from two to four semesters beginning in the academic year 2015-2016.

In 2013-2014 Ontario universities were grappling with how to respond effectively to new Ministry of Education requirements to expand their current eight-month programmes to four semesters (two years or where study is continuous, 16 months). The instructions from the Ministry of Education regarding the structure and content of the new programs were straightforward; programs must comprise 60 credits of study over four semesters and include 80 days of practicum (in contrast to current requirements of 40 days). It was also advised that the new programs include attention to: First Nation, Metis and Inuit perspectives in education; use of technology; child and adolescent development and student transitions; mental health, addictions and well being, and transition from school to work. Unlike the Quebec reform, neither the Ontario Ministry of Education, nor the Ontario Teachers Council (OTC) initially announced any

additional requirements related to changing standards, competencies etc. in the development of the new four semester programmes.

In late 2014 however, the Ontario College of Teachers published a detailed Accreditation Resource Guide for universities “to support an understanding of new elements in Ontario’s enhanced teacher education programs.” (OCT, 2014, p. 2). This guide details how universities might demonstrate they meet the requirements of the College’s regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs which sets out the new requirements that Ontario programs must satisfy in order to prepare new teachers. The recent receipt of this guide, published well after the Ontario programs have been approved by their respective University Senates, sets the context within which the enhanced teacher education programs are scheduled to commence in July 2015 (Queens University) followed by other Ontario universities in September 2015.

On the surface the most significant change in requirements of the current Ontario restructuring is the length of the programme and the time spent in school-based practicum, both of which have doubled, suggesting that the Ontario Ministry of Education sees duration of teacher education and extended school-based experience as critical to the preparation of teachers. These requirements present potential for restructuring in advance of reconceptualization (Grimmett, 1995). The parameters (length, practicum & priority content areas) are laid out by the Ministry of Education and the OCT leaving Faculties of Education the freedom (within the university constraints) to engage in rich reconceptualization of their teacher education programs in the development of new programs. The degree to which such reconceptualization at the program level has occurred is yet to be seen and will likely be the focus of systematic inquiry over coming years.

Of interest to us as teacher educators is how the restructuring imposed by external agencies will open the way for reconceptualization of how we prepare teachers leading to ground level changes and continuous improvement in teacher education programs. We wonder how the increased school-based practicum will be framed within the new teacher education programmes and if and how new programs will engage differently with schools and teachers. Will practicum be represented solely by an increase in days of observation and supervised practice? Will teacher education programmes in Ontario move towards practice based or practice focused teacher education (e.g. Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman, 2011; Hiebert & Morris, 2012)? Will the restructuring provide an opportunity for faculties of education to address the often-voiced concern that “there are too many university-based teacher education programs that are disconnected from the daily lives of schools” (Callier & Riordan, 2009; p. 495). Will we take this opportunity to contribute in constructive ways to sustainable partnerships between university and schools? Will it provide an opportunity for re-conceptualising teacher education that goes beyond tinkering at the fringes of our programs to working in close collaboration with teachers and valuing the knowledge generated through teaching practice?

What has been, and still could be, achieved through Quebec and Ontario Reforms?

As early as 1995 scholars such as Wideen and Grimmett (1995), Zeichner (1995) Tom, (1995) have called for reconceptualising teacher education so the distance between faculties of education and schools is bridged. Grossman et al (2009) call for us to remove the “curricular divide between foundations and methods courses”, to build closer relations between university and schools and to begin with practice. Yet, what is meant by the theory practice divide; should

everything that is done on the university campus be considered theory? Does practice only take place in the school milieu? Is everything other than the school-based practicum theory? In Quebec and Ontario, it is not clear that these questions were even being asked when changes to teacher education programmes were instigated. This is apparent, for example, when we examine the content of the reformed programmes in Quebec and see that foundations courses and methods courses continue to be offered by separate departments, the university and the school milieu continue to operate separately, and most programmes end with the major practice component rather than beginning with practice.

What has been successful in different institutions across Canada is small scale reforms within a wider program e.g. CITE at UBC (Farr Darling, Erickson, & Clarke, 2007); cohorts at OISE (although OISE has recently announced it is cancelling all B.Ed. degrees in favour of Master of Teaching degrees in 2015), the Dillon Project at McGill University (Dillon, 2010), and a recent initiative at the University of Victoria (Sanford, Starr & Mimick, 2013). These reforms are organic and home grown out of the commitment, innovation and sheer persistence of small groups of committed professors who are interested in working in coherent and collaborative ways with colleagues and pre-service teachers. They reflect deep reconceptualization of what it means to prepare teachers and have grown out of teacher education practice. They also feature solid partnerships with schools and cooperating teachers. Where a program has undergone significant reform with the wholesale adoption of a new program (for example, at Queen's University) it has been disbanded due to lack of coherence, collaboration among professors and commitment (Upitis, 2000; Martin, 2007). Other large reforms – Quebec and Ontario – are examples of externally imposed reforms within a politically charged context. These are reforms based on consultation, voices from many and varied stockholders but not explicitly linked to a

reconceptualization of teacher education on the ground as suggested is imperative by Wideen and Grimmer (1995). In Ontario the driver for change is found in labor politics and over supply. The outcome in Ontario is longer programs, more practicum, less funding, fewer graduates, but we are yet to see whether or how the new extended teacher education in Ontario will make a difference to the preparation of teachers.

In Quebec it might be argued that teacher education has been based on research to a certain extent as much of the content of the recent reforms of 1994 and 2001 are based on the report of the Parent Commission, a report on the state of education in Quebec which was published in 1965 and relied heavily on research in psychology and theories of learning and development to support its advocacy of university-based teacher education. However, there is also much criticism of university-based teacher education in Quebec, with claims that it is disconnected with reality and does not adequately prepare future teachers for the challenges they will face (Bidjang, 2005; Bidjang, Gauthier, Mellouki & Desbiens, 2005; Desjardins & Dezutter, 2009; Tardif, 2013). Tardif (2013) explains that education students, whether at the undergraduate or graduate level, make up a substantial proportion of the student population of many universities in Quebec, making it impossible to imagine that universities would countenance a different approach to teacher education, yet university professors are often so busy fulfilling their academic responsibilities such as grant applications, research, publications and conferences, as well as supporting graduate students that they have little time to devote to undergraduate courses in teacher preparation. There has been no concerted effort to determine whether the reforms in teacher education instituted in the 1970's, 1990's and into the twenty-first century have made an impact on the quality of teacher preparation that is so crucial to pupil success (OECD, 2005). Clearly it is time to take stock. .

Tinkering on the Edge of Teacher Education

Wideen and Grimmert argue that teacher education reform can (and has) occurred in three ways internationally: restructuring at a policy level without *purposeful reconceptualization*; restructuring at a policy level *in advance of reconceptualization*; and, where policy and action are closely aligned and *restructuring arises out of reconceptualization* (1995, p. 222). In the reforms of Quebec there is evidence of the restructuring being accompanied by a limited amount of reconceptualization of teacher education, yet in Ottawa, with the severely restrictive time allowed to design new programs for 2015, it is yet to be seen if institutions have been able to engage in rich reconceptualization of teacher education alongside of the externally imposed restructuring.

Internationally and within Canada many reforms have been tinkering at the edges of teacher education (Tom, 1995) making cosmetic changes within restrictive policies and regulations governing university degrees and professor's workloads and within cultures that do not foster "collaborative work on the question of how to improve the pedagogy of teacher education" (Korthagen, 2001, p. 8). We have seen some initiatives with resounding success, including that of Finland, where teachers are required to complete a master's degree, including a research component (Sahlberg, 2011). Another example with some promise is New Zealand, which has taken a different approach where they have increased funding to six pilot programs of postgraduate teacher education (masters qualifications) that must demonstrate sustained and authentic collaboration with schools. A national evaluation of these pilot programs currently underway will provide evidence of the degree to which the restructuring from one and two-year Bachelor of Education programs to one-year Master of Teaching programs is accompanied by reconceptualization of teacher education in practice.

To meet the goals articulated by Grimmett (1995), Korthagen (2001), Kincheloe (2004), Loughran (2006) Russell and Loughran (2007) to name but a few who call for reconceptualization of teacher education, we need to break free of the old ways of thinking about teacher education. This would require fundamental shifts in the ways we as university-based teacher educators view our roles and ourselves in the preparation of teachers, and how we understand one becomes a teacher. It will also most importantly require authentic and sustained collaboration with teachers and schools.

Darling-Hammond (2006), repeating the earlier calls of scholars including Wideen and Grimmett (1995); and Zeichner (1995), proposes three essential changes required in teacher education that could enable programs to graduate effective teachers for twenty-first century schools:

“coherence and integration among courses and between course work and clinical work in schools” (p. 306);

extensive and intensely supervised clinical work-tightly integrated with course work – that allows candidates to learn from expert practice in schools (p. 307); and,

“closer, proactive relationships with schools that serve diverse learners effectively and develop and model good teaching” (p. 300).

The recent reforms in Quebec and the current reforms underway in Ontario provide contemporary reform contexts within which we can continue to examine to what extent we have achieved these changes. As teacher educators within faculties of education we are charged with preparing teaching for the 21st century, and it is therefore our responsibility to examine critically

the ways in which we can work with schools and teachers towards this goal. There is no doubt that we need to graduate beginning teachers who are able to serve well the children and young people of the future. There are examples before us that we can follow, and documented evidence of success. What is now required is the political and professional will to navigate the contextual challenges arising from serving two masters - the university and the profession – and build teacher education communities where restructuring has its genesis in reconceptualization of teacher education in action.

Today's student teachers will work in classrooms for the next 40 years and will work with children who themselves will influence and participate in society through 2070 and beyond (Braslavsky, International Council of Education for Teachers, 2001).

This is an awesome challenge and one that we should not take lightly.

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Appendix I

Core professional competencies for the teaching profession

Foundations

1. To act as a professional inheritor, critic and interpreter of knowledge or culture when teaching students.
2. To communicate clearly in the language of instruction, both orally and in writing, using correct grammar, in various contexts related to teaching.

Teaching Act

3. To develop teaching/learning situations that are appropriate to the students concerned and the subject content with a view to developing the competencies targeted in the programs of study.
4. To pilot teaching/learning situations that are appropriate to the students concerned and the subject content with a view to developing the competencies targeted in the programs of study.
5. To evaluate student progress in learning the subject content and mastering the related competencies.
6. To plan organise and supervise a class in such a way as to promote student learning and social development.

Social and Educational Context

7. To adapt his or her teaching to the needs and characteristics of students with learning disabilities, social maladjustments or handicaps.

8. To integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) in the preparation and delivery of teaching/learning activities and for instructional management and professional development purposes.
9. To cooperate with school staff, parents, partners in the community, and students in pursuing the educational objectives of the school.
10. To cooperate with members of the teaching team in carrying out tasks involving the development and evaluation of the competencies targeted in the programs of study, taking into account the students concerned.

Professional identity

11. To engage in professional development individually and with others.
12. To demonstrate ethical and responsible professional behaviour in the performance of his or her duties.

Part II

Change and innovation in the practicum experience

**Promoting change in teacher education through interdisciplinary
collaborative partnerships: *'It's a pretty unique experience'***

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Abstract

Due to a myriad of academic and social issues, educators at all levels of education are facing more complex and challenging situations. For teacher educators, knowledge of collaborative practices provides an approach to address these issues in education. This research explores the perceptions of a range of professionals engaged in an interdisciplinary project on literacy education in an African Nova Scotian community. The purpose of the research was two-fold: a) to examine an interdisciplinary collaborative approach for addressing increasingly complex issues in teaching practices and b) to explore the perspectives of educators involved in the implementation of a community-based teacher education practicum. The design of this qualitative study was based on a social constructivist theoretical framework. Individual interviews were conducted with the participants in the study. Data was analyzed using a constant comparative method. The findings of this study are of educational importance as they expand on the knowledge and understanding of collaborations and of the benefits of a community-based practicum in a teacher education program.

Promoting change in teacher education through interdisciplinary collaborative partnerships:

‘It’s a pretty unique experience’

Due to a myriad of academic and social issues, educators at all levels of education, are facing more complex and challenging situations. New teachers preparing for a future in the field of education currently face many challenges including rapid reforms to the education system, increased accountability (Woodgate-Jones, 2012), unrealistic expectations, lack of support, inadequate training to meet the unique needs of many students (Nugent & Faucette, 2013), and diverse and complex social issues (Welch, Tourse, Mooney, Shindul-Rothschild, Prince, et al., 2008). In order to address these challenges, new approaches for teacher educational programs are required to provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and disposition to prepare for a future in the education field. One approach to addressing complex issues in teaching is the use of collaborative interdisciplinary partnerships (Styron, 2013). Knowledge of collaborative practices provides an approach for teacher educators to address highly complex issues in teacher education as they work with pre-service teachers to prepare them for a future career in teaching. This study explores the benefits and challenges of a community-based, interdisciplinary collaboration that involved teacher educators, teachers, pre-service teachers, literacy specialists, community members and other professionals in a project designed to enhance children’s literacy education.

Collaborations in Education

Although a collaborative approach is becoming an area of research in teacher education, especially as it applies to working with students with exceptionalities, there has been less attention paid to applying the approach to support all students’ learning. This shift from a consultative model to a more collaborative approach in special education has potential to be used

in many other sensitive and complex areas of classroom teaching. For the most part, classroom teachers still tend to work in a somewhat solitary and independent fashion (Mostert, 1996), which may reflect the fact that collaboration requires professional skills not traditionally associated with teacher education curricula (Friend & Cook 1990). Friend & Cook (1990) stress the value of providing training to pre-service teachers about all aspects of collaboration. When a problem is multifaceted, organizations and agencies are more likely to be successful in their problem solving if they have worked together in a collaborative fashion (Fountain & Wood, 2009). In order to realize demanding education outcomes, and develop connections between theory and practice; educational organizations and public agencies need to develop sustainable collaborative relationships (Fountain & Wood, 2009). There are many reasons to collaborate, but two that relate to teacher education are: (1) the provision of opportunities for applied experience such as service learning, and (2) the provision of exposure to interprofessional perspectives and practices that can lead to a more all-encompassing approach to teaching (Russell & Flynn, 2009).

Research on the evaluation of the collaborative process in education however, is limited, and according to Fullan (2000) it is often confounded by the fact that “collaboration is one of the most misunderstood concepts in the change business” (p. 82). Definitions of collaboration abound (Welch, 1998; Friend & Cook, 1990; Wood & Gray, 1991), but one that is commonly accepted is by Friend and Cook who define collaboration as “a style for interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal” (1990, p. 72). They identify the six necessary conditions for collaboration as follows: “(a) a mutual goal, (b) parity among participants, (c) shared participation, (d) shared accountability, (e) shared resources and (f) voluntariness” (p. 72).

A strong awareness of the “parameters of collaboration” can assist members of the team to develop the best possible solutions (Mostert, 1996). For example, knowing what factors are likely to promote a climate of collaboration with “culturally and linguistically diverse families” can obviate a cultural disconnect and ensure that the collaboration is authentic (Olivos, 2010). This suggests that as teacher educators, we need to understand all that we can about collaborations if we are to educate our students about the process. As collaboration is a process of working with others to achieve a common goal (Welch, Sheridan, Fuhriman, Hart, Connell, & Stoddart, 1992), the process involves partnering with two or more people or organizations to work on a task or tasks through shared responsibility and decision-making to achieve a desired outcome. Given the complexity and diversity of the challenges collaborative partnerships seek to address, collaboration can potentially be more successful if it includes professionals from different disciplines.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Interdisciplinary collaboration can present in a variety of ways, such as team teaching, mutual consultation or a variety of stakeholders coming together to problem solve. An interdisciplinary approach provides opportunity for the pooling of diverse perspectives that increases knowledge about an issue and potential options. Interdisciplinary collaboration presents considerable benefits as well as challenges, and the outcomes can be dependent on the complexity of the situation that is being addressed. For example, in school settings, a collaborative partnership between teachers, support staff, administrators, counselors, and psychologists would ideally be more impactful than if each of these professionals worked in isolation. Unfortunately, many professionals often work in isolation, and Welch et al. (1992)

argued that the primary reason for this is that pre-service professionals are not prepared to collaborate; they are not taught how to engage in collaboration during their professional training.

Within interdisciplinary collaborations, any one discipline may be held back from “making any further progress” by the “constraints” of its own standards and procedures; thus, interdisciplinary collaboration arises as a means through which to “work at the fringes of [a discipline’s] field and in so doing forge new ones” (Rogers, Scaife, & Rizzo, p. 269). O’Donnell and Derry (2005) argue that interdisciplinary teams can address problems beyond disciplinary confines, sharing resources and coming to deeper understanding of complex problems (p. 52). Welch agrees, arguing that collaboration provides the opportunity for “pooling” knowledge, skills, and resources (p. 31). Other scholars agree (Russell & Flynn, 2000; Connolly & James, 2006; Wear 1999; McMurtry et al.; Holley, 2009; Corrigan; Fountain & Wood): collaboration enables teams to address complex, real world issues and can better empower groups to address *individuals* as complex people, born out of multifaceted social, family, and cultural systems.

Wear (1999) notes that “fundamental challenge to interdisciplinary communication is the different ways we see the world” (p. 300) — that is, disciplines each generate their own modes of communicating, of viewing the world. McMurtry et al. (2012) explain that, “Interdisciplinary integration is hard work. This is because significant differences in disciplinary culture and language often need to be overcome, and successful collaboration typically requires collaborators to deal with discomfiting perspectives and engage in deep mutual learning” (p. 470). Along with the range of perspectives accompanying different disciplinary epistemologies come challenges to professional identities and roles (Brown, Crawford, & Darongkamas, 2000). While some professionals see the distinction between their fields and professional identities as outdated and regressive, others hold onto their distinct roles, although interdisciplinary work must

necessarily result in the blurring of boundaries or roles (p. 431). Hall (2005) approaches the same idea by suggesting that every profession has its own culture — specialization increases the isolation of a profession and may make collaboration even harder, although McMurtry et al. claim that specialization leads to a complementary need for and drive toward collaboration (p. 463). Derry and Schunn (2005) similarly argue that, because of academic culture in higher education institutions that insists on maintaining barriers between disciplines, collaboration within institutions can be difficult (p. xvii).

Interdisciplinary collaboration however, with all its challenges to epistemologies and professional identities, can begin addressing the complexities of reality in a way that no single discipline can. Jantsch (1972) argues that universities will necessarily foster more interdisciplinary collaboration in order to stay on the edge of cultural/social transformation and evolution (p. 10-11). Corrigan (2000) similarly notes that, in terms of education (that is, the public education system as opposed to the higher education system), schools function as a center of inquiry for the entire community: they are, therefore, necessarily broader and deeper than a single profession or discipline (p. 182).

Despite the many benefits of collaborative partnerships, they are not without their challenges. Welch et al. (1992) reported that, “many students were reluctant to engage in collaborative activities (p. 16). Students were uncomfortable depending on their peers to complete course assignments, many struggled with practicing problem-solving and conflict resolution skills, tended to interact with each other from the perspective of their profession (e.g. ‘turf issues’), and struggled with understanding how different professions could potentially work together to address issues. They suggested that designing and implementing courses of this nature have several barriers such as the time commitment for faculty to work collaboratively and

to agree on content, and a “resistance to change and persistence to maintain status quo” (p.20). The authors do not suggest that this course was not worth offering to students in the future but the barriers to collaborative work needs to be addressed which will be discussed shortly.

Likewise, Ledoux & McHenry (2008) highlighted the ‘pitfalls’ of school-university partnerships including conflicting partner expectations, conflict schedules or time management difficulties, negative teacher candidate behaviours, negative mentor modeling, and mismatch between school and university curriculum expectations. They argued that both the school and university can abuse the other in these partnerships. Even those authors that reported the benefits of and their positive experiences with collaborative partnerships, acknowledged several challenges, including, relationship problems between the student teacher and mentor when expected progress is not being made and the time restrictions to deal with struggles (Woodgate-Jones, 2012), scheduling of partnership meetings, and internal strife or inability of group members to constructively deal with negative group dynamics that arise (Gandy, Pierce, & Smith, 2008). Moreover, Welch et al. (2008) argued that regardless of how beneficial university courses that teach collaborative skills are, if they are not required courses, it is difficult to recruit students.

These challenges to collaborative partnerships are not insurmountable but careful attention to them is necessary if teacher educators, student teachers, and community organizations want to address them in order to make collaboration more effective. Ledoux & McHenry (2008) argued that clear communication and preparatory guidelines are necessary such as: mentoring teachers must be willing to take on pre-service teachers and not be forced to do so by administration; mentors and pre-service teachers must be willing to learn from each other (e.g. the pre-service teacher has new ideas and skills to share); communication is key (e.g. each

party should be clear about their expectations and what is being offered); and, pre-service teachers should be open and willing to learn from not only the positive experiences but from the negative ones as well. Also, Welch et al. (1992) while noting that changes are needed to teaching programs for students teachers to include collaboration and partnership building, these changes “must be initiated through incremental steps working within the existing system rather than implementing a comprehensive overhaul of programs” (p. 20).

Smith (2012) also acknowledged that innovative changes to teaching practices takes time and support, and changes should be gradually introduced to reduce resistance to new approaches and to provide staff and students time to learn and practice new skills. Additionally, proposed changes must address a specific problem or concern and there needs to be ‘buy-in’ that this is a realistic solution. Finally, senior management support and institutional infrastructure are also necessary to successfully initiate innovative changes. Therefore, in order to develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships, time, support, ‘buy-in’, and infrastructure are necessary to effectively implement any changes necessary to do so.

Overall, research supports the notion that collaborative partnerships can potentially address the complex and diverse issues that teacher candidates face as they prepare for a future in the education field. Learning to collaborate effectively is a skill that would greatly benefit new teachers while also acknowledging that collaborative partnerships have limitations and challenges. There appears however, to be an assumption that educators are already knowledgeable about what collaborations are without clearly defining them and the components. Given the investment in time, resources, and support for university teaching and support staff, this is surprising.

Nevertheless, the research suggests that changes to education programs for student teachers to include learning about and practice with collaborative partnerships shows promise for addressing the many complex and diverse issues that teachers face as they start their teaching career in a rapidly changing educational milieu. Mindful consideration of the challenges of collaboration and proactive measures to address them will help mitigate any pitfalls to both collaborative skill development and practice resulting in innovative approaches to addressing the many issues facing new teachers. Ultimately, when participating in collaborative ventures, participants must feel that the potential for a positive impact outweighs the negatives, whether those negatives involve the blurring of professional boundaries, scheduling difficulties, or the sense that nothing is happening (Freeth, p. 44). When in its most ideal form, interdisciplinary collaboration can break down power barriers and promote innovative approaches to complex issues, but participants — particularly parents and teachers — must see progress being made.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine an interdisciplinary collaborative approach to addressing the increasingly complex issues in teaching practices and to identify the benefits and challenges of this approach in teacher education programs. This research is of educational importance as it expands on the knowledge and understanding of collaborations and the benefits of community-based practicum as part of teacher education programs. The research questions were:

(1) What are the strengths and challenges of a collaborative, community-based non-school practicum for pre-service teachers?

(2) In what ways can a shift to the use of collaborations in teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers for the complexities of teaching in an increasingly diverse student population?

Design of the Study

This study is based on a qualitative research designed to explore the perceptions of members of an interdisciplinary collaboration that developed and implemented a community-based literacy program. As the purpose of this study was to construct meaning from the perceptions of the professionals from different disciplines, a social constructivist theoretical framework was used. This framework views knowledge as socially constructed and learning must be contextualized within social contexts (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978). The context is central to learning.

The Context

This innovative, interdisciplinary collaborative project took place in Canada within a rural African Nova Scotia community and had the goal of enriching the literacy education of early elementary students in an after-school literacy program. The community has been geographically and socially marginalized and has a long history of projects developed to support the children's educational needs but there are ongoing issues. This project was initially funded by a provincial health grant and the initial partners involved a community-based organization that offers a literacy program, Nova Scotia provincial educational specialists, university researchers, and a community-based educational organization for African Nova Scotians. There was a planning committee formed to oversee various aspects of the development of the program including student selection, assessments, and the modification of an existing reading program to ensure that it was culturally sensitive and responsive to the local community. The local culture of

the community was to be a critical component of this community-based literacy program and cultural events involving the children, their families and community members were expected to take place throughout the project. The second stage of the project was the implementation of a literacy program. The tutors in the implementation stage of the reading program were pre-service teachers in an Africentric Bachelor of Education Cohort and as in the original community-based literacy program the pre-service teachers were supported and guided by a Speech Language Pathologist.

Participants

Upon receiving university ethics clearance, all members of both the Planning and Implementation Committees were sent an e-mail and invited to participate in this study. This included the initial partners involved in the community-based organization that offered the literacy program, Nova Scotia Provincial educational specialists, university researchers, and a community-based educational organization for African Nova Scotians. Eight professional from the various organizations agreed to participate in individual interviews. They represented many professional areas, organizations, different races and cultures. All professionals that agreed to become participants completed a short demographic questionnaire prior to their individual interview. Student teachers who were part of an Africentric teacher education cohort were not interviewed. However, their comments were reflected in the responses by the professionals who worked with them directly.

Methodology

Members of the planning committee and implementation process were invited to become participants in the study. Eight members involved in the planning and implementation of the project agreed to be participants in the study which involved one individual interview of

approximately one and one-half to two hours. For the interview, the researchers developed a set of open-ended, guided questions. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and reviewed by the participants to ensure accuracy. One researcher was directly involved in the first phase of the project so she was not involved in the interview process. The analysis of the participants' responses was guided by the constant comparative content method, in which the recorded data was transcribed and systematically coded (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method involves a process of coding data and identifying categories. The initial coding is an open-ended, inductive process, in which key words or phrases are identified (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process involved reading and re-reading the transcripts several times to get a sense of the meanings participants contributed to their experiences. As the categories were identified and grouped, tentative themes emerged from the data and served to highlight the perceptions of the participants. For purposes of this paper, the implementation process will be explored. Two key themes emerged from the data: Promoting equity in education; and Collaborative partnerships: 'We had bumps and we had issues'. The findings of the study will be outlined and discussed in the following section.

Findings and Discussion

This study explores the implementation component of a larger study that involved an interdisciplinary, collaborative literacy project developed and implemented in an African Nova Scotia community. Key persons involved in the implementation process initially involved a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), pre-service teachers (PST) in their final year of a three-year part-time Africentric Bachelor of Education cohort, university practicum supervisors and members of the project's Planning Committee who provided support through workshops and other forms of on-site activities. In the beginning there were 11 PSTs involved in what was

referred to as a service learning component but then six went on to complete a practicum in a school setting. The remaining five PSTs stayed as tutors in the literacy program with about 10 to 12 elementary students. As the practicum progressed with the five PSTs and 10 to 12 students, it became apparent that additional support was needed so a locally well-known, highly qualified educator of African descent was hired as a supervisor for the implementation of the literacy program. Two critical themes emerged from the data.

Promoting equity in education. This community-based collaborative literacy project had a broad educative focus with a view of social justice that “embodies the belief that all students can succeed and all students’ backgrounds and communities can contribute to their learning” (Borrero, 2009, p. 222). All participants talked about the need to enhance the literacy learning of the students and of the need to integrate the language of the children’s families and community in a positive way. As one participant stated:

One thing that I always had in mind was improving the students’ reading, but it was also to recognize that these students have often had experience within the school system that were not good, so to give them a different experience. The program was not only in terms of academic achievement but in terms of the enjoyment of working with someone and having really positive experiences that value them so that they can have more confidence in their abilities and value themselves.

The rationale for involving the Africentric Cohort of Bachelor of Education students as tutors to implement the literacy program was two-fold: 1) to provide an opportunity for the PSTs to receive training in early literacy in a community-based practicum in an African Nova Scotia community; and 2) to enhance a recognition of the importance of PSTs gaining a vision for

social justice in their teaching practices. This is a very innovative and powerful approach to teaching in this geographical area for as one participant indicated:

It's a pretty unique experience to have a group of 10 or 11 black [student] teachers going into an all-black community to teach. That never happens [here]. So you have those folks working together and that's an experience in itself in terms of the B Ed students. We've had all black educational cohorts but to also have the ability to work with all black students... they were all excited about that.

A critical aspect of this project was the recognition of and respect for the students' home language and local community culture as a part of the curriculum and pedagogical approach. Africentric principles were to govern the program so one member of the Planning Committee was to oversee and coordinate community events to include the local experiences of the children, their families and community members. As one participant explains:

It was important that we did the program in the school and in the community center. A lot of times we didn't necessarily see the parents; it might be the grandparents or older siblings that came and picked up the kids, but we did a lot of things to try to encourage buy in. So we spent a lot of time getting materials that were representative of the community... for the initial assessment of the children's reading we used a book by a local writer who wrote of childhood experiences in the area.

Efforts were made to involve the children's families in the program. For example, on the day of the student assessments, the students came with their families and the PSTs came to be in-serviced on the literacy program so as one participant recalled: "we all had lunch together.

Everyone kind of went around the table and told a little bit about themselves, so you know, those kinds of opportunities to start to get to know people and trust people.”

The students were given a one-day workshop on honoring the home language of the children. As one participant outlined:

There was a workshop with the B Ed students on code switching or respecting home language throughout the tutoring program. They were walked through the connection of the language of the children of the area and identified the various forms that they were going to see and forms that they should not try to correct because these are hardwired into the brain and based on valid English that has a structure and so forth.

The continuing modification of an existing, research-based literacy program however, became a time-consuming, controversial aspect of the planning program and a limited part of the implementation process. Unexpected events also occurred during this time. Both the head of the organization offering the literacy program and the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) hired to oversee the literacy program left the organization. Another SLP was hired but someone unfamiliar with this specific program now had to train the PSTs and oversee the tutoring process with the children. This meant that the key people actually administering the implementation process had not been involved in the Planning Committee. As one participant who was key to the implementation process stated, *“I didn’t know anything about this [larger] project.”*

There was limited support for the PSTs to learn both a new literacy program, build a positive relationship with the children and integrate the local culture. As Schulz (2005) points out, PSTs who are in the beginning stages of their career as a teacher, often struggle with the

balance between technical/procedural aspects of the classroom and the intellectual and moral demands of teaching. As one participant explained, *“They [PSTs] had to be supervised in terms of how they were managing themselves in teacher-student relationships.”* Some of the PSTs and instructors viewed the students’ behavior as *“chaos”* and felt that *“nothing could get accomplished”* whereas others, familiar with the local culture, viewed the children’s animated behavior differently. For example one participant encouraged them to *“look at the relationships, look at the fun, look at how the kids are engaged.”* Upon reflection of the implementation process, one participant noted that *“We really should have done more work about relationships, even things like body language...When they’re being unruly, what do you do”*. Some of the PSTs also struggled with the honouring of the home language and viewed it *“as bad English, broken English that needed to be corrected.”* There was no one employed full time with the project so everyone was doing this work in addition to their day job. Travelling to the community and spending time on the project proved to become too difficult for members of the Planning Committee so as time went by, there was limited, if any support from the other educational professionals involved in the collaboration.

Implementing culturally sensitive curriculum content, methods and strategies takes time and involves a critical inquiry into teaching practices. Critical thinking is grounded on individual epistemic stances that are socially constructed and changing habits of the mind is a process (Ostorga, 2006). The members of the project had hoped that one of the courses in their Bachelor of Education program would help to prepare the students for the cultural aspects of this community-based practicum. Unfortunately, there appeared to be a lack of connection with coursework in their teacher education program and the practicum. As one participant explained:

So originally it was intended that the B Ed students would be journaling, that we'd be having debriefs, and that their instructor would take up those issues the next day in class. So the student teachers would be doing their tutoring on Thursday night, Friday night would be a class and then all day on Saturday would be a class where there would be some kind of back and forth. But we didn't have that kind of connection with the university instructors.

Learning to attend to the cultural and linguistic background of students and the need for recruiting and supporting teachers of colour are both important issues in teacher education. The concepts of cultural capital and cultural legitimation and how these concepts contribute to how school reproduce the central values of certain cultural groups over the values of other groups are complex issues. Schulz (2004) writes that, "For future teachers to be effective they will require knowledge of education systems, of families, communities and a range of agencies. And certainly they will need to know about culture (p. 150)." This is an important but challenging issue especially for student teachers in the beginning stages of learning to teach. Although there were challenging issues with the implementation of the literacy program, the awareness of the importance of involving children's families in their education; integrating local cultural materials and events into the curriculum; and the opportunity for Black pre-service teachers to act as tutors/mentors for Black elementary students were all significant achievements in a literacy program for students often marginalized in the school system.

Collaborative partnerships: 'we had bumps and we had issues'. As noted by David (2009), "Collaborative inquiry is among the most promising strategies for strengthening teaching

and learning. At the same time, it may be one of the most difficult to implement” (p. 88). This is so aptly acknowledged by one of the participants:

The difficulty is that people come in saying, this is the way it should be done. And that's where the real growth comes in. If there was one real lesson that I learned from a collaborative approach to education or a collaborative approach to anything really, is that we talk about collaboration as though people know how to do it. And it's actually a skill, right? It's an understanding.

As the project unfolded however, it was continually adding major components. As one participant described it, *“It kept growing... It was like a snowball rolling down a hill, and gradually picking up more and more.”* At the same time, members started leaving just as the implementation process started and there was a turnover of key people: *“Some people had to jump in and really fill roles, multiple roles, just to keep those sessions going...”* It was also decided that the PSTs from an Africentric Bachelor of Education program would be trained to be tutors for this literacy program and then they would train community volunteers to become future tutors for the sustainability of the program.

The start-up of the implementation process however, proved to be more challenging than was expected. Initially, there was resistance from some of the PSTs about becoming tutors for a reading program for young children. As one participant wondered, *“Maybe we assumed that they would buy into it because they were African Nova Scotians.”* The PSTs also had limited experienced in dealing with some of the challenging behaviours of the children. The timing of the program also created challenges as the project went from after school until 8 0'clock at night so the PSTs could obtain all the required hours for their practicum. As one participant noted,

“the PSTs quickly felt that they had been dropped into the deep end of the pool.” The members also suddenly realized, *“Oh my goodness, we had forgotten to think about the instructor being culturally responsive and sensitive.”* Having excluded the teachers and staff of the local school meant that there were no practicing classroom teachers in either the Planning or Implementation Committee.

Practicing teachers could have been a valuable resource to the PSTs and the members of the Implementation Committee. As noted by the participants: *“...I thought these discussions should have been happening with the teachers who were teaching these children every day...”* It also appeared that local community members may not have been as meaningfully involved as they could have been: *“We didn’t necessarily have any direct community stakeholders on the committee...”* Concerns in the community needed to be addressed as community members and school staff began questioning what was happening in the program in their community and as noted by one participant, *“In an African Nova Scotian community, the relationship with the community is as crucial as the relationship with the parent.”* Referring to the beginning of the implementation process one participant stated, *“Honestly, we’re all flying by the seat of our pants, trying to get a million things done.”*

Although the PSTs were initially overwhelmed by this new approach to teaching literacy, their excitement grew as the process progressed. The PSTs also began to acknowledge that they were providing an opportunity for the elementary students to establish relationships with tutors *“who looked like themselves”* in a program that stressed the importance of the children being culturally centered and respected. This helped the PSTs to develop an awareness of the need for social change in our schools as well as a space for developing a disposition to promote social justice issues in education. There were major challenges in actualizing the cultural awareness

piece within the literacy program but in the end, there was an enhanced awareness of the importance of the ethnic, racial and cultural characteristics of students. As one participant explained, *“They [PSTs] were astounded at what they learned about their own culture and their approach to culture and the cultural competency that they developed and the literacy skills.”*

As pointed out by a participant:

This is a program properly designed to meet the needs of a specialized group. We were really creating a model and the fact that we had that cross-sector team meant that this model enveloped the whole person... So that literacy and learning are this elevated experience, which I mean, that’s pretty amazing, right?

Working with one or two students had many benefits for the PSTs. One participant said that *“each and every one of them [PSTs] felt that they had benefited, and they had learned something.”* Another participant asserted that:

Many people feel that you need to be in front of 30 students for a whole day for learning to occur, but what the B Ed students told us was that the B Ed tutoring, the one-on-one tutoring, they learned what teaching and learning is. They sensed what it really is in a deep way... All of them talked about the value of relationships. So, when they’re in front of 30 students, they now know that relationships, even with 30 people are important because they’ve gone through this experience having a solid relationship with one or two students.

McDonald et al. (2011) also found that community-based placements helped PSTs to gain a “more specific understanding” (p. 1695) of individual children and a “broader view of the ecology of children’s lives” (p. 1695).

As outlined by the participants in this study, this community-based program had many benefits for the B Ed students:

For the B Ed students, it was a very powerful opportunity to have a practicum placement with each other. Because up to this point, you go out on your own to do your practicum, and you’re often the only black face in a classroom of all white, and your administrator might be white. In this opportunity, they were with their peers working in a Black community; their supervisor was also of African descent.

This was also an opportunity for them [PSTs] to give back to the [African Nova Scotia] community. So I thought it [the project] was meeting lots of needs.

I might just comment by the way, in the interviews with the students who participated in this project, one thing they all have said, every single one of them have said that this has been a very rich experience.

For the B Ed students it facilitated their finishing their practicum experience, while they all held down full time jobs, and learning something that they could use in their teaching, that wasn’t actually taught at the university.

Another huge benefit of this community-based practice was that the students were able to receive credit for a practicum placement in their teacher education program. This was the first time that a non-school practicum was recognized by the Provincial government for certification purposes and it was the result of the hard work and strong negotiation skills of one of the government representatives working with colleagues in another division of the government and a local university. As the research demonstrates, collaboration can go beyond coordinating or cooperating with other professions as there is the expectation that the outcomes will go beyond anything that the individuals or single organizations can accomplish on their own (Corrigan, 2000).

The PSTs initial resistant to this approach to teaching could be reframed as a study of the complexities of understanding what is problematic about challenging existing values and beliefs about teaching and learning. This approach promotes the metaphor of listening and offers “possibilities for considering and reconsidering aspects of teaching that challenge students’ deeply felt understandings and experiences” (Nicol, 2006, p. 35). This project, although it may be viewed at times, as more aspirational than operational, holds a promising approach to teaching pre-service teachers about the critical role of culture in education and re-imagining visions of teaching differently; of finding ways to integrate the experiences and family backgrounds of the children into the curriculum; and consequently, teaching to improving the educational experiences of students from diverse backgrounds.

Concluding Thoughts

The findings of this study demonstrate many of the benefits and the challenges of an interdisciplinary, collaborative community-based practicum as part of a teacher education program that prepares teachers to teach in a global world. Many insights were gained into the

complexities of learning to teach differently and implementing a culturally-centered literacy program as well as how to support student teachers as they unlearn and relearn in the face of uncertainty and doubt. Learning to teach is a career-long process but a community-based practicum has the potential to help pre-services teachers develop and sustain a disposition for inquiry into their teaching on the ways in which they support the students' lives in a positive, celebratory manner.

With an ever more racially and ethnically diverse student population, partnerships can promote the sharing of expertise and resources, thus enriching the educational experiences for students of differing backgrounds and experiences. Interdisciplinary collaboration can break down boundaries between epistemologies and fields of study, generating new and transformative ways of seeing the world. Collaboration can offer something few other strategies can: a means through which to move beyond one's own constraints — whether personal, epistemological, or professional — and to see the world through a different lens. In collaborative partnerships “the journey is at least equally important as the destination” (Russell & Flynn, 2000, p. 203) and learning to work within a community environment can encourage new approaches to complex issues (Hall, 2005) in teaching. As the African proverb reminds us, “It takes a village to raise a child”.

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**Early teaching experiences in northern, remote, or First Nation, Métis and
Inuit communities: Implications for Initial Teacher Education**

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Abstract

The concurrent Bachelor of Education at Laurentian University has an embedded Indigenous component, which might explain why many graduates have found their first teaching position in northern, remote or First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) communities. This study presents the voices of new teachers in northern, remote, and FNMI communities. Twenty graduates and six administrators were interviewed. Findings reveal that despite their preparation, teacher candidates have much to learn from the practicum, such as an appreciation of appropriate limits to community involvement and the importance of being familiar with commercial assessment tools. Some significant differences were evident too, including the special challenges of working in more affluent northern communities. The knowledge gained through this research will not only aid Laurentian University in preparing its students for the reality of the job market but should be of interest to Bachelor of Education programs throughout Canada.

Early teaching experiences in northern, remote, or First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities:

Implications for Initial Teacher Education

The concurrent Bachelor of Education program at Laurentian University has been in existence since 2003. From the outset it has had an infused Aboriginal focus with Indigenous content included in all undergraduate and final Professional Year Education courses. Professional year candidates normally begin their fifth year with travel to an outdoor education center where they work with Anishinabek elders and community members. The program requires candidates to plan lessons that always consider the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) learners. All senior students in the program travel to a band-run school to learn how it incorporates Ojibwe culture into the curriculum. Annually about one half-dozen teacher candidates compete for the opportunity to complete a six-week placement at that school (OCT, Contemporary Practices, 2010). In August 2012, the School of Education decided to track its 285 graduates from 2007-2012. Just over 100 graduates responded to the online survey and their responses indicated that these Concurrent Education graduates were outperforming other recent Ontario B.Ed. holders in job acquisition. Data from the respondents indicated employment rates for cohorts ranging from 100% for the inaugural group to 69% for more recent graduates (Sheppard & Danyluk, 2014). These results are much higher than the provincial average. For example, according to the Ontario College of Teachers (2012) “Early Career Teachers in Ontario Schools” (pg. 8) only 13% of all Ontario graduates from B.Ed. Programs found regular employment in 2011.

One of the factors contributing to job acquisition is that the candidates appeared much more willing to leave the province or even the country to find work (15% vs. Ontario average of 10%). than most other new B.Ed. graduates (Sheppard & Danyluk, 2014). The embedded

Indigenous component seems also to have contributed to graduates finding work. B.Ed. recipients have often gone on to teach in northern, rural and remote communities including Bella Coola and Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Bonnyville, Alberta, Buffalo Narrows and La Loche Saskatchewan, Kashechewan and Manitoulin Island Ontario, Iqaluit, Nunavut and Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

In 2013, a grant from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario and, another from the university, provided the researchers with the opportunity to actually travel to some of the communities where graduates are working. The purpose of the travel was to learn more about early experiences of program graduates working in remote, rural, northern or FNMI communities and to talk to administrators regarding what might be done to better prepare new teachers for employment in such places. By travelling to a variety of communities the researchers gathered experiences first hand. In addition, by visiting, the researchers were able to capture interview subjects on video in their home setting.

Literature Review

In 2009 the Association of Canadian Dean's of Education Accord on Indigenous Education recognized the importance of preparing new B.Ed. graduates for teaching FNMI students. It called for "opportunities within all teacher education programs for candidates to have authentic experiences in a variety of Indigenous learning settings, whether urban, rural, remote, band-funded, or provincially funded" (p. 7). This appeal becomes more poignant when we examine the reality of much FNMI education in Canada.

The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing in Canada. Statistics Canada has reported that, from 1996 to 2006, the Aboriginal population grew at a rate of 45%, while the non-

Aboriginal rate was merely 8%, (Statistics Canada 2010). However, the Auditor General of Canada (2000) predicted, it will “take twenty years, at the current rate of progress, for First Nations students to reach parity in academic achievement with other Canadians” (p. 16). Parental involvement in the primary and secondary classroom setting has often been inhibited by prior negative education experiences, much of it stemming from the legacy of the residential school system (Wimmer, Legare, Arcand & Cottrell, 2009) Examining strategies to help a struggling Aboriginal post-secondary student sector, Lewington (2011) recently concluded, “poverty, discrimination, a lack of family role models, and the culture shock of leaving remote communities for urban centers conspire against success for the students, many of whom are older, female, and single parents” (p. 2)., Failure to address the issues involved affects all Canadians because it reduces potential taxes and labour pools and instead results in an economic burden on society (Kanu, 2005).

Traditionally children were viewed as a gift from the creator (Garrett, 1996). Their removal from their families and placement in remote residential schools was a deliberate attempt to dismantle Aboriginal societies and subject children to cultural reprogramming (Stonechild, 2006). Overall, as Battiste (1998) points out, the Canadian education system has not been benign to Aboriginal worldviews and the people who hold them. It is a system that sought to discredit their culture and simultaneously conveyed to Aboriginal people that they were unready to undertake higher education (Stonechild, 2006).

Back in 1997 Taylor stated “Most native children will be taught by non-Native teachers. There have been many attempts to improve education for Canada’s Native people. Yet little

attention has been paid to improving training for the large non-Native teaching force which will continue to exist for a long time” (p. 241). Nearly two decades later, in 2005, Kanu called for studies and publications on teachers’ perceptions of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and the school system.

Contributing to the problem, new teachers arriving in FNMI communities have been educated in a system that embodies colonialism where FNMI individuals are regularly viewed as somehow needing help or as “Noble Savages” (Frost, 2007). Godlewska, Moore & Bednasek (2010) suggest the principal problem with Aboriginal education is Canadians’ ignorance of Aboriginal peoples. Many other authors argue the key to engaging Aboriginal students is to incorporate their culture into teaching (Wimmer, Legare, Arcand & Cottrell, 2009; Frost, 2007; Doige, 2003; Goulet & McLeod 2002). We know that children develop both language knowledge and social knowledge based on participation in their family and in the community. When children display communication styles that do not correspond with expected behaviour they may be mistakenly labeled as lacking language abilities (Blank, 2012). Further, Winzer and Mazurek (1988) suggest that when there is a mismatch between the school culture and the student’s home culture a child is less likely to be successful.

For FNMI students, a big part of that culture is the child’s first language. Teachers encountering English as a Second Language in First Nations and Métis communities are forced to use ESL techniques designed for newcomers (Harper, 2000). In a study examining the literacy needs of teachers in First Nations schools in Ontario, Heydon and Stooke (2012) found that there was a dire lack of proper resources to teach English to First Nations students. Ball and Bernhardt (2008) point out many Indigenous languages in Canada are in danger and improving English skills in First Nations schools must not be at the cost of sacrificing the original language.

New teachers often find themselves overworked but this is especially true in isolated communities where, according to Wotherspoon (2008), they of necessity take on additional roles. This chronic work overload may compel teachers to choose simply meeting curriculum demands rather than addressing the many other needs of their learners. The same author points out that although the workload of teachers in these communities is intensified; some also experienced more freedom in their teaching than they might in more populated centers.

In order to improve FNMI student success, teachers planning to teach in these communities must be suitably prepared. The process of developing enough teachers from local communities will take many years. In the interim, it is essential that Bachelor of Education programs prepare graduates for teaching in rural, remote, and FNMI communities.

Methodology

As noted earlier, the original study tracking graduates from 2007 to 2012 alerted the researchers to the fact that former Laurentian students were often working in northern, remote, or First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Recruitment for the current study was done by e-mail. As of September 2014, seventeen graduates had been video recorded. Three others who could not participate in interviews responded to the questions in writing. Four administrators were interviewed and two others responded to the questions in writing. Interviews were semi-structured with 14 questions for graduates (see Appendix A) and 4 for administrators (see Appendix B). Those interviews were conducted in the setting where the graduates taught wherever possible to assist in developing an understanding of the community.

Table 1

Pseudonym, location and nature of participation

Pseudonym	Position	Location	Interview	Video	Questionnaire
Joanna	Teacher	Northern Sask./Iqaluit	X	X	
Jon	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Leonard	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Raven	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Megan	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Winnie	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Colin	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Megan	Teacher	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Marylee	Teacher	Northern Ontario			X
Danika	Teacher	Rural Ontario			X
Page	Teacher	Northern B.C.	X	X	
Stuart	Teacher	Northern Quebec	X	X	
Serena	Teacher	Northern Alberta	X	X	
Jen	Teacher	Northern Alberta			X
Hailey	Teacher	Northern Alberta	X	X	
Will	Teacher	Northern Sask.	X	X	

Becky	Teacher	Northern Sask.	X	X	
Peggy	Teacher	Northern Sask.	X	X	
Heather	Teacher	Northern Sask.	X	X	
Nathan	Teacher	Remote Nfld.			X
Bianca	Administrator	Northern B.C.	X	X	
Tony	Administrator	Northern B.C.	X	X	
Denise	Administrator	Northern Alberta			X
David	Administrator	Northern Ontario	X	X	
Sherry	Administrator	Northern Ontario			X
Cheryl	Administrator	Northern Ontario	X	X	

Funding acquired from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario provided the opportunity to travel inside the province, however most of the graduates were teaching in other jurisdictions. One of the researchers was able to obtain a small grant from the University for travel outside of Ontario.

In each case, participants signed an informed consent and were made aware that they had the final say regarding which video and audio clips would be used in presentations and/ or the making of any video. This study utilized interviews, questionnaires, observations and documents to address the research questions (see Appendix A and B). As only the graduates themselves could explain their experiences, the phenomenological method permitted the researchers to get as close as possible to the lived experiences of new teachers working in these communities.

Through phenomenology, researchers gain insight into the feelings underlying the decisions teachers make and several authors have described phenomenology as being particularly well-suited to educational research (Mostert, 2002; van Manen, 1995; Quicke, 2000 and Jackson, 1990).

Analysis

Findings from the data were triangulated by including interviews, documents and a wide range of participants from across Canada. Objectivity of the data was ensured by consistency of original questions, audio and video recording, and literal transcription of interviews. Using verbatim accounts and conducting interviews in natural settings insured validity of the data. Prolonged engagement with the interviewees, including travelling to their school whenever possible, enhanced credibility.

The two researchers determined the essence of the data separately before agreeing on themes. Following this, two student researchers reviewed the data to determine their own themes. This type of inter-rater reliability according to Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chawick (2008), can result in more rigorous research and reduce bias. Pseudonyms have been used in all cases.

The goal of the study was learn about the experiences of our graduates during the first few years of teaching in a remote, rural or FNMI community. This information will be used to enhance the program and to better prepare our graduates for teaching positions in these areas.

Findings

At present, 10 themes have emerged from the interviews and questionnaires with graduates:

- 1) The importance of appropriate integration in the community;
- 2) Links appear to exist between willingness to move long distances to attend university and moving again for a first job in a remote region;
- 3) That reaching out to parents is often difficult;
- 4) The importance of getting involved in the community but avoiding involvement in local politics;
- 5) There is real value to practicum placements in a FNMI community;
- 6) There are opportunities for independence, as well as financial and personal growth;
- 7) That settings can involve extreme poverty and/or significant prosperity;
- 8) There is a regular requirement to deal with crises;
- 9) The perceived importance of exposure to commercial assessment tools;
- 10) Frustrations exist for those who wish to stay (inability to own property on reserves, few permanent positions for partners/spouses).

Table 2

Occurrences of themes by participant

	Pseudonym	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Joanna	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
2	Jon	X	X				X		X		X
3	Leonard	X	X		X	X					

4	Raven	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
5	Winnie	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
6	Colin	X	X	X		X				X	
7	Megan	X	X	X	X	X					
7	Marylee	X			X		X	X			
8	Danika		X								
9	Page	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
10	Stuart										
11	Serena	X	X			X		X			
12	Jen	X	X					X		X	
13	Hailey			X	X						
14	Will	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
15	Becky	X		X			X	X			
16	Peggy	X		X		X		X			
17	Heather	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
18	Nathan		X				X				
	Admin.										
1	Bianca	X			X						
2	Tony	X			X						
3	Denise	X									
4	David	X		X	X	X					
5	Sherry	X			X						
6	Cheryl	X	X								
	Totals	21	14	12	11	11	10	10	5	5	4

Integration in the Community

Most graduates stressed the importance of becoming appropriately involved in the community as soon as possible. Similarly all administrators discussed the significance of becoming involved in order to gain the confidence of members of the community. One administrator from Manitoulin Island observed that trust was very important in First Nations communities and gaining the confidence of residents began with an understanding of why they might be hesitant to accept any member of the education system. This hesitancy is one of the residual effects of residential schools. As the administrator further explained:

It is not about blaming the residential school system; it's about understanding why that system came to be, how it came to be, and really taking a look at the impacts of what that's done. And it really was extermination right? And it was government policy to exterminate ... our own government policy to do that. So, why should people trust that system? If you understand that perspective you'll start to understand the significance of your role as a good teacher. [David]

Other graduates spoke about making connections with elders by inviting them into the classroom to share cultural knowledge with students. Will felt that some of the students in his class really did not have an understanding of their Métis history and traditions. He decided to invite an elder into his classroom during a health unit to teach his students about living a traditional lifestyle through trapping "We'd studied the history of trapping in our town and how to trap, "Will noted," and [he] brought in all the pelts and kind of had a history on that."

At times learning about the local culture meant graduates had to be willing to reach far beyond their comfort zones. As a vegan, moving to a First Nations community in Northern

Saskatchewan was already a stretch for Beverly, but attending trapping school really tested her boundaries. She felt it was important to understand trapping since so many of the students in her grade six class practiced it as a rite of passage. When it was her turn to skin a rabbit, she described shaking so hard she thought she might pass out. In her interview she described how the experience changed her life. As she later reflected: “I was outside of my comfort zone, hugely, but it has totally improved my life, partly because it was outside my comfort zone, I learned so much, and I was able to create some relationships with some Elders in the community.” For Page, learning how to fish was essential to understanding the remote west coast village she was teaching in. Even though she is a strict vegetarian and could never bring herself to eat fish, she took it upon herself to learn how to fish and how to clean the catch.

Graduates became involved in a range of activities including coaching, attending students’ games, taking language courses, and assuming leadership roles in community events. Heather learned a few important words in Cree so that she could incorporate them into her classroom management. Meanwhile graduates who were interested in athletics naturally took on roles coaching basketball, volleyball, and softball. But even those who were less athletically inclined found that when they offered to coach, they were enthusiastically welcomed. Often the role of a coach in a northern or isolated community involves travelling each weekend to tournaments in other communities. Colin explained that, through coaching, he integrated into the community even though he “rarely had a free weekend.” Heather made herself available to students “24/7” and explained the commitment required by new teachers in remote communities goes well beyond the traditional “9 to 5” job: “It’s not like your day ends at four o’clock,” she explained, “you need to go the hockey games and community dances.” Often graduates found themselves invited to their student’s games and one new teacher was quite touched by the

experience. “They brought me a schedule and highlighted all their games on it,” she remembered, “and they’re like, you’re going to come right?”

After teaching in long term occasional positions for several years, Leonard found a permanent teaching job in a rural community on Manitoulin Island where community involvement involved embracing an outdoor lifestyle. This took the form of hiking, sledding, boating, bonfires, and attending local dances. Similarly, Joanna settled into Iqaluit by learning from local elders how to sew traditional Inuit parkas and sealskin mittens.

Graduates regularly spoke about taking on leadership roles within the community or school as a way of getting to know parents. Leonard, for example, took an organizing role in the fall fair that has been a part of the community for over a century while Jon initiated on a recycling project. It was during the recycling project that Jon describes his first experience of acceptance. In the midst of taking material to a recycling centre, one of the students cried out “Stop the bus! You have to stop the bus right now!” Once the bus was stopped the students led Jon into the bush. After walking for a few minutes, they stopped to show him their goose camp. The students explained how they tied down the trees as part of creating the camp but once they were done, the trees were untied and they returned to their original upright position. Suddenly the students were showing Jon that recycling already existed in their own traditional lifestyle. He described feeling privileged because “really what we strive for when we go to these remote communities, [what] we really look for [is] the permission to be let into what they do and let into their lifestyle.”

Several of the graduates expressed surprise at how much they enjoyed being part of a small community. Two graduates teaching in northern Alberta reported they were unlikely to

return to the Toronto area where they had grown up because of the “feeling of comfort” they felt in their new small towns. “It’s a wonderful feeling working in a small community,” one remarked, “because you do know everyone and who everyone is. It’s actually comforting to run into your students at the grocery store and it’s comforting to know that your other colleagues are nearby.” Another teacher in northern B.C. described “a strong sense that every person matters and everyone’s job is important.” Integration contributed to the new teachers learning about the local culture while at the same time building relationships and making permanent connections.

Willingness to Relocate

The study found a correlation between moving to Laurentian University from outside of Sudbury to embark on a concurrent B.Ed. degree and being willing years later to move for employment. Several graduates reported choosing Laurentian University over other universities because of its beautiful campus as well as being attracted to the concurrent nature of the Bachelor of Education. Those graduates who came to Laurentian University from a community outside of the Sudbury area were much more willing to move for their first teaching job. Danika explained it this way”

I believe wholly that the fact that I had to move to Laurentian University made it entirely easier for me to move to this job. By the end of the program, I had been away from home for 5 years. Moving to new town was no big deal for me. I know for a fact that students who were from Sudbury and had a job opportunity elsewhere were hesitant to move away because they had never been away from home.

Another graduate who eventually moved thousands of miles away from her southern Ontario hometown explained it in the following way;

Well my parents say it the best, when ... people say to them 'Oh she's far away!' Well she was already far away to begin with. Not that far, it was only a four hour drive. I only came home at Christmas and summertime anyways so it's not that big of a difference I already lived on my own, I had my own place and that so really helped with the transition.

Parents

Administrators stressed the importance of establishing a good relationship with parents early in the year. Most teachers in urban centres rely on the phone as a means of communication with parents. However, Winnie was faced with parents who were unwilling to speak to her, even when she was calling to report good news. For her part Joanna found that in her community in northern Saskatchewan many parents did not have phones and she delivered report cards to her student's homes with the hope of establishing a relationship with parents.

Graduates also described having to navigate extended networks of family and caregivers. Colin explained "Sometimes you have to talk to foster parents or social workers just to let them know how the student is doing, if they don't have parents around. I had one student who wanted to go to track and field event but he kept being bounced around by all of his aunts so he couldn't get anything signed. I ended up going to his dad's house and knocking on his door and getting him to sign it."

In some communities graduates reported many of their students had children of their own. In these circumstances students would leave school for a year or two after having a child and then return, often after securing childcare with a relative. As Jon concluded, "A lot of these

kids are raising themselves or they're raised by an aunt, an uncle, a friend, a grandma, a grandpa. A lot of these kids are looking out for themselves.”

Local Politics

While every administrator stressed the importance of getting involved in the community, new teachers also need to be aware that, in small communities, local politics can take on increased importance. One administrator described the necessity of listening and learning; similarly a graduate spoke of the perils of speaking openly at public meetings and being seen as opposing local educational administrators. That graduate learned the hard way that he would have been better off expressing his opinion one on one to his supervisors. Teachers in remote, northern, and small communities live under a microscope and have to be prepared to take on the responsibility that entails. For example, several graduates reported not feeling comfortable with drinking any alcohol in public in case they were perceived as having a serious drinking problem.

High teacher turnover works against establishing trust amongst community members. When Will arrived in his northern Saskatchewan classroom he was the fourth new teacher in six months. Established graduates spoke of the damage high teacher turnover can do to other teachers who are planning to stay. As one remarked, “When you're only here for one or two years those kids never build a proper relationship with a teacher, [so those kids] never build a proper relationship with the education system.” Conversely, others felt the local school board had become so accustomed to high teacher turnover that it was willing to lose two teachers instead of making accommodations. Joanna described how her partner was turned down for a position in his teachable area after already working in the community for a year. She described

frustration at how that refusal resulted in the community losing two young teachers who had every intention of staying.

Practicum

Participants overwhelmingly found their placements to be the most valuable part of their Bachelor of Education experience. Graduates of the concurrent program have around 90 days of field placement. At present the provincial regulations only require forty days. Nathan stated “I think that the extra time we had in the classroom compared to other teaching programs helped make the transition into our own classroom much quicker.”

Several of the graduates had a placement at Lakeview School in M’Chigeeng and spoke about the significance of the experience in preparing them for their own classroom. Three of the graduates who completed their placement in M’Chigeeng found employment in the school after graduation, and according to Winnie, “there definitely was a relationship then between doing your placement there and getting the job.”

Currently in Canada, the competition for teaching positions often is intense and administrators reported there were many applicants for each position. Administrators explained that they would prefer to hire someone from the community but if that was not possible, they would begin to look outside of the community. When hiring new graduates one administrator reported looking for teachers who had a wide variety of talents but some exposure to other cultures was a prized attribute. He also looked for individuals who had worked as a part of a team and had the ability to entertain themselves. Another administrator explained that he looked for applicants who would fit into the community and were willing to embrace an outdoor lifestyle. Understanding the local culture, language and the impact of residential schools was

also a significant factor in succeeding in interviews. Finally, it should be noted a number of Laurentian graduates reported finding their positions by applying to the Apply to Education or Education Canada websites and responding to every posting they could regardless of where it was.

Freedom to take risk and make mistakes

Graduates often remarked that moving to a remote, rural or FNMI community provided them with the freedom and flexibility to be creative and take risks with their teaching. Graduates consistently gave accounts of earning the trust of their administrators and being rewarded with autonomy, Joanna summed it up this way, “I could make units and be creative and do whatever I wanted in the classroom.” The outcome of such autonomy often resulted in field trips that would likely not be approved in bigger centers. During her year in northern Saskatchewan, Heather organized an exchange trip for her class of over twenty grade eights with a class from Toronto. That same year she arranged for her students to visit a uranium mine, “I had one permission form to get a plane, fly the kids into the middle of no-where to go underground in a mine,” she recalled, “and I was in a mine, a uranium mine, watching the milling and the mining, I was [thinking], this is insane ... you could never do this in Ontario.”

Along with freedom comes the opportunity for advancement, Nathan began teaching in a remote part of Newfoundland in September and within months he was the lead physical education teacher. Similarly, Winnie was offered the opportunity to take in-depth training in assessment. With this new expertise, she found herself sharing her knowledge with seasoned teachers. Becky, an administrator in northern British Columbia, was able to secure a Vice Principal position within a few years of beginning her teaching career.

Several graduates stated that they experienced tremendous personal growth and considered the experience life changing. Jon explained, “I think we learn the personal journey is a lot more rewarding than ... maybe sitting around for a couple of years, looking at supply lists and ...[thinking] that dream job is out there.” He described how the challenges he had faced teaching had resulted in the ability to discern serious issues from “day to day annoyances.” He concluded: “This job definitely changed who I am as a person, it made me more self-reflective, definitely makes you more selfless, you don’t have a choice in the matter.”

Poverty and Prosperity

Not all northern, remote, rural and FNMI communities experience universal poverty as is commonly imagined. Three graduates were teaching in a northern community experiencing an economic boom as the result of the development of natural resources. These graduates did not feel the impacts of poverty in their classroom but instead experienced higher expectations to incorporate new technology into their lessons. The children in their classrooms had much of the latest technology at home and their teachers felt compelled to utilize it to engage them.

Crisis

All teachers encounter students with complicated home lives but in some isolated communities the cycle of poverty and aftermath of residential schools has wreaked havoc on families. One graduate theorized that success at school may result in the child moving away and as a result parents might be even more reluctant to encourage success in school. In response to their complicated lives many children had developed great resilience, Raven observed, “some of the stuff that happens to them, if it happened to me it probably would’ve been the end of my life.” Graduates told of visiting homes where the cupboards were ripped off and burned to

provide heat. One graduate had students knocking on her door for food at 11:00 p.m. Others encountered students who had spent the night in cells or had tried to commit suicide the day before. Many of the graduates made use of the supplemental suicide awareness training they had received while at Laurentian University, and as Heather remarked, “You follow kind of those steps, mostly just listening.”

Will had not taken the special training but felt comfortable speaking to students in crisis. “And if that just means that you sit and you listen and you talk to them, and talk their way through it and allow somebody ... that an adult that actually hears them. That’s important, just giving them that outlet.” Other graduates spoke about wanting to be there for their students and sometimes allowing that to blur the lines between being a teacher and being a social worker. Heather told her most recent students they could call her anytime if they were feeling suicidal because a former student in her class tried to commit suicide. She told her new students “You can always come talk to me, here’s my number, here’s my email, send me a message on here.”

Encountering abuse is difficult for all teachers. One interviewee relied on what she had learned in her law class to report the abuse. She reported the abuse to the social worker who took charge. However, the incident took a toll on her. “After the shock ... nothing could really prepare for like how you feel after and [the] empathy that you feel and the shock that you feel. I went to the social worker a lot.” Eventually the child was removed from the home and put into foster care. In the interim the child did not have a foster home to go to and Joanna considered taking him in. One other graduate working in northern Saskatchewan took a teenager into his family’s home until the student found another place to live.

When one community experienced a natural disaster two of the graduates had to evacuate. One found herself assigned to teach in a nearby community, while her colleague took on a liaison role with provincial authorities during the crisis. But after returning from teaching in a nearby community, Raven was met with hostility from her own students. She sensed they felt she had abandoned them. For a week they refused to speak to her and some even threw rocks at her.

In the end, graduates reported being sympathetic to the complicated lives of their students and having to put those complications aside to teach in any way they could. Raven remarked, “The best thing we can teach them is coping skills for stuff going on in their lives, because we can’t stop it and that’s something you have to realize.”

Assessment

After teaching on a First Nation community in northern Ontario for a few months, Raven came to the conclusion that students in her class ranged in reading abilities from a grade one level to a grade six level. For many of her students, Cree was the language spoken at home and although her students spoke English, they sometimes used it incorrectly. Raven was responsible for teaching the grade six curriculum, but she had to find ways to make that curriculum accessible to students who were not at the grade six level. This meant developing some of her own resources and using some of the techniques - including graphics and phonetics - she had used to teach FSL students.

Although these communities may be remote, they often still expect high standards for student achievement and teachers are usually responsible for reporting assessment results to the Education Office. Increasingly funding is tied to high expectations for improvement and in order

to get more funding communities must demonstrate they are improving. Although graduates had been taught about assessment in their Bachelor of Education program, in their new teaching positions they were expected to administer commercial assessment packages. In British Columbia many First Nations have adopted a form of assessment provided by the First Nations School Association. While two graduates teaching in northern Ontario found themselves administering Fountas & Pinnell (2000) literacy assessments. These were items they were mostly unfamiliar with.

Frustrations

The financial benefits of working in remote, rural, FNMI communities can be enticing to new graduates. One administrator explained that for those willing to take the risk, salaries are significantly higher than those in southern Ontario. For example, salaries for teachers in James Bay are amongst the highest in Canada. However, several graduates living on remote reserves noted they were not able to purchase a home and expressed frustration at the inability to reach one of the markers that signal success in early adulthood.

Heather described having saved more money working in northern Saskatchewan in one year than two fellow graduates working in southern Ontario combined. The money, however, can be perceived as too enticing to some residents who feel teachers come to the community only to make a “quick buck.” Two teachers in northern Ontario reported being accused by students of just being there for the money. One of them felt extremely hurt by the comment, so much so that he assured them they would see him next year and the year after that. According to Heather, “If you’re just going to go for the pay cheque, the kids can read that, and they’ll know and they will have no respect for you.”

Discussion

In order to integrate into the community graduates took on a variety of responsibilities from coaching, learning the language, attending trapping school, and learning how to make traditional clothing. The task of being a teacher in such a community is often all encompassing as teachers take on the role of social worker, coach, cheerleader, friend and confidant. The literature tells us that most teachers take jobs in remote, rural and FNMI communities to pay off student loans or with the intention of just gaining some experience (Bishop, 2007; Friesen, 2005). But the graduates in this study often indicated quite the opposite. In fact, only two of the graduates interviewed had left their positions while another moved to an even more remote community. Perhaps the basis of new teachers leaving has less to do with culture shock than it does burnout. These students appear to have been able to cope with the culture shock but were feeling the effects of being consistently overworked, a factor Wotherspoon (2008) also mentioned.

Continued persistence did pay off for many of these graduates and after being seen at a number of community events and making a genuine effort to become a part of the community, many felt as if they had gained the trust of at least some of the parents. Teachers in most settings are “under a microscope,” and this reality is amplified when working in a small community. Local politics often determine the direction of the school and expressing disappointment with administrators or local leaders can put a new teacher in an awkward position.

Graduates teaching in poor communities encountered many forms of crisis during their first few years of teaching which is consistent with the findings of Wotherspoon (2008). The impacts of the abuse suffered in residential schools along with various other sociopolitical issues

continues to impact parenting (Morrisette, 1994) and effects those children currently being taught by Laurentian University graduates.

Graduates who attended Laurentian University from outside of the Sudbury area were much more likely than Sudbury residents to be willing to move to a remote rural or FNMI community for their first teaching job. The experience of being away from home for their five year concurrent degree, coupled with the ever present reality of the Ontario job market, meant graduates were already aware that their chances of finding employment in their hometowns were slim. Instead of working in jobs unrelated to their profession or waiting to be called for supply teaching, these graduates took risks and in doing so experienced tremendous personal growth.

They reported that some of what they had learned in their B.Ed. program at Laurentian University did not prepare them for the very real needs of their students, which sometimes was just compassion and hugs. For some of those children, school was a safe place where there was a certain predictability that did not exist in other parts of their lives. Nearly all of the graduates reported the practicum was where they experienced their greatest learning. And those who had the privilege of doing a practicum at Lakeview School were able to witness an exceptional example of a First Nations School at its best and this inspired them to apply the knowledge they had gained in their own classrooms.

Teaching a variety of grade levels in one grade was a challenge for many of the graduates. As a result, assessment tools became crucial to determining the readiness of their students to learn various concepts. Similarly, Harper (2000) reported teaching in communities where English was not the first language required teachers to incorporate English as Second language techniques into their lessons.

The knowledge gained through this research project will not only aid Laurentian University in preparing its students for the reality of the job market but should be of interest to Bachelor of Education programs elsewhere. We have learned, for example, that many of these graduates secured employment by using the Apply to Education and Education Canada websites. Since so many of our graduates are finding employment outside of the province of Ontario it is disturbing to learn that, while the Ontario College of Teachers is doubling the number of days students must spend in practicum placements from 40 to 80 starting in 2015, it is not allowing any time spent in schools outside the province to be counted toward that total. One of the non-Ontario administrators suggested student teachers should generally complete placements with her board before even considering applying for a teaching position.

Conclusion

This study presents the voices of Laurentian graduates who have recently acquired teaching positions in northern, remote and FNMI communities. Some of the themes found in this research have been mentioned in previous studies. For example, prior writers have pointed to challenges with parents, the struggle with poverty (Lewington, 2011; Toulouse, 2013), and language issues, (Heydon and Stooke, 2012). Many writers have also discussed the importance of connections and getting involved in the community, Wimmer, et al., (2009).

What has not been previously emphasized is the significance of an FNMI-related practicum, the role of moving long distances to acquire an undergraduate degree, the importance of experience with commercial assessment tools, and the unique challenges of teaching in an affluent northern community. Clearly the employment landscape for teaching positions in rural, remote and FNMI communities has changed in recent years. Competition for any job is intense

and the interviewees we visited were committed to staying in their rural, remote or FNMI communities. These graduates also provide evidence that some institutions seem to be doing a better job of preparing student teachers for teaching in Aboriginal communities as Taylor recommended in 1995.

On the basis of this research the following changes to the concurrent program have already been instituted: all students will now complete an Indigenous studies course, more opportunities for placements in rural, remote and FNMI communities are being established, and ESL techniques have become a part of the revised program that starts in the fall of 2015. Other implications for our program include focusing on the use of commercial assessment tools such as Fountas & Pinnell, (2000), offering some sort of understanding of the unique nature of politics in very small communities, and ensuring all students, via mandatory training, have a suitable background in crisis management and suicide awareness.

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Appendix A

Questions for Graduates

1. Would you use any of the following words to describe your new community/school (indicate as many as apply)?
 - Northern
 - Remote
 - First Nation
 - Métis
 - Inuit
 - OTHER (please explain)
2. How did you find this teaching position?
3. How well prepared for teaching did you feel in the first few weeks of your job?
4. What was the biggest surprise about teaching in this community/school?
5. What is the best part of teaching in this community/school?
6. What are some of the challenges of teaching in this community/school?
7. What parts of your B.Ed. experience were most useful to you in this job?
8. What advice would you give to the School of Education with regards to better preparing student teachers to teach in northern, remote, or FNMI communities?
9. What advice would you give to new teachers seeking work in your community/school?
10. Is there anything else you wish you would have known more about before you took this job?
11. Where is your home town?
12. What made you decide to come to Laurentian?
13. Do you think the fact that you had to move to attend Laurentian made it easier to move for this job?
14. Any other comments/thoughts you wish to share?

Appendix B

Questions for Administrators

1. In your opinion what seems to lead new teachers to stay in or leave your community?
2. Are there things we might do better to prepare new teachers for working in your community or other parts of your board or educational authority?
3. Are there things we might do to better prepare new teachers for living in your community?
4. Is there any other advice you could offer our students?

Formation à distance et stages en enseignement : considérations pédagogiques, organisationnelles, technologiques et éthiques

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Résumé

Considérant l'approche multidimensionnelle que permettent les technologies de l'information et de la communication lors d'une supervision de stage qui se fait à distance, nous cherchons à mieux comprendre comment les programmes peuvent se préparer à innover à cet égard tout en évitant l'isolement des personnes apprenantes qui se retrouvent alors à l'international ou en région éloignée. À partir des résultats d'une étude exploratoire-descriptive sur la création d'un sentiment de présence dans ce contexte particulier de formation à distance, nous identifions quelques clés de lecture pour les quatre facteurs suivants : l'éventail des outils technologiques utilisés par les personnes superviseuses, les bénéfices d'une supervision hybride, la valorisation du rôle des personnes-ressources du milieu scolaire, ainsi que les considérations éthiques.

Abstract

Considering the multidimensional approach made possible by the information and communication technologies in an e-supervision of an internship, we seek to better understand how programs can be prepared to innovate in this area while avoiding or limiting the isolation of learners who find themselves in other countries or remote areas. Based on the results of an exploratory-descriptive study on creating a sense of presence in this particular context of distance learning, we identify some key readings for the following four factors: the range of technologies used by supervisors, the benefits of a hybrid supervision, enhancing the role of resource persons in the schools, and ethical considerations.

Formation à distance et stages en enseignement : considérations pédagogiques,
organisationnelles, technologiques et éthiques

1. CONTEXTE

L'étalement sur le territoire des personnes à former et la mobilité étudiante à l'échelle internationale ont amené les universités canadiennes à adopter différentes mesures de formation à distance (FAD). Les facultés d'éducation n'y échappent pas, entre autres pour les stages en enseignement qui donnent souvent l'occasion aux étudiantes et aux étudiants de retourner dans leur région d'origine ou d'explorer d'autres réalités par des stages à l'étranger. Cette situation change la donne en ce qui a trait à la supervision de la formation pratique des futures enseignantes et futurs enseignants. Le territoire canadien étant tout particulièrement vaste, les stages en région éloignée se font souvent sans supervision directe, tout comme ceux à l'international. D'ailleurs, selon Nault et Nault (2001), en supervision directe, la distance à parcourir par la personne superviseure peut nuire à son rôle d'accompagner la personne stagiaire dans son cheminement professionnel. Un certain kilométrage peut alors constituer une limite pour les stages avec supervision directe ; au-delà de cette distance, la superviseure ou le superviseur ne prend pas le volant pour se rendre jusqu'au milieu de stage, alors considéré en région éloignée, et l'accompagnement de la personne stagiaire s'effectue à distance.

Heureusement, l'arrivée massive des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) en éducation a ouvert grand la porte au changement par la formation en enseignement en ligne. En ce qui a trait à la formation pratique, les TIC permettent une approche multidimensionnelle (Pellerin, 2010) afin d'accompagner la personne stagiaire.

Des modèles de FAD se développent et progressent dans plusieurs facultés d'éducation

d'universités canadiennes. À titre d'exemple, la maîtrise qualifiante en enseignement au secondaire (MQES) de l'Université de Sherbrooke accueille des enseignantes et des enseignants - avec une formation disciplinaire pertinente, mais sans diplôme universitaire en éducation - qui suivent une formation de deuxième cycle en ligne leur permettant d'acquérir leur brevet d'enseignement pour le Québec. Cette maîtrise compte deux stages qui se déroulent dans leur milieu de travail, et pour lesquels la supervision s'effectue à distance. Ainsi, la personne superviseure ne se rend pas physiquement dans le milieu scolaire où œuvre la personne stagiaire à moins que celle-ci éprouve des difficultés majeures et qu'un échec est envisagé pour le stage. Actuellement, une seule rencontre en présentiel avant le premier stage permet au personnel superviseur de la MQES de démarrer l'accompagnement de ses stagiaires répartis un peu partout en province. Par une introduction en chair et en os, nous pouvons qualifier cette supervision d'hybride (Conn, Roberts et Powell, 2009).

Lorsque la supervision s'effectue à distance, les objectifs demeurent les mêmes qu'en présentiel, mais le rôle de la personne superviseure change (Hamel, 2012). Par son utilisation des TIC, la superviseure ou le superviseur continue d'accompagner la personne stagiaire afin qu'elle se trouve dans une zone de développement maximal en ce qui concerne les compétences professionnelles (Boutet, 2002), mais elle le fait différemment, entre autres en maximisant les interactions sur les forums de discussions et par une utilisation accrue de la vidéo (Pellerin, 2010). À ce sujet, Guillaud (2008) désigne la démocratisation de la vidéo à des fins de formation comme une transformation culturelle forte. Au-delà de la facilité de montage et de mise en ligne, c'est la pertinence pédagogique de la vidéo qui justifie son utilisation grandissante sur les campus universitaires (Kaufman et Mohan, 2009).

Avec les outils technologiques à sa disposition (vidéos synchrones ou asynchrones de

l'enseignement en classe, services de partage de fichiers lourds, visioconférence, forums électroniques, blogues, e-Portfolio, etc.), la personne superviseure cherche à tirer profit de la puissance du réseau Internet tout en posant des gestes concrets (et possiblement innovants) afin de contrer les limites d'une supervision de stage à distance.

Parmi les principales problématiques, celle de l'isolement des stagiaires est identifiée comme un défi incontournable de la FAD (Poellhuber, Racette, Fortin et Ferland, 2013). Ainsi, en voulant «être là» pour les stagiaires de leur cohorte, les superviseures et les superviseurs cherchent à créer un sentiment de présence chez ceux-ci.

2. CADRE CONCEPTUEL

Lehman et Conceição (2010) proposent une modélisation pour la création du sentiment de présence chez les étudiantes et les étudiants qui suivent des cours en ligne (figure 1) :

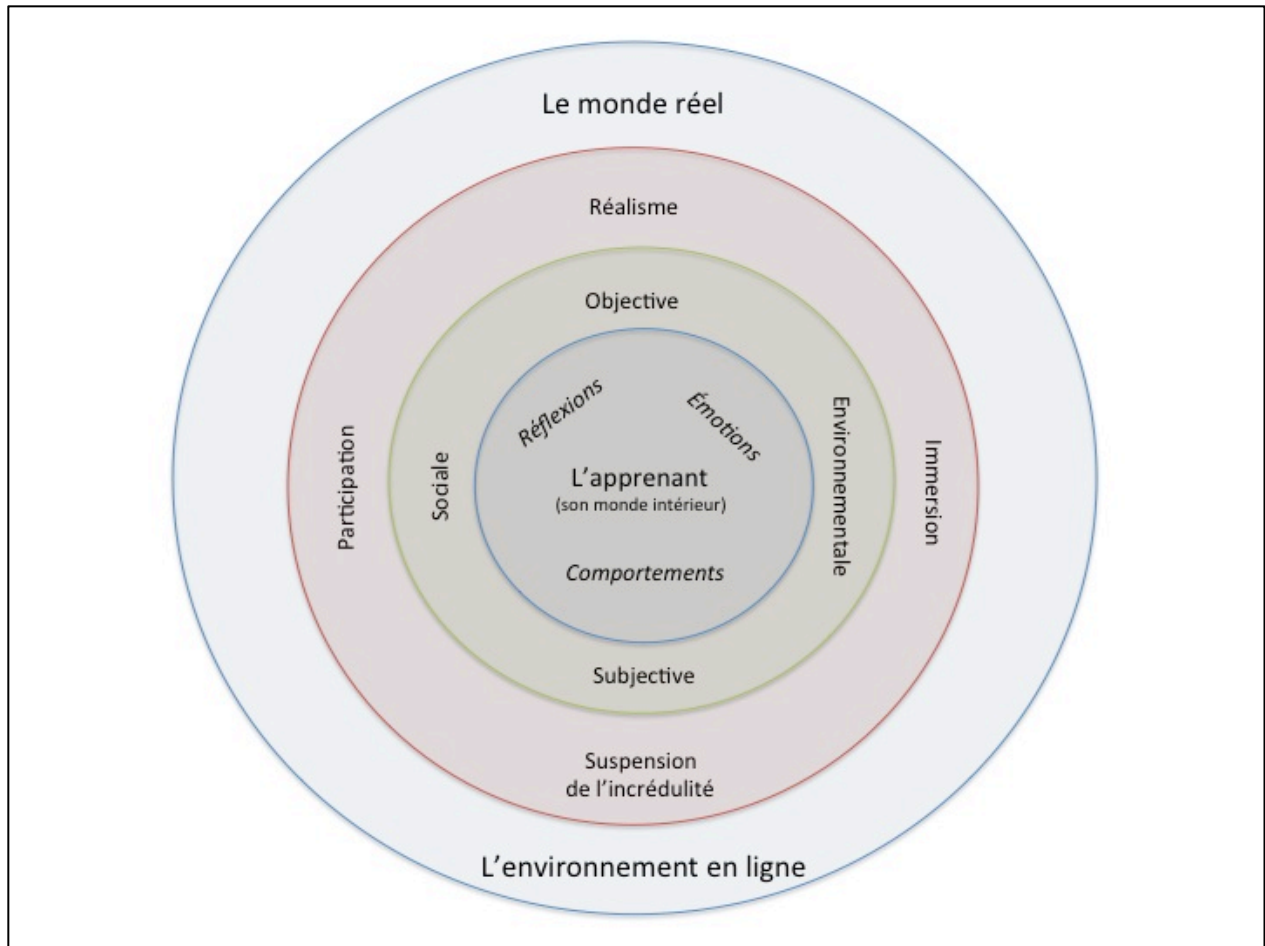


Figure 1 : Modèle pour la création du sentiment de présence en ligne (Lehman et Conceição, 2010)

Selon Lehman et Conceição (2010), ce modèle pour la FAD considère non seulement les types d'expérience en ligne (subjective, objective, sociale et environnementale) et les modes de présence (réalisme, immersion, participation et suspension de l'incrédulité), mais il mène également à six facteurs de présence (1- le type et la convergence du contenu, 2- le format de l'expérience d'apprentissage, 3- les stratégies d'interaction, 4- le rôle de l'institutrice ou de l'instructeur, 5- le type de technologie, et 6- les sortes de support fourni). Ces facteurs peuvent guider la préparation et le déroulement d'un accompagnement en ligne.

En plus de se transposer à la supervision de stage à distance, l'intérêt du modèle de Lehman et Conceição (2010) est qu'il met en commun plusieurs dimensions issues de travaux sur le sentiment de présence (Garrison, Anderson et Archer, 2001, 2003; Ijsselsteijn, de Ridder, Freeman et Avons, 2000; Hargreaves, 2004; Noe, 2005; Alcaniz, Banoa, Botella et Rey, 2003; Conceição-Runlee, 2001). On y retrouve entre autres le modèle de la communauté d'apprentissage en ligne (CAL) (figure 2) de Garrison, Anderson et Archer (2000) :

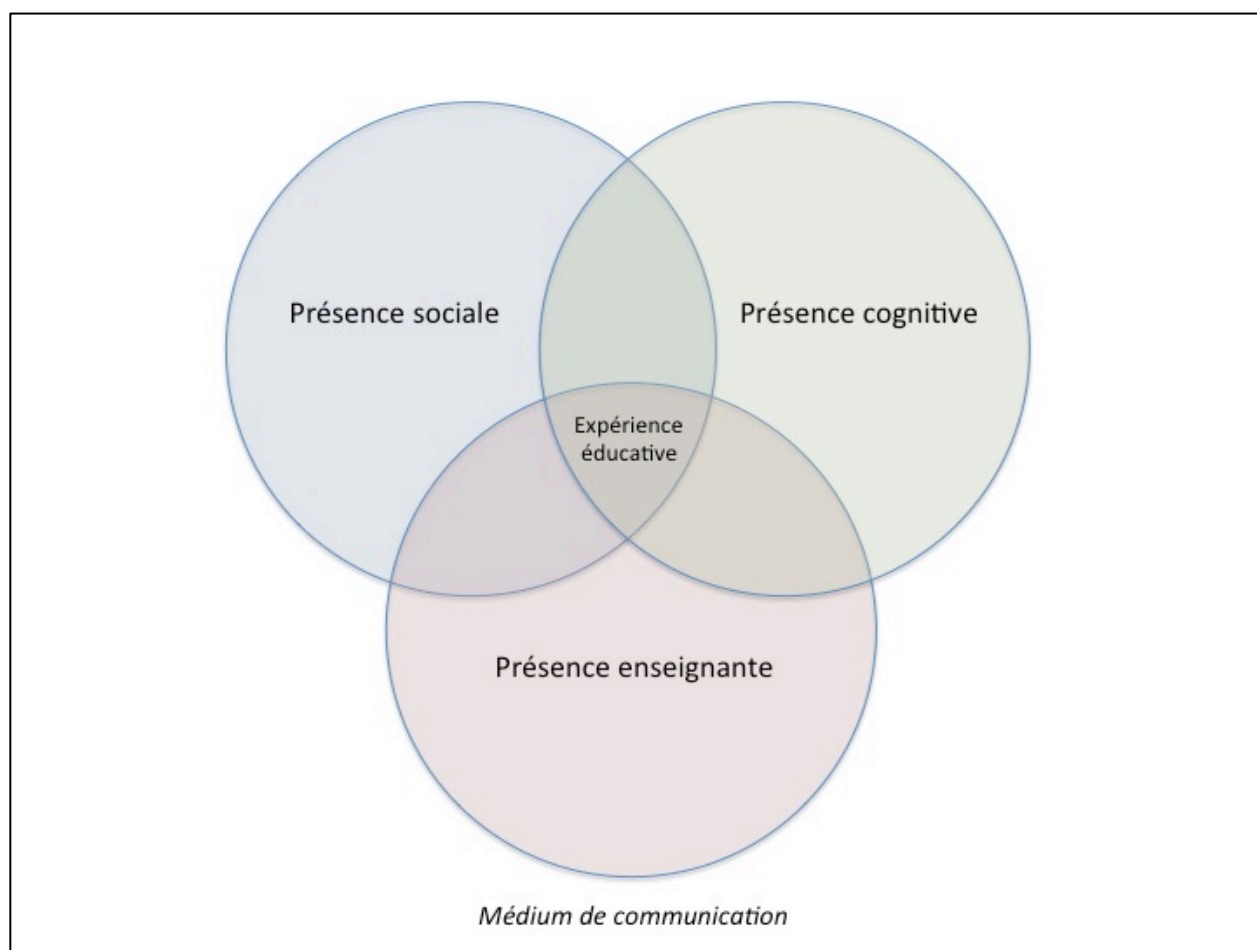


Figure 2 : Modèle de la communauté d'apprentissage en ligne (Garrison, Anderson et Archer, 2000)

Selon ce modèle, le sentiment de présence au sein d'une CAL se partage en trois

catégories : la présence enseignante, la présence cognitive et la présence sociale. Appliquée à la formation pratique à distance, la présence enseignante découle de la structure mise en place par la personne superviseure et des stratégies qu'elle emploie afin de faciliter le développement professionnel des stagiaires. La présence cognitive concerne l'exploration de situations vécues par les stagiaires, la résolution de problématiques, la construction de nouvelles connaissances à partir d'un arrimage théorie-pratique, et toutes autres formes d'accompagnement cognitif. Quant à la présence sociale, elle relève des environnements en ligne dans lesquels les membres d'une CAL - qui réunit tous les stagiaires d'une cohorte dans le cadre d'une supervision - partagent leurs expériences et prennent connaissance de celles des autres.

Si la supervision de stage à distance peut être efficacement soutenue par une communauté virtuelle (Nault, 2000), encore faut-il - comme le suggère Lehman et Conceição (2010) - que les stagiaires aient le sentiment que la personne superviseure «soit là» pour les accompagner. Le modèle de Routier et Otis-Wilborn (2013) (figure 3) illustre bien le rôle que peuvent prendre les TIC lorsque l'accompagnement des stagiaires se fait à distance :

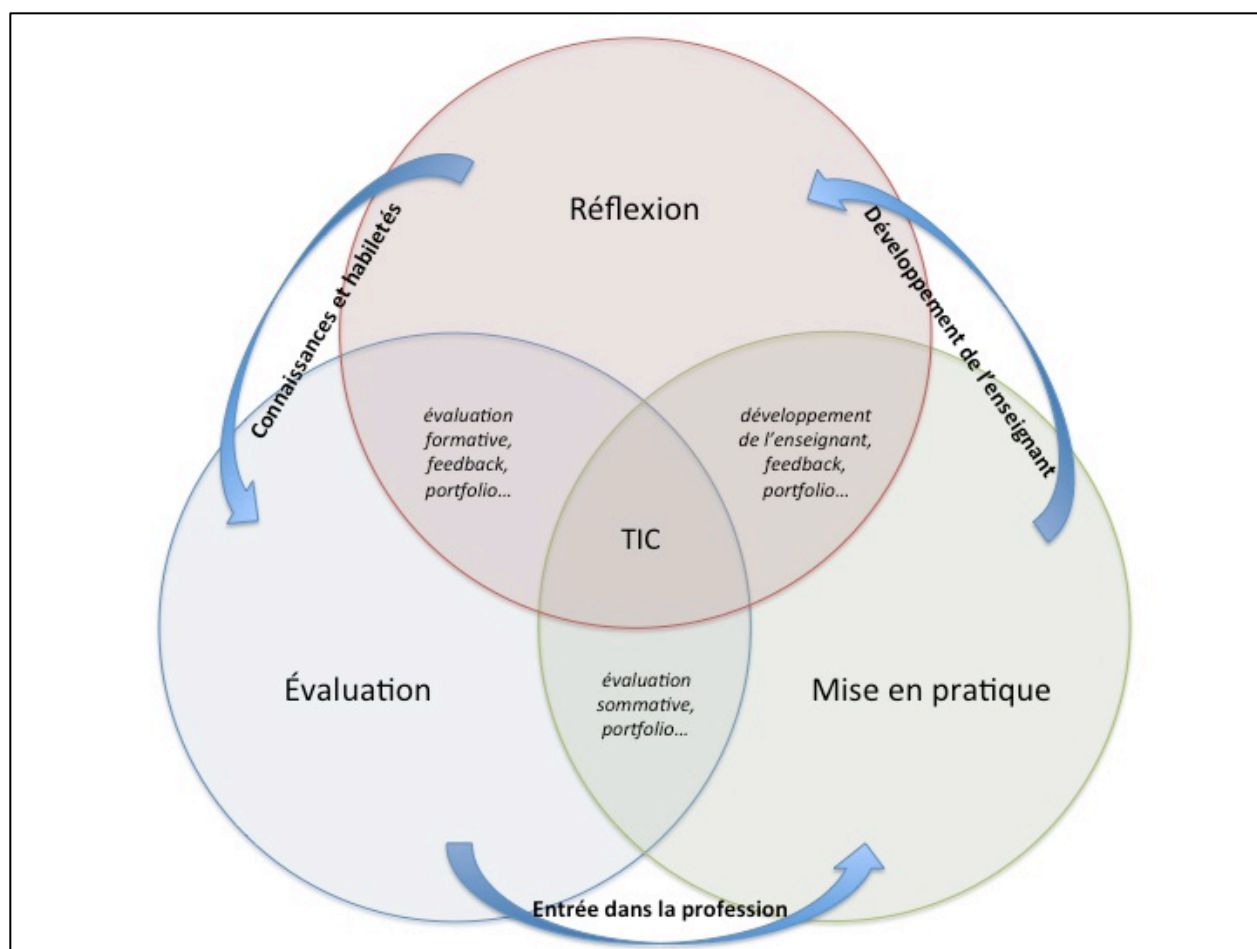


Figure 3 : Modèle de la supervision à distance en enseignement (Lehman et Conceição, 2010)

Élaboré suite au développement de la formation pratique en ligne au sein de programmes de baccalauréat et de maîtrise, ce modèle permet également de guider la recherche quant à la supervision à distance en enseignement (Routier et Otis-Wilborn, 2013).

À partir de ces modélisations (dont la complémentarité sera précisée avec la méthodologie) et des concepts qui s’y rattachent, nos objectifs initiaux étaient: 1- Décrire les possibilités et les limites d’une supervision de stage à distance quant à la création d’un sentiment de présence chez les stagiaires en enseignement; 2- Identifier les conditions favorables à la création d’un sentiment de présence par la supervision à distance de stages en enseignement.

Dans le cadre de cet article, ces objectifs seront au service d'une des questions débattues lors de la conférence de travail de l'Association canadienne pour la formation des enseignants (ACFE) qui avait lieu à Saskatoon en octobre et novembre 2013 : «Qu'est-ce qui amène le changement dans la formation des enseignantes et des enseignants et quels facteurs influencent la capacité des programmes de formation en enseignement à réaliser les changements qui s'imposent?»

Considérant les possibilités de la supervision de stage à distance, nous postulons en effet que ce pan de la FAD implique des ajustements de la part des programmes de formation en enseignement, et nous transposons ainsi la question de l'ACFE : les TIC permettant des changements dans la formation pratique des enseignantes et des enseignants, comment les programmes peuvent-ils mieux se préparer à innover à l'égard de la supervision de stage à distance?

3. MÉTHODOLOGIE

Une méthodologie qualitative appuie cette étude exploratoire-descriptive d'orientation compréhensive. La collecte de données s'est faite par une série d'entretiens individuels semi-structurés avec le personnel superviseur de la MQES de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Il s'agit d'un échantillon de convenance. Suite au démarrage du volet en ligne de la MQES en 2005, des superviseuses et des superviseurs d'expérience ont rapidement adapté leur accompagnement selon les modalités du «distanciel». C'est avec peu de balises qu'ils ont affronté les changements qui s'imposaient, modifié des outils, appris à utiliser divers TIC et par le fait même développé une expertise pour la supervision de stage à distance. Au moment de cette étude, la MQES comptait sept personnes superviseuses (dont une nouvellement en fonction), et nous en avons interviewé cinq ; nous les identifions de S1 à S5 lors de la présentation des résultats. La personne

superviseure nouvellement en poste fait partie de notre échantillon ; les quatre autres cumulent plusieurs années d'expérience en supervision de stage à distance à l'aide des TIC. Ce groupe supervisait des stages dans plusieurs disciplines (enseignement au secondaire du français, de l'univers social, des mathématiques, des sciences et de l'anglais langue seconde).

Les entretiens étaient composés de questions semi-ouvertes, posées selon un guide d'entretien élaboré grâce au modèle pour la création du sentiment de présence en ligne de Lehman et Conceição (2010) et validé par un groupe d'experts. L'interprétation par le chercheur des réponses et des exemples d'un petit nombre de personnes superviseures représente la principale limite à cette étude.

L'analyse des données fut effectuée selon le modèle de Miles et Huberman (2003). La condensation du verbatim des entrevues s'est faite à l'aide d'un codage validé par un procédé interjuge. Cette validation a permis d'assurer une justesse quant à la signification et à la compréhension des codes.

Initialement, le choix des codes s'est fait à partir du modèle de la CAL de Garrison, Anderson et Archer (2000) et du modèle de supervision à distance en enseignement de Routier et Otis-Wilborn (2013), mais nous avons tenu compte des codes émergents pour les différents entretiens. Trois de ces codes (1- la rencontre d'introduction en présentiel, 2- la collaboration avec la personne mentor ou la direction d'école, et 3- l'éthique) se sont tout particulièrement imposés afin d'enrichir notre réflexion sur les changements et l'évolution dans la formation des enseignantes et des enseignants au Canada. Dans la prochaine section, nous nous attardons aux résultats qui concordent avec ce thème.

4. PRÉSENTATION DES RÉSULTATS

Lors de notre participation à la conférence de l'ACFE, notre groupe de travail a identifié différents facteurs à considérer afin de guider la lecture de nos résultats sur la création d'un sentiment de présence par la supervision de stage à distance : l'éventail des TIC utilisées par les personnes superviseuses, les bénéfices d'une supervision hybride, la valorisation du rôle de la direction d'établissement et de la personne mentor pour l'accompagnement des stagiaires, ainsi que les considérations éthiques. Nous proposons ici une analyse de quelques instantanés, organisée selon ces quatre facteurs. Chacun de ceux-ci sera illustré par des citations de verbatim qui donnent à voir quant à la façon dont les programmes peuvent se préparer à d'éventuels changements dans la formation pratique des enseignantes et des enseignants.

4.1. Les TIC pour la création d'un sentiment de présence

La validation du codage n'a pas permis de dégager les propos des personnes superviseuses à l'égard des trois phases de la supervision à distance de Routier et Otis-Wilborn (2013) - qui sont la mise en pratique, la réflexion et l'évaluation -, mais plusieurs des TIC qui sont au cœur de ce modèle furent identifiées. C'est l'éventail des outils technologiques qui s'est donc imposé lors de la condensation des données. Nous détaillerons ces TIC par l'utilisation qu'en font les superviseuses et les superviseurs de la MQES afin de créer un sentiment de présence chez les stagiaires. Ce portrait permet de mieux comprendre la portée des considérations pédagogiques, organisationnelles, technologiques et éthiques du changement de pratique que représente la supervision de stage à distance.

4.1.1. Le téléphone

Nous incluons le téléphone parmi les TIC car il s'impose lors de situations délicates, lorsque des clarifications s'avèrent nécessaires. «Si c'est une urgence, je prends le téléphone»

(S1). Cet autre extrait souligne son caractère exceptionnel: «Le dernier moyen ultime, c'est un coup de téléphone. Il y a la présence, mais ce n'est parfois pas possible» (S5).

Considérant la distance, une personne superviseure définit sa disponibilité, voire sa présence, entre autres grâce aux heures auxquelles elle est disponible au téléphone : «Ils ont mon numéro de téléphone. Ils peuvent m'appeler en tout temps, m'écrire en tout temps. Et je réagis» (S2).

Une des choses, c'est d'être très disponible, surtout au téléphone. [...] Ils peuvent me téléphoner presque n'importe quand. Même les fins de semaine. On n'est plus dans le 9 à 5. Et ça leur convient car ils ont leur tâche d'enseignement de jour, et je ne veux pas les déranger, sauf si eux qui me téléphonent. (S3)

Au-delà de la disponibilité, il y a la rapidité du suivi fait par la personne superviseure : «Je leur garantie une réponse dans les 24 heures. Quand ce sont des questions précises, on fonctionne par courrier, mais quand ça demande une discussion, je prends le téléphone et j'appelle» (S4).

La seule contrainte du téléphone soulevée par les personnes répondantes est qu'il ne reste pas de trace écrite d'une conversation téléphonique : «Je dois donc toujours résumer l'échange par un courriel» (S1).

4.1.2. Le courriel

Pour les personnes superviseures de la MQES, le courriel s'utilise en complémentarité du téléphone. «La gestion quotidienne du courriel est essentielle. C'est dans le courriel que je vais détecter si j'ai besoin de téléphoner. Lire mes courriels à tous les jours, répondre aux interrogations, stimuler quelque chose... C'est la base du bon fonctionnement» (S4). Pour cette

personne répondante, le courriel permet de personnaliser son accompagnement d'une manière qui peut relever de la présence sociale : «Déjà, par la façon dont on écrit, on peut créer des liens, être moins formels et plus collaboratifs. Je trouve ça plus facile de cette façon-là» (S5).

Tout comme pour les retours d'appel, la rapidité du suivi des courriels stimule le sentiment de présence. Dans cet extrait, la personne superviseure souligne que cet engagement devrait se faire dans les deux sens :

Lorsque [les stagiaires] sollicitent mon support, je fonctionne selon un délai de 24 heures, mais dans le guide, je crois qu'il est indiqué 36 heures, ou 48 heures. Il serait intéressant d'établir un délai de réponse pour les étudiants. Ils doivent regarder leurs courriels à tous les jours, et présentement, ce n'est pas le cas. (S3)

Ainsi, dans un contexte de supervision à distance, le stagiaire devrait lui aussi s'investir, établir un délai maximal pour les suivis, afin de signaler sa présence.

4.1.3. Les forums

À la MQES, il y a un forum électronique public pour toutes les étudiantes et tous les étudiants à la maîtrise (il s'agit d'un outil qui peut favoriser une présence sociale), mais c'est le forum qui réunit tous les membres d'une même cohorte de stage que les superviseures et les superviseurs ont commenté de manière significative. Ce «lieu virtuel» permet aux stagiaires de partager leurs expériences, ce qui crée des occasions d'intégration des apprentissages : «On leur demande de nous dire des apprentissages en lien avec les compétences, mais on les pousse à faire référence à des auteurs, à des cours à l'université. Moi, je leur dis qu'on est en train de marier leur pratique à la théorie» (S2).

Sur les forums, cet arrimage théorie-pratique - qui fait souvent défaut dans le processus

réflexif des stagiaires (Boutet, Gagné et Thiffault, 2008) - nécessite l'intervention de la personne superviseure.

Lorsqu'on discute sur le forum, je vais leur dire d'aller voir dans tel document, à tel endroit vous allez avoir telle chose. C'est animé pour que les pièces soient attachées les unes aux autres. Le superviseur doit faire des liens entre les cours, les stages, les documents, les vidéos... À mesure que ça avance, on sent que l'expérience se jumelle à la théorie. Mon rôle est d'approfondir la discussion. (S4)

Cet autre extrait souligne également l'importance du rôle d'animation des personnes superviseures, qui relève d'une présence à la fois enseignante, cognitive et sociale : «Souvent, je les oriente vers une discussion qui amène vite une profondeur. Il fallait éviter de demeurer en surface. [...] C'est facile de surfer sur la signification d'un mot ou deux» (S5). Sans cette présence sur le forum, il y a un risque de dérapage :

Lorsqu'on a commencé les forums pour la supervision, je me rappelle que des superviseurs tentaient de le faire, et ça tombait. Si tu ne l'animes pas, ça va tomber. Les étudiants entre eux n'ont pas ce qu'il faut pour gérer les forums. Ça prend une personne responsable, un animateur qui va coacher tout le monde, et qui va nuancer les propos. Je me rappelle d'un étudiant qui avait un peu «bitché» un autre étudiant. Si je laissais passer ça, celle qui s'était fait attaquer allait s'écraser. J'ai dû intervenir. J'ai appelé l'étudiante pour lui dire que je ne trouvais pas ça correct et que j'allais trouver une façon de récupérer ça sur le forum. (S4)

L'animation implique également d'inclure les plus récalcitrants. «Ceux qui n'embarquent pas, je les bouscule un peu. En général, on leur demande d'écrire un texte sur le forum dans

lequel ils donnent leur perception d'une compétence» (S4). Toutefois, la personne superviseuse n'aura pas à utiliser la coercition si elle réussit à établir un climat positif, favorable à la présence sociale : «S'ils ont confiance, ils vont plus facilement aborder les problèmes qu'ils ont avec leurs collègues, la direction ou les élèves» (S3).

Parfois, il y avait une chimie dans le groupe. Je suppose que c'est ça. Je peux me mettre là-dedans. Ça peut dépendre de la poussée que je donnais en intervenant. Les dernières années, je m'arrangeais pour être une muse. Dans le message de départ, j'allais un petit peu plus loin que juste leur demander de réagir. (S5)

Notons que le forum électronique peut être utilisé efficacement lorsque la supervision se fait de manière traditionnelle, mais cette TIC s'impose tout particulièrement lorsque l'accompagnement des personnes stagiaires se fait à distance au sein d'une CAL.

4.1.4. Les vidéos

En dépit de pouvoir se rendre dans les écoles, les personnes superviseuses de la MQES reçoivent des vidéos afin de voir (de manière asynchrone) leurs stagiaires agir en classe. Lors de l'enregistrement de la période enseignée, des éléments sont à considérer afin que la performance puisse être appréciée à sa juste valeur : le positionnement de la caméra, la qualité de l'image et du son, la durée et le dynamisme des enregistrements, etc. Voici quelques extraits qui en témoignent : «Si la vidéo est bien, c'est presque aussi bien. Je leur dis que je dois les voir, mais que je dois aussi voir les réactions des élèves. Je ne veux pas voir leur visage, mais leurs réactions lorsqu'il y a un travail à faire» (S3); «J'aimerais que la caméra soit placée à l'endroit où je serais assis» (S1); «La caméra doit être près de la fenêtre, sinon c'est noir et on voit très peu. Je leur dis de mettre la caméra sur trépied, de la déplacer au besoin, et de l'arrêter trois ou quatre fois. C'est pour couper le film en segments, afin de pouvoir l'envoyer» (S3); «L'autre

façon, c'est de demander au mentor, ou à un élève, s'il est autonome et que ça ne le pénalisera pas. Avec une caméra à l'épaule, c'est encore mieux pour circuler. Je pense aux laboratoires où c'est vraiment intéressant» (S2).

Une autre personne répondante rappelle que la période filmée doit permettre l'évaluation de diverses compétences de la personne stagiaire :

Ce que j'aime bien, c'est quand j'ai assez d'information sur plusieurs aspects. Par exemple, pour un laboratoire, j'aime bien entendre les consignes au début, et le suivi de l'enseignant qui se promène. Idéalement, il faut l'entendre aussi faire ses interactions. Mais 75 minutes, c'est trop pour ce type de leçons. Une leçon ordinaire, c'est intéressant lorsqu'il y a plusieurs éléments, lorsqu'il y a des transitions, avec une participation d'élèves, en groupe, pas juste par des présentations orales. Lorsqu'il y a plusieurs éléments, des approches pédagogiques différentes dans une même leçon, c'est ce qui est riche, et qui permet de réagir. Ce qui est riche aussi, c'est quand les élèves sont vivants. Ils ne le sont pas toujours de la bonne façon, mais ça aussi c'est riche! C'est comme ça qu'on fait de beaux apprentissages. (S5)

Si la personne stagiaire prend le temps de visionner sa vidéo avant de l'envoyer à la personne superviseure, l'exercice gagne en pertinence pédagogique. Selon Karppinen (2005), la vidéo favorise l'«apprentissage significatif» qu'il décrit comme actif, contextualisé, guidé, émotionnellement prenant et motivant. «Je me rappelle d'un étudiant qui me disait qu'en regardant sa vidéo, il a pu remarquer qu'il ne laissait pas suffisamment de temps aux élèves pour répondre aux questions. Ça aide» (S1). La vidéo peut donc mener à des apprentissages qui relèvent de la présence cognitive : «Certains m'envoient leurs vidéos en ajoutant des bulles, en

écrivant par exemple "Regardez cet étudiant". Ça c'est merveilleux.»

Les contraintes de la vidéo relèvent des difficultés techniques, des inquiétudes que le médium suscite pour les stagiaires, et des conséquences pour la personne superviseure si la vidéo ne convient pas (par une absence des éléments évoqués précédemment). De plus, il y a tout ce qui ne se remplace pas. «C'est sûr que ce n'est pas la même atmosphère, et que s'ils filment mal (ce qui arrive), là, c'est problématique» (S4); «Quand tu es sur place, tu as le pouls du stagiaire avant et après. Tu assistes au premier contact avec les élèves, dès que la porte s'ouvre» (5).

4.1.5. Les services de partage de fichiers lourds

Les vidéos synchrones, même lorsque les fichiers sont compressés, constituent de lourds fichiers pouvant difficilement s'envoyer par courriel. Les stagiaires et les personnes superviseures doivent donc utiliser des services de partage de fichiers. À la MQES, ils sont invités à utiliser une plateforme de transfert de l'Université de Sherbrooke, mais celle-ci, quoique sécuritaire, s'avérait trop instable lors de l'étude. «Pour bien des étudiants, ça ne fonctionne pas. Ce n'est pas convivial. [...] Quand l'université utilisera un outil performant, on l'utilisera» (S2). Ainsi, les superviseures et les superviseurs guident les stagiaires vers des TIC comme Dropbox ou WeTransfer; ces directives relèvent de la présence enseignante, d'une structure permettant aux stagiaires de fonctionner. «Cette année, c'est moi qui les ai invités sur Dropbox, ce qui a augmenté ma capacité à recevoir des fichiers et j'espère que ça ira mieux ainsi» (S3).

L'utilisation de ces TIC ouvre la porte à certains questionnements éthiques car les fichiers partagés se retrouvent sur des serveurs qui ne sont pas ceux de l'université (ce qui rend difficile d'en garantir la non-diffusion). Cette pratique vient contredire certaines prétentions éthiques des

superviseures et superviseurs (abordées en 4.4). Toutefois, malgré l'insistance de l'université pour que les personnes superviseures et stagiaires utilisent ses serveurs, la problématique demeurant entière, les alternatives s'avéraient nécessaires. «La procédure de l'université, je n'ai rien contre, je comprends qu'elle est plus sécuritaire, mais elle ne marche pas. Le service n'est pas adéquat. Et il manque des infos pour que [les stagiaires] sachent compacter les fichiers. Moi, je ne peux pas les aider là-dessus» (S3).

4.1.6. Le portfolio électronique

Le portfolio électronique permet à la personne stagiaire de prendre en charge son développement réflexif, et par le fait même son apprentissage. Même si l'outil repose idéalement sur une posture axée sur l'étudiant, la personne superviseure doit être en mesure d'en expliquer la raison d'être, de faire des liens avec des apprentissages théoriques, de proposer des activités significatives pour les étudiants, et de les encadrer - à distance - selon les visées du programme.

Au moment de l'étude, le portfolio électronique (ou e-portfolio) de la MQES se nomme «cyberfolio». Il est entamé lors du premier stage, et complété lors du deuxième, de manière progressive. «Ce qui peut être fait avec le cyberfolio, puisqu'on y a accès au fur et à mesure qu'il progresse, c'est d'en débiter la lecture, et de questionner les élèves» (S5). Ainsi, cet outil peut procurer une présence cognitive aux stagiaires.

Les programmes en enseignement étant professionnalisants, ils doivent miser sur une alternance intégrative (Gervais, 2010). Cet arrimage théorie-pratique peut prendre son envol avec la rédaction du portfolio électronique. Cette personne superviseure le considère comme la colonne vertébrale de l'alternance. «Je pense que l'outil de base est le cyberfolio. J'ai travaillé beaucoup pour que les étudiants y témoignent de leurs compétences, mais pas seulement à partir

de la classe, mais en traçant des liens avec les cours» (S4).

Toutefois, lors de la rédaction du cyberfolio, les stagiaires se butent à différents irritants. «À moins d'avoir de grandes habiletés techniques, tu ne peux pas jouer avec. Le carcan est là. À quelque part, il n'y a pas beaucoup de place à la création. On peut en faire, mais c'est compliqué» (S5). Cette autre personne superviseuse souligne l'excès de consignes :

L'idée est très bonne, mais je crois qu'on l'a tellement mise dans un carcan que [le cyberfolio] est moins porteur de l'information qu'on recherche. C'est très formel. On veut une introduction, trois aspects d'analyse, et une conclusion. Un cyberfolio devrait te permettre de montrer ce que tu es capable de faire. Il faut y montrer ses meilleures affaires, ses «*best practices*». Je crois qu'on va trop loin là-dessus. Ils doivent être capables d'analyser, mais à mon avis, ce sont leurs démonstrations qui importent. (S3)

Ainsi, même si cette une structure permet de créer un sentiment de présence enseignante chez les stagiaires, l'outil utilisé ne doit pas perdre sa raison d'être. Dans cet extrait, une personne superviseuse parle d'une nécessaire présence en continue pour accompagner les stagiaires dans la rédaction du portfolio électronique :

Dans trop de cas, j'ai l'impression que ça arrive comme un devoir en fin de parcours. Ce n'est pas ça. Il faut constamment que tu les alimentes pendant la session pour faire les liens que tu utilises dans le cyberfolio. Si c'est un devoir à la fin où tu colliges tes données, c'est sûr que les étudiants vont trouver ça difficile. (S4)

4.1.7. Autres TIC

L'équipe de supervision de la MQES utilise d'autres TIC afin d'accompagner les stagiaires à distance. Notons la plateforme d'apprentissage en ligne Moodle, appréciée pour le suivi des visites des stagiaires et le partage de «petits» documents, ainsi que la visioconférence, encore peu utilisée, mais les personnes superviseuses y voient un potentiel : «Il serait intéressant de faire des rencontres avec VIA [le fournisseur du service de visioconférence à l'Université de Sherbrooke au moment de l'étude]. On pourrait voir tous les participants, tout le monde pourrait se voir. Au lieu d'échanger par écrit sur l'une des compétences, ça pourrait se faire à l'oral» (S4).

Cet éventail des TIC utilisées à la MQES est déjà vaste et précise les changements apportés, mais d'autres outils complémentaires - comme le blogue ou la vidéo synchrone - pourraient être envisagés afin de stimuler cette approche multidimensionnelle (Pellerin, 2010), nécessaire à la supervision de stage à distance.

4.2. Supervision hybride

Le caractère hybride de la supervision des stages à la MQES relève d'une seule rencontre en présentiel en introduction du premier stage du programme. Une étude de Gammon et al. (1999) souligne l'importance de ce premier face-à-face pour la réussite du stage, et selon nos résultats, le personnel superviseur de la MQES adhère à cette idée.

La condensation des données de notre étude ne souligne aucune contrainte, mais différents avantages que nous pouvons répartir en deux catégories. La première concerne la possibilité de faire connaissance des différents membres de la cohorte : «Cette première rencontre en présentiel est importante car il faut vraiment briser la glace. Après ce premier contact, les gens se connaissent et c'est plus facile. Le partage de nos expériences au cours de la

session, ce sera comme en présentiel» (S1). Suite à cette rencontre, la création de liens de confiance grâce aux TIC semble facilitée en sein de la cohorte (envers la personne superviseure, mais également entre pairs). «C'est sûr que le premier contact en présentiel, c'est l'fun. On peut mettre un visage sur un nom, et on crée une relation. Ça permet également un sentiment de confiance» (S5).

La seconde catégorie d'avantages à cette rencontre en présentiel implique l'ajustement des attentes et l'établissement des directives par la personne superviseure afin de rassurer les stagiaires : «Un premier contact en présentiel, ça peut vraiment aider. Ça donne une idée de l'engagement. [...] Ça permet d'adoucir certaines craintes. Ensuite, ils se mettent au travail, et ça se passe bien dans la grande majorité des cas» (S5). L'occasion est bonne pour faciliter la suspension de l'incrédulité des stagiaires (Lehman et Conceição, 2010) quant à l'accompagnement en ligne qui leur sera offert :

Lorsque je les rencontre (et c'est pourquoi la rencontre en présentiel est vraiment importante), je leur dis toujours que je ne suis pas un représentant du ministère. Je suis un représentant de l'université et on va s'assurer que ce que vous faites est dans le cadre de la maîtrise. Après ça, le ministère vous émettra un brevet. C'est dans ce cadre-là que je leur parle, et j'essaie de les convaincre, et pour la plupart ça marche. Peut-être qu'ils se sentent contraints à faire cette maîtrise, mais tant qu'à la faire, on va la faire comme il faut. Ça ne sera pas juste une estampe. Moi, je serai là, et je serai très présent lors de tout le cheminement pratique, tout au long de la session. Je leur dis même qu'ils me trouveront peut-être harcelant parce que je vais les suivre de près. Pour la plupart, ça fait leur affaire. (S2)

Dans cet extrait, la personne superviseure cherche à créer un climat favorable et il met

l'accent sur sa présence (identifiée comme étant excessive) lorsqu'il jouera son rôle à distance. Ainsi, avant de s'en remettre aux TIC au cours d'un stage supervisé à distance, la personne superviseure cherche à tirer profit du présentiel.

Par contre, même si les personnes superviseures valorisent une première rencontre en présentiel, il n'en demeure pas moins que les alternatives sont possibles : «Moi, je dois la faire par téléphone. J'ai une longue conversation avec chaque stagiaire» (S3).

4.3. Relation avec les différentes personnes-ressources du milieu scolaire

En supervision de stage à distance, afin de compenser l'absence de présentiel, les superviseures et les superviseurs de la MQES sont tout particulièrement soucieux d'établir une relation de confiance avec les personnes-ressources du milieu scolaire, tout particulièrement en prévision de l'évaluation des stagiaires. Parfois, le pivot est l'enseignante ou l'enseignant qui joue le rôle de la personne mentor.

S'il y a des problèmes avec l'outil, avec l'utilisation de la caméra, je vais devoir me fier un peu plus aux commentaires du mentor. Mais je dois aussi discuter avec eux pour connaître leur vision, leurs attentes... Parfois ils peuvent sentir qu'ils sont eux aussi évalués. Il faut mettre ça au clair, les tenir au courant, établir une relation de confiance afin que je sois informé des situations qui se déroulent en classe. (S1)

Une confiance réciproque permet aux deux formateurs de la triade de mieux jouer leur rôle, dont celui d'accompagnement réflexif qui, en formation pratique, découle de la réalité de la classe. La personne superviseure doit «faire en sorte que son point d'entrée soit l'action concrète de l'étudiant et son point de sortie, la réflexion de ce dernier» (Boutet, 2002, p. 89). Malgré la

distance, la personne superviseure peut alors bénéficier de la réelle présence de la personne mentor sur les lieux du stage. «Les échos que j'ai à cet égard, c'est que les mentors sont très présents. Il faut que ce soit une présence régulière. La mentalité importe peu, mais il faut un suivi constant entre le mentor et l'étudiant, qu'ils travaillent de pair» (S2).

Pourtant, pour la majorité des personnes superviseures répondantes, c'est la direction d'école qui représente le principal pivot. «Je dis au directeur que je compte sur lui. Il peut aller dans la classe et je l'invite à le faire au moins une fois, ou à regarder les vidéos. Si le directeur est en confiance avec nous, avec l'université, lui aussi peut signaler un problème. Le mentor, c'est plutôt rare que je me fie sur lui» (S3). Cet autre extrait va dans le même sens : «Je contacte très peu les mentors» (S2). Cette méfiance relève du contexte de la MQES lors de l'étude; les personnes mentors sont bien souvent des collègues des stagiaires. Mais il n'y a pas que ce double-statut des personnes mentors qui peut poser problème :

Il y a parfois des dynamiques avec le mentor et la direction qui fait en sorte que le stagiaire se ramasse seul. J'ai parfois senti des problèmes qui relevaient plus de la gestion de l'école et de l'équipe que de la gestion de classe. Quand le mentor a de la difficulté, imagine le stagiaire s'il n'est pas épaulé par la direction d'école. À ce moment-là, tu gères des relations interpersonnelles et interprofessionnelles, et ça devient délicat. C'est un rôle qu'on doit jouer. (S5)

Cet autre extrait précise ce nouveau rôle bien particulier de la personne superviseure qui relève également du présentiel, mais qui nécessite une attention particulière en contexte de FAD :

Je dis [aux stagiaires] que s'ils ont un conflit avec la direction ou avec le mentor, [qu'ils m'en parlent] au début du stage parce que vers la fin, il y a moins de chance que ça se règle. Pour moi, c'est facile de discuter avec une direction d'école. Mon but n'est pas de prendre pour l'un ou pour l'autre dans un conflit. Ici, c'est comment on sort de ça, comment on trouve une solution. C'est une façon pour moi de compenser le présentiel. J'essaie de trouver des indices... (S4)

Ainsi, afin de prévenir certaines problématiques qui relèvent du «distanciel», les personnes superviseuses de la MQES préfèrent transiger avec les membres de la direction afin que ceux-ci s'intéressent et s'investissent dans le développement professionnel des stagiaires qui - faut-il le rappeler - font partie de leur équipe-école. «Je leur suggère fortement d'aller voir leurs employés en classe. Pour des cas d'exception, c'est le mentor qui évalue, mais je dis à la direction qu'elle va devoir signer l'évaluation» (S2).

Normalement, c'est la direction qui fait l'évaluation. [...] Lorsque le stagiaire n'est pas en difficulté, ce n'est pas risqué de faire intervenir le mentor davantage, mais on ne veut pas que le mentor sanctionne un échec parce que c'est un collègue. (S4)

Ainsi, que la supervision soit traditionnelle ou non, de bonnes relations avec le milieu scolaire vont souvent de pair avec un stage réussi. Lorsque la supervision se fait à distance, cette condition gagnante devient primordiale, et la situation à la MQES met en lumière l'importance d'inclure les directions d'écoles dans le processus d'accompagnement des stagiaires.

4.4. Éthique de la supervision de stage à distance

L'éthique est un enjeu majeur pour la formation pratique en enseignement, et il devient incontournable dans un contexte de supervision de stage à distance considérant l'utilisation

accrue des TIC par les personnes superviseuses et les stagiaires. La principale raison préoccupation éthique qui gagne en importance en contexte de stage (et qui s'est imposé dans notre analyse de données) relève des enregistrements vidéos que la personne stagiaire doit faire de son enseignement en classe:

Lorsque [les stagiaires] vont se filmer, il faut considérer les élèves qui ne veulent pas se faire filmer. Ça peut avoir un impact sur le positionnement de la caméra. Mais il faut bien informer les gens que c'est uniquement le superviseur qui va visionner la vidéo. Le stagiaire doit bien expliquer la raison pourquoi il se filme.

(S1)

Pourtant, la démarche ne devrait pas se limiter à informer correctement les élèves et exclure du champ de vision de la caméra certains d'entre eux. Le consentement formel des élèves devrait être obtenu dans le respect, de manière confidentielle, selon les droits de la personne (Tochon, 2002). Et lorsque les élèves sont d'âge mineur, c'est le consentement des parents qu'il faudrait obtenir avec la même rigueur.

«J'ai eu un cas où les parents ne voulaient pas. Je me rappelle aussi d'un directeur qui a exigé une lettre de la part des parents. Ceux qui ne pouvaient pas être filmés étaient dans le fond de la classe. Pourtant, c'est nous qui voyons le film, et personne d'autre» (S3). Cette personne superviseuse se plie au non-consentement de certains parents, mais elle s'explique mal leurs craintes. Le prochain extrait illustre bien que pour éviter les problématiques éthiques, les personnes superviseuses de la MQES misent beaucoup sur leurs échanges avec les directions d'écoles :

Quant à l'éthique, je peux garantir que cette vidéo ne va à personne d'autre que moi, et que je la détruis après. Moi, je garantie ça aux directions d'écoles. Même

chose pour le synchrone. Ce n'est pas enregistré, et le seul qui voit ça, c'est moi.

Il faut clarifier la situation. Une fois, une direction a exigé l'autorisation des parents. Il y avait eu quelques retraits. C'est souvent la direction qui provoque ça en envoyant la lettre. Il y a des parents qui prennent peur. (S4)

La personne superviseure cherche à éviter les démarches (et les délais supplémentaires) pour que leurs stagiaires obtiennent le consentement éclairé de leurs élèves (ou de leurs parents) car cette procédure semble perçue comme une contrainte, voire une perte de temps, la diffusion de la vidéo se limitant à une seule personne, soit la superviseure ou le superviseur.

Moi, ce que je dis aux directions d'écoles, c'est qu'on va s'y plier si c'est nécessaire, mais dans la majorité des cas, ce n'est pas un problème. Je suis la seule personne du côté de l'université à visionner ces enregistrements. Je peux assurer que la vidéo que je reçois, je l'emmagasine jusqu'au processus de révision de notes, et après je la détruis. Personne d'autre ne la voit. Je dis aux étudiants que si c'est si génial que ça devrait passer à *Découverte*, inquiétez-vous pas que nous allons chercher à avoir toutes les autorisations. Je ne dis pas ça parce que c'est mauvais, mais il faut faire la part des choses... (S2)

5. DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

Quatre facteurs – l'utilisation des TIC par les personnes superviseures, la supervision hybride, la direction d'établissement et la personne mentor, ainsi que l'éthique - nous ont permis d'explorer comment les programmes peuvent mieux se préparer à innover à l'égard de la supervision de stage à distance.

Dans l'ensemble, nous constatons que l'utilisation des TIC par les personnes superviseures et stagiaires implique un minimum de compétences technologiques de leur part.

Elles utilisent les outils qu'elles maîtrisent, quitte à demeurer très traditionnelles (exemple, par une utilisation du téléphone et du courriel, au détriment de la visioconférence qui pourrait stimuler efficacement le sentiment de présence). Pour plus d'innovation dans le changement de pratique que représente la supervision de stage à distance, les programmes devront entre autres offrir des formations ciblées.

Même si un certain nombre des superviseuses et des superviseurs s'arrange pour tirer profit de certains outils - comme c'est le cas à la MQES pour le forum électronique -, le support technologique des programmes peut être revu à la hausse afin d'éviter les problématiques comme celles du transfert sécurisé de lourds fichiers vidéos, ou de la rigidité structurelle d'un portfolio électronique. Les programmes peuvent également établir des consignes claires et uniformes quant à l'utilisation des TIC dans un contexte de formation pratique à distance, entre autres en ce qui concerne les vidéos qui remplacent les visites de supervision. L'objectif demeure que les personnes superviseuses puissent optimiser le sentiment de présence chez leurs stagiaires, leur faire bénéficier d'une expérience éducative complète.

Ces consignes devraient également concerner l'éthique. Alors que les préoccupations des personnes superviseuses à cet égard se manifestent lorsqu'une problématique survient, les programmes de formation aurait avantage à mettre en place des pratiques qui se préoccupent en amont des enjeux éthiques (Watson, 2003). En fournissant aux personnes superviseuses et stagiaires des balises claires quant à la création, le transfert et l'archivage des enregistrements vidéos effectués en classe, les programmes de formation en enseignement seraient plus en mesure d'assurer que le développement d'un accompagnement à distance favorisé par les TIC se fait dans la bonne direction.

Alors que des changements d'ordre technologique viennent modifier la formation pratique, la personne superviseure n'est pas la seule à devoir modifier son rôle afin que la personne stagiaire puisse demeurer dans cette «zone de développement maximal». Une plus grande implication des directions d'établissement peut s'avérer déterminante - même lorsque les stagiaires ne sont pas à l'emploi de leur établissement -, mais leur rôle, en appui à celui de la personne mentor (ou de la personne enseignante associée), demeure à circonscrire par les programmes.

Afin d'innover en formation pratique, les programmes de formation gagneraient également à explorer des alternatives hybrides. En ouvrant la porte à une supervision hybride qui combinerait les avantages du présentiel à ceux du «distanciel», même les stages se déroulant à proximité des campus universitaires pourraient bénéficier d'un virage (pédagogique, organisationnelle, technologique et éthique) soucieux de ne pas isoler la personne stagiaire. Malgré les inévitables limites de la FAD, l'évolution des stages de la formation en enseignement passe-t-elle par une optimisation du modèle de supervision hybride? La question mérite qu'on s'y attarde.

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**Changing Landscapes in Teacher Education: The Influences of an Alternative
Practicum on Pre-service Teachers Concepts of
Teaching and Learning in a Global World**

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Abstract

It is widely accepted that practicum is a critically important part of teacher education courses and is consistently valued highly by pre-service teachers. Diverse practicum placement sites are explored as a way to expand pre-service teachers' concepts of educational spaces and opportunities, to broaden their understandings of education and to enhance their educational skills and philosophies. This paper is based on a qualitative study developed by the researchers to examine pre-service teachers' perceptions of their experiences in diverse practicum settings. The focus of the study on the value pre-service teachers attributed to their alternative practicum placements that included international school placements and non-school placements and how teacher education programs can respond to this changing educational milieu. The study adds to the body of research that informs teacher education practices across Canada.

Changing Landscapes in Teacher Education: The Influences of an Alternative Practicum on Pre-service Teachers Concepts of Teaching and Learning in a Global World

Education does not evolve in isolation; it is constantly being required to adapt to social change. Education is also profoundly influenced by the great ideological, political and economics shifts that transform societies at important moments in history. The current phase of globalization is one these important moments. Today, long-practiced teaching and learning methods are being transformed under myriad pressures from global economic competition, speedy global communication, growing human migration and others. These changes impact on the types of skills students need for future employment; therefore, providing pre-service teachers with diverse educational experiences allows pre-service teachers to acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for facing the challenges of the global world. Alice Pitt (Pitt, Dibbon, Sumara, & Wiens, 2011) states that “the dilemma for the pre-service programs is to prepare future teachers for schools as they currently exist while also enlarging their vision about what schools and public education might, should, or will become” (p.4). She urges teacher educators to create the opportunities that prepare pre-service teachers for “the complexity of their work in a complex world” (Pitt et al., 2011, p.5).

The complexities of the ‘era of globalization’ are very challenging for educators and education systems. Teachers and teacher educators have an important role in any society, not only because it is the most populated profession in the world, but because teachers are the guarantors of the education of future generations. According to UNESCO Report (1998), approximately 67 million teachers in the world, about two-thirds of whom work in the developing world, are considered to be “carriers of light into dark places, be it tolerance,

international understanding or respect for human rights, and, on the other hand, as costly ‘factors of production’ in an enterprise which absorbs a significant proportion of public budgets” (p.18-19). Globalization increases international economic competition, which results in pressure on decreasing public spending in state budgets (OECD, 2003), forcing education ministries to look for more efficient and cost-saving arrangements for delivering mandatory educational services (Sahlberg, 2002). As a result, teacher satisfaction with their jobs and salaries are decreasing, class-sizes and school-sizes are increasing, financing of teacher professional development is shifting from public authorities to schools and teachers. At the same time, the development and implementation of modern teaching and learning tools requires larger budgets than in the past. Growing cultural diversity in schools and the widening spectrum of children with various special needs call for intensified human development and appropriate provision of support to these students (OECD, 2001, 2003). Bates and Townsend (2007) claim that it is a challenging time for teacher education “as governments are now thinking that the cost of educating their populations should be lowered at the same time as they expect school administrators, teachers, and teacher educators, to do much more, in more difficult circumstances, than they have ever done before” (p.734).

An oversupply of teachers, budget cuts, and negative talk about public schools are among main factors being cited for an enrollment decline in teacher education programs. What gets overlooked by both the government and the potential teacher candidates is the fact that education faculties have capacity to serve education needs beyond supplying teachers to the K-12 school system. The need to broaden the public view of educators and their potential role in society, in places other than schools, becomes vital for the survival of any educational program (Pitt et al., 2011).

These and other dilemmas for teacher education institutions and teacher educators demonstrate the necessity for detailed analyses of the current situation as well as possible future directions and strategies. Despite the diversity of approaches to teacher education, there is a growing, evidence-based consensus around what teacher skills and knowledge are required in the 21 century. According to many researchers, successful education depends upon the interrogation of both markets and systems on the one hand and traditions and communities on the other so that the choices teacher educators and their students make are informed and effective (Bates, 2005; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005; Hinchey & Cadiero-Kaplan, 2005; Sahlberg, 2002). It means that teacher education requires “sufficient autonomy to develop its own effective practice which is cognizant of the demands of both economy and society, of system and culture, but subservient to neither” (Bates and Townsend, 2007, p. 733).

Practicum

It is widely accepted that practicum is a critically important part of teacher education courses and is consistently valued highly by pre-service teachers (Brown and Danaher, 2008; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005; Turnbull, 2005). Smith and Lev-Ar (2005) report that practicum experiences influence students’ views on education and have a positive impact on their attitude towards their future. Teacher educators value the practicum component as the educational context within which pre-service teachers can put into practice their developing pedagogies, they tend to view the placements as a time for pre-service teachers to transfer the pedagogical content knowledge that they learned on campus (Atputhasamy, 2005; Onslow, Beynon, & Geddis, 1992), reflect on their experiences (Borko & Mayfield, 1995), and take some risks (Chandler et al., 1994). Pre-service teachers, however, tend to perceive the practicum as an opportunity for practicing and

gaining practical skills about the procedures and management of classrooms rather than the intellectual and moral aspects of teaching. “Their goal is to be judged proficient in terms of the values that govern the school” (Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004, p. 10). Pre-service teachers’ comments about their practicum experience often reveal “the general difficulty they have in integrating the work that they are expected to undertake on the practicum with what they are learning about teaching in the university component of the course” (Ingvarson, Beavis, & Kleinhenz, 2007, p. 375). Waghorn and Stevens (1996) claim that “student teachers usually comply with the status quo and carry out actions and routines preferred by their supervising teachers” (p. 50), and as a result they tend to reproduce the kind of teaching that they are observing and expected to implement (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999).

A number of authors suggest a need for including diverse practicum placement sites as a way to expand student concepts of educational spaces and opportunities (Anderson, Lawson, and Mayer-Smith, 2006; Furlong, 2000; Metz, 2005). According to Metz (2005), students who supplement their local practicum with educational experiences in alternative settings are likely to broaden their understanding of formal education and enhance their educational skills and philosophies. Diverse placements are valued for “equipping educators with a wide range of skills that can be readily transferable across contexts, inside and outside of school settings” and for providing pre-service teachers “exposure to and opportunities to practice in a wide array of learning environments” (Anderson, Lawson, and Mayer-Smith, 2006, p. 342). In a similar vein, Brown and Danaher (2008) emphasize the importance of helping pre-service teachers to expand their views of teaching and learning beyond the boundaries of classroom-based environment and to develop a more holistic view of education.

Alternative practicum settings provide pre-service teachers with opportunities for “...increased critical thinking and problem solving capacities; engagement in distinctively different communities; and ongoing development of understanding and tolerance to prepare for a lifetime of informed and participatory citizenship, including various personal and educational challenges” (Cantalini-Williams, Cooper, Grierson, Maynes, Rich et al., 2014, p. 12). These skills and dispositions are believed to support pre-service teachers in becoming increasingly competent and employable in education-related careers (Cantalini-Williams & Tessaro, 2011; Maynes, Hatt & Wideman, 2013). Various researchers point out that in alternative settings pre-service teachers are exposed to more ways in which they could apply their teaching and communication skills, and that this exposure could assist in pursuing further career options and diverse employment opportunities (Anderson, Lawson, and Mayer-Smith, 2006; Cantalini-Williams et al., 2014; Maynes, Hatt, & Wideman, 2013).

According to Dantas (2007), participation in the international practicum placements plays a significant role in the development of personal and professional beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers. Mwebi & Brigham (2009) indicate that pre-service teachers with international experiences “increased their self-awareness, and enhanced their personal efficacy and understanding of cross-cultural, diversity, and globalization issues, which has informed their subsequent teaching practice in public school systems” (p. 415). Numerous studies attest to such benefits of international placements as increased global awareness, a greater sensitivity to the needs of diverse learners and better classroom teaching upon returning home (Baker & Giachhino, 2000; Bell, 2000; Bryan & Sprague, 1997; Cantalini-Williams & Tessaro, 2011; Dantas, 2007). In a similar vein, Merrifield, Jarachow and Pickert (1997) report that teachers with cross-cultural experiences are better prepared to work with diverse populations, understand

the power and potential of world connections, teach global connectedness, make students aware of other perspectives, and appreciate and use cross-cultural instructional approaches.

Purpose of the Study/Research Questions

In Canada, the practicum experience is a main source of the variation among teacher education programs as they differ in the number and duration of placements; timing of the placements; how and by whom they are supervised; and how they are evaluated (Pitt et al., 2011). The research on practicum experiences in diverse practicum settings is limited (Chin, 2004; Chin & Tuan, 2000; Metz, 2005; Middlebrooks, 1999; Tal, 2001), and the existing literature advocates for additional research. This paper is based on a qualitative study developed by the researchers to examine pre-service teachers' perceptions of their experiences in diverse practicum settings. The study focuses on the value pre-service teachers attribute to their alternative practicum placements that included international school placements and non-school placements and how teacher education programs can respond to this changing educational milieu. For purposes of this study alternative practicum placements refers to international school placements and non-school placements such museums, hospitals and non-profit organizations. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What do pre-service teachers identify as the strengths and challenges of teaching in an alternative educational milieu?
- In what ways does an alternative placement differ from the traditional local school placement on pre-services teachers' understanding of their role as an educator?
- What changes are needed in teacher education programs to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching in diverse settings in a global world?

This research is of educational importance as it expands on the knowledge and understanding of the impact and outcomes as well as the strengths and the weaknesses of practicum models that are different from the classroom-only practicum traditionally offered during teacher education programs. The study adds to the body of research that informs teacher education practices across the Canada.

The Design of the Study

The research takes place within a tradition of social research which states that reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1972), and that the processes and dynamics in that construction and reconstruction of meaning are open to inquiry. As researchers, we subscribe to the view that reality is socially constructed via the lived experiences of people (McGregor & Murnane, 2010; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009) and through the interaction of individuals (Grix, 2004). This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the perceptions of pre-service teachers' perceptions of their experiences in diverse practicum settings. Qualitative research paradigms emphasize the social construction of knowledge and allow the voices of the participants to be the central point of the research (Creswell, 2007). The study was concerned with meanings and understandings the participants give to the world in which they live, and emphasizes the role language plays in constructing reality. The researchers depended on the participants' interpretations of the phenomenon or situation and tried to 'capture the participants' language and point of view" (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). The research was based on an inductive logic aimed at creating contextualized findings and at credible representation of the interpretations of those experiencing the phenomenon under study.

Two qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis were used: a) an individual, written questionnaire of open-ended questions and b) a focus group interview. Using multiple

research methods can operate to enrich the data and to enhance validity (Reinharz, 1992; Ristock & Pennell, 1996). According to David Morgan (1996), the reasons for combining individual and group interviews typically point to the greater depth of the former and the greater breadth of the latter. Slim and Snell (1996) define a focus group as “a group interview – centered on a specific topic (‘focus’) and facilitated and co-ordinated by a moderator or a facilitator – which seeks to generate primary qualitative data, by capitalizing on the interaction that occurs within the group setting” (p. 189). When setting up a focus group many researchers consider eight to twelve participants to be a suitable number (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990; Krueger, 1994), although smaller groups, with four to six participants, have also been reported (Strong, Ashton, Chant, & Cramond, 1994).

According to Smith (1999), focus group discussions may produce a wider range of thoughts and ideas than individual interviews because the interaction between group members acts as a stimulus. Although the social context in a focus group is not a natural one, the use of focus groups presents an opportunity to observe group interactions within this social context (Morgan, 1996). For instance, researchers can observe participants sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences, and even debating each other. Conflicting opinions between group members may give the researcher an opportunity to explore the thought processes of individuals and the rationale for different viewpoints. Focus groups are believed to be most effective when the participants share some common background characteristics as the researcher may be able to explore the varying perspectives and concerns of different groups of people.

Due to the qualitative nature of the research it is not possible to make empirical generalizations, “characteristic of positivistic and post-positivistic approaches in research, where data are assumed to represent a wider population of people, events or situations in a strict

probabilistic sense” (Cuba and Lincoln as cited in Sim, 1998, p. 350). However, the researchers hope that the data gained from the study will allow for theoretical generalizations which “possess a sufficient degree of generality or universality to allow their projection to other contexts or situations which are comparable to that of the original study” (Sharp, 1998, p. 787).

Data Collection and Analysis

The participants in the study were pre-service teachers enrolled in the B. Ed. program in Atlantic Canada. It is a two year, consecutive program that requires that applicants have completed the requirements for an undergraduate degree and meet all the pre-requisites for admission that relate mostly to teachable subject areas. There are two major practicum blocks in the program. In their first year students complete two weeks in December and five weeks in April/May. In the second year they are in practicum from December to April. The students spend their last semester in a school placement. Within this placement there is an option to apply for four weeks alternative placement if they have been successful in their school placement. Students in other placements such as international locations or with students from distinct cultures may have longer placements but still must be successful in the initial weeks of their second year school placement to be eligible for an alternative placement option. Options typically include non-profit, government institutions such as health care institutions, museums, community colleges, environment and humanitarian organizations.

A written questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the literature review. An e-mail was sent to the second year pre-service teachers who had completed their alternative practicum. Twenty responses to the questionnaires were received, coded and analysed using an inductive approach (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1996; Sim, 1998) to identify shared experiences, commonalities, differences and repetitive responses. Emerging patterns were developed into

themes. Respondents to the questionnaire were invited to become participants in a focus group that was conducted via teleconferencing. The information gathered from the questionnaires was used to foster discussion at the focus group. The focus group discussion involved six participants. The group discussion was audio recorded and transcribed. A thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts was conducted following the same processes as the written questionnaire. The themes were indicators of the significant self-reported experiences and insights of the pre-service teachers that emerged from the data. The findings of the study will be outlined and discussed in the following section.

Findings and Discussion

Two key themes emerged from the study: a) pre-service teachers' shift in beliefs of their roles as educators; and b) benefits of teaching in an alternative educational milieu. The emergent themes are presented along with verbatim quotes of participants to illustrate their perceptions and experiences.

Pre-service teachers' shift in beliefs of their roles as educators. Students enter pre-service teacher education programs with certain preconceptions about what teaching is like, what classrooms are like and what their role as educators will require. These preconceptions tend to influence not only reasons for career choice, but also beliefs and practices in professional lives, including teaching (Fung & Chow, 2002). Pajares (1992) states that preconceptions about teaching are rooted in personal experiences and are usually well established by the time pre-service teachers enter education programs. Many researchers describe pre-service teachers' initial beliefs as liberal and humanistic when they enter teacher education program (Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Reid & Thornton, 2000; Whitehead & Postlethwaite, 2000). Edmonds, Sharp

and Benefield (2002) suggest that pre-service teachers are attracted to their profession “largely for intrinsic reason... (related) to the profession itself and to personal fulfillment” (p. 9). In a similar vein, most of the participants in our study explained their motivation to teach as stemming from their own positive schooling experiences. In the words of the participants:

I wanted to become a teacher based on my experiences as a student and a love of learning. I always felt at home at school, saw my teachers as role models and as a result wanted to do the same for others in the future. I was fortunate enough to have some amazing teachers who instilled confidence, passion and a positive attitude within me from a young age. With those teachers, as well as family support, I made the choice to pursue this career path.

I chose to become a teacher because of the positive influences I had during my school years. It made me want to give back and try to help students in any way I possibly could. My Aunt was a teacher in the local junior high...Unfortunately when I was in high school she suddenly passed away from cancer. After being at her funeral with thousands of past/present students, past/present co-workers and many community members many of them came to my family and thanked us for being blessed to have her as a teacher and knowing her made them better people. From that point on I knew that I wanted to make an impact on people's lives the way she did, by putting everything into her job as it was her passion and her life... teaching.

I had a few teachers who had been very positive role models and influences on my life

and I wanted to be able to do the same for my own students sometime.

I had a lot of wonderful teachers... I also had a wonderful teacher in math to kind of encourage me to go on. And we're still in touch, and she's a wonderful, wonderful math teacher.

I am also influenced by the teachers I have had growing up by giving back to my students what they did for me, guiding me, supporting me and giving me the tools and support to succeed.

I think personal experiences are one of the biggest influences in my teaching. I find myself constantly thinking about what some of my past teachers did/taught me, and how they approached their teaching/learning environment.

In addition to their own school teachers, the pre-service teachers were influenced by the experienced teachers at their school practicum. Many pre-service teachers expressed respect and appreciation for their practicum teachers:

Previous teachers who showed me the importance of getting to know one's students as well as showing care and respect for all students, as well as an appreciation of learning about other cultures, peoples, and ways of life.

I guess the biggest factor was my cooperating teacher. He was a very, very unique teacher. I think the way that he approached teaching and learning, I learned a lot, even just in the first

couple of observation days. I think also his approach to inquiry learning, hands-on learning and making use of the classroom, and connecting different ideas together.

Koc (2012) states that practicum in the classroom setting are used to provide pre-service teachers with a bridge between theory and practice enabling them to refine and define their teaching skills. Current literature supports the importance of teacher practice and explains that the practicum offers pre-service teachers the experience to gain knowledge of how teachers handle and solve the many complex tasks that take place within real classroom settings. As noted by the participants:

I feel that I have been influenced by former professors and cooperating teachers that taught me how to approach teaching certain subjects and suggesting different ways a topic can be studied through engaging me in active dialogue.

I think that brought in a lot of the ideas that I had learned in my methods classes that really helped me in my first practicum.

Sinclair (2008) found that practicum placement encourages student teachers to stay within the teaching profession and continue to teach, as practicums offer real schools and class environments, which both enhance the motivation to continue teaching. As outlined by the participants:

The rewarding feeling of doing a really good lesson, and when the students came up and were like “I really like this!” That was pretty cool!

I think classroom management was one of my biggest worries going into my first practicum anyway and I gained those skills.

The whole practicum experience... opened my eyes to a lot of the classes that were out there at the junior high and high school level.

The practicum enabled pre-service teachers to refine their understandings of teaching and learning and to re-examine their initial preconceptions. Reflection upon their beliefs about the type of teachers they aspired to become as compared to the contradicting teaching philosophies of some cooperating teachers and some models of classroom practices they had experienced during practicum inevitably led to a deeper understanding of complex reality of teaching profession. Some pre-service teachers' commented about difficulties they had trying to integrate what they had been learning in the university methods courses. Others complained about lack of creative independence and the need to comply with the status quo and implement routines preferred by their supervising teachers. Pre-service teachers, who expected to gain some "creative autonomy" of teaching, found it was difficult to function within some rules, norms, tests, and standards.

I found in my second practicum, I was with a couple of different teachers, however, our teaching philosophies did not mix at all. Which you know, you make it work, but I wasn't able to try a lot of things that I wanted to be able to try, based on the fact that they were kind of a little bit more controlling than I would have liked in the classroom. So I think that was a big weakness for me.

In the classroom I was expected to replicate the methods and habits of my cooperating teacher. Rarely did I have the opportunity to develop or showcase my own style of teaching, or develop my own complete lesson plans as I was expected to deliver the plans already set out by my cooperating teachers. Overall, the level of respect given to me as professional summarizes the extensive differences between the traditional classroom practicum and my alternate placement. In the classroom I felt overworked, underappreciated, and generally as if I brought nothing to the table in terms of skills, knowledge, and ability.

Without any doubt, the classroom placement model of focusing on skill development, mastering lesson plans, and classroom management is, and will continue to be, an important component of pre-service teacher preparation; however, as Schulz (2005) suggests there is a need for a change towards “a practicum experience that provides teacher candidates with opportunities for inquiry, for trying and testing new ideas within collaborative relationships, and for talking about teaching and learning in new ways” (p. 148). Zeichner (1996) advocates that the practicum should be a time for growth and learning, where pre-service teachers come to understand the broader implications of being a teacher, and to appreciate the ultimate aim of teaching that is to facilitate learning. For the participants in our study, alternate practicum settings provided multiple opportunities to broaden their understanding of formal education and enhance their educational skills and philosophies. In the words of the participants:

Thinking back on it now is, the alternative placement allowed for me personally to get out of a comfort zone that I've had throughout my own schooling experience. I went to a public school. I participated in traditional schooling all the way up through, and I didn't have any firsthand experience of what it was like for people learning in a different part of the country or a different part of Canada itself.

I think in my alternate placement, I had the opportunity to really look at curriculum and what's behind that. And I really got to take the time to look at lesson plans and create them from start to finish in a great amount of time. So I could go back and I could look at different resources, and have sessions with one of my colleagues, and there wasn't any rush. And I think that really gave me a skill set that is invaluable as a teacher.

I felt that my alternative practicum gave me a better understanding of the other side of the education system, one that I have not been part of or aware of. Teaching in a developing country allowed me to see the variations in the education system in the world and to explore learning, witness and work with different teaching styles, learning styles and understand how much an influence culture has in the learning process.

I got to see more than just a classroom but to work with children on a more personal level by working with NGOs, special needs units and assisting with teaching classes.

So for me, in terms of learning, it was realizing what the degree itself could hold, and what else is actually out there, and how we could put that degree to use. So that was an extreme positive for me.

Benefits of teaching in an alternative educational milieu

Alternative practicum offered pre-service teachers many benefits. As noted by Anderson, Lawson and Mayer-Smith (2007) teaching in unfamiliar or non- traditional environments can help educators develop a more holistic view of education, raise their awareness of the links between theory and practice, and increase understanding and tolerance by engaging in different communities. As one participant explained, *“When these alternative placements came out, there was a mad rush for signing up. There were multiple people applying for any given alternative placement. I think that speaks to how much interest there is out there among the student population in the education program, to try something new.”* Other benefits to the pre-service teachers include developing new values, knowledge and skills as a consequence of adapting to the new context. Some of participants in the study however, were hesitant to apply for an alternative practicum but later embraced the opportunity to expand their thinking about education to other contexts, and to experience teaching and leaning out in non-school settings.

I wanted to comment that the alternate practica opportunity is something I was a bit skeptical about but having nearly completed it I can honestly say I am so glad I decided to follow through with it. I think it has broadened my perspective on what teaching is and how some of the skills I have further developed through this program - open-mindedness, appreciation for all forms of diversity, self-confidence, the ability to work with others, etc. - will be useful in any field.

What surprised me in my alternate practicum was how much I loved it, how that became my career path. I loved my junior high and high school experiences. They were amazing, and I didn't think anything could top those. And then I went to my alternate practicum,

and I came home feeling refreshed and energetic, and so happy. The first day that I was there, I came home saying, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. So the biggest surprise was liking something more than I already loved [classroom teaching].

I'd say the biggest surprise for me is, when I started my alternative placement, I was only about one or two weeks in, when I started to think, wow, I think I'd really like to do this, even instead of classroom teaching. Not that I don't enjoy classroom teaching, but it just gave me a different perspective of how you can use education outside the realm of just in the classroom, and I don't know, it gave me a new perspective and I liked that just as much, if not just personally a little bit more than being in the classroom. So it was a very enjoyable experience.

I hadn't really realized how much education is a part of different organizations, and even how specific organizations like museums and other areas within the government have mandated parts to bring education in, and have representatives dealing with education. And so that was definitely a learning experience for me.

The participants also outlined their experiences of teaching multiple grade levels practice and adapting their pedagogical approaches to different developmental levels. For instance, some of the participants noted:

My role in the placement is also more about letting students drive the content, while guiding them through various programs. Though the programs are all created with standard content, I am able to deliver them with my own style and try out new ways of delivery each time depending upon the group of students I am working with.

Another thing I found really beneficial was being able to see a different group of students come in every single day. So getting to experience not just two classes, really, from your first or second year, but being able to see different classes come in every day, and the different dynamics. And how two classes that are the same grades and have the same number of kids, definitely don't always act the same or are on the same level.

Getting to work one-on-one with students with disabilities it allowed me to see a more personal side to teaching special needs and how I want to learn more about how to teach and what to do to help students with disabilities have a more equitable and accessible education and life.

Pre-service teachers identified the requirement to develop new programs and connecting these to existing curriculum outcomes as a challenge, but one that they felt successful in meeting. They indicated growth in their confidence in making autonomous decisions about the pedagogical approaches and strategies they employed. In the words of the participants:

In my alternate placement I have been given projects to work on independently, with my supervisor indicating she believes I am more than capable to provide valuable insight and new ideas that could be implemented. Overall the setting is much more positive, and I am hugely motivated to work hard in my alternate placement now that I have ownership over the product while knowing that my efforts are valued.

Another thing that I found so beneficial from my alternative placement, I was at the Museum of Natural History, so part of our job duties was to look at the curriculum documents and try to design school programs to be delivered there, based around the curriculum so that teachers feel that when they bring their students in, they can tie their school trips directly to the curriculum. And so, not only did this get me thinking of different ways to plan out things like lessons within the classroom and units within the classroom, it also got me thinking on how to apply the curriculum outcomes to programs that can be offered outside of the classroom, as well as being able to deliver them to different age groups.

While the employment prospects for many pre-service teachers continue to be grim, the collected data were rich in positive responses from the participants who attested to the importance of the alternative practicum in expanding on the value of teaching degree beyond the classroom and opening up other career possibilities. As the participants outlined:

As we went through our education degree, these stories and the news articles started coming out more and more about the lack of positions for the traditional teacher within

the Province. So I felt personally that this opportunity to do an alternative placement, to see somewhere else outside of that provincial placement, would be that much more important as time went on, and as we graduated and thought about actually getting into the workforce.

I definitely felt as though we are more respected as educators in the alternate placement as compared to the school setting where we were just seen as “student teachers” who were wasting their time entering the school system at a time when there are few job opportunities. In the alternate placement we are valued as ‘educators’ and our knowledge, experience, abilities and understanding of education are respected and considered an asset to the ‘team’.

Recently, I was able to get a permanent position at the museum where I did my alternative practicum.

I definitely think even the job market for some who are coming out of the education program, the alternate placements are not only an excellent way to kind of explore different options and opportunities, but it’s also a great way to develop your skills.

I loved my alternative practicum and I am so happy I did it. I really ended up finding my niche. I loved the group of learners I was teaching and ended up landing a summer job one week after graduating. Alternative practicums allow pre-service teachers to explore

the other definitions of “teacher”. I found mine and I work every day to make this my career.

... to be offered a contract right after being done was really an uplifting and positive experience to know that education degree is valued.

Concluding Thoughts

This study was designed to examine pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their experiences in diverse practicum settings. The research focused on the value pre-service teachers attribute to their alternative practicum placements that included international school placements, and non-school placements. The findings demonstrate that the traditional school-based practicum context, although highly valued by pre-service teachers, the alternative practicum gave them a broader understanding of the role of an educator in society. An alternative practicum offers an important complement to the classroom based practicum in that it provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to examine their beliefs and understandings of education as well as to refine their knowledge and skills as a consequence of adapting to the new educational context. A one participant indicated, *“I have immensely appreciated my alternate placement, and I strongly suggest others complete one if possible. In particular, it is important for B. Ed. students to learn of other ways the degree can be used, as well as diversify skills which will set you apart from other graduates.”*

Understanding of the complexity and diversity of educational environments gained by the participants of the alternative practicum is a significant outcome in light of the naïve beliefs of

some pre-service teachers that “teacher education can prepare teachers with a range of contingency strategies for the issues and challenges they will face throughout their career” (Graham & Phelps, 2003, p. 11). This study demonstrates that diverse practicum settings can be key to effective professional development of pre-service teachers and to their preparation for “the complexity of their work in a complex world” (Pitt et al., 2011, p.6).

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**Exploring teacher education graduates' conceptions of theory
to better understand theory-practice connections**

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Abstract

This study explores how to create meaningful and coherent interconnections between field learning and university coursework to support the learning of teacher-candidates in their initial teacher education program. In this chapter, we discuss how nine recent program graduates describe their understandings of theory and practice and the ways that program experiences did or did not help them connect theory and practice. Their responses lead to six broad conceptualizations of theory and revealed that the graduates' understandings of the interrelationships of theory and practice are profoundly influenced by their multiple conceptualizations of theory. We use the open and closed systems of learning to teach and the role of complexity reduction as lenses for analysis. We highlight the ways that dissonance is a significant learning opportunity in teacher education, by which 'discomfort' rewrites assumptions and reconstructs ideas about teaching and learning.

Exploring teacher education graduates' conceptions of theory
to better understand theory-practice connections

Context and Goals

...all aspects of knowledge and skill will be connected to and reflected in both coursework and the practicum. ... the notion is that theory and practice must be strongly linked (Ontario College of Teachers Accreditation Resource Guide, 2014, p. 3).

As researchers of and reflective practitioners in teacher education in Ontario, we have focused much of our ongoing study on the contexts, locations, experiences, relationships, events, activities and issues that facilitate the development of teacher-candidates' professional knowledge and practice. Exploring how to create meaningful and coherent interconnections between field learning and coursework to support teacher development has been key to our work. In an earlier study of meaningful contexts for teacher learning (Broad, James, Baxan, Stewart Rose & Wilton, 2014), teacher educators described learning opportunities that they believed assisted teacher-candidates to bring together theory and practice. The data described revealed the ways that instructors saw experiences of dissonance and discrepancy as fertile spaces for teacher-candidates to develop their understandings of theory and practice. To further our understandings, this study seeks to give voice to and understand the experiences of recent graduates of the teacher education program in this regard.

The context and requirements of initial teacher education in the province of Ontario is shifting. In 2012, multiple stakeholders such as teacher educators, university faculty, politicians, policy makers, board administrators, teachers, parents and students in publicly-funded schools

engaged in dialogue about program structure and content, field experiences, and the relationship of these program elements (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013; Ontario College of Teachers, 2014). During the consultation period, many stakeholders expressed strong support for “more time in schools” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). As a result of this consultation process, the Ontario Ministry of Education has specified new areas of mandatory core content, increased the program length from two to four semesters, and has doubled the required practicum experience to 80 days in Ontario schools. Consequently, questions have emerged regarding how to design effective learning opportunities for teacher-candidates in these extended periods in school settings and how to meaningfully connect the learning that happens in schools and in university coursework. Given the mandate in the new program to link theory and practice more coherently, faculties of education are questioning program structures and determining how the increased time might be utilized to integrate the learning in classes at the university with the learning in field settings (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005b; Zeichner, 2010). In an attempt to inform our teacher education curriculum development, we engaged in this study to understand how recent graduates’ views of the interrelationship between theory and practice inform their professional learning in the program.

It has been long posited that the interplay of theory-practice lies at the core of the complex and continuous process of learning to teach (Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, & Doone, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Dewey, 1904; Zeichner, 2010). Teacher education literature in particular discusses the disconnect between theory and practice and how this might be exacerbated or diminished in the two sites for learning at the university campus and in schools (Blunden, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006). Studies that

examine teacher-candidates who experience profound learning in relation to practical experiences are important to consider when seeking theory practice connections. (Korthagen, 2010; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Russell, 2008).

Dewey proclaimed that “it is difficult, if not impossible, to define the proper relationship of theory and practice without a preliminary discussion, respectively, (1) of the nature and aim of theory; (2) of practice” (1904, p. 9). Thus we are compelled to understand the experiences of the teacher-candidates in this regard. When supervised student-teaching experiences are strongly linked to course work, teacher-candidates “appear more able to connect theoretical learning to practice, become more comfortable with the process of learning to teach, and are more able to enact what they are learning in practice” (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005a, p. 375). Others echo this need for strong connections to facilitate learning (Allsopp et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010).

Our research team remains curious about these processes of how teacher-candidates build their professional knowledge, and how theory and practice work together in both the practicum school and university classroom settings. As we heed the call for more time in classrooms, we must consider how teacher-candidates understand the nature, aims and uses of theory in their developing practice and the ways they build their professional knowledge when theory and practice work together at both these sites of learning. We suggest that exploring how teacher-candidates and recent graduates describe their understandings of theory and practice can assist in determining effective designs for the enhanced program. We set out to investigate how recent teacher education graduates explain the experiences that helped them to connect theory and practice. Their responses, however, revealed that the graduates’ understandings of the inter-

relationships of theory and practice are profoundly influenced by their conceptualizations of theory. As a result this chapter focuses upon the ways in which recent teacher education graduates understand the roles and purposes of theory in their journey of teacher learning and implications for the way teacher education programs might be designed.

What is Theory? How are Theory and Practice Linked?

There are multiple definitions and conceptions of theory. Yinger (1978) states, “[a]lthough definitions of theory appear to be almost as numerous as people concerned with it, theory in its simplest form, consists of formalized or systematized (a) a set of units, facts, propositions, variable, and (b) a system of relationships among the units” (p.3) within a certain discipline. Wright (2008) notes that theories are contingent on particular times and perceived problems and that certain assumptions usually underpin theoretical concepts/constructs. Thus, when using a certain term to describe theory, the positioning of the person doing it needs to be described. Wright also points to the necessity to not only define what theory is but also to clarify the level of a theory that is relevant for a research problem and, we contend, the classroom. For example, Punch (2009), describes metatheories and substantive theories in relation to education research, Schram (2006) differentiates between big T and little t theory, Wright (2008) uses ‘social theory’ and Ball (2006) refers to ‘critical social theory’. Indeed, “theory” is a contested and layered concept within the literature.

Further, when theory and practice are considered together, the contestation and complexity become more pronounced. Lampert (2010) posits that theory is not merely the province of thought and practice is more than enactment. Randi and Corno (2007) argue that taking theory into practice is a matter of transfer in “applying teaching and learning principles in

new situations” (p. 335). Other authors are more skeptical of any transfer of knowledge and skills because these are deeply embedded in the contexts in which they are acquired (Perkins & Solomon, 1988). Still others maintain that transfer of learning could occur “when the initial learning focuses on understanding underlying principles, when cause-and-effect relationships and reasons why are explicitly considered, and when principles of application are directly engaged” (Sheppard, Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Rust, 2005, p. 289). Biesta (2010) questions all of this, and problematizes the notion of application of theory in practice; challenging the belief that scientific knowledge can be applied in practice without significant interventions to recognize and account for differences in the many contexts in which the knowledge is enacted. Yinger (1978) advocates for the need for theory building from practice. He maintains that fieldwork is a fundamental basis for theory development because “our theorizing is grounded in situations that are representative of real settings in which teaching and learning occur. Better yet, theorizing should be grounded in actual teaching/learning situations” (pp. 15-16). Britzman (2003) also believes that theory “lives in the practical experiences of us all and yet must be interpreted as a source of intervention” (p. 69). She notes that research from almost three decades ago by Clandinin, Connelly & Elbaz, identified teachers as theorizing agents as “they implicitly hold and routinely enact theories of teaching and learning” (p. 65).

When theory and practice are understood as interactive and interconnected, and further complexified by the theorizing agents’ identity and experiences, it leads us to consider the multiplicity of ways in which our program graduates understand and articulate what theory is, how they see the relationship of theory and practice and question what these myriad ideas and conceptions might mean to program development.

Method and Analysis

Researchers for the present investigation conducted semi-structured individual interviews with teacher-candidates who, in 2013, had recently graduated from a one-year consecutive or five-year concurrent⁹ Bachelor of Education programs. A call for participation was sent to all graduates of these programs, and all nine who volunteered were included in the study. As Table 1 shows, the participants represent a range of educational backgrounds and teaching histories. They were enrolled in either the elementary or secondary teacher education program. In Ontario, “P/J” refers to Primary/Junior, i.e., kindergarten to grade 6; “J/I” refers to Junior/Intermediate, i.e., grades 4 to 10; and “I/S” refers to Intermediate/Senior, i.e., grades 7 to 12.

The interviews were conducted and analyzed according to a qualitative approach, which is “a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner” (Cresswell, 2005, p. 56).

Each teacher-candidate participated in a single 45 - 60 minute semi-structured interview. The primary data source was the participants’ responses as reported in interviews. Other data sources, such as researcher notes and narrative descriptions served as complementary data. Analysis focused on responses to questions regarding:

- the participants’ program, informal and formal teaching experiences, and career aspirations and status;

⁹ At our university, teacher-candidates in the concurrent program undertake two degrees simultaneously; one degree is a Bachelor of Education and the other is a degree in Arts, Music, Health and Physical Education or Science.

- their definitions and understandings of “theory” and “practice”;
- their memories about times when they were aware that theory was informing their practice, and practice informing their theories;
- their general explanations of the relationship between theory and practice;
- their examples of specific moments of deep learning in their journey of learning to teach,;
- their recommendations concerning how to improve the program to strengthen connections between theory and practice.

After the data collection was completed and the interviews were transcribed, all participants were assigned pseudonyms (reflected in Table 1). When analysing data, we took an inductive approach (Creswell, 2005), by going from the particular (i.e. the detailed data) to the general (i.e. codes and themes). While there is no single, accepted approach to analyze qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994), we aimed to generate a larger, consolidated picture (Tesch, 1990). This process involved first reading the interviews several times to gain a better understanding about the information that the teacher-candidates provided (Creswell, 2005). The next step was to develop codes, examining the codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapsing the codes into broader themes (Punch, 2009). We chose to use themes as a way to analyze our data, as they allow synthesis of similar elements in the data presented from multiple perspectives. That is, we provided several viewpoints from different teacher-candidates as evidence for a theme. A description of the participants’ teaching qualifications and their status of employment at the time of the interview is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants

Participants	
1	Natalie Calabrese (F) is an Intermediate/Senior (I/S) B.Ed. graduate specializing in Science and English, seeking employment, hired as a Long Term Occasional teacher (not in a contract or permanent position) after interview.
2	Elizabeth Podborski (F) is a Junior Intermediate (J/I) graduate, seeking employment, hired as a French teaching assistant.
3	Julie Chen (F) is a Primary/Junior (P/J) graduate seeking employment as an elementary teacher, currently a tutor and teaching at university level.
4	Donald Yang (M) is a J/I graduate currently an employed teacher.
5	Marcello Alessandro (M) is an I/S graduate, with French and Arts education specialization, teaching part time French.
6	Jennifer Beauchene (F) is an I/S graduate and currently working in an education organization but not working as a classroom teacher.
7	Valerie Andersson (F) is a P/J graduate, currently employed as classroom teacher.
8	Joaquin Torres (M) is a P/J graduate, working abroad as a teacher.
9	Katherine Donorwicz (F) is an I/S graduate in English and History, currently teaching as a tutor and supply teaching.

The interview data was analysed across participants and within a single interview. For example, responses to “definitions of theory” were compared, as well as examining the ways that the responses to “definitions of theory” changed within a single interview. We include “reflections of the researchers about the meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2005, p. 251) as interpretations or a way of making sense of the data or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call

“lessons learned” and connect these to literature. To validate findings we checked for inter-coding reliability (i.e. several researchers worked on coding the data and compared codes) and intra-coding reliability (i.e. coded the data after we completed the data collection and then a few months later when we started writing) (Creswell, 2005). The findings have been shaped by the assumptions and experiences of the researchers conducting the study and carrying out the data analysis.

The Analysis: *Theory As...*

The interview question “what is theory” invited a range of responses. Some participants were able to easily respond; others, after struggling to respond, asked to skip this question; while others, with further prompts were able to provide responses from which we inferred definitions. The content of the responses included what we categorize as names or labels, an imagined ideal, a rule, an outlook, an explanation for what is happening, and a framework for complex thinking. As we describe the range of ideas expressed about theory in the following six themes, we recognize that frequently conceptions are coloured by the utility of theory in application, pointing to the almost unconscious interweaving of theory and practice.

Theory as... categories.

1. **Theory as a name.** When asked “what is theory” many of the participants did not define theory, but named theorists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, and Kumashiro. A participant with many undergraduate psychology credits made connections to these courses and described theory as, “you know, what you learned for your exams in an undergraduate degree.” We were surprised how few participants (n=4) named specific theorists during their interview and when they did, the chosen theorists were from the educational psychology course, a foundation course in our program which uses a common text and refers to a body of

knowledge specific to the discipline. Some participants named a theory (without the theorist's name), but rather with a descriptive title such as “the theory of stage development,” “critical race theory,” “multiple intelligences,” motivation theories, and “*Tribes*’ behaviour management.” Donald, one of the participants in the study, states that “*theory is about how students react, how students learn in their different ages in their life - like Piaget.*” Many of the participants defined theory by identifying an instructional strategy or practice, such as differentiated instruction, culturally relevant pedagogy and small group instruction.

2. **Theory as the imagined ideal.** The participants explained how theory represents “the ideal,” or a vision of good teaching, or “what we strive for.” For example, Joaquin provides a metaphorical insight:

It's kind of like the Food Network way of doing things. You see it done perfectly. Like, that's the way it should be. And...on TV and all the ingredients come together, the soufflé arises. It's just perfect. It's easy to forget that in the real world your soufflés don't always turn out as well as you think it should.

Marcello says it this way:

I think that, as educators, everyone wants to be aiming for this theory because, you know, this theory [is] generally based in research. And so you really want to aim to get there and do that, but it's not always possible. And sometimes the theory, I find, can be sort of lost....So it's like, that sort of thing that we're always aiming for that and the closer we get the better.

3. **Theory as a rule.** While this conception of theory reflects notions of best practice and

evidence-informed teaching strategies it differs in that the participants expect a guaranteed positive result. *Theory as a rule* provides a “prescription of, a certain way of doing things to achieve a required outcome” (Joaquin). Valerie describes theory as “like a guideline (because) before you start doing, you need to know some basic rules so that you don’t go off track... like the golden rules.” Valerie continues that “[Theory] is not just reading a book. It comes from many people’s experience. So it’s been discussed and debated and *been proved*” and that theory is “...many people’s work on this [idea], so it’s something that helps us for our practice for our future career.” In this technocratic rational conceptualization, *correct* implementation of theory and student learning are presumed to have a simple direct cause-effect relationship.

Interestingly, though offered as “a magic solution,” *theory as a rule* seemed not to support the recent graduates through complex teaching situations. Marcello expressed his frustration, after finding that the rule that “French language is best learned with an immersion approach” did not automatically produce increased student achievement in his remedial French classes. Thus, he reverted to direct instruction and rote learning, even though the situation appeared to be much more complex. In these situations, the participants had difficulty looking beyond the rule for other reasons why the instructional practice might not be working or the students might not be achieving.

4. **Theory as an “outlook” or set of principles.** This broad category includes ideas such as beliefs, values, principles, commitments and discourses that inform practice. When participants describe theory in this manner, they are clear, articulate, and passionate about their conceptions about teaching. “All students can learn,” “curriculum must be relevant to the lives of the students,” and “assessment needs to go beyond pencil and paper texts”

are presented as simple and unquestioned theories. *Theory as an outlook* is not a prescription to follow, like strategies or rules, but functions as a guide for decision-making. Natalie explains:

I think for me, theory, the way that I approach anything theoretical sort of it gives me a framework or a way of looking at something. So anything that we talked about [in class] you know - education theory, provides ways to frame what we do in education - that is how I tend to define theory. Theory is sort of where I get an outlook for how to approach... situations in the classroom or that type of thing.

Of all categories, *theory as an outlook* seemed the most helpful or least problematic to the recent graduates. We notice that when theory is conceived as *an outlook*, participants engage in making a personal connection with theory in a move toward personal theorizing. The participants easily share their values and construct their identities as teachers; however, it seems that this theory is situated only within the educator and can be separated from the reality of the classroom. In this case, the theory can exist as an idea or ideal but does not necessarily incorporate the messier aspects of enactment. For our participants, *theory as an outlook* did not appear to include the interactive nature of theory-practice.

5. **Theory as an explanation for what is happening.** In this category, theory is more connected to context; it is applied to a situation to better understand it. Julie explains that:

Theory helps you understand your experiences a lot better. I also think theory is what helps you explain something that you can't really explain right away.... For progress to happen, I think you need theory. I think theory is very important because your practical experiences can only explain so much, but then once you

see something new or once you see something that you never expected to happen that's when you look at theory.

In this case, theory helped the graduate see something in a new light, something that she wouldn't have seen within the limits of her current perspective. This category, as we have constructed it, describes a situation where the participant has accepted or incorporated a theory and laid it over the situation. In this case, the situation does not seem to further inform or modify the theory. Jennifer explains that, "Theory is like my mental tools. Like different tools that my brain has to make sense of things and use frameworks to understand what is happening in front of me." Natalie, another participant, states:

I think a lot of the articles that we talked about, particularly in my School and Society class, just seemed to make sense in terms of looking at the way that a student's background or a student's personal beliefs or their socio-economic status that type of thing influences the way that they are in the classroom.

6. **Theory as a framework for complex thinking.** Many participants explained that theory guided them through complex thinking. What makes this category different from the previous one, "theory as an explanation for what is happening," is that the participants tended to see how theory informed their understanding, how it helped them make an informed decision and that it appeared to be attached to larger personal understandings. Katherine describes how theory helps to guide teachers' decision making when she explains that "theory is the understanding of how and why things happen and what the responses to these reactions could be." In her conception, theoretical work included

developing an understanding and emphasizing the learning process of a teacher with a more interpretive, interactive relationship with theory. Valerie describes how “The theory helps us thinking. It might not teach us everything, but to help us how to think.” Jennifer describes how theory enables action:

I have worked in schools in the city, so I don't know in other contexts, but, where I think certain discourses around race and achievement and class and these kinds of things come to life in schools. And I think that theory really provides an opportunity to kind of make sense of some of those things that are happening and not sort of allow them to be just happening.

This category of *theory as a framework for complex thinking*, unlike the others, emphasizes a robust relationship where theory, teacher and context are interdependent. Two participants emphasized how theory is used and developed over time. Elizabeth describes how theoretical understanding is a slow accumulation of a personal schema, “like a spiral, every time you think you get to the end, it's really just the beginning again. It is never ending, sort of evolution...of getting to know each student, but also the dynamics of the classroom...” and Julie says, “once you see something new or once you see something that you never expected to happen that's when you look at theory and that's when you try to fit it into your schema.” Julie highlights how she must consider, test, evaluate and modify a theory so that she can fit it into her larger ideas about education, “and that's when you try to fit it into your [existing] schema, ...”

Elizabeth highlights that you have to know theories, but also to know how to use them in context, explaining that:

I think you can be armed with any number of theories, but until you're in a classroom, until you're with the students until you sort of know the dynamic, the interplay between yourself and them and themselves to each other, it's, like I can't walk into the classroom and have a theory and just paste it onto the students. I have to have the interplay between and really get to know them before I can either use one or combine different methods of learning with my students, so like, it has to be an interplay, it has to be interactive and sort of proactive and changing, ever changing.

While we have delineated six categories outlining how the participants described theory, it is not to suggest that the participants adhered to only one conceptual definition or construct of theory. In fact, analysis of each transcript revealed how one participant would describe “theory” in multiple, fluid ways during a single 45-60 minute interview. We consider the complexity as Joaquin explains how theory is “a set of hypotheses, a set of ideas about how we can do something to get where we want to be. And they may not necessarily be right, they may not necessarily be wrong, usually it’s a mixture of both” and later states that, “when you try to devise a theory to explain something, you kind of have to simplify things, it’s simplified models.” He also explains that he thinks of theory as “a set of possible explanations, mechanistic explanations, kind of a set of possibilities and you’re trying to explain something or you’re trying to prescribe a certain way of doing things to achieve a required outcome.” The six categories capture broad constructs but do not indicate the mutability and complexity discussed next.

Discussion

Our analysis of the categories lead us to notice ways that “theory” is conceived along

continua 1) from static to fluid, 2) from theory as received by the teacher from an external location to the notion of *teacher as theorizing agent*, and 3) from how the relationship between theory and practice is positioned as being discrete separate conceptualizations to an interconnected symbiotic relationship.

Continuum Static Simple to Fluid Complex

As explained above, the recent graduates hold to multiple conceptualizations of theory simultaneously. When asked “what is theory,” often participants initially responded with a static idea to be applied to a situation. As the interview progressed, theory might then be described as a tool for reflection. Like the teacher educators in our earlier study (Broad et al, 2014), these novice educators also conceptualize theory on a continuum from theory as a static consumable product to a fluid, developing, malleable notion. At one end of this continuum of conceptualization, theory comes from articles, readings, textbooks, and “the stuff you memorize in undergraduate exams.” Considered this way, we heard participants discuss how theory is absolute, unchanging, and offers predictability and guarantees. Theory can be seen as pristine and the participants admitted a sense of guilt or wrongdoing if not implementing it “word-for-word.” Elizabeth explains:

I won't necessarily implement it word-for-word. I would take the kernels that I think are important. I don't know if using the word 'theory' is necessarily problematic, but I would almost say I'm inspired, not necessarily completely influenced. I also get worried because sometimes if I say I'm using a specific theory but it's not 100% what it is, oh no, am I somehow infringing on copyright or being dishonest a certain way.

The other end of the continuum makes room for theory to be problematic, changing,

developing, evolving. Donald explains that “every time we try to bring theory in the classroom, we feel like we have to modify theory or change it completely according to our personal personalities in order to, to make it, --make our practice more doable. We work a theory every time we change situations.” In this instance, theory becomes what the teacher needs it to be. Natalie explains “I think for me, theory, the way that I approach anything theoretical sort of, it gives me a framework or a way of looking at something (way of understanding). So anything that we talked about [in class]... you know, education theory, ways to frame what we do in education is how I tend to define theory.”

Donald’s comments provide an example of the morphing conceptualizations of theory saying “theory is sort of where I get an outlook for how to approach, you know, situations in the classroom or that type of thing.” He suggests that “what you learn from studying theory is a mindset [outlook], a set of rules [rules] and logic [thinking] that can help you start off as a teacher.” The text in parentheses is our analysis. In the multiple conceptualizations of *theory as...*, we point to the common ways that these conceptualizations can be used as frameworks for understanding and as ideas used to inform decision-making. Theory, then, for many of the new graduates is an influence that they draw upon to help guide them to the decisions of planning, teaching, explaining, sense making, and reflecting. Theory is their servant, morphing into the form that is required by them in each particular moment.

Locations of Theory-Making

We wonder: are the novice teachers unclear about what theory means to them or does theory have shifting meanings? When do we, as educators, need to create our own theories? When do we need theory to be presented to us? As described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle

(1999), the origins of theory are located/attributed in different places by discourse and perspectives and thus take on different roles in professional decision making. At times, theory can be owned by the educator with the internal view that “I am a theorizing agent.” Other times, theory is attributed to another in an external location, from research, from a university, from an educational theorist. In this case, theory is taught, theory is received wisdom, and it is rejected or implemented. Marcello describes how theory can be experienced as external received wisdom, “theory is generally based in research” and that “the theory did help, but many of the theories always felt like words to me that we were studying, things that we were applying.”

Relationship between Theory and Practice

The notion of a theory-practice divide was both accepted and challenged by participants. At times, theory was seen as distinct from practice and other times was described as inseparable, “you can’t have one without the other” (Elizabeth). She further explains that “sometimes you have a practice and it leads you to a theory and sometimes you can read a theory and it can lead you to your practice and that's kind of tricky because they're definitely intricately related.” These conceptualizations highlight how theory can confirm or challenge beliefs and highlight the dissonance between what the participants want to believe and how they want to teach and what they view as possible. Jennifer explains that:

There are many moments in classrooms that are not necessarily as explainable as a lot of education theory suggests. Even very progressive theories that I really identify with, can kind of leave you with an empty toolbox to deal with the volatility of 30 young people in the classroom that have very different experiences as well as your own kind of coming together.

As teacher educators, we wonder if struggling with the ways theory and practice come together is a part of building theory, knowledge and practice. Further, we wonder about the outcomes of the various ways that theory is identified, conceptualized and used and whether these ways of conceptualizing theory helps or hinders professional learning. The participants described their struggles with decision-making, and how to “use theory.” Different conceptualizations highlight different struggles:

I struggled with making a meaningful connection between the two [theory and practice]. Because it's very easy to say, this is a theory, this is how things should be, or this is, and this is why things should be that way and say, ok, well, you could use, let's say, a practical strategy of a jigsaw, for example, as a means to engage students in a way that fits this theory. (Natalie)

Natalie further states, “I found that there was an awful lot of trial and error in what I was doing.”

Donald also points to his struggle to define the use of theory:

The theories did help every now and then, but the fact that I can't even remember a lot of them right now, except for the ones that I really favored, I guess is a sign proving that personal, the personal messages, the philosophy of professors that really stuck.

Implications for Teacher Education

Throughout the interviews we noticed that for some of the graduates who attempted to “use theory” to guide their decision-making or solve their pedagogical problems, they were betrayed by the promises of theory. Marcello tells a story about his desire to engage disengaged students by using multimedia technologies as the assessment format, “I used multimedia - but it

didn't work.” The participant was invited by the interviewer to further theorize the situation, hoping to illuminate the complexity of the situation by hinting that perhaps the student isn't comfortable with the multimedia pedagogy or this student doesn't feel welcome in the school. The participant replied “I guess” with no further exploration. This situation, where a belief in a simplistic notion of causality between implementation and result led to the abandonment of sound pedagogical practices, occurred throughout the interviews. Marcello's theory that *multimedia pedagogies engage all students* did not deliver on its promise. He explained that “when constructivist theory did not work for me, my AT said [not to] discount the power of direct instruction” thus raising questions for us about “failed” attempts to use educational theory which facilitate a return to a more familiar, behaviour-based, less reflexive practice, or apprenticeship of observation. It appears that there are no “magic bullets” or easy solutions (Biesta, 2010, p. 496). However, we wonder whether helping our candidates understand the various ways to consider theory and practice in order to prepare for the dissonant experiences and struggles might in some ways allow openings for further learning.

To better understand the limits and opportunities for thinking about theory and practice in teacher education and the teacher-candidates' complex and challenging process of continuing to learn to teach, we draw on systems theory. In particular, we found helpful insights in the work of Gert Biesta (2010) as he describes conditions when evidence-based practice doesn't work. When candidates learn about teaching and learning in the university setting, it is largely reflective of a closed system, not only because the learning may be isolated from the classroom populated by people, but also because the content variables and concepts are isolated for focused study. When teacher-candidates are asked to implement what they have learned in coursework into a practicum environment, they enter an open system in which elements operate probabilistically,

unlike closed systems which operate deterministically (Biesta, 2010, p. 496). Biesta (2010) explains that because the elements that make up the system are “human individuals,” who think, respond and “act upon the basis of their interpretations and understandings” (p. 497), they blur our mechanistic ontology and ideas of *what works*.

The university class time is, by default, a closed system, where everything is idealized and works as expected. Joaquin insightfully describes teacher education campus instruction is like a cooking show, where the food always turns out perfectly. Without real students in real classrooms, the system of pedagogy is perceived as closed. Teachers would be able to focus on one thing at a time, manage the cognitive load, highlight ideas, and make the situation manageable. The practice or strategy succeeds as expected. However, real classrooms are anything but closed systems. The complexity of such an open system can be overwhelming, as teachers manage the histories, identities, and learning strengths and needs of each student and their families, the expectations of the curriculum, the needs of the local community, the demands of policy and evaluation, and the complex dynamics of the classroom community. The candidates may implement their practice based on theory exactly as it was taught in the “closed system” university classrooms which reflect a simple, idealized scenario, only to discover the incredible complexity of the truly unexpected and ever-evolving “open system” teaching in the field. Perhaps in some ways when associate-teachers, acting as host and mentor to the teacher-candidates, recommend *to forget everything you have learned at The Faculty, I will teach you to teach* and when teacher-candidates say things such as *I learned nothing in Teachers’ College* or *Practicum was the best part of my program* or *I learned to teach by teaching*, they are, at least partially, accurate, in that the open system provides the real context to learn to teach. Simple, isolated models exist in stark contrast to the complexity of the “real world” where teachers make

complex decisions and act in the moment.

Biesta (2010) describes the notion of “complexity reduction” (p. 497) as the ways in which we reduce the number of available options for actions for the elements of a system. He uses the example of reducing the menu in a fast food restaurant as a way to lessen time and preparation of ingredients in the name of efficiency and consistency. Like the ready-to-serve, uniform, cheap, plentiful, unhealthy meal of burger and fries, *complexity reduction* demonstrates that the quest for simplicity in education can be harmful, hegemonic and oppressive for teacher-candidates and students. Given the pros and cons of complexity reduction, we must ask the questions when and how might complexity reduction in teacher education, especially when aligned with closed systems, be useful and when might it be harmful?

The teacher educator’s and teacher-candidate’s skills lie in negotiating the tensions and working to keep balancing complexity and simplicity. It is our contention that how teacher educators make their thinking explicit can assist candidates to understand the deeper tensions and complexities of teaching, even in a more artificial “closed” adult environment. How can we help teacher-candidates see the simple concept in the “heated kitchen” of complexity? How do we use one theory in combination with many, and how do we balance dissecting elements in isolation with embedding multiple complex inter-related factors in the living classroom? Biesta (2010) suggests that we consider how ontological defaults challenge truths and how the notion of simple causality distorts our ideas about teaching and might inform teachers’ professional learning. Theory then requires complexity and context.

Teacher educators are challenged to make this open/closed system pedagogy explicit in their instruction and to prepare teacher-candidates for transitioning from one setting and

experience to another. Complexity reduction is a helpful pedagogy up to a point and leads to a number of questions: How does this relate to the transition to the practicum or to employment? Further, how do we work with associate teachers to make this transition from closed to open systems - and how do they provide some opportunities for closed system practice?

So how do we work to be explicit in complexity? How do we make theory visible? Is it by discussing the limits and opportunity of theory? How do we support teacher-candidates as they deal with application errors and misunderstanding, complexity, and dissonance? How do we help them to manage with seemingly “conflicting” theories? Hammerness et al. (2005a) posit that along with knowledge and instructional skills, teachers need to build and understand a conceptual framework for their work. They state that “teachers must i) have a deep foundation of factual and theoretical knowledge, ii) understand these facts and ideas in a conceptual framework and iii) organize knowledge in ways that facilitate action” (p. 366). In this understanding of development of professional knowledge and learning, there is not complexity reduction but rather an emphasis on construction and reconstruction of understanding by teacher-candidates in order to ‘facilitate action.’ This work of learning to teach is challenging intellectual work that cannot be underestimated or left tacit. Preparation for dissonance, discomfort, and the joys and difficulties of the unexpected seems both necessary and important for teacher learning.

Further, the participants’ experiences emphasize the process of using theory to build meaning. If we consider that teacher-candidates’ learning is a recursive task, where new meanings are constructed through the everyday of teaching or significant events, we come closer to the participants’ description of theory as a building of schema over time. Each time we cycle through, we are able to “pick up” and create new meanings. Building knowledge is best not conceived as always ‘adding to’ but also ‘pruning’ and ‘reassembling.’ Dissonance is a

significant learning opportunity which through ‘discomfort’ rewrites assumptions and reconstructs ideas within their schema.

Our recent graduates highlight the need for teacher educators to present multiple, conflicting, competing theories and, by being explicit, prepare teacher-candidates to make sense of these competing theories. If we do not, they may see what is presented, modelled or discussed at the university as a monolithic truth which is not to be critiqued, questioned and re-understood --simply accepted or rejected. Their sensemaking is further complicated if they also must reconcile the dissonance between theories presented at the university and the theories presented by associate-teachers or in schools. Unable to mitigate discordance within a collection of theories, the theory-practice divide is reinforced. Ongoing discussions about the need to learn from and through dissonance are necessary for teacher candidates to see themselves as active agents and theorists as Hammerness et al. (2005a) and Korthagen (2010) suggest.

Further Reflections

In this study, we have concentrated on the *blurred lines* which occur in the areas where theory and practice are inextricably interconnected. We acknowledge that meaningful contexts are foundational to the learning and deepening of professional knowledge but in this work we explored the ways that the teacher-candidate graduates described their ‘sense-making’ or interpretation of the ‘blur’ rather than necessarily the insights that grew out of their focus. We wanted to look deeply at these more troubling and indistinct areas not to simplify them but to explore the complexity, complication and interaction of theory and practice as teachers continually construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their understandings in practice, in context and in response to the learners with whom they are working and learning. Natalie states:

I certainly struggled with always knowing how to put those things into practice so like I was saying, you know a lot of the things that we had talked about [in class] and those articles that I was referring to, they sort of helped me to generally understand or to generally acknowledge the fact that students had diverse backgrounds, students are impacted by a lot of different factors.

In our six *theory as...* categories, we notice that in many of the cases where the participants found theory “useful,” (quotes indicate participants’ words) they used “this thing called theory” to help them make sense of what they saw, and to inform decision-making. The possibilities for deep and thoughtful work around theory and practice are present but seem to require intense focus and concentration around many continuing questions: How might we as teacher educators forefront the nature and purposes of “theory” and how to “use it” in the complexity of learning about teaching, in open dynamic systems where the unexpected, discrepant, discomforting and disappointing happen? How do we help to prepare teacher-candidates to face and learn from the continual challenges of A (simplified theory) bumping up against B (the complex world)? How do we help them to consider and re-consider the “failure” of a theory? As educators both in university classrooms and in school classrooms, how do we make our theorizing explicit? and What are the opportunities for teacher educators in field and faculty classrooms to ask teacher-candidates to be explicit about moments of dissonance and to explain what aspects of the teacher education program were being drawn upon in order to make pedagogical decisions? During our conversations with our participants, we noticed that it was not necessarily “external” theory that guided candidates’ decision-making but rather values, philosophies and commitments. How then can we most effectively use the construct of “theory”? We suggest that the nature of theory be problematized with teacher-candidates, recognizing its

limits and opportunities, including the ways in which it is (inter)related to identity, principles, values, research, and practice.

As we plan for extended and enhanced teacher education in Ontario, we might be well served to carefully consider ways we talk about, demonstrate and use theory in our own classrooms in order to scaffold the use of theory, and build in opportunities to try and retry various pedagogical approaches. Perhaps both teacher educators and teacher-candidates can think aloud and talk about their experiences, particularly the dissonant ones, with colleagues in order to avoid moving too quickly to notions of simplistic causality. Perhaps the additional time might be used productively to question and trouble complex ideas as well puzzling outcomes and difficult experiences with various theoretical lenses or frameworks? Perhaps programs can experiment about being more explicit about the complexity of learning to teach in order to help prepare candidates for the important and career-long learning that comes from surprising, unexpected, frustrating or challenging events.

Further questions

We are interested in turning our attention to these new questions which have arisen from concentrating on theory and practice in our initial questions. What are the “meaningful moments” that provide a context for the teacher-candidates to learn from the open and closed systems of teacher education? How do novices make decisions in their classrooms and how do they understand their decision-making processes? How do experienced teachers conceptualize and use theory in making decisions? How can teacher education better prepare teacher-candidates for the complex thinking/decision-making in which they will engage in the future?

How do we, as teacher educators, both engage in the meaning-making ourselves and provide opportunities that allow teacher-candidates to grapple with theory and practice and make sense of their experiences? We know that many join us in the project of trying to improve our programs in ways that acknowledge the ongoing and iterative nature of learning our complex work of teaching and teacher learning.

NOTES

1. This paper discusses the second phase of a larger project that investigates meaningful contexts for teacher learning. In phase one, we asked questions about how teacher-educators create meaningful experiences for informed and reflective practice - where theory informs practice and practice informs theory. We sought to identify the specific elements and contexts of meaningful experiences for the teacher-candidates through the eyes of the teacher educator. The data emphasized the complexity of learning to teach and highlighted the role of discrepancy, discomfort, and dissonance in teacher-candidate learning. As it is not the aim of this paper to make explicit links to phase one, it will not be described here. See Broad, K., James, U., Baxan, V., Stewart Rose, L. & Wilton, L., (2014). Focusing the “Magic Eye”: Exploring Meaningful Contexts for Teacher Learning. In L. Thomas (Ed.), *Becoming Teacher: Sites for Teacher Development* (pp. 32-61). Canadian Association for Teacher Education/Association canadienne pour la formation à l’enseignement. Publication available at <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwVGDOGBDzJdR1R2VGZvakZjUDQ/edit>.

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Part III

New directions for foundations of education

Shaking the Foundations: Educational Foundations as

“Dangerous” Content and Practices

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Abstract

In a moment marked by heightened technical-rational demands for accountability and effectiveness, teacher educators are revisiting both the content and the relevance of traditional Foundations of Education courses. This chapter offers a critique of the often narrow disciplinary nature of educational foundations, at least in how it is often marshalled in teacher education courses. Through a review of teacher education at the University of Regina, the authors argue for the integration of Foundations content into the fabric of teacher education programs. Educational history, educational philosophy, the sociology of education and other theoretical paradigms within foundations represent a significant opportunity to reframe teacher education. The caveat is that these paradigms cannot serve their own disciplinary focus. Within teacher education, they must be made to serve in dismantling the inequities, oppressions and privileges with which education is already implicated in sustaining. When taken up in an integrative way, these foundations represent an important way to ground anti-oppressive teaching.

Shaking the Foundations: Educational Foundations as
“Dangerous” Content and Practices

Context for the Conversation: Educational Foundations

Given the ubiquity of technical-rational approaches to teaching and learning that exist in schools, broader education policy and current educational initiatives many teacher education programmes feel pressured to respond to the demands of stakeholders that teacher candidates become “skilled” and proficient. Mehta (2013) illustrates how this “rationalizing” of schooling has existed throughout the modern history of schooling. In the Progressive Era of the 1920s, for example, control of education shifted to business elites, city elites and university professors who sought “to use the latest scientific and methods and modern management techniques to measure outcomes and ensure efficient use of resources to produce the greatest possible bang for the buck” (p. 3). These discourses existed coterminously with Dewey’s advocacy for self-reflection in teaching and inquiry-based approaches to education. Almost one hundred years later, the technocratic logic of efficiency and accountability discourse continues to constitute how we are able to think about and engage in education. Pinar (2012) describes what he refers to as “school deform” in which accountability has become commonsense (p. 5), especially as beginning teachers are “invited” to be responsible for managing classrooms, assessing learning, planning lessons, and identifying deficiencies in learners. Similarly, Au (2012) advocates “questioning relationships of power as they exist within school knowledge” which necessarily requires critiquing the over emphasis on technical-rational approaches to education by carefully considering normative constructions of students and learning (p.5). Au (2012) argues that critical curriculum studies, and by extension, teacher education, requires consideration of the ways in which consciousness is shaped in and through school environments.

In this chapter we argue against both a rigid disciplinary focus to education foundations and the separation of traditional subjects of foundations courses. We worry traditional foundations courses have contributed to the privileging of dominant narratives within pre-service teacher education. As such, we believe that teacher candidates should trouble and challenge content traditionally taught in foundations courses in ways that advance anti-oppressive and anti-racist teaching and learning. There is a meaningful place for content from traditional foundations integrated critically into other teacher education classes. Thus, we begin by briefly highlighting the technocratic logic that allows for “efficiency and effectiveness” to permeate and control education. Next, we illustrate the rationalizing effect of the scientific method in education, specifically proficiency and performance based approaches, followed by a consideration of professionalization versus de-professionalization movements in American teacher education. These situate a consideration of the foundations of education, especially as they can simultaneously represent and interrupt the “establishment.”

In terms of representing the “establishment”, the foundations have reproduced dominant understandings of knowledge and practice in education. Dominant forms of history and philosophy do not offer generative ways into problems of the present. However, this is not to suggest that it has to be this way. Foundations of education may also be taken up as dangerous knowledge (Britzman, 1998), in so far as they speak back to ahistorical and atheoretical orientations to curriculum and pedagogy. Such orientations are very often in service to the technical rational mode of teacher education, which does not account for the histories, identities, and material realities of learners in schools. So, on the one hand, foundations maintain the educative commonsense. On the other hand, they offer a means through which to create cracks in the commonsense.

Applying Technocratic Logic to Schooling

The language of efficiency and effectiveness continues to have a significant presence in educational discourse and in classroom practice. It can be seen in the meritocratic sorting of pupils, the creation of measurable outcomes, and the implementation of narrow evaluative practices. Technocratic logic offers to “improve the quality of schooling for all” and includes the “science of testing” to “ensure efficient use of resources to produce the greatest possible bang for the buck” with respect to public funding of education (Mehta, 2013, p. 3). In her conceptualization of teacher professional identity, Mockler (2011) argues that “technical-rational understandings of teachers’ work and ‘role’ are privileged in policy and public discourse over more nuanced and holistic approaches” (p. 517). In his case study of a working class primary school in England, Lefstein (2012) expresses concerns about “the regime for the regulation of school teaching” (p. 644) and how it shapes discourses about what constitutes educational success and failure separate from considerations of the complexities of students’ lives, including their socio-economic realities. He further argues that technocratic logic applied to schooling in effect blames teachers for students’ failures, however narrowly they are conceptualized.

These understandings position teachers’ work and students’ learning against that which is easily measurable. Couture (2012), drawing on the work of Theoharis (2009), maintains that educational policy makers are not focussed on considering “the complex intersections of social, economic and political forces that inhibit schools from achieving the goals of social justice and equity” (p.48). He suggests that instead there is a narrow focus on “basic knowledge and skills tied to core subjects (now ambiguously described as ‘competencies’)” (p. 48). In the context of Saskatchewan, current debates about the usefulness of wide-scale standardized testing to actually “measure” learning and by extension, teaching, are reflective of the ubiquity of technocratic

logic permeating educational decision making and policy. This is not particularly surprising given the historical influence of technocratic logic in education (Mehta, 2013; Slattery, 2013). For example, the use of the Tylerian Rationale as a framework for planning persists in 21st century teacher education programs and K-12 classrooms as teachers are challenged to instruct “effectively” and engage in evaluative processes that measure the “effectiveness” of their instruction. The Tyler Rationale advanced a series of considerations for teachers to ascertain the purposes of education: how these purposes might be attained, how to effectively organize experiences for students, and how to determine whether the purposes have been attained (Tyler, 1949). While teacher candidates may not be able to explicitly name the planning approach they are or have been taught as the “Tyler Rationale”, they are able to speak the language of “effective” instruction.

Regulatory regimes in the present attempt to control and manage the work of teachers and the learning of students. They are marked by the removal of power from practicing teachers and by the empowerment of auditors, policy makers and accountants (Davies, 2010). The effect of “new managerialism” reduces critical thought and the possibility of dissent. Pinar (2012) expresses similar concerns about surveillance and the stifling of dissent through the “insistence on intellectual conformity compelled by standardized tests ...test after test distracts teachers and students from facing the unresolved issues ... among them racialized, gendered, economic injustice” (p. 65). Not only does testing control what teachers teach, it also controls what students learn, subjecting them to “constant surveillance and inspection, tests they can only fail” (Pinar, 2012, p. 64).

In England, the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) regulates the work of teachers in classrooms through school inspection processes, shaping the “discourses about

success and failure” (Lefstein, 2012, p. 644). In the United States, *Race to the Top* and, before that, *No Child Left Behind*, have created what Pinar (2012) calls “school deform” insofar as these movements advance narrow skills and measurement of effectiveness through standardized testing regimes (p. 17). Similarly, in Australia, the focus on outcome-based education can be understood as emerging from the need to “measure educational effectiveness in terms of student learning” (Donnelly, 2007, p. 2). Canada and its provinces are not immune to these regulatory regimes in education. Saskatchewan’s LEAN initiative inhibits the ability of classroom teachers to make educational choices by placing decision-making in the hands of “educational managers” through a top down process. Underneath these regimes, effective teaching comes to equal student gains in standardized test scores. Liu (2008) connects effective teaching in the research literature to effective operation or effective management or effective production. Thus, effective teaching is code for effective management.

Contesting Foundations of Education

In this historical moment, Friedrich (2014) describes how fast-track teacher education programs can be imagined in some places as “a set of empirically proven techniques that can be reduced to their core elements and reproduced” (p. 3). These “alternative” certification programs are connected deeply with the educational reforms rooted in the technocratic logic noted above and the push towards greater standardization in education (Biesta, 2004). This reductive model is in contrast to a more traditional, university-based model that conceives of teaching “as much more than just techniques” (Friedrich, 2014, p. 3). The complexity of teaching demands multifarious engagement with a variety of social and technical realities. Often, this complexity is mediated through the social foundations of education, courses that explore the social, political, philosophical, and historical bases and contexts for teaching, schooling and schools. Scholars

within these foundations have written about the de-legitimization of the place and value of foundations courses within teacher education.

Christou (2010) notes that foundations have been marginalized in teacher education programs throughout North America. Although largely focused on the history of education, Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011) reflect on the decline of history of education across Canada and explore some implications for both history and other foundations disciplines. These courses are seen as too “ideological” in nature or even as “irrelevant”, and are consistently ranked as the least useful in studies conducted of teacher education students’ understandings of their education experience (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). This sharp divide between methods and ideas, between practice and theory, seen throughout the modern history of teacher education, is made more relevant in the current climate of standards and accountability. Justifying the value and the impact of each discrete element in a program of teacher preparation is difficult to manage. Accountabilities, efficiencies and technocratic logic require deliverables, and these courses are often packaged as modules, tacked on and offered as brief perfunctory pieces, rather than as framing and informing the field of teacher preparation.

Context for the Conversation: Teacher Education at the University of Regina

Technical Teacher Education

The previous secondary education program at the University of Regina, launched in 1985, consisted of four years of study designed around what came to be called the “technical core”. This technical core was organized in Education Professional Studies (EPS) classes, which attend to the “ability to teach” (Lang, 1992, p. 3). Instructors, whether faculty or practicing professional teachers, introduced students to a range of skills and ideas and modeled a range of behaviours that students would be able to practice themselves in their microteaching labs. Each

lab was sequenced with a corresponding EPS class so that the discussion and teaching in the course was reinforced and practiced in the lab. Usually staffed by retired teachers, these labs were carefully articulated processes wherein teacher education students concentrated on “specific aspects of the teaching act” while reducing “the number of variables that must be accounted for” (Lang, 1990, p. 2). Students prepared lessons, concentrating on specific, professional targets prescribed each week. By taking these targets in small pieces, students were exposed to the skills of teaching in technical ways, targeting set or closure, one week, concentrating on movement around the class another week, and questioning techniques in the next. This work was done with little consideration for who the individual learners in classrooms were and what their specific and diverse needs might be. Microteaching was also a way to introduce students to clinical supervision techniques in a more relaxed atmosphere. Students learned how to observe nonjudgmentally, ask for and provide feedback appropriate to professional targets, and how to pre- and post-conference in ways that supported clinical supervision.

These laboratory settings were articulated together with field experiences, and often the microteaching setting provided material, planning, and targets on which to build for teaching in the field context. Student teachers observed practicing teachers, built relationships with students, and taught classes in the field environment. The practices of clinical supervision were used to pre- and post-conference with the cooperating teacher. These field experiences culminated in a semester internship where the professional expectations and collegial relationships were increased in intensity. Together, cooperating teachers and interns underwent thirty hours of training in clinical supervision techniques prior to internship. These cooperating teachers were required to report on a wide range of competencies that the intern demonstrated.

A professor working in the program at the time described the overall approach this way:

We would teach people how to teach. We would do skills and strategies, we would do lesson planning, we'd do things like set development closure for presenting a lesson. We would talk about questions, we would show people how to lead a discussion. We would talk about classroom management, ... how to handle disruptions when they occur; you know we would give people a repertoire of skills and strategies that would enable them to teach and meanwhile they'd be taking curriculum classes. And then at the end of the program we'd tack on Ed. Foundations and tell them what it was all about. (Hallman, 2003, p. 178)

Given this depiction of “tacking” on foundations courses, it is important to note the place of foundations in this technical program. Foundations courses, including emphases on history of education, sociology of education and philosophy of education, were relegated largely to one or two elective courses, usually reserved for the post-internship semester. Some of this content found its way into EPS 100 (some history of schooling) and EPS 200 (some sociology content). It is clear from this description that the technical, the attention to “learning to teach” was the foundation: all else served this technical core. This delineation enforced the theory/practice divide, and made sure that students could only come out on one end of it, with practice being the most important consideration. The effectiveness of this formation can be seen in the importance that recent graduates placed on skills and classroom management (Lang & Petracek, 1984) while, at the same time, students were panning courses in education history or philosophy of education and ethics as meaningless (Lang, 1978, p. 6). A practical orientation, a process of developing effective classroom skills, and a general, technical orientation were supported and encouraged through this technical teacher education. The technical success of the program translated into the desire of school divisions for graduates.

The Renewed Program and Core Studies

At present, we are in a renewed four-year undergraduate teacher education programme first implemented in 2009. The renewed program reflects a commitment to anti-oppressive education and is very much a response to the privileging of the technical discussed above. The process of renewal was not without its challenges, particularly because of the perceived success of our previous program and the “classroom readiness” of the graduates. Anecdotally, superintendents and directors of education expressed a preference for University of Regina graduates because they required fewer supports, were perceived to be better equipped at classroom management, and could write a mean lesson plan. However, in the late 1990s, a small group of faculty began to raise concerns about the program’s lack of attention to issues of diversity and its dominant narratives of teaching and learning. They authored a report in which a series of recommendations were made regarding the program, including the need for ecological education, inclusive education, and anti-racist education. This report became one of the catalysts for conversations amongst faculty exploring “both the philosophy underpinning the implications of a renewed teacher education program and what the program might include in light of its philosophical orientation” (Sorensen, 2013, p. 3). Further, the Role of the Schools Report (*School^{PLUS}*, 2001) articulated the importance of better meeting the needs of children and communities in Saskatchewan, suggesting a more inter-professional approach to collaboration. It too was considered in program renewal conversations.

During the 2005-2006 academic year the Faculty developed eleven principles of teacher education that included, but were not limited to the following:

- Engaging pre-service teachers and faculty in the transformative power of education.

- Engaging in intentional, critical self-inquiry in dialogue with communities to promote diversity, inclusion, understanding and respect.
- Valuing a research culture that informs and is informed by current research in teacher education and other related fields.
- Providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to continuously construct, explore, assess and revise their practice; and to critically reflect upon the values they bring to practice.
- Preparing pre-service teachers who understand how social differences are constructed and valued, and use pedagogical strategies that are respectful of students' identities. (Faculty of Education, 2006).

In light of these principles and earlier conversations, the Core Studies courses were created in response to the privileging of the technical core. To be clear, this is not to suggest that the technical was no longer necessary or important to teacher education. Rather, the shift reflected a need to place the technical requirements of teaching into a context that addressed the social, the racial and the cultural.

This process was not without incredible tension on many sides. Certainly, the power of technocratic logic was ever present as we re-imagined what teacher education might be. Akmal and Miller (2003) note the complexity of “interwoven factors in the change process” including “issues of turf and territoriality, resistance to change, and the ‘disconnect’ between content and pedagogy departments” (p. 419). Proulx and Simmt (2011) highlight this disconnect between two hegemonies: disciplinary content in the subject matters, and the separation of content knowledge and pedagogy. They critique what they refer to as “the hegemony of working on isolated components” in teaching, advocating for the need to question the “structures and well established

programs we have in our institutions” (Proulx and Simmt, 2011, p. 224, 226). In our Faculty of Education, the investment in the past success of the program made it difficult for some to imagine doing anything different.

The ECS courses that emerged through program renewal centre anti-oppressive theories and practices in education. For example, students are required to take ECS 110 (Self and Other), which is intended to contribute to their understandings of their own emerging teacher-identities in the context of larger normative and cultural discourses of schooling. The course engages students in explorations of social constructions of identities along with examinations of the role of power and dominance in identity (re)production. ECS 210 invites students to explore curriculum as social and culturally constructed while ECS 200 provides students with the opportunity to examine the construction of the child, adolescent, adult, student, learner and school over time, as influenced by a range of theories, philosophies and ideologies.

Several other Cores Studies courses are required during the four-year degree program and the two-year after degree program, including ECS 410 (Assessment and Evaluation), ECS 310 (Inter-professional Collaboration in Education), and ECS 310/350 (Pedagogy, Theory and Practice). Core Studies classes reflect a deeper and more deliberate attempt to integrate technical approaches to education with insights from foundations of education. However, if you were to look at the templates that our students follow in their various programs, you would not see a required stand-alone course in Education Foundations with the exception of a small group of religious studies minors who take a moral education Foundations class. Students have some flexibility to take an education elective in their program and may choose to enroll in one of two or three Foundations courses available to them in their final semester. In addition to Core Studies, another aspect of program renewal was the inclusion of an Indigenous Studies class for

most teacher candidates. Arguably, Indigenous Studies is foundational to teacher education in its consideration of the historical and contemporary experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada.

In the previous teacher education program, all students were required to take at least one three-credit education foundations course. The shift away from this requirement is not because faculty do not believe in the importance of the history, philosophy, or sociology of education. Rather, it reflects a desire to integrate these areas of consideration into the Core Studies courses. Arguably, students in the renewed program come away with not only a greater depth and breadth of foundational knowledge but also a more critical awareness of the foundations of education in light of dominant narratives of education, curriculum, and society. Thus, while it might appear on paper that the foundations of education do not matter very much in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, the reverse is true. There is no theory without practice and no practice without theory. The Faculty of Education Criteria Document (2014) affirms this:

The gravity facing educators is enormous, as is the work undertaken in our Faculty through teaching, research and service. Our need to conceptualize and engage with students in pedagogy that works to undo the ongoing legacy of Canada's colonial history while simultaneously working to sustain the identities of diverse Canadian learners and the communities and environments where we live is pressing. While our Faculty is responding to these urgencies in multiple ways, including the renewal of our program with more emphasis on the integration of understandings from across disciplines, increased collaboration across subject areas and teaching for an equitable, just and sustainable world, our responsibilities to value the diverse capacities and ongoing growth of all members of our Faculty is imperative. (pp. 3-4)

Foundational Ideas in Current Teacher Education Practice

In light of our discussion thus far, we ask the question: Is the content of educational foundations still relevant today? Responding to this question, at least from our location, depends on two necessary clarifications. First, what is meant by the content of educational foundations must be clarified. Second, what is meant by the relevance of educational foundations must be carefully focused. To meet the demands of teacher education and schools and especially students in the present requires a particular kind of foundations content and a particular kind of relevance.

Particular kind of content. While the paper began with a critique of the narrow disciplinary nature of educational foundations, at least in how it is often marshalled in teacher education courses, the introduction also suggests that the content of the foundations has the potential to be “dangerous knowledge”; that is, knowledge that is disruptive to dominant paradigms. Educational history, educational philosophy, the sociology of education and other theoretical paradigms within foundations represent a significant opportunity to reframe teacher education. The caveat is that these paradigms cannot serve their own disciplinary focus. Within teacher education they must be made to serve in dismantling the inequities, oppressions and privileges with which education is already implicated in sustaining. These foundations represent an important way to ground anti-oppressive teaching.

It can be argued that the rigid disciplinary approach to education foundations has served to maintain normalized neutrality around the study of education. By insisting on disciplinary boundaries, much is left unsaid and unconnected. To study educational psychology for example, without also including the critiques of testing, mystifies the role of this foundation in educational contexts. The conceptual development of intelligence and its intentional racialized (and

racializing) production of knowledge are deeply problematic. Often, the way that psychology is taught and the way it underwrites much of education becomes normative and therefore unquestionable (Friedrich, 2014). A textbook like *A History of Education in Saskatchewan* (2006) can represent an important collection of accessible historical content while privileging legal or administrative history, and mostly failing to take up the colonial history that underlies much of the content in the book, thereby limiting “the scope of the ‘sense-making’ that might be made available to practitioners” (Cappello, 2007, p. 95). Teacher education students’ exposure to narrow disciplinary foci can limit and reproduce hegemonic knowledge.

Content as dangerous knowledge. There is a need therefore to introduce these disciplines to students in ways that trouble the production of the knowledge and subjects made possible through these disciplines. Rather than allegiance to a narrow version of traditional disciplines, students are better served by access to insights from across a number of disciplines, including critical psychology, sociology, history, and philosophy. These might be woven together in such a way that the resultant critical understandings inform broadly and not merely reify narrow disciplinary paradigms. “Critical” does not mean a facile passing of judgment. Here, critical, in the Foucauldian sense, refers to “an analysis of the assumptions on which taken-for-granted practices rest” (Dean, 1994, p. 119). Taken up in this way, educational foundations content represents fields of contested knowledge, and students engage this knowledge in ways that reveal power at work and the production of both content and effects.

Our teacher education students should leave their programs having deep and transformative encounters with the connections between schooling and various forms of oppression. They should understand how schools remain colonial spaces through curriculum or teacher practices and attitudes (Sterzuk, 2009). They should understand the role of deficit

thinking in maintaining racist practices in regards to minoritized students (St. Denis, 2011). They should know the role of schools historically, both through residential schools and the production of inferiority and cultural genocide on First Nations students, and the concomitant production of ignorance for non-aboriginal students (Tupper, 2012). While it is possible to see a role for disciplinary knowledge, it is important that this content be recast in the service of marginalized groups. A particular kind of education foundations content is required, content that enables an understanding of the many ways that knowledge has produced both dominance and marginalization through schools and the work of teachers.

In our renewed program, an example of this kind of “dangerous knowledge” is represented in ECS 110 (Self and Other). Almost the first class that students take within the faculty, and serving as a touchstone for many of the other classes students take, ECS 110 enables students to begin to see knowledge as connected to identities and inequalities. Students explore philosophy through post-structural understandings of the production of subjectivities. They read historical texts and wrestle with the unequal way that Canadian identity and society has both produced and disadvantaged African-Canadians (Shepard, 1991), Ukrainian Canadians (Boyko, 1998) and First Nations peoples (Kelm, 2003; Carter, 1989). They reflect on the identities that schools encourage for different types of learners through the enforcement of dominant norms and the creation of the “other”. Students learn through sociological texts about the production of racialized identities and confront, often for the first time, the production of whiteness. Students engage with the psychological production of dis/abilities and consider the school practices that enable the production of difference as deficit. By the end of the course, students are able to speak to the production of school knowledge and schooled identities across the categories of race, class, gender, abilities and sexualities. Foundations content, in the service of anti-oppressive

teaching and marginalized groups, allows these students the potential for deep understandings of these realities.

Particular kind of relevance. The question of relevance has been asked of educational foundations from at least the normal school days of the early 1900s. The plea from pre-service teachers to have more practice and less theory can still be heard on students' lips. Educational foundations can be seen as relevant to the extent that they enable students to begin to understand themselves and their world as much more unequal than most of them realized, and this understanding comes alongside ways to be with this content in meaningful ways as teachers. It is not enough to reveal oppression (for example), but it is also important to model, in the same moment, the usefulness of this knowledge in the critique and transformation of educational practices.

In some sense, narrow disciplinary approaches have further enshrined the perceived gap between theory and practice (Davies, 2010; Hogg & Yates, 2013; Proulx & Simmt, 2011). By insisting that theory (psychology, history, psychology whichever) must be attended to before or after the practice of teaching, teacher education imagines theory to be impractical or somehow separated from practices. Establishing and maintaining this divide serves a technocratic logic that places a premium on performance and on measurement – it is difficult to measure an abstraction. However, this forced separation is not actual (although it is constructed that way); it does not describe the way that teachers practice. Every practice is embedded within beliefs and values, practiced because of reasons (efficiency, control, aesthetics). Every theory also expresses itself in embodied ways and can explain or invoke practice on many levels. Theory and practice are deeply enmeshed within each other.

Foundations as dangerous practices. Like the notion of “dangerous knowledge” and building off of the kinds of content described above, foundations content could provide the support for “dangerous practices”. Anti-oppressive teaching, rooted in broad understandings of the production of inequality through schooling, can emerge from education foundations classes. Dangerous practices require critical self-reflective work intended to destabilise the dominant self. Given that the overwhelming majority of our students are racialized white, this dangerous work requires seeing, critiquing and dismantling whiteness and its corresponding normativity. These practices anticipate resistance in the form of white innocence (Mills, 2007) but do not accept it, nor do they accept teaching as ahistorical or atheoretical. The lived realities of theories and practices require ongoing attention, concentrated efforts, to see practices as examples of theory and to make theory practicable. Dangerous practices, because they run counter to the technocratic, necessitate messiness, ambiguity, and uncertainty.

In our renewed program, examples of these “dangerous practices” can be drawn from the ECS 210 (Curriculum as Social and Cultural Construction) class. Early on in the course, students are invited into some autobiographical work as they write short narratives about coming to see themselves as teachers. Inevitably, students write about some of their school experiences, some of their teachers, and the ways in which their journey into education was shaped. Also inevitably, these same students (with few exceptions) do not use the language of race, gender, class or sexualities to describe their identity construction. They do not realize that this is so until they are invited by the instructors to revisit their stories through these lenses.

This constitutes dangerous practice for a number of reasons. First, some students resist this invitation: ‘I did not see my race as relevant so I chose not to include it’ or ‘if you had asked us to write like that we would have’. Some students are unable to connect the dis-ease they feel

and their inability to think about themselves as particular identities as problematic; they are “normal”. Second, some students are amazed at the way the theories they have explored in ECS 110 could be so easily ignored and forgotten. The activity enables some students to begin to see how they are implicated in the way that these structuring forces have and will continue to position them. The invitation acts as a way for students to live out the theoretical content and make new (if difficult) meaning of their own stories.

A second example involves the ways that theory and practice are engaged intentionally. The Faculty of Education at the University of Regina recently hosted the *100 Years of Loss* exhibit that visually represents the history of residential schooling in Canada. Included in ECS 210 was a “practical” assignment that invited teacher candidates to think through and create interdisciplinary experiences for K-12 students who visited the exhibit. Teacher candidates planned for pre-learning, for activities at the exhibit and for a series of lessons for after the experience. Rooted in practically engaging the formal curriculum and imagining as well as planning instruction through the lens of anti-oppressive teaching, the course enabled students to theoretically engage practices.

Conclusion

We continue to be attentive to the possible and impossible in our renewed teacher education program. While what we have offered in this discussion is an attempt to re-imagine the content and relevance of the foundations of teacher education, these foundations continue to be implicated in the ongoing colonial realities of Canada. There is work yet to be done to untangle these in our courses and with our teacher candidates. We have yet to meaningfully decolonize our practices and ourselves. Regan (2010) argues that we have been blinded from “seeing how settler history, myth, and identity, have shaped and continue to shape our attitudes in highly

problematic ways. It prevents us from acknowledging our own need to decolonize” (p. 11). Education foundations content may provide the means to think through and work on this decolonizing project. As teacher educators it is important that we not allow the foundations to serve their own needs. They must be put to work in the service of anti-oppressive, rather than technocratic, approaches to education.

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**Integrated Explorations of Key Ideas in the Foundations of Education:
An effective approach or marginalization?**

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Abstract

Based on the set of key foundational ideas compiled through canvassing of the literature and our colleagues, we analysed documents that address the content of our teacher education program to discover if and how foundational ideas are being explored through current teacher education approaches utilized at the University of Saskatchewan. We think our findings provide some insights into foundational ‘big ideas’ that need to be included in teacher education, how these might be explored, and if explored through an integrated approach whether this leads, necessarily, to the marginalization of foundational studies. Through this examination we address the question: Is the content of the traditional foundations of education still relevant today and how are foundational ideas being explored through current teacher education approaches?

Integrated Explorations of Key Ideas in the Foundations of Education:

An effective approach or marginalization?

In order to examine change and progress in Canadian teacher education we believe we should explore our collective understanding of the big ideas that need to be studied in our teacher education programs and the approaches to how these concepts are studied. Based on the understanding that the traditional foundations of education, such as sociology, history and philosophy of education are being phased out or reduced in many teacher education programs, we decided to focus our study by investigating if and how foundational ideas are being explored through current teacher education approaches. Our inquiry involves an examination of the teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan where we work. In particular, we investigate if and how foundational ‘big ideas’ are explored in our teacher education program and will attempt to address the question: Is the content of foundational studies still relevant in a twenty-first century teacher education?

We think that the findings from this project will provide insights regarding what are the big ideas that need to be included in pre-service teacher education programs, and whether an integrated study of the key ideas of educational foundations marginalizes foundational studies.

Description of Our Project: Context & Literature

Context

The College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan includes about 45 tenure-track/tenured faculty members divided into four departments (Curriculum Studies, Educational Administration, Educational Foundations and Educational Psychology & Special Education) and

roughly 650 undergraduate teacher candidates. There is one undergraduate program offered, with several streams (sequential elementary, sequential secondary, direct-entry Aboriginal and direct-entry Practical and Applied Arts), that lead to a Bachelor of Education degree.

Counter to the trend at other teacher education institutions in Canada (Christou & Bullock, 2013), the College of Education has not disbanded its Department of Educational Foundations. It is the case, however, that the newly revised and implemented undergraduate teacher education program at University of Saskatchewan does not offer specifically identified ‘Foundations’ courses; that is, courses identified as history of, sociology of, or philosophy of education. Instead, the effort has been to integrate the content of the traditional foundations of education, like other ‘big ideas’ of teacher education, into all elements of the program (including courses and field study experiences) based on the underpinning notion that an interdisciplinary (or an inter-departmental) approach to curriculum development would provide enhanced program continuity and coherence. This integration was accomplished through the development of integrated program goals and outcomes and by the collaborative work of an inter-departmental core course development team which designed the required learning experiences (on campus and field study courses) that were devised to assist in achievement of the program goals and outcomes. While it might be argued that program continuity and coherence have been improved, there is lingering concern that the integrative approach has led to the marginalization of key foundational ideas in our teacher education program.

Literature

The first step in addressing the question we outlined above involves identifying the ‘key ideas’ of foundational studies. For this, we have turned to the literature. There is a relatively significant body of literature acknowledging the importance of foundational studies in the education of

teachers (Christou & Bullock, 2013; Kerr, Mandzuk & Raptis, 2011; Christou & Sears, 2011 ; Liston, Witcomb & Borko, 2009; Christou, 2009; Crocker, & Dibbon, 2008; Butin, 2005; Chartrock, 2000; Sadovnik, Cookson Jr., & Semel, 2001). However, rather than rather than explicitly identifying key ideas recommended for study as part of the foundations, many of these studies trace the decline of the study of history, philosophy and sociology of education in teacher education programs in North America, bemoan this decline and offer significant arguments for requiring that pre-service teachers be re-engaged in foundational studies. While this body of literature helped to frame our understanding of the concerns and issues that face historians, sociologist and philosophers of education, most important to this particular project are the studies in which the authors outline and argue what they claim to be the ‘big ideas’ of the foundations of education.

For the purposes of this study, we have chosen to focus on the arguments enumerated in two recently published papers authored by Canadian teacher educators, Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011) and Christou and Sears (2011). Based on our syntheses of these papers, teacher education programs should assist teachers in developing deep understandings of the following key foundational concepts; teachers must understand:

- teaching as an epistemological act
- teaching as a moral act
- the multiple frameworks through which teaching and learning can be viewed
- schools and school systems as social structures embedded in communities
- disparities that existed and continue to exist in society and in schools, including those based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, abled-ness and so on
- the historical context of educational assumptions, beliefs, theories and practices

- how to critique current educational practices and the gap that sometimes exists between what said that is done and what is actually done in schools

To build collective understanding of the foundational content that Canadian teacher educators think should be explored in the context of where we work, we shared this list of big idea categories with colleagues who are members of the Department of Educational Foundations and invited them to add to or elaborate upon these ideas. The input from these colleagues did not result in additional big idea categories, but rather enriched the descriptive explanation of each of the key foundational ideas listed above. We used these combined ideas as the basis for our investigation and the full description of each of the big ideas will be elaborated below in the discussion of our methodological approach and findings.

Methodology & Data Sources

Procedure

To determine, whether and how these foundational ideas are being explored at the University of Saskatchewan, we undertook an analysis of documents that address the content of our teacher education program. We examined the *Professional Growth Portfolio* [PGP] (2013) which teacher candidates, instructors and internship facilitators (practicum advisors) utilize to monitor teacher candidate learning and growth. We also examined course and field study syllabi of the required components of our program.

These program documents were scrutinized using a document analysis approach, which involves the examination and interpretation of text and images “to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27; see also Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). Documents, which have been referred to as

‘social facts’ (see Atkinson and Coffey, 1997, p. 47 in Bowen, 2009, p. 27), represent the thinking of the document producers and are produced without intervention by researchers. As data sources, documents are ‘unobtrusive’, ‘non-reactive’ and stable (Bowen, 2009, p.31), meaning that they are not affected by the presence of a researcher or by the research process.

The procedure for analyzing documents includes skimming, thorough reading, assessing/ interpreting, selecting of excerpts and quotations that are organized according to categories or emerging themes (Bowen, 2009, p. 28), and then re-reading the resulting synthesis to corroborate initial categorizations or themes. Document analysis is an iterative process that can include elements of content analysis (Bowen, 2009), which systematically organizes data into categories related to research questions and can involve a quantitative element where the researcher determines how often certain words or themes occur (Neumann, 1997).

Because our research question asks about the inclusion/infusion of foundational ideas in our program, we used these key ideas as pre-constructed categories for organizing data (i.e., excerpts and quotations) drawn from the documents. Our analysis involved examination of program documents in relation to the foundational big ideas to determine if the content of the documents aligned with or reflected these big ideas.

A note on numbers. Although our analysis is primarily qualitative, we did find numbers helpful in understanding if foundational key ideas are marginalized, or not, in our teacher education program. Numbers help reveal the degree to which foundational key ideas are included in our program. For example, the eight course syllabi and the PGP selected for use as data sources include a total of 87 distinct learning outcomes.¹ Of these

87 learning outcomes, we identified 77 as referring directly to the big idea categories – that is, 89% of the learning outcomes in the documents we analysed are directly connected to foundational content key ideas.

Further, we found numbers to be helpful in revealing how particular big idea categories are weighted or emphasized in our program. Most of the 77 learning outcomes we identified as referring directly to foundational big ideas fit into more than one big idea category. We coded each learning outcome included in the PGP in each syllabus with a number and used a table (see Appendix C) to record the multiple big idea categories in which each learning outcome belonged. Using this approach we could easily tally the number of learning outcomes from the PGP and all syllabi that fit into a particular big idea category and could compare this number with the total number of times learning outcomes were recorded (i.e., 218). This allowed calculation of percentages that represent the degree to which each foundational key idea is emphasized in our program. We will refer to these numbers in our discussion of findings, below.

Data Sources

To explain our choices regarding the program documents we used as data sources, we must provide a brief description of our teacher education program. As mentioned above, the College of Education undertook an initiative to enhance our teacher education program and we have now revised and implemented the sixty credit units of professional study required to earn our Bachelor of Education degree.² The sixty credit units of professional study includes 21 credit units of core course/on-campus study components, 18 credit units of field study, a 9 credit unit inquiry project, 9 credit units of subject

matter methodology and a 3 credit unit elective. Teacher candidates who complete their Bachelor of Education using the sequential route are grouped in cohorts during their first year of study in the College and all must take the same approved core courses (with some slight modification depending on whether they are planning to become elementary or secondary school teachers) and the same field study components (that is, twelve credit units of study). The six credit units of subject matter methodology study required in the first year of study in the College continues to be under development, with faculty experimenting, for example, with offering various configurations of integrated subject area methodology courses. Teacher candidates are not grouped in cohorts during their second year of study in the College, as they engage in a sixteen week extended practicum field study (internship) and the related professional study seminar during the fall term, when they are dispersed to work with partner schools and cooperating teachers in local and rural school divisions. Following the sixteen week internship, teacher candidates complete the inquiry project and another three credit units of subject area methodology and an elective. The table below shows the pattern of study over two years of the sequential route.

Sequential Route: Professional Study Components

YEAR 1 - TERM 1	YEAR 1 - TERM 2
<p>EDUC 301.3 Educator Identity in Contexts: Anti-Oppressive and Ethical Beginnings</p> <p>EDUC 302.3 Situated Learners: Contexts of Learning and Development</p> <p>EDUC 313.3/ 315.3 Pedagogies of Place: Context-based Learning (Elementary/ Secondary)</p> <p>EDUC 321.3 Field Experiences: Contexts of Learning</p> <p>3 credit unit Subject Matter Methodology course/ modules</p>	<p>EDUC 303.3 Education in Society: Structures and Systems</p> <p>EDUC 309.3/ 311.3 Languages of Knowing (Elementary/Secondary)</p> <p>EDUC 312.3/ 314.3 Relational Curriculum-making (Elementary/Secondary)</p> <p>EDUC 322.3 Field Experience: Relational Curriculum-making in Practice: Planning, Adapting and Assessing</p> <p>Subject Matter Methodology course/modules - 3 credit units</p>
YEAR 2 - TERM 1	YEAR 2 - TERM 2
<p>EDUC 471.3 Professional Study Seminar</p> <p>EDUC 421.12 Field Experience: Professional Internship</p>	<p>EDUC 410.9 Inquiry Project</p> <p>3 credit unit Subject Matter Methodology course/ modules</p> <p>3 credit unit Elective</p>

***Note: the documents related to the program components in bold font were selected as data sources. The syllabi that were developed and shared at the 2013 College of Education Spring Retreat for Faculty and Staff were the syllabi used as data sources for our study.**

For the purposes of our investigation, we chose as data sources the course syllabi of the approved core courses and field study components that teacher candidates must take in their first year of study in the sequential program, representing 24 of the 60 credit units required for graduation (see Appendix A for core course/field study calendar

descriptions) and the Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) (see Appendix B), which is the primary assessment tool used for evaluating success in the required sixteen week internship, representing 12 of the 60 credit units required for graduation.

We did not choose to analyze the course outlines of the professional study seminar, the inquiry project or the electives as data sources because the particular content studied by teacher candidates as part of these program components is highly variable depending upon the needs and interests of the teacher candidates. In addition, we did not choose the course syllabi of the subject area methodology courses/modules as data sources because these program components are still evolving so the documents related to these courses do not necessarily represent a consistent set of key content big ideas.

The program documents we selected as data sources represent over half of the professional study credit units required for graduation – that is, they represent 36 of 60 credit units, or 60 percent of program requirements. Our analysis involved examination of these program documents in relation to the foundational big ideas to determine if the content of the PGP and the selected syllabi aligned with or reflected these big ideas.

Key Ideas of Foundations as Categories: Descriptions & Findings

As indicated, we used the key ideas of the foundations of education as pre-constructed categories for analysis of the documents. The key foundational ideas that we used as categories are fully described below, along with our findings in relation to the big idea categories.

Big Idea: Teaching as an epistemological act

Epistemology, as a branch of philosophy, explores how knowledge is put together and verified. Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011, p. 123) argue that teaching is an

epistemological act because it is about giving reasons for why people should believe what they are being told and should engage people in examining the soundness of these reasons. It follows then, that teacher education should include the explicit examination of knowledge claims, the reasons given for supporting such claims, and what the implications are for teaching when the nature of knowledge is understood, including how knowledge has been and is put together and substantiated by various peoples living in various contexts over time (Kerr, Mandzuk & Raptis, 2011). Because teaching is about questioning, creating, and sharing knowledge, (D. M., personal communication, December 19, 2013) teacher education needs to explore and compare knowledge about education, schooling, and indoctrination to see how these differ (H.W., personal communication, December 19, 2013) and should assist teacher candidates in philosophizing about the nature of and relationship between Education and Wisdom (H.W., personal communication, December 20, 2013).

In our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to an exploration of the creation, questioning, sharing and application of knowledge (including world views and perspectives developed in particular times and places), as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: Some text makes reference to explicit examinations of knowledge creation and substantiation. For example, the *Languages of Knowing* course explores “the ways in which multiple discourses can be used to shift ways of coming to know” and indicates that when teacher candidates complete the course they will be able to “Recognize languages of knowing as social constructs subject to contestation and evolution...” (Syllabus for *EDUC 309/311*).

Other textual examples are not as explicit, but do indicate that the program includes opportunities to develop understandings regarding how and where knowledge is put together, and by whom, and that this is necessary for considering and improving teaching practices. Two examples drawn from different course syllabi demonstrate this type of text: teacher candidates will come to appreciate that teaching and learning is “related to examining one’s own lenses/worldview through development of critical consciousness” (Syllabus for EDUC 301) and teacher candidates will be able to “identify student diversity as it relates to the adaptive dimension including ways of knowing in different geographical and cultural context and their relationship to equity teaching” (Syllabus for EDUC 302). In another instance, a PGP learning outcome indicates that teacher candidates will be able to use “constructivist principles to guide student learning” (*Professional Growth Portfolio*, 2013, Goal 1). To achieve this outcome, teacher candidates will need to have explored constructivism as a way in which knowledge is put together and substantiated and be able to apply this understanding in practice.

Numbers: There are 31 learning outcomes that refer to teaching as an epistemological act. These 31 are evenly distributed across the course syllabi and PGP and they represent 14% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes.

Big idea: Teaching as a moral act

Moral or ethical acts are principled actions that are judged to be ‘right’, appropriate or just because they are coherent with socially/culturally agreed upon standards. In claiming that teaching is a moral act, Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011, p. 124) also claim that teacher education should involve a critical examination of qualities we expected and expect of good teachers (e.g., courage, empathy and humility) and how

these qualities are called upon in teaching. In addition, by positing that teaching is a political and ethical act (K.W. & D.M., personal communications, December 19, 2013) colleagues agree with Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011) who argue that teaching as a moral act needs to be considered within the context of power relationships. Hence, all agree that teacher education should involve the examination of power relationships as these exist(ed) and evolve(ed) in the past and the present.

In our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to the standards by which right or just action could be judged, to the naming or describing of the characteristics of good teachers, to the exploration of ethical practices, or that referred to an examination of power relationships and the implications of these, as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: There are many examples drawn from the syllabi and PGP which demonstrate that opportunities to examine teaching as a moral act are included in the program. For instance, a PGP learning outcome names some of the characteristics of good teachers, indicating that teacher candidates will foster development of each student's sense of self-worth "while demonstrating **caring, compassion, trust and empathy** [emphasis added]." (*Professional Growth Portfolio*, 2013, Outcome 2.2) In another example, the course goals section of the syllabus for the course titled, *EDUC 303 Education in Society: Structures and Systems* indicates that teacher candidates are expected to "determine the values and characteristics of what makes a good teacher" [and that they will] "develop constructions of professionalism in relation to what it means to be an educator" [addressing among other issues, the value of] "the moral and ethical obligations of educators in a societal context." Examples of particular learning outcomes

drawn from the syllabi of other courses also demonstrate that teaching as a moral act is a program focus, indicating that upon completion of the courses that teacher candidates will:

...recognize that teaching is a political and ethical act involving social responsibility for oneself, others and society.” (Syllabus for *EDUC 301*)

...begin to identify learner-specific assessments for and of learning related to ethical practices... (Syllabus for *EDUC 302*)

...implement ethical and intellectual practices that support learners as they become capable of balancing imagination and critical thought.” (Syllabus for *EDUC 312/314*)

In addition, several syllabi refer to the examination of teaching in the context of power relationships. Two instances serve as examples: teacher candidates will “comprehend structures and ideologies that produce and maintain hierarchies” (Syllabus for *EDUC 301*) and will interrogate how power relationships influence “the construction of world views.”(Syllabus for *EDUC 309/311*)

Numbers: There are 22 learning outcomes that refer to teaching as a moral act. These 22 are fairly evenly distributed across the selected program documents and they represent 10% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes.

Big Idea: Multiple frameworks through which teaching and learning can be viewed

Colleagues in the Department of Education Foundations argue that another key content area which must be explored in teacher education are the critical frameworks for

understanding past and present educational practices. (M.B., personal communication, December 19, 2013).

Similarly, Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011, p. 129) argue that teacher education must provide opportunities to explicitly examine multiple theories and broad principles about teaching and learning, as well as the personal beliefs of teacher candidates about education, and that teacher candidates should engage in thinking through how they might apply these sets of ideas in a variety of cases. Through the critical examination of multiple frameworks, teacher candidates participate in developing personal and collective theoretical frameworks that help to guard against dogmatic prescriptive practice.

In our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to theories, ideologies, frameworks, beliefs, reflective practice, praxis, diversity of ideas and/or how such theories, ideologies or principles might be applied in practice, as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: The PGP learning goals and outcomes clearly indicated that our program includes examination of multiple frameworks from and through which teaching and learning can be viewed. For example, the PGP (2013) indicates that teacher candidates are to “Develop as a critical reflective practitioner[s] who connect practical and theoretical knowledge” (Goal 4) and will develop in self and others understandings of “exceptionality and inclusive education” (Outcome 3.5) and “anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches to education” (Outcome 3.6).

The examination of multiple theories and teaching/learning principles are highlighted in the syllabi of core courses, too. For instance, the course rationale section of the Syllabus for *EDUC 301* (2013) indicates that teacher candidates will be provided

with opportunities to “analyze a series of arguments pertaining to issues of race, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender and sexuality, especially in the ways they relate to education” and that, through completion of the course, each teacher candidate “should have a better understanding of how ideology affects most interactions in the classroom, and how ideology affects the school experience for children in all classrooms”. The Syllabus for *EDUC 302* (2013) indicates that teacher candidates will examine “a diverse range of conceptions [read theories] of individual development relating to social context, culture, and place” and that they will “begin to connect concepts of exceptionality to investigate inclusion in relation to the special needs and diverse identities of students”. A final example demonstrating that our program includes examination of multiple frameworks comes from the Syllabus for *EDUC 303*, which indicates that teacher candidate will be able to “describe different approaches to education (e.g., progressive education, home schooling, de-schooling, types of school systems, critical pedagogy, institutionalization of schooling, assimilative education, colonization, multiculturalism, biculturalism, bilingualism) and explain the ways in which they can enable and disable educative possibilities for learners”.

Numbers: There are 35 learning outcomes that refer to the examination of multiple frameworks through which to view teaching and learning. These 35 outcomes are evenly distributed across program documents and they represent 16% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes.

Big idea: Schools, school systems as social structures embedded in communities

Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011), p. 127 are clear in their position that teacher education should provide opportunities for teacher candidates to analyze classrooms and

schools in the context of the communities in which they exist so that teacher candidates can appreciate the intricate webs of interactions between people of very different statuses and different levels of responsibility. This kind of analysis assists teacher candidates in understanding the disparities that exist in classrooms, schools and communities. Colleagues corroborated this position, arguing that teacher candidates “need to think about how teachers' and children/youth's experiences before/during/after school shape their lives together” (S.M., personal communication, December 20, 2013) and offered specific examples demonstrating how communities hold world views that shape school and classroom practices – how, for example, holding an anthropogenic view of the planet means that communities have very particular attitudes about land ownership, resource extraction, and the valuing (read: lack of valuing) of species other than humans. (J. M., personal communication, December 20, 2013). Thus, all agree that teacher education must include the study of schools and school systems as social structures deeply embedded in the society in which they exist.

In our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to social, environmental or institutional relationships, structures or conditions, communities, classroom connections (local, regional, national or global), cultural or legal contexts, and the role of families, colleagues, peers, and world views in shaping classrooms, schools and communities, as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: It should be unsurprising that the syllabus for the course titled *ECUC 303 Education in Society: Structures and Systems* contains multiple examples of text that refer to schools and schools systems in relation to communities. For instance, the

goals section indicates that this course will help teacher candidates come to an understanding of

the relationship between schools and communities, ...an understanding of normative issues in education as they relate to the law, governance, and institutional decision making [and that teacher candidates will develop a] thorough knowledge of the nature and distribution of power in the school system [by investigating] the organizational structuring of the school system which leads to the marginalization of students. (Syllabus for *EDUC 303*, 2013)

At the same time, both the PGP and other core course syllabi also indicate other locations in the program where schools and school systems in context of communities will be examined. For example, as part of *EDUC 301* (2013) teacher candidates will “analyze and evaluate, institutional structures” that can contribute to discriminatory behaviours and practices, while *EDUC 312/314* (2013) indicates that teacher candidates will come to understand that “Curriculum is made through the interaction of educators, learners, subject matters, and contexts such as communities, families, government documents and policies, schools, historical developments, and social and environmental milieus.” The Professional Growth Portfolio (2013) indicates that teacher candidates will be able to identify and ameliorate “ways in which socio-economic status affects children, learning and community”(Outcome 3.2) and will learn to build “classroom connections with local, national, and global communities [and] inclusive communities across lines of difference” (Outcomes 5.1 & 52.)

Numbers: There are 34 learning outcomes that refer to schools and school systems as social structures that are embedded in communities, which represent 20% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes. These 34 outcomes are unevenly distributed with EDUC 303 and EDUC 312/314 having clusters of 8 outcomes each and the PGP having a cluster of 10, while EDUC 309/311 has one outcome identified as belonging to this big idea category.

Big idea: Disparities that existed and continue to exist in society and in schools

Our colleagues, along with Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis, (2011), are determined that teacher education must include an examination of the inequities that exist in society and in schools, including those based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, abled-ness and so on. Understanding concepts such as racism, alienation, marginalization, ambivalence, authority, conformity and colonization can help prospective teachers understand their past experiences as students, their current experiences as pre-service teachers and, most importantly, the experiences of many of their own students (Kerr, Mandzuk & Raptis, 2011, p.126.). Colleagues at the University of Saskatchewan stressed that all teacher candidates must examine how racism and colonization lie behind the inequities experienced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, enriching understandings of the Indigenous peoples in Canada and their frameworks for reclaiming self-determination through education (M. B, personal communication, December 19, 2013).

In our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to learner diversity, (acknowledging differences based on culture, language, race, ethnicity, class, gender, abled-ness and other identity markers), to anti-racist or anti-oppressive education,

to colonization, systemic oppression, privilege and exceptionality and to culturally responsive teaching practices and teaching for social justice, as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: Every one of the six program goals listed in the PGP is accompanied by at least two related learning outcomes that refer to learner differences and/or the importance of acknowledging disparities. For example, according to the *Professional Growth Portfolio* (2013) to demonstrate achievement of program goals, each teacher candidate:

Uses a variety of ways to identify and build on student academic, physical, spiritual and social strengths (Goal 1, Outcome 1.2).

Develops knowledge and understanding of students' distinct cultural, ethnic and language background and applies it to anti-oppressive teaching practices. (Goal 2, Outcome 2.3).

Develops in self and others understanding of anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches to education. (Goal 3, Outcome 3.6).

Identifies and understands how education is affected by present day and historical global, local, political and cultural issues (i.e. war, peace, poverty, racism). (Goal 4, Outcome 4.1)

Builds inclusive communities across lines of difference (e.g., ethnicity, ability, class, race, gender and family structure) and promotes open communication. (Goal 5, Outcome 5.2)

Plans instruction using the Adaptive Dimension and resource-based learning to address individual student needs and cultural diversity using a wide

repertoire of instructional strategies and methods. [and] Incorporates First Nations, Inuit and Métis content and perspectives across all teaching areas.

(Goal 6, Outcomes 6.2 & 6.3)

Along with this, the core course syllabi also indicate that learner differences and disparities, and the pedagogical implications of such, are examined across the program. For instance, the primary focus of EDUC 301 is on assisting teacher candidates in coming to “Comprehend structures and ideologies that produce and maintain hierarchies across race, class, gender, sexuality, religion and other identity markers. [And to] Appreciate what it means to be a teacher in the context of on-going colonialism and indigenous/settler relations.” (Syllabus for *EDUC 301*, 2013) EDUC 303 requires teacher candidates to “scrutinize the ways racist and oppressive structures are institutionalized in school settings including the experience of diverse peoples in western educational systems.” (Syllabus for *EDUC 303*, 2013) The *Languages of Knowing* syllabus indicates that this course will include a focus on “Societal conceptions of language empower or marginalize learners, their languages, and communities” (Syllabus for *EDUC 309/311*, 2013), while the Syllabus for *EDUC 312/314* (2013) indicates that curriculum-making relies in part on “Understanding how individual learners are situated within diverse social, cultural, and place-based contexts and the influences this has on their cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, growth and implications this has for assessment and planning.”

Numbers: There are 44 learning outcomes that refer to learner differences and disparities that exist(ed) in schools and society. These 44 outcomes are evenly

distributed across syllabi and the PGP and they represent 20% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes.

Big idea: The historical context of education

Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011) argue that teacher education must examine the historical contexts of education and schooling because “history reveals a complexity or messiness that is a more accurate picture of the realities of schooling” (p. 128). Colleagues concur, arguing that teaching is grounded in a particular time and place and that place is foundational to learning (D. M., personal communication, December 19, 2013) and that teacher candidates must examine systemic historical inequities in knowledge production, dissemination, and measurement and ideologies, theories, discourses, and practices that perpetuate them. (M. B, personal communication, December 19, 2013). Christou and Sears (2011) argue that the historical context of educational assumptions, beliefs, theories and practices can be understood through exploration of the concepts ‘connections’, ‘construction’, and ‘conflict’– that is, by “a) connecting it to the lives, interests and professional concerns of beginning and practicing teachers, b) engaging students in the construction of educational history, and c) involving them in the conflicts inherent in the discipline of history generally and the history of education in particular.” (p. 50)

Hence, in our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to the development or evolution of educational ideologies, knowledge, perspectives, world views, and practices, to connecting past with present understandings, contestations, or

practices, and to personal, cultural, racial or ethnic histories, as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: There are several examples drawn from the syllabi which demonstrate that there are some opportunities in the program to examine the historical contexts of education. For instance, as part of EDUC 301, teacher candidates are expected to develop a “consciousness of historical patterns of systemic oppression as these patterns have unfolded throughout different periods and contexts” (Syllabus for *EDUC 301*, 2013), while the Situated Learners syllabus indicates that teacher candidates will come to “recognize the historical emergence of the categories of childhood and youth in educational contexts...” (Syllabus for *EDUC 302*, 2013). The syllabus for *Education in Society* indicates that this course will involve, in part, the examination of “historical perspectives as a way of understanding current systems, institutional policies and educational philosophies” (Syllabus for *EDUC 303*, 2013). In other examples, curriculum-making involves “Exploration of the social, political, and historical contexts of education in relation to Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan and elsewhere” (Syllabus for *EDUC 321/314*, 2013) and understanding pedagogies of place involves examining “...the role of place in learning: Its histories, present-day realities, and future” (Syllabus for *EDUC 313/315*, 2013).

Although the PGP does not contain text that refers explicitly to the examination of historical contexts, this document does include expectations that teacher candidates develop “knowledge and understanding of students' distinct cultural, ethnic and language background and [apply] it to anti-oppressive teaching practices [and that they should incorporate] First Nations, Inuit and Métis content and perspectives across all teaching

areas” (Professional Growth Portfolio, 2013, Outcome 2.3 & Outcome 6.3). This implies that teacher candidates will be provided with opportunities within the program to examine both the social and historical contexts of education.

Numbers: There are 17 learning outcomes that refer to the historical context of education. These 17 are fairly evenly distributed and they represent about 8% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes.

Big idea: Critiquing educational practices - understanding the gap between what said and done in schools

Kerr, Mandzuk and Raptis (2011) claim that providing teacher candidates with the tools needed for critiquing current educational practice is one of the most important roles of foundational studies, arguing that teacher candidates must “develop the habits of mind for discerning what is effective in schooling, what is not effective, and when our rhetoric does not match what we actually accomplish.” (p. 129) Further, because “educational debates are ideologically based and highly contested”, teacher education must provide opportunities for the explicit examination of assumptions about teaching and learning held by individuals and groups and teacher candidates must “have the opportunity to grapple with difficult questions that have no easy, pat answers.” (Kerr, Mandzuk & Raptis, 2011 p.129) Teacher candidates need to learn how to “think carefully and critically about socially consequential, culturally saturated, politically volatile, and existentially defining issues within the sphere of education” (Butin, 2005, p. 218 in Kerr, Mandzuk & Raptis, 2011).

In our analysis of program documents, we assessed text that referred to the development of critical thinking skills (e.g., the capacity to analyze, synthesize, interrogate, articulate, explain, critique, apply), including in relation to thinking about learner diversities and pedagogical choices, to development of critical understanding of past and present global, local, , political, social, and cultural issues, to development of reflective practice or reflective practitioners and the implications of this, and to development, in self and others, critical lenses for assessing assumptions and understandings, as belonging in this big idea category.

Textual examples: Several learning outcomes of the PGP demonstrate the expectation that teacher candidates are to engage in critical examination of educational practices which can reveal the gap between what is said about what is done in schools and what is actually done. For example, each teacher candidate is are expected to develop as “a reflective practitioner who continually assesses the effects of instructional choices and actions on others” (*Professional Growth Portfolio*, 2013, Outcome 4.2). In addition, each teacher candidate “Promotes and engages in the improvement of social and environmental conditions [and] Demonstrates, shares, and assists students in developing critical insights into current issues” (*Professional Growth Portfolio*, 2013, Outcome 3.1 & 3.3). It is not possible for teacher candidates to achieve these outcomes if they are not provided with opportunities to critique educational practices or to develop their own critical insights into social, economic and political issues.

In fact, textual examples drawn from program syllabi demonstrate that teacher candidates will engage in critical examinations of practice as part of their studies in other components of the program. For instance, curriculum-making requires that teacher

candidates engage in analysis of “the Saskatchewan Curriculum documents to draw attention to the educational issues of a politically, economically, and culturally diverse society” and that teacher candidates are expected to “Reflect on teaching/learning through collegial conversation and professional dialogue”. (Syllabus for *EDUC 312/214*, 2013) The syllabus for Languages of Knowing indicates that teacher candidates will “critique the languages of knowing and explore the ways in which multiple discourses can be used to shift ways of coming to know and access to power for educators and learners” (Syllabus for *EDUC 312/214*, 2013), while *EDUC 303* expects teacher candidates to “develop their ability to think critically in assessing their personal actions in schools and in various educational settings.” (Syllabus for *EDUC 303*, 2013),

Numbers: There are 35 learning outcomes that refer to critiquing educational practices and understanding the gap, representing 16% of the total number of recorded learning outcomes. These 35 outcomes are emphasized in *EDUC 312/314*, which has a cluster of 11 outcomes and in the PGP, which has a cluster of 8.

Discussion

The iterative analysis of program documents in relation to the foundational big idea categories, provides insights into if and how foundational ‘big ideas are including in the undergraduate teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan. First, it is evident that some foundational big ideas receive more attention in our program than do others. Some big idea categories are evenly weighted in our program as evidenced by the percentage representing the degree to which they are emphasized - these are teaching as an epistemological act (14%), multiple frameworks through which teaching and learning can be viewed (16%), schools and school systems as social structures (16%) and

critiquing educational practices (16%). However, two categories are emphasized to a much lesser degree - these are teaching as a moral act (10%) and the historical contexts of education (8%) – while the differences and disparities category receives the most emphasis (20%) in our program.

Although there is disparity in the representation of foundational ideas in the program, our analysis does demonstrate that the PGP and course syllabi, representing well over half of the requirements necessary for graduation, are actually infused with the study of foundational ideas. Despite the fact that program and course developers expect these ideas to be studied in an integrated way, it is evident that the study of foundations is highlighted, with 89% of the learning outcomes listed in the PGP and syllabi referring to one or more of the foundational big idea categories. Clearly, at least in this program, the integrated study of the key ideas of educational foundations does not lead to a marginalization of foundational studies.

A Note on Limitations. We acknowledge that our study examines the inclusion of foundational big ideas only and so does not reveal anything about whether other equally important big ideas of teacher education have been left out or minimized in our program. Hence, other questions for future inquiries include: What are the key concepts/big ideas of educational psychology, educational administration and curriculum studies? How are these key concepts explored in our teacher education program, and how does this compare to other teacher education programs? Is there an ideal balance in the types of big ideas included in teacher education programming and an ideal way in which these ideas be explored? How might such a balance affect the professional practice of graduating teacher candidates?

Further, we recognize that examining the PGP and course syllabi to determine how key foundational content has been included is limited in that this analysis only reveals program ‘inputs’ - i.e., that which program developers imagine will be learned. We see this particular study as the initiating step in understanding if and how foundational studies could be included in twenty-first century teacher education programs in Canada. We plan further studies that will involve examination of the assignment descriptions included in the syllabi to determine if and how teacher candidates are asked to apply the foundational big ideas they are expected to learn. In addition, we think it is important to attempt to understand the actual program outcomes - i.e., to understand what is actually learned. Therefore, we intend to survey teacher candidates enrolled in our program in an effort to determine if and how the foundational big ideas are explored from the perspective of these learners.

In Summary

Based on the set of key foundational ideas compiled through canvassing of the literature and our colleagues, we investigated if and how foundational ideas are being explored through the current teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan. We think our findings provide insights into some of the big ideas that we need to be thinking about in terms of teacher education and how these might be explored. With evidence that foundational ideas are emphasized in our program, we claim that the content of the traditional foundations of education is still relevant today and that the integrated study of the key content of foundations in education does not marginalize foundational studies.

Notes

¹ The 28 learning outcomes of the two field study syllabi match the 28 learning outcomes found in the PGP tables, so the 28 were only included once in the determination of the total number of learning outcomes.

² To earn our B.Ed., candidates must also complete a minimum of 60 credit units of 'subject area' study prior to or concurrent with the 60 credit units of professional study offered by the College of Education. The 60 credit units of subject area study are selected from Fine Arts, Humanities, Kinesiology, Mathematics, Native Studies, Natural Sciences, Practical & Applied Arts and Sciences, and/or Social Sciences.

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APPENDIX A

Calendar Descriptions of Courses/Field Study Chosen as Data Sources

EDUC 301.3 Educator Identity in Contexts: Anti-Oppressive and Ethical Beginnings This course will have a central focus on an anti-racist and anti-oppressive examination of self and learners, with an understanding that education is an ethical and political act. Specific attention will be paid to the Saskatchewan context. Teacher candidates will connect these understandings to teaching practice as they develop their professional identities.

EDUC 302.3 Situated Learners: Contexts of Learning and Development Teacher candidates will investigate the contexts of understanding knowledge and learning, learner diversity and development. This will include child and adolescent development, assessment, exceptionalities, and language use in learning. It will also include a focus on related implications for pedagogical decision-making, planning, and assessment to support diverse learners' cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, and age-specific growth.

EDUC 303.3 Education in Society: Structures and Systems This course considers the structures and contexts that shape education for learners and teachers. Examining historical and cultural perspectives as a way of understanding current systems, institutional policies, and educational philosophies, governance issues, law, institutional norms, family and community contexts will support the exploration of one's own philosophies and practices of teaching.

EDUC 309.3/311.3 Languages of Knowing (Elementary/Secondary) This course will examine languages of knowing that are dominant within and across ELA, Social Studies, Mathematics, PAA, Sciences, Fine Arts and Physical Education and their relation to cultural contexts; media as a dominant language of knowing in relation to youth identity and society; and the resulting importance of considerations of interdisciplinarity and diverse knowledges in curriculum-making and pedagogy.

EDUC 312.3/314.3 Relational Curriculum-making: Intersections of Educators, Learners, Contexts, and Subject Matters (Elementary/Secondary) Curriculum-making is an intentional act of organizing, designing, developing, and assessing outcomes of learning experiences in subject areas. Curriculum is made through the interaction of educators, learners, contexts and subject matters, including ELA, Social Studies, Mathematics, PAA, Sciences, Fine Arts and Physical Education. Considerations for planning, intellectual practice, assessment, and building learning experiences will be aspects of this course.

EDUC 313.3/315.3 Pedagogies of Place: Context-based Learning (Elementary/Secondary) This course considers pedagogical, planning, and assessment choices in relation to geographical and cultural contexts, the specific knowledges and situations of learners, subject learning and relational curriculum-making, and social and ecological justice priorities. Holistic, experiential, and inquiry-based pedagogical methodologies will be examined and experienced.

EDUC 321.3 Field Experience: Learning in Contexts This field study includes one full-time week within the first month of the term. This component of field study focuses on community and place-based learning in alternate sites of educational practice that offer an integrated and orienting place-based experience. In addition, teacher candidates will engage in weekly school-based experiences where they will engage with learners to more deeply understand learning in contexts.

EDUC 322.3 Field Experience: Relational Curriculum-making in Practice: Planning, Adapting and Assessing Teacher candidates will engage in weekly school-based experiences, and in one full-time week at the end of the term, where they will engage with learners, peers and partner teachers in practice to more deeply understand curriculum making, languages of knowing, socio-culturally responsive pedagogies and implications in planning and assessment.

EDUC 421.12 Field Experience: Professional Internship Teacher candidates will work with one or more co-operating teachers and will function as professionals-in-training, engaging with students and their families. Teacher candidates will work alongside colleagues on a regular and in-depth basis, team-teaching, planning lessons and other school-based programs, and progressing toward a full teaching load within their school context. The experience affords teacher candidates with opportunities to be innovative and to implement learning gained in past terms.

Calendar Descriptions of Core Courses/Field Study Not Chosen as Data Sources

EDUC 410.9 Inquiry Project and Community Learning Field Experience Post-interns will develop an independent or interdependent inquiry project connected with

their on-campus and field study experiences. Post-interns will be facilitated in developing understanding of action research, narrative inquiry, and other approaches to inquiring appropriate to questions they wish to address and they will be encouraged to organize an interprofessional community-learning field experience through which they will develop positive attitudes toward community partnerships in education and develop skills related to community engagement and community-based learning.

EDUC 471.3 Professional Study Seminar This seminar is designed to be combined with internship experiences to explore subject matter specific topics and methodologies and topics of issue or concern that arise while on internship, including but not limited to topics like building learning communities, professionalism in teaching-learning contexts, ethics, differentiated instruction and culturally responsive assessment for learning.

APPENDIX B

Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP)

Purpose

The Professional Growth Portfolio is used by teacher candidates to help them link on-campus courses and field study experiences to enhance their professional development. Teacher candidates are responsible for using the Professional Growth Portfolio as a tool for gathering evidence of their progress toward achieving program goals and outcomes. The Professional Growth Portfolio is similar in scope and purpose to individual professional planning portfolios widely used by teachers. It is designed to help teacher candidates

- Focus their thinking on the connections between theory and professional practice
- Focus on students' learning as well as on theorizing about personal teaching practice
- Identify strategies for working towards professional goals and teaching competence
- Identify criteria for measuring progress
- Develop professional interactions and discussions among colleagues including other
- teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, course instructors, internship facilitators
- Share responsibility for leadership
- Increase their professional knowledge, involvement, and develop ownership of their own

- learning and growth

How to Use the Professional Growth Portfolio

Teacher Candidates are tasked with using the PGP Tables (see below, includes program goals and outcomes) to collect and analyze evidence of their progress toward achieving program goals and outcomes. Teacher Candidates are encouraged to keep their records in electronic form for easy sharing with peers, instructors, cooperating teachers and internship facilitators

Recording Evidence Throughout their professional learning experiences teacher candidates are expected to collect evidence of progress toward achieving program goals and outcomes by adding to their PGP on a regular basis – evidence can include

- records of observations made during school and community visits
- assignments (or parts of assignments) completed as part of on-campus coursework
- critiques/summaries of articles read as part of on-campus coursework
- instructional plans (lesson & unit plans)
- feedback/discussions with peers, cooperating teachers, instructors, internship facilitators while preparing to work with learners,
- records of professional discussions that are part of on-campus coursework
- feedback from peers, cooperating teachers, instructors, internship facilitators related to teaching

Recording Analysis & Reflections Teacher candidates are also expected to record their analysis of the evidence they have gathered. In the analysis they should:

- Deconstruct their observations – that is, explain, analyze, infer and interpret the gathered evidence to address the general questions: What have I learned about students and their learning needs; what are the implications of this for teaching?
- Examine and explain changes in their own behaviours/ways of thinking
- Explain how they think the evidence recorded is an indicator of their progress toward achieving particular program goals and outcomes.

Uses of Evidence and Analysis

Teacher candidates are expected to use the PGP as a tool for structuring conversations between themselves and cooperating teachers, faculty instructors and peers and as a springboard for reflective writing, theorizing and inquiry activities that take place as part of coursework and field study assignments.

In the first year of sequential study, the PGP is of particular importance for recording evidence of progress in required pre-internship field study, with the major evaluation of successful completion of these component based on a demonstration of progress toward program goals and outcomes.

During internship, teacher candidates are expected to use the PGP during conferences with their cooperating teacher and internship facilitator, making dated notations about progress towards program goals and outcomes. During internship, teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers use the PGP to develop midterm and final evaluation reports upon which pass/fail judgments are based.

Professional Growth Portfolio (PGP) Tables

Goal 1: Support broad areas of student growth by providing varied and constructive learning opportunities

Related Program Goal: Recognize Learning as Valuing and Constructing

By this we mean: The program strives to prepare educators who appreciate learning as processes of valuing (that is, recognizing that the knowledge we think worthwhile reflects what we value as a society) and constructing (that is, learning involves unique and active knowledge construction processes by learners, supported by teachers.)

Goal 1 Outcomes: The Teacher Candidate...	Evidence / Artifacts	Analysis/ Interpretation
1.1 Ensures the participation and success of all students.		
1.2 Uses a variety of ways to identify and build on student academic, physical, spiritual and social strengths.		
1.3 Uses constructivist principles to guide student learning.		
1.4 Analyzes the classroom environment and makes adjustments to enhance social relationships and student motivation/ engagement.		
1.5 Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their understandings in multiple ways.		

Goal 2: Affirm dignity and respect for individuals (students, families, colleagues)

Related Program Goal: Affirm Dignity and Respect for Individuals

By this we mean: The program strives to prepare educators who promote dignity and respect for all.

Goal 2 Outcomes: The Teacher Candidate...	Evidence / Artifacts	Analysis/ Interpretation
2.1 Creates and maintains a learning environment that encourages and supports the growth and potential of the whole student.		

2.2 Provides learning opportunities that recognizes and fosters each pupil’s sense of self-worth and dignity while demonstrating caring, compassion, trust and empathy.		
2.3 Develops knowledge and understanding of students’ distinct cultural, ethnic and language background and applies it to anti-oppressive teaching practices.		

Goal 3: Strive to support social justice and ecological responsibility

Related Program Goal: Support Emancipatory Action for Social and Ecological Justice

By this we mean: The program will strive to prepare educators to address systemic forms of race, gender, ethnic, sexual, ability, environmental, socio-economic (i.e., colonial), and other forms of oppression to achieve social and ecological justice through emancipatory educational theories and practices.

Goal 2 Outcomes: The Teacher Candidate...	Evidence / Artifacts	Analysis/ Interpretation
3.1 Promotes and engages in the improvement of social and environmental conditions.		
3.2 Identifies and ameliorates ways in which socio-economic status affects children, learning and community.		
3.3 Demonstrates, shares, and assists students in developing critical insights into current issues.		
3.4 Empowers students by assisting in development of understandings of democratic action.		
3.5 Develops in self and others understanding of exceptionality and inclusive education.		
3.6 Develops in self and others understanding of anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches to education.		

Goal 4: Develop as a critical reflective practitioner who connects practical and theoretical knowledge

Related Program Goal: Philosophize Educational Possibilities

By this we mean: The program will strive to prepare educators to imagine and propose educational theory and practice within visions of the highest aspirations for humankind and the world.

Goal 4 Outcomes: The Teacher Candidate...	Evidence / Artifacts	Analysis/ Interpretation
4.1 Identifies and understands how education is affected by present day and historical global, local, political and cultural issues (i.e. war, peace, poverty, racism).		
4.2 Is a reflective practitioner who continually assesses the effects of instructional choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.		
4.3 Combines practical and theoretical knowledge with broader life learning to refine a philosophy of education.		
4.4 Is sensitive to and engages the unique strengths and learning styles of all students.		
4.5 Identifies, defines, and attempts to conduct all dealings and to resolve problems cooperatively with those involved.		

Goal 5: Create a positive community in the classroom and school

Related Program Goal: Build Communities

By this we mean: The program will strive to prepare educator-leaders who engage in relationships that build learning communities and community through learning

Goal 5 Outcomes: The Teacher Candidate...	Evidence / Artifacts	Analysis/ Interpretation
5.1 Builds classroom connections with local, national, and global communities		
5.2. Builds inclusive communities across lines of difference (e.g., ethnicity, ability, class, race, gender and family structure) and promotes open		

communication.		
5.3 Works with colleagues in mutually supportive ways and develops effective professional relationships with members of the educational community.		

Goal 6: Build instructional competence and strong teacher identity

Related Program Goal: Engage in Education as Transformative Praxis

By this we mean: The program will strive to prepare educational leaders who recognize their practice as transformative praxis.

Goal 6 Outcomes: The Teacher Candidate...	Evidence / Artifacts	Analysis/ Interpretation
6.1 Demonstrates knowledge and confidence in subject matter and knowledge of Saskatchewan curriculum documents and applies these understanding to plan lessons, units of study and year plans using the Broad Areas of Learning and Cross-curricular Competencies.		
6.2 Plans instruction using the Adaptive Dimension and resource-based learning to address individual student needs and cultural diversity using a wide repertoire of instructional strategies and methods.		
6.3 Incorporates First Nations, Inuit and Métis content and perspectives across all teaching areas.		
6.4 Plans and develops engaging and authentic lessons that demonstrate knowledge and confidence in subject matter.		
6.5 Incorporates available technology in pedagogically appropriate ways.		
6.6 Establishes a classroom environment that supports learning and develops responsible learners.		
6.7 Carries out professional responsibilities for student assessment and evaluation.		

6.8 Demonstrates capacity to take risks and make mistakes as part of professional growth and accepts constructive criticism in cooperative manner.		
6.9 Reflects upon the goals and experience of professional practice, adapts teaching accordingly and demonstrates professionalism at all times.		

Appendix C

Learning Outcomes per Syllabus & PGP Coded by Big Idea Category

Big Idea Key Word	301 9 outcomes	302 8 outcomes	303 12 outcomes	309/ 311 5 outcomes	312/ 314 18 outcomes	313/ 315 7 outcomes	PGP 28 outcomes
Epistemology	6, 7, 8, 9	2, 4	1, 10, 11, 12	1, 2, 3	2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18	1, 2, 5	1.3, 4.2, 4.3. 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5
Disparities	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 4, 6, 7	1, 4, 5, 6, 7	4	2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15	2, 4, 6	1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2, 6.3
Critique & Gap	1, 2, 7, 8	1, 5	3, 4, 9, 12		2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	2, 6	2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4. 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 6.8, 6.9
Historical	3, 4, 5, 6	1	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9		10, 11, 15	6	2.3, 6.3
Moral	1, 6, 9	4, 7	1, 5, 10, 11	1	2, 3, 11, 17, 18	5, 6	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 5.3, 6.9

Multi- framewo rks	3, 6, 7, 8, 9	2, 3, 5	3, 6, 7, 8	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.2, 4.3, 6.8, 6.9
Schools & Systems	1, 5, 6, 7	4, 6	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9		4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15	4, 6	1.4, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

Part IV

Admissions to teacher education in a time of change

Changes In, To, and Through the Initial Teacher Education Program Admission Process

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Abstract

This chapter explores how changes in, to, and through the process of admitting teacher candidates to an initial teacher education (ITE) program relate to wider program changes. Through a review of materials from a large consecutive ITE program in Ontario, we identified seven problems that the admission process in that program has been called upon to solve. Some of the problems have been seen as the responsibility of the admission process for many years; other problems have only recently been assigned to the admission process. These problems are related to three distinct relationships of admission process changes with wider program changes: changes *in* the admission process that happen as a result of other changes in the program; changes *to* the admission process with no attendant changes to the program; and changes *through* the admission process in which the admission process is intended to change the program or the teaching force.

Changes In, To, and Through the Initial Teacher Education Program Admission Process

This chapter is about the admission process – the process by which a program decides which of the individuals who apply may attend – and how admission process changes relate to wider changes in an initial teacher education (ITE) program. To mention the admission process to teacher educators is to conjure images of piles of applications (or queues of computer files) to be read, memories of meetings spent arguing about minimum criteria and relative merits, and sometimes questions about how and why the individuals they teach in their courses got to be there. It is both a tedious necessity for the administration of a program and a sometimes contentious enactment of a program's values. It is also, as we will explore in this chapter, related in complex ways to program change.

What is the admission process?

In the first paragraph, we described the admission process as the process by which a program decides which of the individuals who apply may attend. Taking a closer look at this description, three aspects are especially relevant to the discussion in this chapter. First, that it is a process, typically involving well-defined steps and numerous individuals in formal roles. Second, that only those who apply can be admitted, so those who are admitted are a subset of those who apply. And, finally, not all who are admitted will choose to accept that invitation – that is, those who attend are a subset of those who are admitted.

Admission processes tend to be similar not only across ITE programs, but across many other higher education programs. Applicants submit transcripts from schools they attended as

proof of their previous academic achievement. They may also be asked to provide a statement, either written or oral, about their previous experiences and/or about their interest in the program. In 2012, for example, nine of Ontario's 12 publicly-funded ITE programs required such a statement (Ontario Universities' Application Centre, OUAC, 2011). Some programs will request letters attesting to the applicant's suitability. In the United States, though not in Canada, it is common for programs to require scores from tests such as the Praxis I Pre-Professional Skills Tests. When Crocker and Dobbin (2008) asked more than 300 faculty members in ITE programs across Canada what admission criteria they "would like to see used," the most frequent responses were previous university grades (92%), work experience with children (74%), interviews (68%), and written essays (59%). The remaining criteria were other work experience (55%) and other factors (25%). As Crocker and Dobbin observe, "the prevalence of multiple responses indicates that many faculty would like to see more than one criterion used" (p. 66).

The materials requested from applicants are considered together, usually by a committee of faculty members or by staff in the program to which applicants are applying. Sometimes applicants are eliminated because the materials show they have not met a minimum requirement (usually grades or credentials). Sometimes the individual materials are rated, the ratings are combined, and the committee begins by offering admission to the applicants with the highest ratings. Sometimes programs are seeking applicants with particular characteristics or interests.

What is the admission process for?

From the preceding description, it may seem that the purpose of the admission process is obvious – if it is the process by which a program decides which applicants may attend the program, then the purpose of the admission process is to decide which applicants may attend. We

use the word “may” deliberately, acknowledging its ambiguity. A program might, through its admission process, decide which applicants would be *permitted* to attend or it might decide which applicants would be *invited* to attend. Implicit in these wordings are very different stances: admission to the program as a good to be protected or admission to the program as a good to be offered, albeit selectively. Is the admission process solving the problem that some applicants should not, for some reason or reasons, have access to the program? Or, is the admission process solving the problem that there is more demand for the program than can be fully met? This contrast leads us to ask, “Are there other *problems* that the admission process is called upon to solve?”

Problems Assigned to the Admission Process

Recognizing that asking, “Are there other *problems* that the admission process is called upon to solve?,” offered a way to create a more detailed and nuanced account of the admission process, we undertook a review of materials produced over the past decade at a large consecutive (one-year post-Bachelor’s degree) ITE program in Ontario for evidence of problems assigned to that program’s admission process. Although the program, because of its large size and location in a very large urban centre, is not typical of all ITE programs, many of the problems assigned to its admission process will, we believe, be familiar to teacher educators in other ITE programs.

Some of the problems we identified have been seen as the responsibility of the admission process for many years and other problems have only recently been assigned to the admission process. The emphasis on some problems has changed over time. That the admission process is expected to solve problems for ITE programs signals its potential influence within programs, especially in relation to program change.

Problem 1: There are more applicants than spaces in the program. This is a problem shared by many ITE programs, especially in urban areas, and provides admission committees the opportunity to focus on selecting from among the applicants to the program. An understanding of the admission process as addressing this problem is illustrated in the following excerpt from the program's *2006/2007 Bachelor of Education Application Handbook* (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, OISE, 2005; we refer to the 2005 version because, in subsequent years, the information for applicants was disbursed across websites and application forms, instead of being in a single document):

Selection Criteria: Not all applicants who satisfy our minimum requirements related to English proficiency, academic standing and experience background can be admitted. Our final selection decisions will be influenced by the number of applicants and the level of the qualifications that they present for consideration. (p. 9)

This problem does not in itself provide an obvious direction for the admission process. There are many ways in which the subset of applicants to be admitted could be selected, the simplest (though admittedly unlikely) being by lottery. In fact, we suggest that this problem can be an impetus for programs to assign other problems to the admission process: If selections must be made, perhaps they can be made in ways that also address other problems. Furthermore, changes in the program may result in more or fewer applications, changing the importance of Problem 1.

The next two problems relate to screening of applicants. In contrast to selecting, which focuses on choosing which applicants to invite to attend a program, screening is about excluding applicants. We will discuss two possible reasons for exclusion: inadequate knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes *for success in the program* or inadequate knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes *for success as a beginning teacher*.

Problem 2: Some applicants lack the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes to succeed in the program. This problem leads admission committees to focus on identifying minimum criteria for entry to the program and checking that applicants meet those criteria. An understanding of the admission process as addressing this problem is illustrated in the following excerpt from the same 2005 document:

Admission to the B.Ed. program is based on acceptable levels of English proficiency, academic standing, and experience background. To be eligible for consideration applicants must meet our requirements in each of these three areas. (p. 9)

The criterion of experience is one that continues to be debated within this program: Is it necessary for applicants to have had a certain amount of experience working in a public school classroom setting as an adult (not as a student in the class)? Another consideration for this problem is particularly relevant to programs that do not experience Problem 1 (receiving more applications than there are spaces available): Is it ethical to admit, simply because there is space available, an applicant who is unlikely to succeed in the program? Offering admission to such applicants might well require changing the program to provide additional academic supports for such applicants.

Problem 3: Some applicants lack knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that are not taught in the program, but that they will need to succeed as beginning teachers. This problem is similar to Problem 2, but is more specific to the requirements of the profession. Because the rate of failure or withdrawal by teacher candidates is very low, and with graduation from the program comes the program's recommendation to the regulatory body for licensure as a teacher, admission to the program almost always leads to admission to the profession of teaching. It is possible that some applicants may have the academic and other skills needed to succeed within

the program, but may not have – and will not have the opportunity to gain during a one- or two-year program – knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that will be needed when they enter the profession (see Casey & Childs, 2008, for a fuller discussion of this problem). An understanding of the admission process as addressing this problem may lead an admission committee to set admission criteria based not only on requirements for success in the program, but also on an understanding of requirements for success in the profession, combined with an understanding of what it is possible to learn within the program.

The most obvious example of knowledge that is not taught in the program, but that is required for work as a teacher, is the content knowledge required of subject specialist teachers in the Intermediate and Secondary grades. For example, applicants to this program who want to teach Chemistry must have “Five full-year university courses in science with a minimum of four full-year courses in chemistry” (OUAC, 2012, p. 50); those who want to teach Instrumental Music need “Three full-year university courses in instrumental music” (p. 49), although “consideration will also be given to equivalent field experience and/or related postsecondary education” (p. 49).

Some educators have argued that content knowledge is also critically important for teachers in the Primary and Junior grades. For example, the Sub-Committee of the Mathematics Education Forum of The Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences, consisting of four teacher educators at Ontario universities, recently observed that:

Despite the fact that standardized test results in mathematics for Ontario are showing promising results, these results remain somewhat stagnant over time and continue to point to a vast number of students still being left behind. While we have some exceptional teachers of mathematics at the P/J/I levels, there is no consistency in their depth of

understanding of the material they teach – the depth needed for students to achieve at the highest levels. (Kajander, Kotsopoulos, Martinovic, & Whitely, 2013, p. 63)

The subcommittee recommended to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) that “Teachers admitted to Primary/Junior/Intermediate teacher education must have at least one undergraduate course in mathematics, but preferably two” (p. 62). This recommendation was made as part of the OCT’s consultation about extending the length of the teacher education programs in Ontario: that is, Kajander et al. were suggesting that even a longer teacher education would have insufficient time to provide the mathematics content knowledge needed by elementary teachers.

There has also been much discussion within OISE’s program about requiring applicants to demonstrate particular attitudes, such as a commitment to social justice. The application for September 2009 admission included a question that began, “This question is an opportunity for you to show that you understand that you will have a responsibility to support equity and social justice through your work with students and families.” OISE’s equity policy, which begins, “OISE is strongly committed to social justice in everything it does,” was also included on the application form, along with the caution that, “Profile responses that are contrary to OISE’s equity policy will be judged ‘Insufficient’” (OISE, 2008, para. 1).

How this problem is understood and addressed depends, in part, on the beliefs those involved in the admission process have about what teacher candidates are able to learn within the program. Our analyses of responses to an anonymous on-line survey by OISE instructors who participated in reading admission materials showed some variation in beliefs. In 2012, for example, of the 41 instructors who responded, 38 (93%) believed that learning about teaching and learning by reflecting on experiences was at least somewhat useful for predicting the success of beginning teachers. What is more interesting, however, is that three (7%) of the instructors

believed it was at least somewhat useful and also believed that teacher candidates could not learn it adequately during the program. While this may seem a small number of instructors, these three instructors together read at least 100 and possibly as many as 200 applications. Data for the 2009 question focusing on social justice yielded similar results: three of 37 instructors (8%) believed that demonstrating a commitment to social justice was at least somewhat useful for predicting success as a beginning teacher, but could not be learned adequately during the program.

The next three problems relate to possible responses to increasingly diverse populations of students in the schools and of potential applicants to the ITE program.

Problem 4: The current teaching force does not reflect the diversity of the student population. Why is it important that teachers represent the diversity of the students they teach? Villegas and Irvine (2010), in an exhaustive review of the literature, found research supporting “the potential of teachers of color to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color” (p. 176) and “the workforce rationale” – that is, the contention that teachers of color will provide a stable workforce for schools with high proportions of students of color. Similar arguments have been made for more teachers with Aboriginal identities, with additional emphasis on culture and historical understanding. For example, Wotherspoon (2008) suggests that Aboriginal teachers “have a vital role to play in engaging in sustained partnerships and coalition-building to work with Aboriginal communities toward mutually desired outcomes” (p. 398).

Arguments for more teachers with disabilities suggest that “educators who have disabilities ... not only add a unique perspective or dimension of diversity to those responsible for carrying out education’s missions but also contribute significantly to solutions to issues our schools face” (Keller, Anderson, & Karp, 1998, p. 8), including “provid[ing] valuable role

models for students with disabilities ... both for careers in educational professions and for lives fully integrated into society” (p. 9) and “influenc[ing] the perceptions and attitudes of both fellow staff members and students as their colleagues and students develop realistic appraisals of not only which limitations do or do not emerge from certain disabilities but also whether these limitations really matter” (p. 9).

An understanding of the admission process as addressing the problem of the current teaching force not representing the diversity of the student population is illustrated in the following excerpt from the program’s 2006/2007 admission materials:

... in keeping with the policies and principles for admission to the University of Toronto, OISE/UT is dedicated to admitting qualified candidates who reflect the ethnic, cultural and social diversity of Toronto, Ontario and Ontario schools. Applications are encouraged from visible minority group members, persons with disabilities, women in non-traditional subject areas, males interested in primary school teaching, Aboriginal persons and native speakers of French. (OISE, 2005, p. 4)

Problem 5: Some applicants are members of groups that experience or have experienced discrimination. This problem challenges the admission process to take into account differences in educational and other opportunities experienced by applicants to the program – especially when those differences have resulted from systemic discrimination. For example, Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller (1992) found that Ontario’s children who were African Canadian or had a disability were disproportionately placed in vocational programs. This permanently limited their ability to qualify for university admission. Members of Canada’s Aboriginal communities were, for much of the 20th century, denied high school education (Miller, 1996). Such discrimination affects not only the individuals who directly experience it,

but can also affect the chances that their children will attend post-secondary studies (Knighton & Mizra, 2002).

This problem relates to, but is not the same as Problem 4, which concerns the lack of diversity in the teaching force. This problem calls on the admission process to take into account differences in the past academic performance and in the experiences of applicants when those differences may be related to systemic discrimination. If groups that are underrepresented in the teaching force are also groups that have suffered the effects of such discrimination, then addressing this problem through the admission process may be a necessary part of addressing Problem 4. Both Problems 4 and 5 are also related to the next problem.

Problem 6: A program is perceived as unwelcoming to members of groups underrepresented in teaching. Potential applicants may perceive ITE programs in general – or a particular ITE program – as unwelcoming to members of minoritized groups, especially groups that are currently underrepresented in the teaching profession, such as racialized minorities, Aboriginals, or individuals with disabilities. Because this problem relates to programs’ efforts to address Problems 4 and 5, the ways in which ITE programs have approached this problem will be discussed in some detail.

In 2013, all 12 publicly-funded universities in Ontario with one-year consecutive (i.e., post-Bachelor’s) initial teacher education programs offered in English, published statements explicitly inviting applicants from particular groups to apply. Examples are the University of Windsor’s statement that “Applications are encouraged from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the teaching profession” (OUAC, 2012, pp. 67-68); “Wilfrid Laurier University values diversity and encourages applications from qualified candidates who self-identify as members of Aboriginal/First Nations groups, racial minorities, and/or differently-abled groups”

(p. 65); or, for Lakehead University's program, "Mature and Aboriginal applicants, as well as applicants with disabilities, are encouraged to apply" (p. 30).

Although different programs used slightly different terms, the most frequently mentioned identities correspond to three of the four "designated groups" listed in Canada's 1995 *Employment Equity Act*: Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities (*Employment Equity Act*, 1995, c. 44, s. 3; these are the terms used in the *Act*). (The fourth designated group is women; however, women are already over-represented in teaching: Statistics Canada's 2005 *Labour Force Survey* found that 69.0% of full-time teachers in Canadian elementary and secondary schools were women (Lin, 2008).)

The Ontario Universities' Application Centre, which coordinates applications across all of the programs, asks applicants to indicate if they are "of indigenous ancestry." Programs are able to obtain this information from OUAC. In addition, 5 of the 12 programs provided an optional form on which applicants could select one or more additional categories. For example, Trent University's form listed "Persons of Indigenous Heritage," "Persons of a visible racial minority," and "Persons with a disability." In addition, OISE's program used information from applicants' responses to its *Applicant Profile*, which in 2013 included the statement that "Applicants who consider themselves to be members of a group traditionally under-represented in the teaching profession are encouraged (but not required) to elaborate on this" in one of the application essays.

Two of the universities (Lakehead University and University of Ontario Institute of Technology) specifically invited applicants with disabilities, if they feel they have been academically disadvantaged, to describe that disadvantage. A third university (Brock) extended

this invitation to anyone who self-identifies as being in one of that university's encouraged groups.

Four of the universities (University of Ottawa, OISE/University of Toronto, University of Windsor, and York University) invited applicants to write more generally about how their social identity relates to their future work as a teacher. For example, York University asked applicants who chose to self-identify as being in one of its encouraged groups to:

... also include in your personal statement reference to the individual and/or systemic barriers you have encountered. Explain how your learning through these experiences might be valuable when building relationships and working with diverse groups of students. (York, 2012, p. 4)

The programs vary in how they used the information provided by applicants who are encouraged to apply. Four of the programs (Nipissing University, University of Ottawa, Queen's University, and Wilfred Laurier University) specified that they designate spaces for applicants with particular identities. For example, Queen's University stated that:

For a designated number of places in the Education program, preference is given to members of Aboriginal/First Nations groups, visible racial minorities and differently-abled groups currently under-represented within the teaching profession. Equity applicants are automatically considered for admission under regular admission procedures as well. (OUAC, 2012, p. 41)

Only one program (Trent University) specified that it was willing to waive minimum admission requirements; on its *Equity Admissions Application Form*, it stated "Equity applicants with an academic average below 70% will have their profile read if they meet all other requirements." Eight programs clearly stated that *all* applicants must meet the minimum

requirements, which are, typically, an acceptable undergraduate degree and a minimum academic average in previous undergraduate courses. Whether the remaining programs would consider waiving the minimum requirements is unclear.

In 2013, OISE's program considered applicants' self-identifications in making admission decisions, though it neither designated spaces nor waived requirements. Applicants who met the program's minimum requirements were grouped into five bands based on their combination of academic degrees, undergraduate marks, and ratings of their responses to the program's written statement. All applicants in the first three bands were admitted. When there were not enough spaces available to offer admission to all those in band 4, priority was given to those who had self-identified as a member of a visible minority group in their response to a question about how their personal background will inform their "work in diverse classrooms and schools with those who are traditionally underserved in the educational system" (OISE, 2012, Part 2, para. 1).

What reasons did the ITE programs give for encouraging applications from members of minoritized groups? Seven of the 12 programs connected the encouragement of potential applicants to what we discussed in Problem 4: A need to increase the representativeness of the teaching workforce.

However, is encouraging potential applicants to apply sufficient to increase the representativeness of the teaching workforce? Some of the programs targeted one aspect of admission processes – the use of undergraduate marks – as a possible barrier to admission, which might discourage potential applicants from applying. Marks on previous academic courses are typically understood to indicate whether an applicant has the academic skills required for the coursework in the initial teacher education program. However, if some applicants' previous marks were low for reasons unrelated to their academic skills, then those marks might be a poor

predictor of future performance by those applicants. As we saw earlier, some of the programs invited applicants with particular social identities to describe the educational disadvantage they experienced. Using Bernhard's (1995) terminology, we might call this "diversity as disadvantage/deprivation." Based on such applicant narratives, a program could choose to admit applicants who did not have the minimum required marks (Trent University) or, by giving applicants priority for designated spaces, to admit applicants who achieved the minimum, but may not have scored as highly as other applicants.

A deeper problem with this approach is identified by Ahmed (2012) in her detailed critique of the actions or statements universities use to demonstrate their commitments to diversity. She points out that when similar statements (e.g., "women and ethnic minorities encouraged to apply") are included by a university in job postings, it is "premised on a distinction between the institution as host and the potential employee as guest" (p. 42). She goes on to observe that:

To be made welcome by an explicit act of address works to reveal what is implicit: that those who are already given a place *are the ones who are welcoming* rather than welcomed, the ones who are in the structural position of hosts. (p. 42)

It is not clear that simply encouraging potential applicants from minoritized groups will, in fact, make a program seem more welcoming.

The last problem concerns the practical effects on admission processes of how programs are funded.

Problem 7: The program will receive provincial government funding for up to, but not more than, the number of spaces filled as of October 1. This problem is different from those discussed above. In most years, programs are under financial pressure to fill, but not to exceed

their assigned number of spaces (however, the Ontario government has made an exception in a few years, providing funding even for unfilled spaces). This problem may have different effects depending on the size of the applicant pool in relation to the number of spaces – and the ability of admission committees to give priority to some of the above problems may be compromised when the number of qualified applicants is not large in comparison to the number of spaces. For example, programs may need to consider the ethics of offering an applicant admission to a program if the applicant’s application materials suggest that the applicant lacks the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes to succeed in the program (Problem 2) or to succeed in the profession (Problem 3).

Changes In, To, and Through the Admission Process

That the admission process is expected to solve problems for a program means that the admission process is viewed as potentially influential. In this section, we ask, How do admission process changes relate to wider changes in ITE programs?

There are three distinct relationships between admission process change and wider program change, which we will call change *in*, *to*, or *through* the admission process. By change *in* the admission process, we mean change that happens as a result of other changes in the program when the admission process is not the intended target of the change. An example of change *in* the admission process is when a change in the size or other characteristics of a program means that fewer individuals apply to the program and, because of this change, the admission process no longer has to address Problem 1 (more applicants than spaces in the program). This change in the admission process was not intended, but is a result of the change in

the program. Such changes in the program might also change how the admission process addresses Problem 7 (the need to meet enrolment targets).

An example of a change *to* the admission process is when a program decides that its admission materials are not sufficiently welcoming to potential applicants from groups that are under-represented in teaching and so the admission materials are rewritten to better address Problem 6 (program is perceived as unwelcoming to members of groups that are under-represented in teaching). This is a change that is directed at the admission process itself, with no attendant change to the program. Addressing Problem 5 (some applicants are members of groups that experience or have experienced discrimination) may also involve changes in the admission process for some applicants, without necessarily changing the program.

An example of change *through* the admission process is Problem 3 (beginning teachers do not have the needed knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes) – changing the admission process to address this problem is hoped to transform teaching in Ontario’s schools. As a side effect, it is also likely to change the ITE program, as the teacher educators will be able to assume a higher level of knowledge or skills or different attitudes for entering teacher candidates. Other examples of change *through* the admission process are focusing the admission process on Problem 4 (the current teaching force does not reflect the diversity of the student population), which also seeks to use the admission process to change the teaching force, or Problem 2 (some applicants lack the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes to succeed in the program), which can permit teacher educators to assume higher levels of preparation by teacher candidates – or to accommodate lower levels of preparation – when planning program curricula.

Conclusion

The admission process is an annual process of deciding who may attend a program out of those who applied. In this chapter, we have discussed how the specifics of how these decisions are made may be shaped by what particular problems – and combinations of problems – are assigned to the admission process. Are there more applicants than spaces – a problem of selection? Should the admission process be concerned with screening out applicants who lack the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes to succeed in the program or in the profession? How does a program understand its responsibility to address underrepresentation of some minoritized groups in the teaching profession and factors that may contribute to this underrepresentation? Finally, how does a program reconcile addressing other problems with financial pressures to fill all available positions?

Attempting to address multiple problems simultaneously through the admission process requires judgements about the relative importance of different problems and thoughtful decisions about what to do when it is not possible to simultaneously address all the problems assigned to the admission process. Sometimes discussions about these tensions can be an impetus for change in other parts of the program. For example, if it is not possible to fill all the spaces while also screening out applicants with inadequate knowledge of a curriculum area, then a program may decide to offer remedial courses to help teacher candidates to acquire the required knowledge. This is an example of change *through* the admission process, where change begins in the admission process and leads to change in other parts of the program. We also described examples of change *in* the admission process – that is, when change in other parts of the program leads to change in the admission process – and change *to* the admission process, when change occurs only within the admission process.

As this chapter illustrates, asking what problems the admission process is being called upon to solve can help us identify not only the specific problems being assigned to the admission process, but also changes in focus over time. Considering changes in the problems assigned to the admission process can enhance our understanding of changes in the initial teacher education program.

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More than Gatekeeping:

The Pedagogical Potential of Admissions Procedures for Teacher Education

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Abstract

Teacher education program admission processes in Canada need to change. Declining number of applications in response to teacher surpluses are pressuring education faculties to rethink how they approach admissions. We argue that admissions programs need to develop pedagogical capacities beyond the traditional gatekeeping role they currently serve; that the conceptions of students with regards to teaching and learning as well as their discipline need to be solicited in the admissions process and shared with the instructors in the program. In this chapter we discuss current practices in initial teacher education admissions; show the inadequacy of current approaches to the selection of candidates for education; and describe how the admissions process to get into education at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) was modified to serve both gatekeeping and pedagogical purposes and on what basis those changes were made.

More than Gatekeeping:

The Pedagogical Potential of Admissions Procedures for Teacher Education

“It takes more than good grades to make a good teacher.” We hear this comment often from people critical of admissions procedures to faculties of education. Usually the critique is protesting the exclusion of someone whom, we are told “is really good with kids,” but their grade point average did not meet the required standard for admission. While somewhat crudely put, it begs important questions that are the subject of considerable debate among teacher educators: Who should get in to teacher education programs? What combination of background, experience, talent, and education provides the best potential for the development of a successful teacher?

In response to these questions initial teacher education (ITE) programs have developed a range of procedures for assessing and selecting candidates for admission. For the most part, these are designed to identify candidates with qualities that best fit the priorities of pre-existing programs. We argue they are inadequate for two reasons: first there is little if any systematic attempt to use the data gathered to assess the cognitive frames of candidates (the structure of their ideas related to the learning of children or their intended discipline); and, second, the admissions data collected is rarely used to adapt coursework or ITE programs to best meet the needs of the students as they move through the education program. Our contention is that information about the cognitive frames of teacher education applicants, particularly as they relate to teaching and learning generally as well as to the disciplines or areas they wish to teach, has the potential to provide important information both for selecting appropriate candidates (a

gatekeeping function) as well as for tailoring programs to best meet their needs as learners (a pedagogical function).

In this chapter we discuss current practices in ITE admissions; show the inadequacy of current approaches to the selection of candidates for ITE; and describe how the admissions process to get into education at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) was modified to serve both gatekeeping and pedagogical purposes and on what basis those changes were made. This book addresses change and progress in Canadian teacher education, and we have chosen to offer examples and explanations for how admissions not only should be changed, but how it was changed at the University of New Brunswick. Admissions processes can no longer serve solely a gatekeeping function; we need it to be a source of insight into the prior learning of our candidates and as data to inform what we teach, how we teach and where we teach in faculties of education. Candidates in teacher education programs are often told that good teaching depends on knowing one's students and adapting planning and instruction to take into account students' prior knowledge. It seems to us that teacher education programs themselves should not be exempt from this maxim and that data collected during the admissions process can provide important information about students that can be used in shaping individual courses and program components. This chapter will demonstrate that the admissions process is pivotal in providing the data needed to facilitate and expedite the adaptability and long-term change of teacher education institutions.

Current Practice in ITE Admissions

Teacher education institutions have developed an array of application procedures for vetting applicants. These vary considerably from minimalist to maximalist approaches

(Hirschhorn, Sears, Sloat & Sherman, 2011). Programs collect data on candidates through a range of mechanisms that fall into three, sometimes four, categories: Academic Credentials; Personal Statements; References; and infrequently, Interview/Performances. Most education institutions solicit and collect data in these categories although the specific means for that and the relative weighting of the areas in admission decisions differ (Hirschhorn, Ireland & Sears, 2014). Following the collection of data, the potential of the applicants is assessed and the best candidates are admitted.

For example, the institution in which we work has historically taken a relatively minimalist approach assessing applicants via a written application package alone. This contains a fairly standard array of documents including university transcripts for previous degrees, a short statement outlining why the applicant wants to be a teacher, several letters of reference, and a record of previous experience working with children and young people. The University of Jyväskylä in Finland moves further along the scale toward a more robust approach beginning with an application package containing similar materials to those outlined above but moving on to an “entrance examination” including a “demonstration lesson, interview, and group task” (Valli & Johnson, 2007, p.495). The Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada, goes even further in requiring potential applicants to their Bachelor of Education program to take a full course as part of their university work comprised of large amounts of time working in classrooms with children prior to applying to the Faculty with individual assessment of their potential in the classroom. Following completion of the course, students meet individually with an instructor to discuss their suitability for the teaching profession and in addition to a grade receive an assessment ranging from Highly Recommended to Not Recommended (Butt, Grigg & McConaghy, 2010).

More recently researchers at OISE have worked to develop rigorous, research-oriented approaches to admissions procedures (Casey & Childs, 2007; Casey & Childs, 2011; Thompson, Cummings, Ferguson, Moizumi, Sher & Wang, 2011). They provide an overview of research into the correlation between various admissions criteria and success in both teacher education programs as a whole and the experiential or student teaching components of those programs in particular. They describe in some detail the writing component of the admissions process at OISE and how they have worked to make it a valid and reliable instrument for assessing the relevant qualities of applicants. However, none of the programs we have looked into to make a serious attempt to map the cognitive frames of applicants to uncover the structure of their ideas about teaching and learning. In the next section we will discuss why current admissions models may be missing an opportunity to be more than a gatekeeper to the education programs they serve by approaching admissions data as a source of insight into candidates ideas about teaching and learning and modifying instruction to address what is learned..

The Inadequacy of Current Approaches to Education Program Admissions

As described earlier, the University of Lethbridge uses one of the most robust ‘maximal’ models we have seen to admit students into their education program. However, even in their admissions process, the emphasis is on more tangible elements such as level of comfort working with children and peers, or technical aspects of lesson delivery such as organization of material, pacing, and voice modulation. Candidates are sometimes asked about their conceptions of teachers and teaching but this evidence seems to be treated anecdotally and not analysed systematically for what it might reveal about the cognitive schema of applicants. This holistic, sometimes technical focus is not generally how Canadian teacher education programs describe

themselves, but it is the most common type of question listed in their admissions documentation (Teacher Education Canada, 2015). This is particularly curious given that academics in education around the world seem to have largely accepted key findings from the “cognitive revolution” of the twentieth century including the compelling evidence that “prior knowledge matters” (Sears, 2009, p.145).

Even when admissions procedures do make attempts to assess the cognitive frames of applicants the data serves as a gatekeeping function alone and is not used for pedagogical purposes. Falkenberg (2010) argues the processes are unidirectional; they seek candidates with qualities (including prior knowledge) that best fit the priorities of pre-existing and fixed programs but do not allow for the possibility of “program adaptability.” Program adaptability, as Falkenberg describes it, “is the idea that the program is designed to be responsive to the qualities that teacher candidates bring with them” (Falkenberg, 2010, pp. 22-23). This is consistent with the basic constructivist premise that a key part of good teaching is engaging students where they are conceptually in order to take them some place new. In the words of David Ausubel (1968, p. vi), an early proponent of the role of prior knowledge in teaching and learning, “The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him [sic] accordingly.”

Prior Knowledge and Admissions

A central tenet of what Howard Gardner (2006a, p. 74) calls “the cognitive revolution” of the 20th century is that “prior knowledge matters” (Sears, 2009, p. 145) to teaching and learning. People come to any learning situation with a set of cognitive structures that filter and shape new information in powerful ways. Gardner (2006a, p. 76) calls these structures “mental

representations” and argues they underlie the fact that “individuals do not just react to or perform in the world; they possess minds and these minds contain images, schemes, pictures, frames, languages, ideas, and the like.” The literature uses a range of terms but generally refers to this phenomenon as prior knowledge; meaning the knowledge learners brings with them to the classroom or any other learning situation.

Research demonstrates not only that learners bring mental representations or schemata with them to learning situations, but that these filter and shape new learning (Sears, 2009). These mental representations or frameworks are often incomplete, “naïve” (Byrnes & Torney-Purta, 1995), or “simply wrong” (Gardner, 2006b, p. 54). When presented with information that does not fit existing structures learners will often distort it or discard it completely rather than doing the difficult work necessary to restructure their frameworks. Research on prior knowledge consistently shows cognitive schema to be persistent and resistant to change. As Gardner (2006b, p. 1) puts it, “Minds, of course, are hard to change.”

A key component of the constructivist approaches to teaching and learning that dominate curricular and policy documents in public education in Canada and teacher education programs is that attention to prior knowledge is essential to good teaching (Richardson, 1997; Windschitl, 2002; Peck, Sears & Donaldson, 2009). A fundamental principle of constructivist approaches is to begin where students are conceptually and help them to both construct new knowledge on that foundation and, where necessary, tear apart and reconstruct prior knowledge. As Gardner (2006a, p. 77) writes, “If one wants to educate for genuine understanding . . . it is important to identify these early representations, appreciate their power, and confront them directly and repeatedly.”

If good teaching really is largely based on confronting and building on prior knowledge, attention to mapping these conceptions needs to be a central part of admissions processes both for the purposes of selecting appropriate candidates and for adjusting elements of the program to respond to those prior conceptions. In other words, data collected in admissions should be used both for gatekeeping and pedagogical purposes. The remainder of this chapter will be used to describe what was changed about the UNB admissions process and on what basis the changes were made. It is our intention to share with the reader how we are attempting to address the deficiencies already described and what was required to make the changes. We will conclude with a brief discussion of what we have learned from this process and what implications that may have for other education faculties seeking to change their admissions processes.

Changes to UNB Education Admissions

As discussed above, our institution has historically employed a relatively minimalist approach to admissions procedures and done little to systematically assess the cognitive frames of applicants. After a series of Admissions Committee meetings in 2013 to discuss the information being gathered in the admissions process, the application procedures were changed to include questions designed to provide data on applicants' cognitive frames with regard to two areas: the nature of teaching and learning generally; and nature of the disciplines or subject areas they hope to teach. Additionally, the reference requirements were changed to require the candidates to provide an academic, a professional and a personal reference, and the provided forms were fine-tuned for the type of reference being provided. For example, academic References are asked to comment on the candidate's academic potential, while personal References are asked to comment on the candidate's character. These changes were put in place

in time to be used by the prospective teacher candidates who applied to UNB Education with the intention of commencing in September 2014.

Beyond changes to the admissions package itself, after the admissions process is completed and students are sent notices of acceptance, the students who are accepted have their data anonymized and distributed to the instructors according to the disciplines they list as potential teachables. The admissions committee retains a copy of the admissions data for pattern analysis, and schedules a meeting for that purpose to be held shortly after the school year begins.

The basis and intentions for the new admissions questions. Teacher education scholars such as Shulman (1986), Crocker and Dibbon (2008), An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta/The Teaching Council (2011), Waldron, Pike, Greenwood, Murphy, O'Connor, Dolan, and Kerr (2009), and, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), have argued that teachers require a solid grounding in both pedagogy and subject-matter content knowledge and, in particular, a well-developed sense of how these come together in teaching. It was our intention to modify the application process at UNB to explicitly ask admissions questions that got the prospective teachers to address this connection, and to move away from more generalized statements about why they wanted to be teachers. However, getting prospective teachers to accurately and authentically portray their prior knowledge as it pertains to teaching in an application process can be difficult, and thus, we borrowed an approach used commonly in phenomenographic research; semi-projective technique. This is a structured and culturally patterned research approach designed to get participants to describe the qualitatively different ways in which they perceive, conceptualize, and understand their various experiences (Marton, 1981; 1984; Richardson, 1999; Peck, Sears & Donaldson, 2008). Greenstein and Tarrow (1970) and Buros (1965) describe in detail how

projective technique can be used to gain access to an individual's personality and experiences, by asking them to respond to deliberately ambiguous questions or stimuli. Common examples of this approach are Rorschach ink blots, Murray TAT pictures, human hands in various positions, word associations, and sentence completions (Buros, 1965). Semi-projective technique adapts this approach to be more focused on the particular phenomena being investigated and so stimuli are designed to prompt responses about those phenomena (Peck & Sears 2005; Peck, Sears & Donaldson, 2008). The admissions questions at UNB were designed with this technique in mind, with the most important goal being to get at the prospective teacher's conceptions of teaching and learning, instead of asking them to write a generalized essay on why they wanted to be a teacher. The focus was on a faithful representation of the subject's sense of meaning of the chosen aspect of their life experiences (Buros, 1965).

Some other ITE programs in Atlantic Canada frame their prompts with a much greater degree of specificity. St. Francis Xavier University (St. FX), for example, provides the most specific guidelines for the personal statement. Applicants are asked to explain why they want to be a teacher, and are provided with a quotation from the book *The Dreamkeepers*, by Gloria Ladson-Billings. The quotation speaks to applicants not simply stating that they like children, but indicating a love of learning and the value of knowledge as well. Applicants are advised "Your essay will be evaluated on your articulation of your view of students, view of subject matter and vision for schooling" (Teacher Education Canada, 2015). This indicates some expectation of candidates' prior knowledge not only of content, but also of a teacher's role and responsibilities in the classroom and in the greater school context. We appreciate this willingness to require candidates to share more of their orientation to teaching than is typical in ITE admissions questions, but with a little digging, prospective teacher candidates can learn that Ladson-Billings

is a well-known social justice advocate, and thus, may nudge them to claim this as their orientation to teaching regardless of whether it is or not. It is our goal to ask the questions in an ambiguous enough way that the candidates must share their own conceptions of teaching and learning, and not tell us just what they think we want to read.

It seems to us that providing this level of prescription makes it unlikely that responses will reflect the applicants' thinking but rather what they surmise the assessors want to hear. Valli and Johnson (2007) point out that several studies of admission processes in Finland found that in interviews candidates often provide common answers to questions reflecting not their own beliefs and values but those they believe the interviewers and institutions want to hear. The level of detail and background provided in the prompts described above make this even more likely.

In designing our stimuli, therefore, we were seeking middle ground - to focus applicant responses on the concepts or areas we wanted to assess without telling them what to say. To that end, we designed three writing prompts as follows:

Prompt 1:

EDUCATION-RELATED EMPLOYMENT AND EXPERIENCE
--

List below your education related experience. These can include both paid and volunteer positions.

Position	Responsibilities	Hours/Days Per Week	Duration

Select one or two of the above and on a separate page briefly explain (300 words or less) what you learned from the experience(s) about the processes of teaching and learning.

Prompt 2:

Reflecting on your post-secondary education, select one or two areas of study and on a separate page briefly describe (300 words or less) how particular courses and/or the program as a whole contributed to your development as an educator. For example, you might explore insights on the nature of knowledge gained from the study of particular disciplines (math, science, history, art, psychology etc.). In short, how has your post-secondary education to date prepared you for teaching?

Prompt 3:

Identify two specific goals you hope to work toward in the B.Ed. program at UNB and on a separate page say why these are important areas of personal or professional learning for you to address.

Prompt 1 is designed to elicit student conceptions of teaching and learning (pedagogy) while Prompt 2 is designed to get at how they understand knowledge and, in particular, knowledge in the context of the disciplines they plan to teach. Prompt 3 is a bit more open but designed to uncover understandings about professional learning.

It might be assumed that those with little or no professional experience might have limited and very similar conceptions in these areas, but the recent study by Ell, Hill and Grudnoff (2012) calls that assumption into question. The researchers sought to “look beyond subject matter knowledge to investigate whether new teacher candidates held prior knowledge about teaching and learning” (p. 56). To that end they asked the candidates to assess two brief samples of children’s work; one in mathematics and one in writing. The researchers hypothesized that the candidates would operate more like laypeople than teacher experts in their assessments but were surprised to find that “in both mathematics and writing around half the teacher candidates recognized the key features outlined by the experts” (p. 59). The authors acknowledge that the study is preliminary and “focuses on one small part of the complex skills and understandings that teachers need in order to assess formatively in their classrooms” (p. 56), but it does demonstrate two very important points relevant for this chapter: first, that it is possible to assess important aspects of candidates’ prior knowledge with relatively short activities; and, second, that we may be under-estimating the sophistication level of teacher candidates’ prior knowledge.

The Gatekeeping Purpose of ITE Admissions

The data provided by the modified admission requirements described above is used by the faculty involved in the admissions process to decide who are the best candidates to be admitted into the Faculty of Education and the decisions about who to admit are completed very quickly after the Dec. 31st deadline. This stage of the process, just like in other ITE programs, is intended as a gatekeeping stage with candidates being selected who are believed to be the best fit for the program and the teaching profession. A description of the debate over the complexities and priorities that influence this gatekeeping function is well described by Casey and Childs (2011). Nonetheless, we contend that teacher candidates come to teacher education programs with well-entrenched conceptions or scripts about what a teacher is, what it means to teach, and the nature of the subjects they plan to teach and that these mental representations or cognitive frames are very difficult to change. It follows that selection processes should make some attempt to assess this prior knowledge and give preference to applicants whose cognitive frames are more consistent with contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. Teacher education programs are of limited duration and as Russell (2009) argues, their relatively short expanse barely scratch the surface of prospective teachers' conceptions of teaching derived over a lifetime of learning in different venues. Selecting candidates most disposed to thinking about teaching in ways consistent with contemporary approaches has the potential to enhance successful transition into the profession.

The pedagogical purpose of ITE admissions

In addition to the changes made to the application requirements to get into education at UNB, what is done with the data after the students are admitted into the program has also

changed. The responses of the students to the questions in the application package who are admitted to the program are anonymized and made available to the instructors working with the students, after the students have already been accepted and are about to begin their school year. The identities of the students are removed so that instructors cannot single out and potentially harm individuals for their conceptions of a particular discipline or their conceptions of teaching and learning in general. Yet, the information can be useful for instructors to view the preconceptions of their students and to plan pedagogical experiences to build on or even challenge these conceptions. Ell, Hill and Grudnoff (2012) assert that a cohort of teacher candidates will have a range of conceptions that will not always fit our preconceived expectations or our interpretations of their actions. A compilation of the responses of their students to the admissions questions above; questions specifically designed to elicit the conceptions of the prospective teachers with regards to their discipline, may provide instructors with valuable insights into the conceptions of their students.

Currently, teacher education in Canada is seeing a decline in the number of students who are applying to get into these programs and to become teachers (Mason, 2012). Education programs in Canada do not have as many applicants to choose from and this has increased the pressure on Faculties of Education to reduce enrolment targets, broaden their definitions of who is admissible, and to compete more aggressively with other education faculties for the students who do still want to be teachers (Alphonso, Morrow & Bradshaw, 2013). Thus, there is an increased pressure on admissions committees to accept a broader range of students than they may have in the past, and to do so expediently. There is also an increasing chance in this era of teacher surplus / teacher education application shortage, to select students whose conceptions of teaching and learning are not a perfect fit with the program they are applying to. We believe that

providing instructors with the data detailing the prior conceptions of their students, increases the chances that they can differentiate their instruction in ways to accommodate the potential variability in conceptions of teaching and learning they will encounter when working with their students. If education students possess a broader conception of teaching and learning, instructors are going to need as much information as possible in order to prepare experiences that will potentiate the educations of each of their students.

Research Stemming from Changes to Admissions Process at UNB

The changes to the admissions process at UNB has been years in coming to fruition and has taken the collective efforts of the admissions committee and the faculty at UNB. It was not a change that was made lightly. However, for all of the grounding in constructivist doctrine and phenomenographic method, there is no guarantee that the changes that were made will accomplish what they were intended to accomplish. Further, it would also be wise to learn whether the changes are being well received by the students, the admissions committee, or the instructors; the people most affected by the changes. In an era of declining applications to faculties of education, it would not be wise for the application process itself to turn prospective students away. Thus, we have begun a program of research to measure the impact of the admissions changes, commencing in 2015. This research will encompass interviews with the students regarding the application process; interviews with the admissions committee regarding the logistics of the process, as well as whether the changes affected the selection process in any way; and, interviews with faculty/instructors regarding whether being provided the information collected during the admissions process was used and whether it was useful.

Final Word

In this chapter we have argued that education programs and their admissions processes need to change. The number of students applying to education programs is diminishing, while the potential diversity of the students' conceptions regarding teaching and learning is increasing. With small changes to the admissions processes itself and a shift in the how the data from these processes is used, teacher education programs can begin to practice what they have been teaching to their students for years: learn who your students are, and begin from that point as you seek to educate them. We need to consider how the traditional gatekeeping function of admissions processes can be expanded to also now serve a pedagogical function – we need to use what we learn from students in their applications and adapt our instruction, our program offerings and our goals accordingly. At UNB we have sought to pursue this potential, and in the course of making this change, have learned of many practical and theoretical considerations that needed to be discussed before the change could be made. We have documented some of the basis for our actions as well as the products in this chapter, with the intention of short-cutting the process for other academics who may be seeking to change their own admissions processes.

Using admissions data in this way is an expansion of the traditional and necessary gatekeeping role served by the admissions process, and it enables education faculties to be more responsive to the evolving perspectives of its teacher candidates. Does it enable education programmes to *best adapt to the rapid rate of change in the educational milieu* as the focus question asks? In our opinion, yes. By focusing on the prior learning of students that emerge from the education milieu of their K-12 and post-secondary educations, it enables education faculty and programmes to be responsive to the cognitive frames of the teacher candidates in

order to not only help them grow as professional educators, but also to help the program remain responsive to the needs of these students.

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Part V

Diversity and inclusion as innovation in teacher education

Inclusion in teacher education: What needs to change in practice?

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Abstract

Educational inclusion is an international movement with the goal of ensuring free and equitable access and participation in public education for all students, regardless of language, gender, culture, or ability. In this paper we examine initial teacher education at one university within the province of British Columbia to determine state of inclusiveness within its Bachelor of Education program. We base this examination on two frameworks which support inclusive education initiatives, as well as national law on the duty to accommodate. Multiple barriers are identified at the program, institutional, and governmental levels, as well as the tensions between interacting inclusive education and the integrity and rigors of the teaching profession.

Inclusion in teacher education: What needs to change in practice?

Educational inclusion is an international movement that seeks to ensure fair and equitable access to public education for all individuals, regardless of language, gender, culture, or ability (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2012; Inclusion International, 2009). School jurisdictions across Canada continue to work towards this ideal (Roehrer Institute, 2004). The strides that have been made in public education for school-aged children are notable; however, there have not been the same advances in initial teacher education. In this paper we¹⁰ begin by briefly discussing the concept of inclusive education and the cornerstones of building inclusive communities, along with the Canadian Human Rights Legislation which outlines the obligations of employers to accommodate for individual needs. Based on the principles of inclusive communities/education, we review our university and initial teacher education program, and the provincial system of professional certification, by presenting profiles of three teacher candidates who have unique learning needs. We point out specific barriers to inclusion of these teacher candidates, as well as the tensions between the principles of inclusiveness and the requirements to ensure professional integrity and the teaching profession. We close by identifying practices and policies which must change in order to make teacher education programs more inclusive and reflective of our national goal of respecting and supporting diversity.

¹⁰ The authors have been full-time faculty in the School of Education at Thompson Rivers University for 20 and 15 years, respectively. The second author is the Practica Coordinator for the Bachelor of Education program. Both authors have sat on the Special Placements Committee which vets requests for particular practicum placements based on personal circumstances.

Inclusion Philosophy and Means of Attainment

Inclusion is an international movement which seeks to advance the well-being of individuals and communities by equally valuing and respecting all citizens regardless of differences in religion, language, physical appearance, or ability (Clutterbuck & Novick, 2003). Although there is no clear consensus on the operationalization of the term *educational inclusion* (Crawford, 2008; Inclusion International, 2009), there is commonality in the definition. In essence it means that an individual has equal opportunity to access and participate in the education system (Press, 2010), so that he or she can develop to his or her full potential. The philosophy of inclusion (and educational inclusion) can be further explained as a belief that all individuals have value and can contribute to the fabric of a community. In order to do that, public schools have been charged with making physical adjustments to the school building, attitudinal adjustments among staff and students, and utilizing creative technologies and methods in order to provide the best possible education for all students. There are two theoretical frameworks for inclusion that are helpful in investigating the degree of inclusiveness in initial teacher education programs: 1) social inclusion for civil societies (developed by the Laidlaw Foundation, 2003), and 2) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for teaching and learning contexts (Rose & Meyer, 2002). In addition to these frameworks, we also present duty to accommodate law which is found in the Canadian Human Rights Act (Minister of Justice, 2014), as a way to evaluate inclusiveness in our initial teacher education program.

Social Inclusion Framework

The framework outlined by the Laidlaw Foundation (2003) for social inclusion in cities, schools, and communities is useful in terms of a review of university, government, and accreditation systems. An inclusive community has the following characteristics:

1. Integrative, cooperative, and interactive
2. Invested - for the social and economic health and well-being of all members
3. Diverse - in all structures, processes and functions of daily community life
4. Equitable - so that everyone has the opportunity to develop one's capacities and participate actively in community life
5. Accessible, sensitive, and safe
6. Participatory - so that all members may be involved in planning and decision-making

These six characteristics provide a foundation upon which teacher education programs can design program goals and objectives for inclusion. For example, in terms of equity (principle #4), initial teacher education programs may seek to recruit a more culturally diverse student body, and provide numerous avenues where students can be involved in program development and planning. Further, for accessibility, sensitivity, and safety (principle #5), faculty may implement different types of scaffolding, so that teacher candidates are more likely to experience success in both course and field work. In the instance of the TRU Bachelor of Education program, teacher candidates may apply for special placement considerations during practicum, if they have special needs which require accommodation (young children, learning disability or medical concerns). Within the postsecondary education program, there needs to be a commitment to inclusive teaching and learning methods. An appropriate and relevant approach to inclusive teaching and learning is the model of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is a framework that is useful when examining teacher education programs. The principles of UDL were created by Rose and Meyer (2002) in acknowledgement of the increasingly diverse student body in public schools in the United States, and the barriers created

by a "one-size-fits-all curriculum" (CAST, 2011, p. 4). They recommend that changes be made to the curriculum in ways that support and scaffold those learners who are typically "in the margins" (Rose, Meyer, & Hitchcock, 2005). UDL is not intended just for students with disabilities, but is an educational reform which can enhance the engagement and learning experiences for all students.

The three foundation pillars of UDL are: 1) multiple means of expression, 2) multiple means of engagement, and 3) multiple means of representation (Maryland State Board of Education, 2011; CAST, 2011). Thus, UDL offers options for how information is presented, how students are engaged in learning, and how students demonstrate their knowledge and skills. UDL classrooms provide the opportunity for all students to access, participate in, and progress in the general-education curriculum by reducing barriers to instruction and increasing levels of engagement.

Duty to Accommodate

The Canadian Human Rights Act (Minister of Justice, 2014) states that:

all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted. (p. 1)

Therefore, it is incumbent upon employers, and even educational institutions, to make the necessary accommodations which will permit equal opportunity. In the case of teacher candidates, this means that the university or teacher education program must admit and make adjustments for anyone who is 'able and wishes' to become a practicing teacher. The Canadian Human Rights Commission further explains that this duty to accommodate has limits, however, if it causes an organization undue hardship. Unfortunately, there is no precise legal definition for determining undue hardship, but these could include "adjustments to a policy, practice, by-law or building [that would] cost too much, or create risks to health or safety" (CHRC, 2013, p. 1).

In order to be socially just, initial teacher education programs must reflect practices in our public school systems and in our wider communities by being examples of socially inclusive communities. That is, university teacher education programs must also practice inclusive pedagogy (such as UDL), and faculty and teacher candidates must represent the diversity of their respective communities. Creating the conditions that enable equal access is not straightforward, and there are both legal and ethical questions that arise in terms of undue hardship, and the implications for the educational system. In the next section, we examine the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) initial teacher education program, as well as the institutional and provincial accreditation process, in terms of the characteristics and principles of social and educational inclusion, and the legal duty to accommodate.

Inclusion within an Initial Teacher Education Program in Canada - Characterizing the Challenges

The teacher education program at TRU strives to promote diversity by specifically reserving 10% of the available spaces for individuals from minority status groups. The majority

of these "special status"¹¹ teacher candidates have specific learning disabilities, are of Aboriginal ancestry, or live with a mental illness. Seldom do we have individuals who have physical impairments. The following three composite characterizations are fictitious, yet represent individuals with whom we have had direct experience over the past 15-20 years at TRU. The first characterisation is of a teacher candidate with a mathematics learning disability. The second teacher candidate is an Aboriginal single mother with family and financial strains, and the third individual is a male who suffers from recurring bouts of depression. Each of these "characters" requires adjustments to the standard teacher education program and certification process.

Janet

Janet is a 24-year-old single woman with a learning disability. While she is a gifted reader, mathematical operations are very difficult for her. During her extended practicum she made errors in marking papers and also during lessons when explaining mathematical operations to students. In high school she did attend a Learning Assistance Center, however, no formal assessments were made at that time, and therefore, she has no official designation as "learning disabled". This is problematic because the University will not grant adaptations or modifications to her program without an official designation. Janet could have a psychometric assessment administered privately by a psychologist; however the cost is over \$1500, which is completely unaffordable for her.

In addition to the financial implications, Janet does not want to pursue an official assessment. She is embarrassed about her learning challenges and fears being stigmatized if labeled, especially if any kind of designation affects her application for her first teaching

¹¹ The term "special status" was used by our university to describe individuals from any minority group who wished to receive unique accommodations during their post-secondary education. Applicants made this claim on their initial application forms, however this option is no longer available.

position. She is willing to forgo any special considerations because of this, and risk failing her final certification practicum. Further adding stress is the lack of funding to support her education. There are few bursaries available for individuals with a learning disability. If she were a single parent or had a physical disability, she would qualify for a wider range of bursaries.

Janet was not meeting practicum expectations in the eighth week of her ten-week final practicum and was withdrawn. She is about to start a supplemental practicum which she must complete in order to certify as a teacher in British Columbia.

Maureen

Maureen is an Aboriginal single mother of five children ranging in ages from three months to 12 years. Her band is paying for her education and she intends to return and teach in the band's school. Funding is available only if she is a full-time student. Maureen feels the pressure and obligation to return and give back to her community. During the course-work portion of the teacher education program, Maureen had extreme difficulty submitting assignments on time and participating as a member in group work. She would need to leave the university as soon as classes ended, because she could not afford after school care for her children. As a result, she missed group work activities. Her first three practica had to be within the city limits, and on a bus route, because she had no vehicle. Because of limited childcare, she did not volunteer for extracurricular activities at her practicum schools. During Maureen's certification practicum, a family member passed away and she was absent for over 2 weeks attending traditional celebrations and mourning. Consequently, she had to defer her certification practicum for one year. After a year's break, Maureen is returning to complete her extended 10-week practicum.

Brad

Brad is a 29-year-old single male who was very successful in his Bachelor of Arts degree before entering the Bachelor of Education program. He has a strong Physical Education background and is a very accomplished rugby player. However, multiple head injuries while playing sports have resulted in recurring bouts of headaches and depression. Brad has missed a lot of course time. Although he was diligent about contacting the program coordinator to report an absence, he would frequently be away at least one or two days per week, and on some occasions for up to one week. His instructors were understanding and allowed for many extensions on assignments. The certification practicum is approaching, and with the ten-week extended practicum, he is required to complete six consecutive weeks teaching at 80-100%. Brad is aware that repeated absences during the long practicum are difficult for the children, disruptive to the continuity of teaching, and puts added pressure on the teacher mentor.

All three of these teacher candidates' learning challenges are exacerbated by barriers within the B.Ed. program, at an institutional level, and related to final professional accreditation. Janet would have more success if she were able to accept support for her learning disability both from the institution and from the program. Additional mentoring and extra time to prepare lessons, evaluate student work, and write report cards could be granted. Maureen is "juggling" many competing demands and would benefit by extending her two-year program (with financial support) so that she can devote more time and energy to her certification practicum. Both Janet and Brad would benefit from a part-time option for the certification practicum. The slower pace would provide them with extra time between teaching days.

While adjustments are made "in house" to scaffold teacher candidates who experience learning challenges or complex life situations, there are program, institutional, and government

practices and policies which prevent the implementation of accommodations and adaptations that would assist teacher candidates who present with profiles such as the three cases described. In the next section we discuss these three levels of barriers and how they limit inclusion of teacher candidates (TCs) with unique life situations or exceptional learning needs. Changes in policy and practice which reduce barriers and increase access to the teaching profession are not without issue, however, and we discuss these throughout the remainder of the paper.

Programmatic Barriers

Teaching methodology. The TRU Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program attempts to incorporate principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in its courses, both as content and as pedagogy. The goal of UDL is to design education that is accessible for all while maintaining the integrity of the product, that is, the curriculum and objectives (Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2003). Recall the three main principles of UDL: facilitating multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of expression of understanding, and multiple means of representation of knowledge (CAST, 2011; Maryland State Board of Education, 2011). As much as possible, TRU B.Ed. faculty attempts to allow choice in topics of assignments, as well as means of representing understanding. For example, in terms of engagement, TCs have a choice in the grade level that they would like for their extended practicum, and are often afforded the choice in determining the type of lesson or unit plans that they would like to create. An example of options for representation occurs when TCs are required to create a philosophy of teaching and education; the philosophy may be presented in a variety of formats such as written prose, poetry, music, or visual arts. Adjustments such as these support success in the initial teacher education program TRU, but they also serve to model for the soon-to-be-teachers how they can meet the diverse learning needs of the students who they will teach.

Faculty are generally very agreeable to making adjustments to assignments and topics to better meet the interests and learning styles of the TCs, thus easing some of the course burdens for teacher candidates like Janet, Maureen, and Brad. There are some limits to this, however. For example, some courses are intended to be reading and writing intensive (such as the history of education), and there is an expectation that all TCs will demonstrate strong oral and written communication skills, regardless of preferred learning style, disability, or challenging life circumstance. Further, there are some faculty who have more traditional teaching styles (i.e. lecture format), and are somewhat reluctant to make significant changes to their course content or delivery. Even though teacher educators are immersed in current teaching pedagogy, it may be that they are not adequately meeting their students' (teacher candidates') needs. Therefore, there are two issues related to these types of programmatic barriers - one relates to the skills and competencies that are deemed essential for any classroom teacher, and the second is the entrenched teaching style of some teacher educators.

The first of these issues is a larger philosophical question about who is entitled to be a teacher. Some might argue that there are higher societal standards for public school teachers, and that not all individuals may have the necessary skills to achieve these competency levels. Following this line of logic, students such as Maureen, would not qualify to be a teacher because they have a math disability (dyscalculia). These individuals may be stellar in every other curriculum area, and also could contribute in many positive ways to the life of the school, but would not become provincially certified because of their disability. At a time when inclusivity is viewed to be politically and morally "correct", we wonder where the limits to eligibility can be drawn. It is a question that has no easy answers.

The second programmatic issue which can become a barrier to success in a teacher education program relates to teaching style. One way to create a more diversified teaching methodology among faculty is through professional development and the implementation of professional learning communities (PLC). To support change at the programmatic level in this area, a professional learning community amongst faculty could be arranged to share expertise and demonstrate UDL and its effective practices. In professional learning communities, inquiry, and learning are continuous. As Hulley (2004) states, “a process of school improvement cannot be seen as an event. The conditions in and around the school are changing constantly and staff must have a mindset of continuously improving outcomes” (p. 2). In order to model, and live, the edict that all educators should be lifelong learners, continual reflection of our practice and professional development is essential, even among teacher educators.

In the last decade, inspired by the medical-rounds model used by physicians, a new form of professional learning known as instructional rounds networks is in practice (City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel, 2009). Marzano (2011) states that the primary purpose of the concept of instructional rounds “is for observing teachers to compare their own instructional practices with those of the teachers they observe. Through this process, educators develop a shared practice of observing, discussing, and analyzing learning and teaching” (p. 80). This model has become a valuable tool that educators and teacher educators can use to enhance pedagogical skills.

Scheduling limitations. There is little flexibility to re-arrange timetables in the TRU B.Ed. program schedule. Four practica are carefully sequenced throughout the program and require the successful completion of course content before progressing to the next practicum. This is problematic for Janet, Maureen, and Brad who require additional time to complete course work. Second, the cohort model assumes that TCs will bond and work intensively with peers

thus simulating the collegial nature of public education. Often course assignments require group work, which can be quite problematic for TCs such as Maureen and Brad (Maureen because of family commitments immediately after class time, and Brad because he frequently misses classes).

In such cases, teacher candidates typically move to a part-time schedule where their workload is substantially reduced to accommodate their needs. This seems to be a “default” process however, rather than a proactive one, and is somewhat counterproductive for the benefits of a cohort model. Despite this, TCs have expressed that this option is a very positive one for reducing stress; students with disabilities, medical issues, or unique life circumstances, who are carrying a more appropriate workload are better able to perform. TRU has implemented a part-time option for course completion and it was very beneficial for those students who chose this option. It might also be an effective option to permit a part-time schedule for the final extended practicum. One of the current requirements for provincial certification includes teaching 80-100% of a full time teaching workload for six consecutive weeks. This issue will be discussed further in the section on the Teaching Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education.

Institutional Barriers

Admissions. There are a number of institutional barriers to inclusion in the postsecondary context. These barriers exist even before the student arrives at the university. Marketing and promotion materials are biased by their omission of representations of individuals with disabilities or exceptional learning needs. For example, while promotional materials include photographs and images of individuals of Aboriginal ancestry, other visible minority groups are not represented such as those with physical disabilities, perceptually impaired, or individuals with chronic health issues. The implicit assumption is, therefore, that individuals

who apply for admission must be able-bodied and capable of learning in conventional ways. It is understandable why applicants such as Janet and Brad would be reluctant to reveal their learning or mental health needs. In addition, while some university programs, including the B.Ed. program, reserve a certain number of seats for students from minority groups, there is no longer a mechanism within the admission process where a student can claim a minority or special status (with the exception of First Nation status). Therefore, by acknowledging only Aboriginal ancestry as a special minority status that is actively recruited, the university sends a message that other types of diversity are not valued.

A more systemic issue exists across institutions in British Columbia. This issue involves the lack of provincial policy and legislation by the Ministry of Advanced Education supporting inclusive practices in postsecondary programs. Historically, programs that have accepted adults with developmental disabilities have been segregated and limited to vocational or pre-employment training in community colleges. According to self-advocates, “access to university programs has been extremely restricted due to attitudinal, financial and academic barriers. Federal and provincial post-secondary funding has been significantly reduced and therefore post-secondary education is less accessible to students with developmental disabilities” (Inclusion BC 2015, n. p., para. 5). The BC Ministry of Education has developed policy for the inclusion of all school-aged children and youth in K- 12 classrooms and schools. However, the provincial government has not recognized the continuation of learning in postsecondary contexts for adult learners with developmental, learning, or physical disabilities. It is the intent of Inclusion BC to advocate for changes at the provincial and ministerial levels.

Disability services. Other institutional barriers exist once the student has been admitted. Like most universities, there is a disability office at our university which attempts to advocate for

individuals with special learning needs. Some of the key services include counselling, notification to professors regarding a requirement to adapt or modify assignments or course delivery, and referral to community agencies. Unfortunately, this office does not provide assessment or diagnostic services, or professional long-term counselling. This is problematic because if an individual arrives at the university without a formal diagnosis, for example for a specific learning disability (dyslexia), like Janet, she is not entitled to receive any instructional accommodations. Further, if the student did have a diagnosis while in public school, it has to be current (within five years), in order to be acknowledged. Most university students do not have the financial means to access psycho-educational assessment in order to receive a formal diagnosis. In addition, if an individual needs long-term counselling or medical treatment for depression, (like Brad), he must access these services through the community and at his own expense. Not only can this financial burden be impossible to maintain, but students who are from communities outside of our city do not have established contacts for medical services. Lastly, it should be noted that the Students' Union offers dental and medical plans for students. The loophole in this case is that students must be on-campus in order to access these supports. In our teacher education program, however, students are in the field for a considerable amount of time, and therefore off-campus. During these times, they are not covered by the medical and dental plans. While these may seem like minor loopholes in the system, two of the three teacher candidates who we describe require additional support that is simply not available within the university structure.

Articulation between teacher education programs and school districts. Another significant issue in addressing the needs of teacher candidates with disabilities is the number of administrative barriers that exist between the university and partnering school districts who host

teacher candidates in their classrooms. Host schools are not yet familiar with accommodations (with the exception of physical disabilities), especially for adults in professional programs. They may have knowledge of how to adapt teaching and learning for children and youth in their charge, but are less familiar with making adjustments for their staff or teacher candidates. For example, it is less common (or acceptable) to change schedules for individuals with mental illness, like Brad, which typifies the tension between being fully inclusive and maintaining professional integrity. As well, there is no formal mechanism to transfer information regarding accommodations and on-site support from the university setting to the practicum context. The duty to accommodate legislation is focused on employment contexts, and is not as clearly articulated to include post-secondary education or professional training programs; there is work to be done to address this gap.

There is extensive research which confirms the disjuncture between university and field placement practices. For example, both Armstrong (1999) and Slee (2001) found that TCs with disabilities were not well-supported in their school-based practica. Bargerhuff, Cole, and Teeters (2010) reported similar findings, adding that "educators pontificate about inclusion, but typically sustain exclusionary practices through our failure to relinquish our views of disability" (p. 203). There is certainly adequate evidence of the need for more training in working with teacher candidates with disabilities, so that host teachers and schools can better serve those individuals who may require adjustments or supports.

Self-advocacy. During practica, teacher candidates must advocate for themselves, rather than relying solely on the teacher education program to do so for them. Self-advocacy is not always easy, however. In the case of a TC like Brad, who is living with a mental illness, he may not be comfortable disclosing this personal issue, and be worried about the stigma that is

associated with such a disability. A similar situation exists for TCs such as Janet, who have a learning disability. Riddick (2003) cites that “up to 50% of prospective education students with dyslexia were not declaring their disability on applications because of fear of discrimination” (p. 389). Social stigma around learning disabilities and mental illness continues to exist, especially within the teaching profession.

Advocacy (either self- or program-driven) is usually initiated as a result of a failing practicum, and therefore, it is not part of a well-executed pro-active plan. TCs often call on faculty for support when they reach a crisis point, and it is then that the topic of a potential disability, medical issue, or life challenge, is raised. Thus, advocacy by and for TCs is ‘ad hoc, often at a time when it may be too late to remediate. One of the outcomes of not meeting expectations is that the teacher candidate may be withdrawn from the practicum. TCs may also opt for a supplemental practicum a year later, to provide additional time to learn and demonstrate the essential basic competencies. However, this may occur without first obtaining a formal diagnosis or the necessary medical treatment, and consequently the supplemental practicum simulates the first certification practicum attempt, but without any specific additional accommodations or supports in place. Students like Janet would rather just “get through” the practicum without a formal assessment for disability status which would assist them. Sometimes TCs opt for privacy even if it means failing or leaving the teaching profession.

Government Barriers

In addition to program and institutional barriers, there are government systems which hinder the practice of social and educational inclusion in initial teacher education. The chief barrier is the need for a minimum of six consecutive weeks of teaching at 80 - 100 % in order to be eligible for provincial certification. The reason for this requirement is that pre-service

teachers must demonstrate an ability to successfully deal with the intense demands and realities of full-time teaching. This seems to be contrary to the duty to accommodate law, however. If Maureen and Brad were already employed, the school district would be required to make adjustments to their teaching schedules (such as permitting job sharing). Therefore, the application of the duty to accommodate legislation is inconsistent across employment and service provider contexts. For students such as Maureen and Brad, there is a need for an alternate practicum schedule that would still enable teacher certification.

In British Columbia, under the Ministry of Advanced Education, there are no policy statements for inclusion of people with disabilities in postsecondary settings. A few colleges and universities have taken pro-active steps towards inclusion by creating more flexible admission criteria. However, the majority of people with developmental disabilities do not have equitable access to post-secondary education (Inclusion BC, 2015).

At this time, the British Columbia (BC) Teacher Regulation Branch is working with Field Coordinators in teacher education programs on a case-by-case basis to accommodate TCs' special needs in practicum. In some cases, there is a large cost to do so. For example, a TC with a hearing impairment may need a Phonar system installed into the classroom to accommodate her disability. Additionally, some technical software and physical adaptations may be required. This example raises the question about the expense of enacting inclusive educational practices in post-secondary training programs. Should the teacher candidate, university, or school district cover the cost of providing such physical or technical accommodations? Further, what are the limits to these accommodations? As noted by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (2013), sometimes "accommodation is not possible because it would cause an organization undue hardship" (p.1).

Summarizing the Barriers to Social and Educational Inclusion

It is clear that there is still more to be done to achieve social and educational inclusion in initial teacher education. To the credit of the TRU Bachelor of Education program, faculty are generally willing and able to follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning within course content and delivery. This reflects other current findings which note that teacher educators are typically receptive and responsive to the learning needs of their teacher candidates (Baldwin, 2007; Csoli & Gallagher, 2012), and make adjustments to enable multiple means of engagement and representation of knowledge (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Additionally, the implementation of a professional learning community would provide an effective means for more skill development amongst faculty. Instructional round networks enable and support a process where educators develop a shared practice of observing, discussing, and analyzing learning and teaching.

The very design of a semestered, sequential, and cohort model of program delivery does seem to pose challenges for students with exceptional learning needs or challenging life circumstances. A part-time option which still requires completion of prerequisite skills and abilities does seem to be a reasonable option, although sacrificing the benefits of a cohort model.

Institutional and governmental systems do fall short in some cases, based on the principles of social inclusion. For example, it does not appear that TRU, as an institution, seeks to create equitable and accessible learning environments for all individuals, as demonstrated in their admission materials and procedures. Neither is it fully invested in supporting students who have exceptional learning or health needs, once students are admitted into the program. Likewise, the school districts (institutions) which host teacher candidates are not always sensitive and safe inclusive communities which support a diverse teaching staff. If students do

not disclose their learning and/or mental health needs with the university or host schools, it is very difficult to provide appropriate support (Csolli & Gallagher, 2012; Leyser & Greenberger, 2008), and the chances of success are greatly decreased (Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Janiga & Costenbader, 2002).

Governments and certification bodies must maintain the rigors of initial teacher education programs and the teaching profession, which is a concern shared by many in initial teacher education (Baldwin, 2007; Brulle, 2006; Papalia-Berardi, Hughes, & Papalia, 2002; Riddick, 2003). Teaching is a very specialized, demanding, and complex profession. The question remains: How can initial teacher education programs accommodate the needs of teacher candidates with exceptionalities without compromising the rigor of its professional certification standards? One size does not fit all. If the Canadian society values a diverse teaching force, flexibility and accommodation are required.

As we have alluded to, however, these initiatives are not without issue. It is prudent to question what the limits to accommodation might be. Surely, it is not reasonable to believe that anyone who simply desires to become a teacher should qualify. Human rights legislation states that society must accommodate so that individuals can "make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have" (Minister of Justice, 2014, p. 1), and yet, one must question if this is always in the best interests of the wider population, not to mention the children whom we teach. We do not know how these tensions are best resolved, but rather, are choosing to begin the discussion with other Canadian teacher educators. In the meantime, some change is possible and advisable.

A Call for Change

Social and educational inclusion has become a national imperative. Our brief review of one initial teacher education program and university within one province in Canada illustrates that there is still more to be done to realize this goal. At the same time, we acknowledge the tensions that exist between current structures and systems, and actualizing the goal of full educational inclusion. We now outline some specific changes at the program, institutional, and government levels which will support social and educational inclusion in teacher education in Canada.

There are two main ways that the TRU B.Ed. program can better support the needs of teacher candidates with exceptional learning and health needs. The first is to offer, on an ongoing basis, a part-time program option, which could include a part-time practicum. Another change is for all faculty members to more fully embrace the principles of Universal Design for Learning. Whenever possible, TC's should be offered choice in means of engagement, expression, and representation. The program need not compromise its standards or the expectations of the teaching profession. Moving to a more diversified teaching methodology is a programmatic barrier that can be overcome with faculty professional development and supported with the implementation of professional learning communities (PLC) For example, a professional learning community could be arranged to share expertise and demonstrate UDL and its effective practices. In professional learning communities, inquiry, and learning are continuous (Hulley, 2004) with the goal of improving outcomes. Similarly, with the implementation of instructional rounds between teacher educators, as Marzano (2011) notes, “the chief benefit of the approach resides in the discussion that takes place among observing teachers at the end of the observation, as well as in subsequent self-reflection” (p. 80).

Several changes can be made institutionally (university and school district) to support social inclusion. To begin, promotion and marketing materials must include images and text representing students from visible minority groups. For example, photo material could include individuals who are wheelchair-bound or visibly challenged in some way. Further, text materials should make reference to a variety of exceptional circumstances, and on-line material could be presented with an auditory option as well as visually. In this way, the message is that the University acknowledges and welcomes diversity in the student body. Further, application materials should allow for individuals to declare a special status. We realize that some individuals are not comfortable disclosing any unique learning need, medical issue, or life circumstance. However, if TRU becomes known as a diversity-friendly university, applicants may feel safe enough to declare this status. Self-advocacy skills can be supported when there is institutional acknowledgement of the diversity of the student body (Bargerhuff et al., 2012; Papalia-Berardi, et al., 2002).

Other institutional changes can be made for students who have been admitted. The Disability Services office is well-established, but additional resources should be added. Administration of psycho-educational assessments could be added to their service delivery, perhaps at a reduced rate. It may also be helpful to have an expanded medical service on campus for students who do not have their own general practitioner or dentist. Medical coverage that is offered through the Students' Union should be available for students, even when they are not on campus, provided that they have paid student fees. In a broader sense, awareness of disability and mental health issues must be promoted on campus, and on a regular basis.

Not only does the university need to develop policy and practices to better articulate with the partnering schools, students need to feel that they are able to disclose their disability in safe

manner. School district - university partnerships need to develop a collaborative approach to proactively plan for accommodations for students with exceptionalities. Partnerships could include the institution's Disability Services, the field coordinators from the teacher education programs, school district administrators, and any helping professionals who may be involved in the teacher candidate's care.

Change at a provincial government level is now underway. The BC Ministry of Education's Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB) has been working on a new practicum policy where TCs may be placed in practica on a part-time basis. A part-time practicum could resemble a part-time teaching assignment, such as working every other day or working only mornings. The length of the practicum would have to be adjusted to satisfy the requirements for the number of days for certification. In this way, teacher candidates, like practising teachers, are selecting their level of workload in order to accommodate their own special needs.

Conclusions

Provincial and territorial ministries of education are striving to achieve fully inclusive educational settings in public schools. In light of this national goal, we wondered how initial teacher education programs in Canada mirror these initiatives. In this brief review we have identified a number of barriers (program, institutional, government) that could be addressed to respond to the unique health, life, and learning needs of teacher candidates. We also note, however, that there is a distinct tension between the goals of social and educational inclusion and the standards and expectations of the teaching profession. We have not proposed solutions to these disparate perspectives, but have opened the conversation for other teacher educators in Canada. It is not only the law, but also essential that teacher education programs abide by the duty to accommodate policy when TCs are in a training context. We believe that the changes

outlined above will serve to build more inclusive communities within initial teacher education and the wider society.

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What Teachers Believe about Inclusive Assessment in Canada

An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract

The present study examined Canadian teachers' beliefs toward inclusive classroom assessment. The relationship between teachers' assessment beliefs and characteristics were also investigated. Questionnaire responses from a group of Canadian teachers were analyzed based on the Rasch item response model and stepwise regression analyses. Our results show that participating teachers generally strongly endorsed the statements about ACC (accommodations) rather than those of AAL (assessment *as* learning) and AOL (assessment *of* learning). Participating teachers were less likely to agree with the statements about AFL (assessment *for* learning). The findings of this study are also generalizable across various teaching experiences and characteristics. To meet the evolving education needs of students, we suggest that the teacher education programs should provide teachers with opportunities for developing, re-visiting, and redefining their assessment beliefs and practices in inclusive classrooms.

What Teachers Believe about Inclusive Assessment in Canada: An Empirical Investigation

Assessment is a critical indispensable part of teachers' practices across grade level and subject domains. In particular, teachers' beliefs about assessment play an important role in their assessment practices because beliefs are the best indicators of teachers' behaviours and decisions that teachers make (Haney, Czerniak, & Lumpe, 1996; Pajares, 1992). For this reason, it is becoming difficult to ignore the importance of investigating the nature and relationships among teachers' assessment beliefs. To meet the evolving educational needs of students, teacher education programs require preparing teachers to adapt to the rapid changes in the education systems. For example, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.) continues to develop new assessments in collaboration with teachers and PreK-12 education sector to reflect their commitment to achieving targets outlined in the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond* (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.). As a result, it has become more important to examine teachers' assessment beliefs and discuss what needs to change in current teacher education programs.

Although there is a large body of research on classroom assessment (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 1998b; Popham, 2009, 2011) and increasing demands for inclusive education in Canada (e.g., Hutchinson, 2014; Smith et al., 2012), far too little attention has been paid to understanding a teacher's way of thinking about the different purposes of assessment and accommodating students' special needs in inclusive classroom settings. This investigation is imperative as understanding teachers' beliefs would be beneficial for policy making, teacher education and professional development (Brown, 2004). To fill this gap in research, the present study has

examined Canadian teachers' inclusive assessment beliefs. In addition, the relationship between their beliefs and characteristics are also investigated in this study. This paper begins by laying out the theoretical framework of this study and reviewed literature on teachers' beliefs about classroom assessment and accommodations. The relationship between teachers' characteristics and their assessment beliefs are also discussed.

Theoretical Framework of Classroom Assessment

Current literature on classroom assessment incorporates three major principles: assessment for learning (AFL), assessment as learning (AAL), and assessment of learning (AOL). AFL refers to the assessment practices that have been taking place to enhance student learning and improving the quality of teachers' practices as well as helping stakeholders (e.g., students, peers, teachers) to identify the next steps in learning and instruction (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Wiliam, 2011). AAL encourages teachers to develop students' metacognitive skills so as to help students monitor and self-evaluate their own learning throughout the entire learning process (Earl, 2003; Earl & Katz, 2006; Marshall & Drummond, 2006; Sadler, 1989). The practices of AOL are usually conducted to measure students' level of content knowledge or abilities compared to curriculum expectations or standards; it takes place at certain intervals in order to provide "different kinds of information in different forms at different times" to decision makers at all levels (classroom, institutional, and policy level) (Stiggins, 2006, p. 5).

AFL is often equated with formative assessment, whereas AOL is equated with summative assessment. Black and Wiliam popularized these two types of assessments (1998a, 1998b); the authors estimated that the effect sizes of formative assessment were significantly larger than many other educational interventions. However, effect sizes of formative assessments may vary from study to study (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Wiliam, Lee, Harrison, & Black, 2004). It is

believed that these two types of assessments serve distinct functions and purposes for understanding students' learning (Birenbaum et al., 2006; Black et al., 1998a; Harlen & James, 1997). Furthermore, a number of researchers have argued that it is necessary to shift the paradigm from AOL to AFL in order to focus on learning rather than testing (e.g., Birenbaum et al., 2006; Tan, 2011; Teasdale & Leung, 2000).

Teachers' Beliefs about Assessment

The widely cited work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggest that an individual's attitudes, beliefs, intentions and behaviours are inter-correlated. Marshall and Drummond (2006) also indicate that teachers' beliefs about learning affect how they implement AFL in the classroom (e.g., whether or not they promote student autonomy, or learn alongside their students in class). Beliefs can be longstanding and habitual- which may explain why it is so difficult to change teaching practices. With this in mind, it is important to measure teachers' beliefs about assessment to provide a starting point for enhancing assessment practices, teacher education and in-service professional development. Because assessment is a very complex issue (Brown, 2004; Resemal, 2011), previous studies on teachers' beliefs about assessment have yielded mixed results which are discussed in the following paragraph.

In an earlier study, Delandshere and Jones (1999) interviewed three elementary school mathematics teachers involved in curriculum reform in the United States. They reported that all these teachers perceived assessment as a summative tool to measure students' achievements, rather than a tool to investigate how students learn and inform their teaching practices. Similarly, Volante and Fazio (2007) also found that a majority of teacher candidates in a Canadian teacher education program considered the purpose of assessment mainly from the perspective of AOL or summative view (e.g., testing, reporting, grading students). However, in a recent study, DeLuca,

Chavez, and Cao (2013) observed that teacher candidates' conceptions of assessment shifted from perceiving assessment as testing to seeing more interaction between the way students learned and the way they taught by the end of a semester-long measurement course. Moreover, Brown (2004) and Brown, Lake, and Maters (2009) indicated that New Zealand teachers' conceptions of assessment (primary and/or secondary schools) derived from four major beliefs: (1) the quality information that assessment provides improves teaching and learning, (2) assessment serves the purpose of making students accountable for their learning through accreditation or certification of students' achievement, (3) assessment makes teachers and schools accountable, and (4) assessment is irrelevant to students' lives or teachers' work. In a recent study, Segers et al. (2011) partially confirm Brown's model as four conceptions of the purposes of assessment were identified in their study: (a) assessment informs learning and students' achievements, (b) assessment is driven by school accountability purpose, (c) good quality of assessment which leads to teaching adaptations and measuring higher order thinking skills, and (d) bad quality of assessment because of unreliable and inaccurate test results. However, another study based on a similar model (Remesal, 2011) concluded that fifty elementary and secondary teachers in Spain have different and contrasting conceptions of the purpose of assessment in teaching and learning- these may be due to the demands of external assessment policies and the tension between educational and societal functions of assessment in school. It is clear that there has been an increasing amount of literature on this issue; however, the inconclusive findings drawn from previous research highlight the need for conducting the present study.

Teachers' Characteristics

The effect of teachers' characteristics on teacher's beliefs or conceptions of assessment had been investigated in several studies. Brown (2004) examined whether there were significant differences in teachers' conceptions of assessment among teachers with varied characteristics: gender, years of experience, years of teacher training, and the role of participants (teachers or school leaders). None of these factors were found to be significantly associated with teachers' conceptions of assessment in this study. With regards to grade level difference, Scott, Webber, Aitken, and Lupart (2011) found that significant differences existed in Alberta teachers' assessment beliefs and practices within the contexts of elementary and high schools. Elementary and middle school teachers tended to use more formative assessments than senior high school teachers. Scott et al. further stated that, "[a] key factor was the subject specialization and the examination orientation in the senior high school and how those influenced secondary teachers' PD needs and perceptions of assessment" (p. 105). Brown et al. (2009) indicated that secondary school teachers in Queensland were more likely to agree with the use of a teacher-centred transmission of knowledge method than student-centred teaching compared with primary school teachers. The authors explained these differences resulted from the external demands of preparing older students for high-stakes assessments. In addition, some studies examined subject teachers' conceptions of assessment. For example, Greek and Cypriot primary mathematics teachers agreed that assessment plays an important role in diagnosing student learning and determining teaching effectiveness although these teachers were not necessarily prepared to change their classroom instruction accordingly (Philippou & Christou, 1997). Wang, Kao, and Lin (2010) found that a group of science teacher candidates in Taiwan tended to express their beliefs by assessing students' factual knowledge of science rather than their higher-order

thinking skills. The authors suggest that these students' beliefs about assessment in science were mainly based on three domains: content knowledge, process of inquiry, and attitudes. Based on these studies, the current study examined whether or not teacher characteristics (gender, years of teaching experience, grade level, subject domains) had a significant influence on teachers' beliefs about assessment. This investigation is important as the findings associated with these characteristics would help ensure that the results are generalizable across teachers with varied characteristics and knowledge backgrounds.

Accommodations

A number of previous studies on teachers' assessment beliefs regarding AFL, AAL and AOL rarely discussed accommodations (ACC) within the context of inclusive education; thus, ACC becomes a missing piece in our current assessment model. Inclusive education has been widely accepted and implemented in Canadian education systems; that is, students with and without special needs and/or diverse needs (e.g., English language learners/ELLs) receive differentiated instruction in general classrooms when appropriate and applicable. The use of accommodations is known to be of importance for assessing students with special needs and ELL students placed in inclusive classrooms. Such accommodations could help students bypass their learning difficulties to demonstrate their actual knowledge and skills throughout the assessment process (e.g., American Educational Research Association et al., 1999; National Research Council, 2004; *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada*, 1993). In addition, test validity, fairness, and educational equity can be maintained as accommodations should not compromise assessment validity, ensuring that the scores students receive can be validly interpreted in terms of their actual knowledge and skills (*Principles for Fair Students Assessment Practices for Education in Canada*, 1993). Therefore, ACC should not

be separate from those three elements of assessment in any given inclusive classroom. To better understand the missing piece of the assessment puzzle, the present study further investigated teachers' beliefs regarding ACC, AFL, AAL and AOL. In particular, this study examined the extent to which teachers' beliefs aligned with these four assessment principles. The findings of this study can help explain why these principles are difficult to enact in inclusive classrooms.

Teachers' Judgments about Accommodations

There is a consensus among special education researchers that providing teacher training and professional development on accommodations for instruction and assessment is much in need of attention (e.g., Destephano, Shriner, & Lloyd, 2001; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; Hodgson, Lazarus, & Thurlow, 2011; Schulte, Elliott, & Kratochwill, 2001). In a major study, Fuchs et al. (2000a) found that teachers were over-accommodating students with learning disabilities for a reading comprehension test. Providing unnecessary accommodations may jeopardize student achievement because these accommodations may actually confuse or distract the students (Helwig & Tindal, 2003; Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, & Tindal, 2007). More importantly, teachers had difficulty in accurately predicting whether or not students would benefit from the accommodations. Teachers recommended accommodations to students who actually did not benefit from them. It was even more problematic when students without recommended accommodations had better outcomes than those with accommodations recommended by teachers. Similar findings were also found in mathematics (Fuchs, Fuchs, Eaton, Hamlett, and Karns, 2000b). These researchers recommended that teachers should use data-based measurements to make valid decisions on accommodations rather than solely rely on their subjective judgments. Tindal, Lee, and Ketterlin-Geller (2008) also reported that teachers' judgments about potential benefits of varied accommodations were consistent approximately

50% of the time. That is, teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of accommodations were unreliable. Their findings echo the work conducted by Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan and Tindal (2007). The authors also found a weak correspondence between the accommodations documented in students' individual education programs (IEP) and teacher accommodations.

In addition to studies on accommodations for students with special needs, a growing body of literature has investigated the effectiveness of varied accommodations for ELL students (e.g., Abedi, Lord, Hofstetter, & Baker, 2000; Abedi, Hofstetter, & Lord, 2004; Sato, Rabinowitz, Gallagher, & Huang, 2010). However, studies on teachers' beliefs about accommodations for ELLs are still limited. Siegel (2013) suggests that teacher candidates should equip themselves with knowledge of how to use equitable assessment to support learners from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds in inclusive science classrooms.

Collectively, teachers are expected to have ample knowledge of four major concepts: AFL, AAL, AOL, and ACC. However, many studies on accommodations focused on large-scale or standardized assessments that are more closely linked to AOL rather than AFL or AAL. Empirical studies on assessment literacy also rarely discuss the use of accommodations for students with special needs and ELLs. The present study aims to fill these gaps in current assessment research. More specifically, this study examined: (a) teachers' beliefs about four major assessment concepts, and (b) the role played by a teacher's characteristics in a teacher's way of thinking about inclusive classroom assessment.

Method

Participants

The sample in this study consists of 76 elementary and secondary school teachers in Ontario (80.3% female, 19.7% male). Approximately one-third of these teachers have taught at elementary (35.5%), secondary levels (28.9%) or both (35.5%). Of these teachers, they often teach multiple subjects such as math and science and half of them were special education teachers (51.3%). About 70% of these teachers have taught at least five years and 17.1% of them have taught more than 21 years. A majority of these teachers have worked with students with special needs (94.7%) and ELL students (88.2%) throughout their teaching careers (Table 1).

Measures

The present study developed an *Inclusive Classroom Assessment Survey* (ICAS) designed to investigate teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to the purposes of classroom assessments. The questionnaire consists of 20 items reflecting four constructs (AFL, AAL, AOF, and accommodations). In this study, the construct of AFL was used to measure teachers' beliefs about using formative assessments to understand students' learning progress in relation to the curriculum expectations and standards (4 items); AAL was defined by teachers' beliefs about instructing students to monitor, assess, and adjust their own learning progress as well as make decisions about their learning (4 items); AOL measured teachers' beliefs about summarizing students' current level of learning compared with their peers, curriculum expectations and standards in order to determine the next step in students' learning (4 items); and the construct of accommodations (ACC) was used to investigate teachers' beliefs about using accommodations to support students with disabilities and/or ELL students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills as well as to inform teachers' teaching practices (8 items). Moreover, this questionnaire used a 5-

point Likert scale of response options, providing five response categories (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not sure, Agree, Strongly agree). Seven reverse items were recoded before data analyses. Teachers' background information was also collected through this questionnaire, including sex, subjects and grade levels taught in school, and any experience working with students with special needs and ELLs.

Several methods were employed to evaluate each item and psychometric properties of the survey instrument:

(1) Content Validity: Survey items were reviewed by three professionals specialized in assessment and measurement, including a professor and two doctoral candidates. The items were further revised based on their feedback.

(2) Psychometric evaluation and item calibration:

The Rasch item response model (IRT), known as a 1-parameter logistic function (1-PL), was applied to evaluate the psychometric properties of each item and the survey instrument. The fit indices, weighted mean square fit or infit mean square statistics, were calibrated to ensure there is a good fit between the item parameters being obtained and the Rasch model (Table 2). In other words, each item was examined to ensure its contribution to the underlying construct of the survey. The fit indices estimated by the IRT are analogous to an index of item discrimination such as point-biserial correlation and factor analysis in the classical test theory (CTT). If the infit mean square of an item is greater than the value of 1.33 or less than 0.75, it indicates that the item fits to the model poorly (Wilson, 2005). Thus, Table 2 and Figure 1 show that all items in the survey are overall fitting the model well, especially for items 1, 2, and 17 (infit mean square =1.00) indicating a perfect fit between the item and the model. Note that almost all participating teachers endorsed one of the items measuring ACC ($n = 74$) except for two teachers who were

not sure about the statement (item 13); consequently, the model did not converge when this item was included in the model. To allow the model to converge, this item was excluded in the Rasch model; however, it was kept in the survey as it is significantly correlated with the entire survey ($r = .396, p < .001$).

The item and test “information” is a critical indicator of reliability and precision of estimation as it is the reciprocal of the square of the standard error of measurement (SEM). The magnitude of information function determines the degree of reliability: High information indicates that the instrument is reliable and vice versa. The item information function of the ICAS ranges from 5.15 to 5.73, and test information is 5.40 resulting in Reliability $r = 0.81$. This result suggests that this survey is reliable for measuring teachers’ assessment beliefs across all items (Reeve & Fayers, 2005).

Data Analysis

This study conducted analyses based on the Rasch IRT model, which can calibrate item difficulty (b or β) and person’s ability, θ , simultaneously. There are many advantages of IRT over classical test theory. For example, the item parameters can be calibrated more precisely and will be less confounded with the characteristics of samples than in classical measurement theory (Camilli & Shepard, 1994). In addition, the latent ability estimate, θ , is measured on a continuous scale ranging from $-\infty$ to $+\infty$ (Hambleton & Jones, 1993); hence, the ceiling effect derived from the total scores can be handled in an IRT framework.

Participants’ responses were analyzed by the Rasch model to calibrate item difficulty and the person’s ability or latent trait (assessment beliefs, θ). The person’s ability estimates of each construct were then treated as dependent variables for backward stepwise regressions, instead of the raw scores of the survey. Teachers’ characteristics were assessed in these regression models,

including sex (female, male), years teaching school (less than 2 years, 2-4 years, 5-10 years, 11-20 years, more than 21 years), grade level taught (elementary, secondary, or both), subjects or program (English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, special education and others), whether or not respondents had worked with students with special needs, and English language learners (yes, no). The data analyses conducted in this study were performed by the Construct Map 4.4 (Kennedy, Wilson, Draney, Tutunciyan, & Vorp, 2008) and SPSS 21 (IBM Corp., 2013).

As in previous studies such as Finch and Bronk (2011), this study converted the 5-point Likert scale into a binary scale (0 = do not agree, 1 = agree) and responses “not sure” were treated as missing data. This method was adopted as the data shows that respondents generally either endorse or do not endorse a particular item, and thus, it is appropriate to collapse five response categories into two categories. In addition, this process was undertaken to ensure that the statistical power was not substantially reduced (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Results

Rasch Analyses

In Rasch models, item difficulty and a person’s ability are conventionally measured in log-odd units (logits) which represent the logarithm of the probability of a score (0 or 1). In the present study, the estimated latent trait or person’s ability of participating teachers, θ , ranges from .85 to 2.48 logits, averaging 1.87 logits. The results suggest that participating teachers, on average, have positive beliefs about inclusive assessments as they have at least a 50% probability of endorsing many items (Table 2 and Figure 2). One of the advantages of item response modeling is that item difficulty can be compared in relation to a person’s ability by using a visual

representation of a diagram- wright map (Figure 2). The wright map indicates that participating teachers were very unlikely to disagree with three reverse items: item 1 = 2.59 logits; item 5 = 1.80 logits; item 20 = 3.281 logits. The descriptive statistics of these items are shown in Table 3.

Regarding the comparisons of four constructs, average item difficulty of each construct was compared and ordered from the most difficult to the easiest: AFL (.84), AOL (.35), AAL (.18), and ACC (-.79). A teacher with stronger beliefs (person ability estimates, θ) would have a 50% probability of endorsing an item with greater item difficulty. Therefore, these results show that participating teachers generally strongly endorsed the statements about ACC rather than those of AAL and AOL. Moreover, participating teachers were less likely to agree with the statements about AFL.

Regression Models

To further investigate the factors that influence participating teachers' assessment beliefs, stepwise regression models were built to identify the predictor that significantly predicts the level of teachers' assessment beliefs of AFL, AAL, AOL, and ACC. Four sets of stepwise regression analyses were conducted. In the set of four regression analyses, each analysis included all the predictors that can describe teachers' experience and backgrounds, including sex and teaching experience: number of years teaching experience, grade level taught, subjects or program taught in school (English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, special education and others), whether or not the teacher had worked with students with special needs, and English language learners in class. Only the predictors that can reliably predict respondents' levels of beliefs remained in the final models.

The results of ANOVAs suggest that few predictors in the four models can predict teachers' beliefs about AFL: (1) grade level taught, whether or not respondents have been special

education or math teachers and worked with ELL students ($F_{4, 71} = 2.71, p < .05$), (2) whether or not respondents worked with ELLs or have been special education or math teachers ($F_{3, 72} = 3.28, p < .05$), (3) whether or not respondents have been special education or math teachers ($F_{2, 73} = 3.77, p < .05$), and (4) whether respondents have been special education teachers ($F_{1, 74} = 4.90, p < .05$). However, it is important to note that coefficients of the regression models indicate that only one variable- special education teachers- contributed significantly to the explanation of level of beliefs about AFL ($\beta = .24, p < .05$). Thus, these results suggest that special education teachers have stronger beliefs in AFL than other subject teachers. Findings also showed that neither years of teaching or sex significantly predicted teachers' assessment beliefs about AFL. In addition, none of the predictors contributed to the variances in teachers' assessment beliefs about AAL, AOL, and ACC.

Discussion

Findings of the present study generally revealed that participating teachers have strong assessment beliefs as they were likely to agree with the statements describing the concepts and principles of classroom assessment in inclusive classroom settings. More specifically, these teachers were most likely to endorse those ACC items than AAL, AOL, or AFL items. This finding suggests that most participating teachers perceived accommodations as fair and beneficial for students with special needs and ELL students. This result accorded with the study of Tindal et al. (2008), which showed that special education and general education teachers in elementary and middle schools in the United States rated highly or very highly the potential benefits of accommodations for mathematics. This finding of the current study is also consistent with Brown (2007) who also reported that approximately half of special education and general

education teachers in Virginia agreed or strongly agreed that providing accommodations to students with disabilities and ELL students is fair when they took the state-wide assessments.

This study produced results that echo the findings of a great number of the previous studies on AOL (summative) and AFL (formative) assessments (e.g., Birenbaum et al., 2006; Black et al., 1998a; Delandshere et al., 1999; Harlen et al., 1997; Volante and Fazio, 2007; Volante, 2010). The order of average item difficulty for each construct is listed by difficulty from hardest to easiest: AFL, AOL, AAL, and ACC. The results suggest that participating teachers' assessment beliefs varied in degree. In particular, these teachers held more positive beliefs about AOL than AFL. In other words, teachers more likely viewed classroom assessment as a tool to measure and report students' performances than an investigative tool for enhancing student learning and teaching. It is also worth noticing that these teachers favored AFL the least among four major concepts of assessment. As a large body of research suggests that teachers' assessment practices are substantially influenced by their own beliefs about teaching and student learning (e.g., Fishbein et al., 1975; Haney et al., 1996; Marshall et al., 2006; Pajares, 1992), the results of the present study may in part explain why AFL is difficult to enact in classrooms.

Interestingly, although AAL was derived from AFL, the participating teachers' beliefs about AAL were more positive than AFL. This finding suggests that these teachers appeared to value the active role that students play in their own learning process (e.g., self-monitoring, self-evaluating) given that these teachers were not necessarily agreeing with AFL. This result is in contrast to earlier findings in previous studies. Marshall et al. (2006) observed that most teachers' classes adhered to the procedures or "letter" of AFL rather than promoting learners—the "spirit" of AFL. Black, McCormick, James, and Pedder (2006) also suggest that the implementation of AFL does not always lead to learning autonomy. Torrance (2007) concluded

that teacher candidates' practices had shifted from AOL, through AFL, to AAL, although the development of student autonomy was still weakly promoted in this study. However, the results of the present study imply that these teachers were in favor of the "spirit" of AFL rather than following the procedures of AFL (e.g., using explicit learning objectives, providing descriptive feedback, multiple assessment strategies). Moreover, it shows that the development of assessment beliefs may not be necessarily a progression from AOL through AFL to AAL as indicated in previous research.

It is somewhat surprising that many participating teachers strongly agreed or agreed, that "teachers' teaching experience informs teaching practices more than assessments" (item 1) ($n = 46, 60.5\%$). Some teachers disagreed with this statement ($n = 24, 31.6\%$) and a small number of teachers were not sure about this statement ($n = 6, 7.9\%$). Findings also showed that teachers with varied teaching experiences held similar beliefs toward assessment. In other words, regardless of their years of teaching and the subject areas worked in school, participating teachers were more likely to rely on their teaching experience than the use of assessment given that their overall assessment beliefs were quite positive. The present finding seems to be consistent with previous research which found teachers may hold different or even contrasting beliefs with regards to the role of assessment in learning and teaching (Resemal, 2011). Although Griffiths, Gore, and Ladwig (2006) suggest that teachers' beliefs play a more significant role in teaching practices than teaching experience, the results of the present study indicate that many teachers believed their teaching experience guided their classroom practices. One possible explanation of this observed phenomenon is that "teachers' knowledge of students based on long relationship and their understanding of curriculum and pedagogy preclude the need to carry out any kind of assessment beyond the intuitive in-the-head process that occurs automatically as

teachers interact with students” (Brown, 2004, p. 305). However, other empirical studies have strongly argued that the consistency and accuracy of teacher judgments on accommodations were questionable (Fuchs et al., 2000a, 2000b; Ketterlin-Geller et al., 2007; Tindal et al., 2008). Importantly, Fuchs et al. (2000a, 2000b) recommend that data-based assessment should be used to enhance teachers’ judgments.

Almost half of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed, that “it is very difficult for students to actively monitor and adjust their own learning progress” (item 5). This result accords with earlier observations from Volante (2010), which showed that many teachers and administrators were not familiar with AAL and did not implement it consistently in school. Remesal (2011) stated that “attempts to change teacher assessment practices towards assessment for learning will be unproductive, as long as we ignore the teachers’ particular beliefs telling them that young learners are not capable of assuming an active role in their learning process” (p. 480). The participating teachers’ responses collected for this study hold important implications for professional development on learner autonomy and AAL. The results suggest that teachers may need additional assistance in understanding what student autonomy is and how to implement it in class. Marshall et al. (2006) and Black et al. (2006) recommend that teachers promote learner autonomy throughout students’ learning process by developing students’ meta-cognitive, reasoning, social and collaborative skills- professional development programs should transfer such knowledge and skills from the learning theories about learning how to learn to teachers.

A number of teachers strongly agreed or agreed with an ACC item stating that “... classroom assessment accommodations can be very different from assessment accommodations provided for students taking provincial assessments” (item 20)($n = 48, 63.2\%$). However, a relatively small number of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this

statement ($n = 13$, 17.1%); 19.7% ($n = 15$) of respondents were not sure about this statement. A strong body of evidence suggesting that accommodation used during instruction should also be used for classroom and large-scale assessments (e.g., Bolt & Thurlow, 2004; Ketterlin-Geller et al., 2007; National Research Council, 2004; Thurlow, Christensen, & Lail, 2008). This is to ensure that students are familiar with using the accommodations during instruction and benefit from using them. In particular, Helwig and Tindal (2003) indicate that a mismatch between instructional and large-scale assessments may interfere with students' assessment performance and that their success on assessments may be compromised. In the present study, responses from a majority of teachers did not follow this guideline recommended by previous research. Thus, this guideline and its applications should be further clarified in detail.

Overall, teachers' characteristics (sex, years of teaching experience, grade level taught in school, subject areas, whether or not they worked with students with special needs and/or ELLs) were not significantly associated with their beliefs about inclusive assessment. That only one of four subscales (AFL) was significantly predicted by a factor (special education teachers) suggested that differences in teachers' backgrounds are not powerful in shaping teachers' assessment beliefs. Most importantly, the results suggest that findings of this study are generalizable across various teacher characteristics and teaching experience.

Conclusion

In this investigation, the aim was to assess teachers' beliefs about four concepts of inclusive assessment (AFL, AAL, AOL, and ACC). The following summaries can be drawn from the present study. First, participating teachers held relatively positive beliefs about accommodations compared to the other three concepts of classroom assessment. Second, these

teachers had more positive beliefs toward AOL than AFL, a finding consistent with previous studies. Third, these teachers held stronger beliefs about AAL than AFL. Fourth, this study has also discussed some specific beliefs of teachers in detail. Teachers believed that teaching experience informs their teaching practices more than assessments. Teachers also believed that it is very difficult for students to take an active role in their own learning process. Moreover, teachers believed that accommodations used during instruction do not need to align with those for large-scale assessments. Finally, the findings of this study are generalizable across various teaching experiences and characteristics such as sex, years of teaching, subject areas, and grade level taught in school.

The empirical findings in this study provide a better understanding of teachers' beliefs about inclusive assessment. Enhancing our understanding of teachers' beliefs toward inclusive assessment contributes to the development of teacher education programs. The evidence from this study suggests that teacher development for inclusive assessment is critical for teachers because it helps them to further understand and enact effective assessment practices in inclusive educational settings, especially those teachers who may possess relatively negative beliefs toward inclusive assessment. To prepare teachers to respond to rapid changes in education, teacher education and professional development programs should provide teachers with opportunities for re-visiting and redefining their assessment beliefs and teaching practices in inclusive classrooms.

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Table 1
Participating Teachers' Backgrounds and Experience

Characteristics		<i>n</i>	%
Sex	Female	61	80.3
	Male	15	19.7
Grade level taught	Elementary	27	35.5
	Secondary	22	28.9
	Elementary and Secondary	27	35.5
Teaching experience with	Students with special needs	72	94.7
	ELL students	67	88.2
Years of teaching	less than 2 years	5	6.6
	2-4 years	18	23.7
	5-10 years	20	26.3
	11-20 years	20	26.3
	more than 21 years	13	17.1
Subject areas	English language arts	58	76.3
	Math	53	69.7
	Social studies	48	63.2
	Science	52	68.4
	Special education	39	51.3
	Other	30	39.5

Table 2
Item Parameter Estimates and Fit Indices

item	Estimate	Error	Outfit		Infit		Raw/Max
			-Unwghted- MnSq	<i>t</i>	-Weighted- MnSq	<i>t</i>	
-							
i1	2.59	0.18	1.05	0.30	1.00	0.10	24/70
i2	-0.06	0.21	1.21	1.10	1.00	0.10	62/72
i3	0.15	0.20	0.91	-0.50	0.92	-0.40	61/73
i4	0.69	0.19	0.82	-1.00	0.81	-1.20	54/72
i5	1.80	0.18	0.94	-0.30	0.91	-0.60	37/71
i6	-1.07	0.23	1.17	0.90	1.11	0.60	67/71
i7	-0.68	0.23	1.36	1.80	1.19	1.00	66/72
i8	0.66	0.19	1.09	0.50	1.08	0.50	53/70
i9	-0.89	0.23	0.90	-0.50	1.04	0.30	69/74
i10	0.48	0.20	0.81	-1.00	0.85	-0.90	52/66
i11	1.32	0.18	1.00	0.00	1.06	0.40	44/70
i12	0.52	0.20	1.15	0.80	0.91	-0.50	54/69
i14	-2.57	0.26	1.17	0.90	1.22	1.00	70/71
i15	-1.83	0.25	1.18	1.00	1.17	0.90	67/69
i16	-2.59	0.26	1.14	0.80	1.20	1.00	71/72
i17	-1.39	0.25	1.07	0.40	0.99	0.00	68/71
i18	1.44	0.18	1.03	0.20	1.05	0.40	40/67
i19	-1.84	0.25	1.05	0.40	1.02	0.20	70/72
i20	3.28						
FOR	0.84	0.20	1.00	-0.03	0.93	-0.35	
AS	0.18	0.21	1.14	0.73	1.07	0.38	
OF	0.35	0.20	0.97	-0.18	0.97	-0.18	
ACC	-0.79	0.24	1.11	0.62	1.11	0.58	
Average	-0.17	0.22	1.06	0.30	1.03	0.20	

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Three Selected Items

Item	Agree/ Strongly Agree		Disagree/Strongly Disagree		Not Sure	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1. Teachers' teaching experience informs teaching practices more than assessments.	46	60.5	24	31.6	6	7.9
5. It is very difficult for students to actively monitor and adjust their own learning progress.	34	44.7	37	48.7	5	6.6
20. Classroom assessment accommodations can be very different from assessment accommodations provided for students taking provincial assessments.	48	63.2	13	17.1	15	19.7

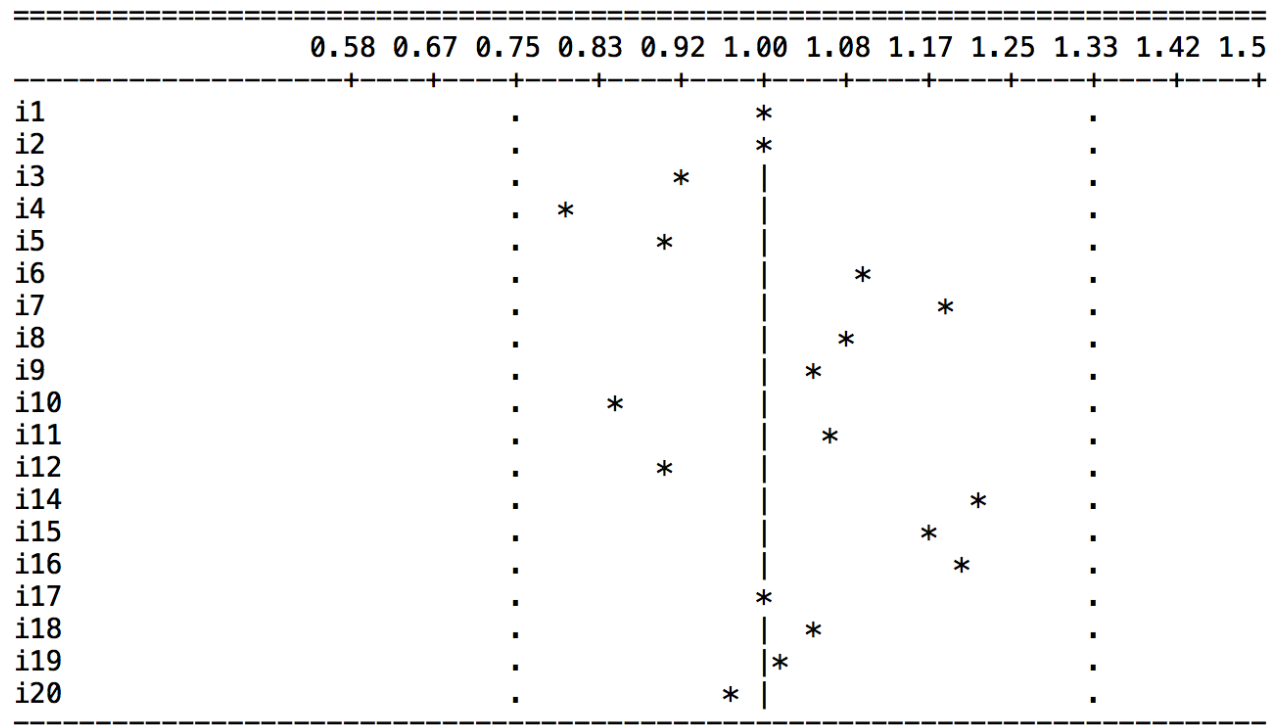
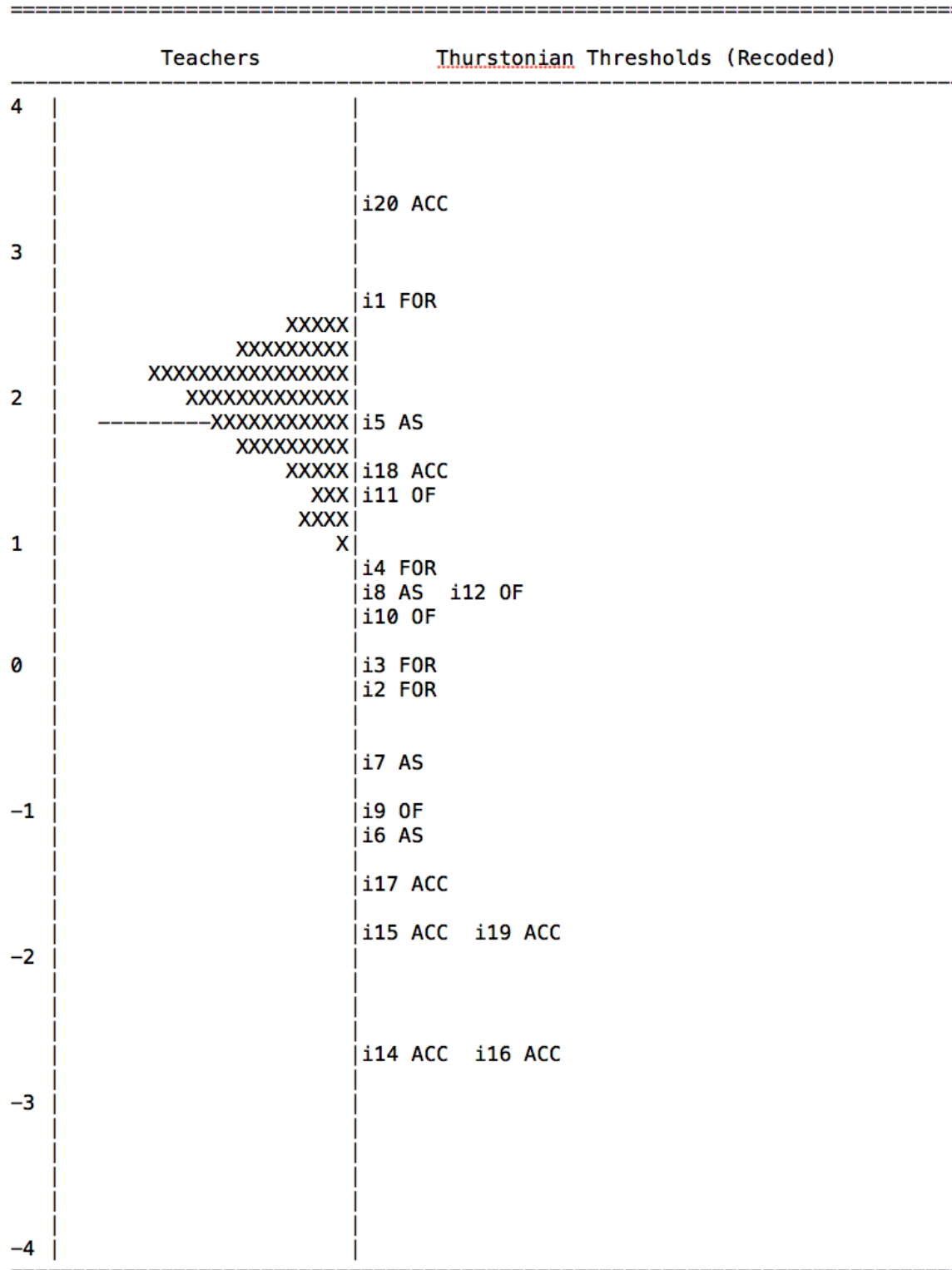


Figure 1. Infit Mean Squares



Each X represents 1 student, each row is 0.170 logits

Figure 2. Map of Person Estimates and Response Model Parameter Estimates (Wright Map)

Teaching for Change & Diversity
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Abstract

Processes of globalization, high influxes of immigration and mobility and the increase in rapid technological advancement have brought about shifts in Canada within the past 30 years (e.g. see Byrd Clark, 2009, 2010, 2012; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) in terms of language, culture, and identity. One of the biggest educational challenges, aside from misunderstandings and simplistic, homogeneous conceptions of diversity, is that not all teacher education programs in Canada require B.Ed. students to take a course on how to support, work with or include diversity within their pedagogical practice(s). There is a critical need to prepare future teachers on how to teach about diversity and incorporate alternative ways of teaching through multiliteracies in the form of digital pedagogies. With expanding definitions of literacy, combined with an increasing population that encompasses a myriad of languages, social backgrounds, and cultures, digital technologies have the potential to create a better intercultural understanding as well as opportunities to create more inclusive classrooms. This chapter will discuss the critical need for a reconceptualization of teacher education programs to include multicultural education in relation to diverse, multilingual students and the impact that progressive, sustainable practices (e.g. digital pedagogies) have on meeting the needs of Canadian students.

Teaching for Change & Diversity

Canada has always been a country of immigration. However, with the increased rise of globalization, changing fluxes of immigration, the urbanization of the population, (including First Nations), and the rapidity of technological advancement and mobility, one can see that Canada's cultural and linguistic landscape has changed. These changes are contributing to transforming the ways in which language, identity, community, and culture are experienced in Canada today. As Byrd Clark (2012), argues, this heterogeneity (complexity within diversity) "challenges political legislative solutions adopted from the 1970s in Canada", and at the same time, compels us to rethink how we move into the future. This is particularly relevant when we look at the increase of youth in Canada for whom English or French is not their first or home language, and the critical need of not only preparing future teachers on how to teach about diversity but also to incorporate alternative ways of learning and teaching (e.g. multiliteracies). The purpose of this paper is: (1) To take into account such shifts and growing complexity by looking at teacher preparedness in relation to the increase of multilingual, diverse students and the integration of new technologies, and (2) to argue for the need to reconceptualize teacher education programs that require diversity education and the incorporation of digital technologies through multiliteracies pedagogies. Multiliteracies pedagogies refer to teaching strategies or methodologies for the increased intercultural communication (multiculturalism and multilingualism) in the 21st century and how new technologies (continue to) change the way people communicate (The New London Group, 1996). Thus, our argument to reconceptualize teacher education programs for future teachers in a globalized world that are inclusive and offer diversity and multicultural education in relation to contemporary pedagogies (e.g. the impact of

digital and information technologies) is equally intended to represent a sustainable practice for Canada's increased mobilization.

In regards to teacher preparedness and transformative learning, we have initially found that it is difficult to provide prescriptive propositions in how to prepare teachers for the future as well as the present due to the changing nature of Canada's classrooms. Canada has been recognized and represented as an officially bilingual and multicultural country for over forty years yet studies continue to show that capitalizing on student diversity are areas in which both novice and experienced teachers require more support (Cummins, 2000, 2006; Duff, 2007; Salvatori, 2009). In addition, despite the increased access to technology in schools and the investment of equipment, only a small amount is used regularly (Cogan, 2007; Dawes, 2001; Inoue & Bell, 2006; Wang, 2005; Byrd Clark, 2012). Based on prior research studies (Anderson, Groulx, & Maninger, 2011; Byrd Clark, 2012; Cummins, 1981, 2006; Duff, 2007; Egbo, 2009; Geer & Sweeney, 2012; Schecter, & Cummins, 2003), we do have some important suggestions to recommend for teacher education programs, particularly for the social realities of today's youth in Canada (and elsewhere). As a result, teacher education programs require change to teach for student cultural and linguistic diversity through the inclusion of strategies that teach for variety of linguistic and cultural groups that exist in Canadian schools.

Two main overlapping issues are critical for reshaping practice-based teacher education programs: The inclusion and requirement of courses on linguistic and cultural diversity as well as the incorporation of digital and information technologies. Teacher education programs across Canada have the potential to address the increasingly complex linguistic repertoires of youth with multiple identities (e.g see Byrd Clark, 2012; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009). How can

faculties of education respond by creating teacher education programs that provide sustainable pedagogies for a technology-rich, and linguistically and culturally diverse student body?

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

Multicultural education has been a growing phenomenon as Canada's cultural and linguistic landscape continues to evolve with increasing mobility (e.g. immigration). In 2010, 85% of Canada's new permanent residents spoke either English or French as a first language (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2012). Such diversity reflected in the linguistic repertoires of younger Canadians, particularly in larger urban cities (e.g. Toronto and Vancouver) requires rethinking the ways in which educators adapt to accommodate the diversity of learners (and their families) within our educational system. Over the past 30 years, studies have expressed concern over the state of multicultural education in Canada in order to prepare teachers to be able to engage with the continuously changing diverse society (Cummins, 1981, 2006; Duff, 2007; Egbo, 2009; Schechter, & Cummins, 2003). Many of these same studies also show English language learners (ELLs) have the ability to surpass their English-speaking counterparts when it comes to scholastic achievement in French as a Second Language (see Mady & Turnbull, 2010). At the same time, several studies have shown that many teachers and student teachers have expressed feeling unprepared to teach in a diverse classroom, and have indicated that further research is required to support teachers in meeting the needs of children who speak neither French or English as a first language (L1) (Cummins, 2000, 2006; Duff, 2007; Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006; Lapkin, Mady & Arnott, 2009; Salvatori, 2009). According to the Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (2012) in investigating the current situation for student teacher education in relation to diversity and inclusion, their

principal concern is the cultural, racial, and linguistic divide between teachers and students. In addition, Ryan, Pollack & Antonelli (2009) found in recent years that the gaps between educators and administrators in Ontario and the students they teach are highly under-representative.

One of the biggest challenges, aside from misunderstandings and simplistic, homogeneous conceptions of diversity, is that not all teacher education programs in Canada require B.Ed. students to take a course on how to support, work with or include diversity (in all its forms) within their pedagogical practice(s). According to Gagné, Schmidt, and Gambhir (2005), all student teachers need to have at least one required course, which introduces them to critical thinking and pedagogy in relation to diversity. While we promote having at least one required course for B.Ed. students to take, we also feel that working with linguistically and socially diverse learners should be weaved throughout entire teacher education curriculum programs, and not exclusively in the form of one required course.

The second challenge entails different understandings of the notions of diversity and multiculturalism. There are many adjectives being used in today's globalized world to talk about diversity as relates to research and education: multicultural and intercultural, cross-cultural, meta-cultural, polycultural— but also global and international (Dervin, Gajardo & Lavanchy, 2011). These “labels” can appear interchangeably – without always being defined—or be distinguished. For us, diversity encompasses not only linguistic variation, but is also very much tied to the construction of social difference, which takes into account the concepts of language, culture, and identity, but at the same time, critically questions the uses of power and social justice (that is in terms of self-other relations; how people position or categorize themselves in relation to one another as well as how people become categorized and positioned by others in

different contexts—particularly school contexts). Generally speaking, multicultural education in Canada, historically, for example, celebrates only cultural differences and tends to ignore similarities, individuality, and the importance of power relations, context, and interaction.

It is important to signify that Canada has been recognized and represented as an officially bilingual and multicultural country for over forty years and is renowned for its federal policies, the Official Languages Act (1968, 1988) and Canadian Multicultural Act (1971, 1985). In response to the political as well as economic tensions resulting from the Quiet Revolution in Québec and at the same time, to ensure that Canada would be viewed as everyone's country, a pluralistic country (according to Heller, 2007), the Multicultural Act was established (Herriman & Burnaby 1996) and quickly extended to include indigenous and immigrant groups.

“It is this perpetual image of a federally supported official bilingual French/English multicultural Canada that is represented to the outside world; nevertheless, in reality things are much more complex, unequal, and contradictory. By implementing these policies, the Canadian government is trying to balance how to maintain individual rights (universalistic), and at the same time setting up a pluralist framework to give recognition to both multicultural groups and English and French minority communities (particularistic), thus recognizing the specificity of the cultural and linguistic community to which individuals belong. However, the notion of community is becoming blurred. Recognizing difference can become problematic because an individual may belong to several cultural and linguistic communities (Quell, 2000) and more importantly, not all groups (or languages for that matter) are perfectly homogeneous (Marcellesi, 1979; Rampton, 2005). That said, many individuals find

themselves in a perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others' attempts to position them differently" (Byrd Clark, 2012, p. 145).

Thus, our understanding of diversity in this paper takes on what Dervin & Keihäs (2013) refer to as "diverse diversities" which focus on multiple, complex social identities, and not just some 'façade diversity' through e.g. a unique language or cultural identity. As such, we reject the use of a static understanding of the concept of linguistic and cultural diversity, which overlooks contextualized and intersubjective interaction between complex persons and leads to what Sen (2006) has described as a "plural monoculturalism" rather than dialogue. This complex, yet interdisciplinary understanding of diversity also comprises and necessitates a reflexive component or reflexivity (Byrd Clark, 2012; Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014) whereby student teachers (and researchers) need to develop a heightened awareness insofar as they can take responsibility for their actions, and question and criticize systematically what they say and do. In other words, they need to become critically aware of how they invest in the use of certain categories (labels) or processes of 'othering' (through their encounters with linguistic and social heterogeneity in their teacher education classrooms, practicum experiences, and future classrooms). For Byrd Clark (2012), "Perpetuating the use of monolithic categorizations (e.g. L1, L2, ESL, FSL) does not appear to take into account any type of reflexivity on the hierarchical and problematic nature of the imposition of social categories or the recognition of transnational, diverse, plural identities. In other words, it does not reflect the researcher's awareness of his/her own investments in the employment of such categories" (p. 149). This notion of labeling and social categorizing is extremely important when talking about diversity education, as it is only through becoming aware of how we (as individuals) use categories and labels (in this case, having to do with language) that we can understand how we "do" or contribute to *othering*. In

applied linguistics, cognitive psycholinguistic approaches to *Second* language acquisition (and culture) have dominated the field (e.g. Chomsky, 1965; Krashen, 1976; Hatch, 1978; Lightbown, 1985; Pica, 1997; Spada, 2006). Such approaches continue to reproduce models of seeing language learners as “essentialized interlocutors with essentialized identities, who speak essentialized language” (Block, 2003:4). Essentializing in this case means looking at learners through traditional approaches or perspectives (e.g. relying only on national or ethnic cultures to explain what people do and think). Thus, we support Dervin (2013) in his conceptualization of multicultural education, as he states: “Intercultural education consists in giving the power to become aware of, recognize, push through and present/defend one’s diverse diversities, and those of our interlocutor”. Teacher education programs then need not only to offer a mandatory required course on how to include, support and work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners, but also as mentioned above, weave interdisciplinary, reflexive approaches throughout the curriculum and programs that promote critical and reflexive engagement with historical and social relationships of power and authority. This is extremely important when attempting to understand one’s own as well as one’s students’ different life trajectories, experiences and chances. This is also significant to teachers and students, especially when teachers often called upon to teach and use a standardized *one size fits all* curriculum, a curriculum that neither reflects nor embraces students’ or teachers’ multiple identities or complex social realities. Without any critical awareness development and/or diversity training, teachers and students will most likely continue to reproduce dominant, traditional ways of thinking without even realizing how these contribute to social exclusionary processes or the impact such ways of thinking have on their future students.

This does not mean that B.Ed. students do not need an understanding of the historical, political, and philosophical approaches (and yes, cognitive psycholinguistic approaches!) of second language acquisition. On the contrary, in order for students to have a deeper engagement and appreciation of diversity and diverse life/educational experiences, student teachers need to be familiar with and have a fundamental understanding of how and why certain ways of thinking about language, culture, identity and education have evolved and developed in the field as they have. More importantly, they need to understand the impact of such approaches, particularly as regards practice (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Leung, Little, & Van Avermaet, 2014).

If B.Ed. students are not offered this critical, reflexive component through a mandatory course combined with an interdisciplinary teacher education program, then there is a greater risk that we, as Canadians will continue to unconsciously reproduce unidimensional, blind objective “common sense” euro-centric middle class biased approaches that “deal with” or “cope with” a separate, diverse “Other”—continuing to see diversities as a “problem” that need to be managed or dealt with through quick-fix solutions, rather than valuable resources that open possibilities for a deeper engagement on the part of the teacher and learners (Byrd Clark, personal communication).

Finally, incorporating these two main proposed points articulated in this paper do not come without challenges. First and foremost, these challenges have challenges of and within themselves. Arguing and struggling to get administration in faculties of education as well as ministry officials to recognize the importance of having a required course on linguistic and cultural diversity for all B.Ed. students has proven very difficult (please consult the London and Middlesex Immigration Partnership at <http://olip-plio.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Case-for->

[Equity-Inclusion-and-Diversity-Training.pdf](#)). Also the time constraints of having to work through varied programming (one year vs. two year B.Ed. programs) have presented challenges as regards curricular planning and programming. Second, in regard to incorporating interdisciplinary and reflexive approaches to diversity, Hanauer (2013) has found that the development of learners' self-reflexivity has been hailed as a way of validating language learners' experience, giving them pride and enhancing their self-esteem through narratives of the self. Reflexivity, in the classroom, according to Kramsch (2014), "requires a heightened awareness of how facts, people and events are represented in various modalities in the media and in everyday life" (p. 204). In this sense, reflexivity in pedagogical ways, can present challenges. Narratives of self (particularly in the confessional mode) can easily become self-indulgent narcissism or dialogue with the self. "The teacher can easily be cast in the role of confidant, discourse analyst, or creative writing expert, for which he/she has no training" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 204). Reflexivity, in this vein, is ultimately a valuable practice, but one for which teacher trainers themselves have to be trained, or else in the case of linguistic variation, they might, for example, use narratives of the self only to practice grammar and vocabulary.

In light of reconceptualizing teacher education programs that comprise a mandatory diversity training course as well as a reflexive component in relation to broadening understanding and engagement as concerns diversity and multicultural education, we cannot help but consider the impact of digital and information technologies for future teachers in today's globalized world. When we think about reshaping pedagogies that represent diverse social experiences, linguistic heterogeneity, and the ways in which difference gets constructed, we cannot help but question what role and potential digital and information technologies may serve in such a reconceptualization. Perhaps digital and information technologies could be used in

ways to narrow the gap and offer insights on how we can make teaching and learning more accessible and meaningful as well as shed light on how we might reconfigure traditional meanings of multicultural education and diversity. Can technology integration make a difference; could the use of technologies cut across boundaries and boundary making? And how does this relate to the inclusion of social and linguistic heterogeneity and developing reflexivity? In other words, why might we need to know about and incorporate digital and information technologies? In the next section of our paper, we attempt to address some of these questions by considering the importance of digital technologies in preparing teachers particularly as regards new ways of learning for their future learners, and engaging with diversity and multilingualism.

Digital and Information Technologies

Rapid migration, mobility and computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the world are having an impact on the educational needs and identities of students (and teachers). In a world where language is being both globalized and globalizing, and internationalization remains a priority in the global workforce; the need for professional language educators continues to be in demand. According to Thomas, Peterson and Warshauer (2013), today's educators need support to understand how their learners are changing and the ways technology can be used to aid their teaching and learning strategies. Despite this increased mobility, and technological advancement, many teacher education programs across Canada have not expanded to include societal multilingualism in classrooms, nor the use of digital technologies. This is significant when one considers that almost 90% speak a language other than French or English (Statistics Canada, 2012). The incorporation of digital technologies and multilingual practices in teacher education classrooms has the potential to transform traditional ways of thinking about languages,

cultures, identities and education, particularly with respect to the explicit development of multilingual repertoires demanded by globalization (Byrd Clark, 2012). New and growing technologies in education are a powerful tool to engage students with literacy, promoting overall academic development (Cummins, 2006). However, despite the increased access to technology in schools and the investment of equipment, only a small amount is used regularly (Cogan, 2007; Dawes, 2001; Inoue & Bell, 2006; Wang, 2005; Vanthuyne, 2010).

In addition to the cultural and linguistic diversity among our student body, we must also consider a new generation of students in a sense of the way they learn. A shift from a traditional approach to teaching and learning to a pedagogy that provides sustainability for teaching and learning, includes teachers who are capable of teaching ‘new aged learners’ or ‘Generation P’ (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Generation P refers to ‘participatory’ learners:

...who have different kinds of sensibilities from the students of our past. They have at hand ubiquitous smart devices, connected to the new social media and allowing them to communicate with people at a distance from them at any time of the day and anywhere (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012, p.9).

As a result, Kalantzis and Cope (2012) assert that Generation P learns better in informal settings and from a variety of sources- in the self-directed electronic devices and software applications, and in social media interactions, such as online gaming and interest communities on the web. Students continue learning outside the classroom through social media in a variety of contexts throughout the day. Examples of the kinds of work students do are: researching information using multiple sources and reporting upon their findings in an extended web project report; tackling real-world problems, which they have to try to solve; documenting hypotheses;

reporting on results; analyzing issues from different perspectives; working in groups to create a collaborative knowledge output; and working in Internet and other multimodal new media space that bring together writing, image, sound and video (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Preparing teacher candidates for the technology-rich, 21st century students demands a deeper understanding of the multimodalities required to teach and learn in a rapidly changing digital classroom. “Teacher preparation programs need to create intentional learning environments, where pre-service teachers can explore issues that are relevant and develop pedagogies that are effective for a knowledge era” (Clifford, Friesen, & Lock, 2004, p. 19).

Not only is it imperative for teacher candidates to learn with and about various digital and information technologies to eventually compete within the job market, but they also have expectations of using technology to support and engage in their learning. From the explanation of Generation P given above, the students that the teacher candidates will likely have in their future classrooms will be accustomed to having access to copious amounts of information literally at their finger tips and expect to learn in an environment that capitalizes on their multi-tasking, inquisitive nature. In studies that have investigated students’ behaviors and perspectives of learning with and about technology (Davies et al., 2008; Robertson et al., 2004; Geer & Sweeney, 2012), several conclusions were drawn in that integrating technology can affect student performance. Many students showed increased engagement, motivation, and better on-task behavior. In general, it helps to clarify new concepts learned and provides practical modes of situated learning. In addition, 60% of teachers reported that it better supports learners’ diverse needs as it can offer multiple ways for students to acquire new information through multimodalities (text, visuals, audio) (Geer & Sweeney, 2012).

The reality of including the pedagogical and technological knowledge and skills to effectively integrate digital and information technologies in teacher education programs is a process that would be best integrated on an individual basis. A one-sized fits all approach in teacher education programs will likely not be the easiest way to expose and/or prepare student teachers for the underused technology they are likely to find in some schools. Technological knowledge, which is the knowledge of various types of digital and information technologies and technological pedagogical knowledge is knowing how to effectively integrate technology, student assessment, all based on contextual circumstances (Kohler & Mishra, 2009). Not only do teacher education programs require student teachers to take a risk including new technologies and pedagogies as they learn to teach, they also require teacher educators support for instructional practices in this area. In this regard, there is a disconnect between what is taught in teacher education programs and what is actually going on in schools. Are teacher educators providing mentorship for various pedagogies used to incorporate digital technologies?

There are few studies (e.g. Ertmer et al., 2012; Ottenbreity-Leftwich et al., 2013) that have investigated the ways in which teacher education programs have integrated technologies that are being used in many schools. In a 2012 mixed methods study, (Ottenbreity-Leftwich et al., 2013) involved both student teachers in teacher education programs and teachers already with the field. A comparative analysis was done on a questionnaire distributed to both samples. The results of this questionnaire revealed several inconsistencies in what student teachers were being taught about technology integration for teaching and learning with a student centered approach and the technologies that teachers were actually using in the field. This disconnect is yet another reason why it is imperative to ascertain which types of technologies faculty and student teachers are using within their programs and why they are using them. This study

concluded that future research should examine sustainable partnerships that facilitate discussion of technologies to be implemented into teacher education programs and in-service teacher professional development (Ottenbreity-Leftwich et al, 2013).

There are also studies that have investigated the impact of teachers' attitudes towards the integration of technology (Cogan, 2007; Dawes, 2001; Anderson, Groulx & Maninger, 2011). Teachers' perceptions towards the use of and strategies for technology integration effect the amount of technology used, the ways in which it is used and the reasons for its use. Teachers are more likely to integrate technology at a higher level (which involves more higher-order and critical thinking tasks) to support student learning if they are comfortable (have a high self-efficacy) and are familiar with the uses of technology for teaching and learning. Therefore, investigating how student teachers in teacher education programs are educated in the use of technology for teaching and learning is an excellent opportunity to expose future teachers to both the benefits and challenges of integrating technology in their classrooms.

Teacher education programs have the capacity to shape the way their future teachers think about technology in making the transition from teacher to facilitator. It is likely that entering into today's classrooms that there will be students who will know more about different types of technology than the teacher. We therefore need to show our student teachers how to capitalize on this, use this as a resource and have our students teach us about the technologies that work best for them. Providing student teachers within teacher education programs the knowledge and skills to adapt to their future students could result in a more positive attitude towards the integration of technology and the risk taking needed to let go of the notion as teacher expert on technology. In the end, it is the students who know best how they learn and teachers

should be facilitating and providing students with the resources they need to capitalize on this.

“Tomorrow’s teachers need to be comfortable with Internet learning design and delivery platforms- learning spaces that are not just lesson plans, nor textbooks, or student workbooks but are all these things, with a look and feel more like social networking to blogging sites” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012, p.11).

Integrating digital and communication technologies in teacher education programs can be a lengthy and complicated process. This can include the experience, perspectives, or willingness of faculty/teacher educators to teach their students about various technologies and how to use them, or educational policies that follow specific course requirements for degree programs. There may be resistance to incorporating technologies or discussions about which technologies are the best, the most useful, or the most used in schools. The reality of coming up with a one size fits all solution to accommodate all faculties of education is not only complicated it is unrealistic due to the changing nature of technology itself but also the contexts. Different types of technologies may be more relevant dependent upon geography, socio-economics, or population. We therefore propose that each teacher education program work together as a faculty and for administration to think carefully about what types of learners are in their community. Aside from scheduling conflicts, the inclusion of relevant and interesting ways of incorporating technology does not need to be complicated, time-consuming or require extensive planning. We do not suggest a required technology specific course as there are other more specific issues in education such as linguistic and cultural diversity that would be more beneficially taught in the form of a structured course.

Many universities with faculties of education have educational eLearning consultants

(either within the faculty or through a learning or teaching support centre) whose job it is to assist faculty members with integrating digital or information technologies into their courses (irrespective of content). Taking an existing course outline and working with an eLearning consultant could assist teacher educators in adding technologies for teaching and learning to their classes to a level at which they are comfortable. This can have several advantages in that the technologies can both be beneficial to the faculty members by expanding their knowledge base, engaging their student teachers, and being a positive role model in modifying their pedagogies to support student diversity. This may also increase their student engagement and increase marketable skills in greater demand in the teaching job market. As contexts of faculties of education differ and not all will have access to the same types of digital and communication technologies or the resource of an educational consultant, there are numerous online educational communities that discuss ways in which technologies can be used in teacher education programs. We suggest if this is the case, start small, with a goal of choosing one type of technology and include it in your syllabus. Remember you do not have to be the experts; you have your students for that. Starting with giving students a choice in the way they want to represent their work for assessments or in class discussions is a great way for you to learn what your students are capable of- let them teach you (and others) about new software applications or the interactive whiteboard activities that they already know how to do and are currently using outside the classroom.

Preparing teachers for the future, as well as the present, given the changing nature of Canada's classrooms poses challenges such as teaching with increased linguistic and cultural diversity and using technology in a variety of ways to meet the present and future needs of Canadian students. Research over the last 30 years indicates that many student teachers are still unprepared for a technology-rich, multicultural classroom (Cummins, 2000, 2006; Duff, 2007;

Salvatori, 2009). Therefore, reconsidering the structure of teacher education programs is vital to ensure our future teachers are equipped with sustainable practices, which includes the ability to utilize or incorporate various pedagogies for a variety of learners. The two main overlapping issues inclusive of a multiliteracy approach involve the requirement of courses on linguistic and cultural diversity as well as the incorporation of digital and information technologies in teacher education programs. With expanding definitions of literacy, combined with an increasing population that encompasses a myriad of languages, dialects and cultures, digital pedagogies have the potential to create a better intercultural understanding as well as opportunities to create a more inclusive classroom. Examples include using communication technologies (e.g. video clips, live conferencing) to expose learners to different ways in which students across the country live and learn. This has the potential to broaden the ideologies of students to see beyond their own environment (classrooms, homes, and cities). Faculties of education have the potential to provide student teachers with a sustainable program that includes the infusion of technology-rich activities and assessments that can be later employed within their own classrooms as well as a mandatory course in teaching for student diversity. Studies involving ways in which student teachers learn within teacher education programs to integrate technology (Graham, Borup, & Smith, 2012) include showing teacher candidates content-specific technology integration examples through practice and teacher educators' instructional uses. The inclusion of digital technologies in learning programmes offer great opportunities for supporting the development of multilingual repertoires for student teachers in the process of becoming future teachers in Canada. This could also foster a deeper engagement with the learning and teaching of languages, identities, and cultures in our globalized world and digital age.

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Responsive Pedagogies: Envisioning Possibilities

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Abstract

Schools are communities of diversity as they welcome students from many cultures; some Indigenous and others are immigrants with many cultural and linguistic difference. Teachers grapple with how and what to teach students who are often marginal due to the value placed on those differences by the mainstream society. Responsive teaching is inquiry by using and adding to the cultural experiences, and perspectives of diverse students as conduits for teaching. By appending responsive pedagogy to the educational curriculum, it will enable teacher candidates to build bridges of meaning between existing social and school experiences as well as between academic concepts and lived socio-cultural realities for students of diversity so all will have a fair chance to succeed.

Responsive Pedagogies: Envisioning Possibilities

Teacher education programs are in flux as they strive to address the rapid demographic changes that affect school culture and curriculum. Increasingly, the growing numbers of children entering Canadian classrooms who are racially, culturally, or linguistically different present a challenge to teacher educators as faculties struggle to graduate well-prepared teachers candidates who are both critically conscious and subscribe to social justice, meaning that every student has fair access to an education. The varied cultural, ethnic, and educational backgrounds of students affect each one in different ways. Factors such as race, parental education, socioeconomic status and interactions with other minority groups shape their experience in schools. As schools welcome a diverse cohort of non-mainstreamed students from a variety of cultures and postal codes, the majority of teacher candidates are mainly white, privileged in the dominant culture. They may not have first-hand knowledge of the hidden injuries of race and social class as education for the working class has been about failure without fluid transitions of mobility (Reay, 2006; Sennett & Cobb, 1972). This may compromise how diverse cultural and linguistic issues are addressed in colleges of education especially with regard to the issue of teaching pedagogies as “classrooms of difference” are now the prevailing norm.

Difference is the essence of humanity, therein; the fundamental tenets of working in schools must be acknowledgement and respect for diversity. Despite the growing complexity of linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity in the school classrooms, teacher education programs continue to utilize the traditional pedagogy of past decades, the professorial lectures and readings followed with a school practicum (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Most prospective teachers believe that through instruction in lesson planning and assessment, the universal

tradition in teacher education, they are “good to go.” According to Cochran-Smith (1995), we have typically initiated teacher candidates into the “discourses and practices of teaching--- especially through widespread versions of the ‘lesson plan’ based on the linear analysis of objectives, teaching methods, and management” (p. 494). Lesson planning or behaviour management may not lead to an advocacy stance on teaching, press for social change, or meet the needs of an increasing diverse population of schoolchildren. Education faculties need to prepare teacher candidates who know who they are teaching, what to teach, and pedagogies to teach that foster inclusivity. A teacher’s knowledge of a student’s culture and language must go to a deeper level of understanding and critical consciousness; teacher practice must journey beyond the awareness and respect level to competence in helping every student to have access to achievement, while maintaining the traditions and in many cases the language of home. In this way, teachers may see their role as “adding to rather than replacing what students bring to the learning” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 23).

Children of Difference

Schools are often uncertain of how to address both pedagogy and assess the achievement levels of children from different cultures. Some schools do little, following a “sink-or-swim” philosophy. Unfortunately, with this approach too many children “sink” into counterproductive alternatives to academic success. Other schools presume deficits in the children, their families, or their cultural-linguistic backgrounds. This belief is unjust as it puts the culturally different child at a disadvantage and over time it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Gay, 2002). Neither viewpoint offers a respectful or equitable approach to providing the best education possible for all children. Some schools recognize and acknowledge cultural diversity as positive and strive to

validate and celebrate it. Frequently, these efforts focus on the superficial, external traits of a culture such as its food, dress, music, or holidays, while ignoring the socioeconomic, historical, cultural or racial discords. Whereas other schools recognize that language and culture are important components in the learning process and attempt to make accommodations to linguistic and cultural differences or what Ladson-Billings (1995) describes as culturally relevant teaching in action (p. 162). Nieto (2000) asserts that society advocates for equal and high-quality education for all, but in reality these goals are not achieved. Cultural and linguistic differences need to be at the core of learning and teaching strategies. Racism and inequality must be the confronted in school programs (p. 344-345). Although recent strides have been made in “indigenizing” educational systems, schools are still primarily using a Eurocentric curriculum. However, most schools do not reflect the beliefs, attitudes and values of the Indigenous population. Eurocentric curriculums “continue to impede Indigenous students’ chances of educational success” (Anderson, 2011, p. 94). Gay (2002) asserts that culturally responsive teaching is using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching. The question of difference has become a challenge that educators need to acknowledge (Nieto, 2000; Strong-Wilson, 2007). Although numerous theories and practices have been suggested, there is uncertainty about generating a single solution. What is appropriate for Indigenous and immigrant children who do not speak either official Canadian languages, speakers of non-standard dialects who code switch school language with home language, or for refugees who are too traumatized to participate or speak? Unfortunately, there are no universal strategies for teaching all children who are culturally or linguistically different from their teachers or classmates. There is a need for faculty and teacher candidates to consider their assumptions, understand the values and practices of diverse children and cultures different

from their own, and generate flexible and responsive pedagogy that makes issues of diversity an explicit part of the pre-service curriculum for teacher candidates. Diversity is a resource not a problem.

Multiple Pedagogies

Change is necessary so that educators can select and incorporate responsive pedagogies that include strategies, resources and philosophies in their classroom that honor home and community. Evans (2006) explains, the more a teacher knows about their student's culture, the more they can explain their engagement in the classroom and integrates classroom practices that form bridges with language and literate behaviours. Gay (2002) states that teachers need to know which ethnic groups embrace cooperative problem solving, how different groups interact with adults, how learning is viewed, and how gender plays a role in the socialization and academic life of children. Whereas Pewewardy (2002, 1993), a Native educator, asserts that one of the reasons Indigenous children experience difficulty in school is that schools traditionally have attempted to insert culture into the education, instead of inserting education into the culture. Monroe, Borden, Orr, and Meader (2013) suggest that as Indigenous student populations rise throughout Canada, decolonizing strategies are called to interrupt the long histories of exclusion and discrimination. The goal of Indigenizing education is about re-centering and privileging Indigenous ways and modes of learning. Ladson-Billings (1995) advocates for culturally relevant pedagogy that facilitates academic success for students, maintains cultural competence, and promotes a critical consciousness through which they learn to challenge the present social order. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) endorse bi-lingual pedagogies and remind us that "socioeconomic status plays an undeniable role; pre-existing inequalities tend to intensify

subsequent inequalities” (p. 122). What troubles these researchers is that school remains an alien place for many children of diversity and schools and faculties of education need to focus on solutions. While families with more cultural capital, (education and resources) and social capital (networks and connections) possess a better advantage in helping their children (Bourdieu, 1977), immigrant and refugee groups have a strong presence throughout the social history of Canada. Persistent poverty and inequitable distribution of wealth worldwide continues to push individuals out of their own countries in search of better economic conditions and job opportunities in Canada. Although immigration segues to a better life, it often dislocates children and undermines their “map of experience” as they build on their cognitive skills, learn English as an additional language (or French as an additional language in Quebec) while constructing a new school identity (Cummins, 2001). Teachers are charged with the job to introduce, critique, and interpret knowledge deemed important for a society’s members to know. In this respect, a teacher can be seen as an “intellectual” or cultural broker for those who come from diverse backgrounds. If teacher education programs are at present the keys to helping cultivate a societal culture of inclusiveness in which diversity in race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and culture receives the attention it now warrants, then how do we proceed? Nieto (2000) believes that in spite of their usefulness, culture-specific accommodations are limited as we tend to essentialize about students rather than view them as individuals (p.151-152). Darling-Hammond (1997) takes a more inclusive approach, proposing that teacher education should focus on knowledge of subject matter as the most promising way to generate powerful teaching and pedagogy for classrooms in the new century. As educators we want to attain the best pedagogies, a blend of academic and cultural, that will enable teacher candidates to become agents of change and strive for learners of diversity to achieve at the same rate as their

mainstream classmates. It isn't more practice teaching that is needed. Instead, it is more embedded and critical reading of the world, self-study, inquiry, and discussion about teaching practice.

Alternative Solutions

Darling-Hammond (2000) proposes an alternative by suggesting that new programs can engage teacher candidates in studying research and conducting their own inquiries through case studies, action research, and the development of structured portfolios, which can challenge their own student teaching practice. She envisions the professional teacher

as one who learns from teaching rather than one who has finished learning how to teach.

The task of teacher education is to develop a capacity to inquire sensitively and systematically into the nature of learning and the effects of teaching. (p. 170)

Through the process of inquiry, individuals construct much of their understanding of the natural and human-designed worlds. Inquiry implies a “need or want to know” premise. Inquiry is not so much seeking the right answer – because often there is none – but rather seeking appropriate resolutions to pressing questions and issues. For educators, inquiry implies emphasis on the nurturing of inquiring attitudes or habits of mind that will enable individuals to continue the quest for knowledge throughout their teaching practice. Conversely, for the most part there is a disconnection (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Zeichner, 2010) between the education faculty and the schools as teacher candidates need to examine teaching practices on the cultural located basis of ideology, values and power.

Content of disciplines is very important, but as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. The knowledge base for disciplines is constantly expanding and changing. No one can ever learn everything, but everyone can better develop their skills and nurture the inquiring attitudes necessary to continue the generation and examination of knowledge throughout their lives. For transformative education, the skills and the ability to continue learning should be the most important outcomes. Over several decades teaching in our faculty of education, there has been various attempts to increase the teacher candidate time in the school by adding student teaching practice (1 day per week, year 1) with a partnership school and an extended three month capstone internship (12 weeks, year 2) combined with a mandated professional growth portfolio completed with pre-scripted goals and predictable comments. Prospective teachers return from the practicum in their last semester of classes with a kaleidoscope of impressions and checklists but little is critically articulated. Familiar comments such as “*My co-operating teacher was great*” do not capture the learning processes observed. For the most part the way teacher candidates discuss students is usually by grade level label or zone (red zone means failure), with little knowledge about how the child processes learning. In a follow-up post-practicum seminar, one teacher candidate responded that in her grade five class she worked with a boy from the Philippines, who had trouble reading and scored at the grade two level, which was in the red zone because he did not want to read. If asked to describe the child, often the response would be by race or ethnicity and test score, but never by difficulty or process as in relating that the student does not self-monitor while reading or sounds out each word phonetically rather than apply metacognitive strategies. Teaching is complex, as it requires the ability to create engaging tasks and solve learning problems for a range of students who learn differently. The teacher candidate had some ideas about teaching but they were tacit and unexamined. The pathway to the

B.Ed. degree is when faculties prescribed the outcomes and schools remain “practice fields,” a place where teacher candidates try out lessons and record results in their professional growth plan, a hegemonic construction and dissemination of knowledge that does not require mention of their critical thinking about process or action plans for change.

While questioning and searching for answers are extremely important parts of inquiry, effectively generating knowledge from this questioning and searching is greatly aided by a conceptual context for learning. Just as teacher candidates should not be focused only on content as the ultimate outcome of learning, neither should they be asking questions nor searching for answers about minutiae. “*In the grade one, the students did animated phonics and it was cute to see them do the routines,*” reported another student returning from the internship. Instead of scripted programs, well-designed inquiry-learning activities and engaged interactions (Cambourne, 1995) should be set in a conceptual context so as to help prospective teachers accumulate professional and practical knowledge as they progress through the program. Inquiry in education should be about a greater understanding of the world in which they live, learn, communicate, and work.

Hanging Out in School

As an ethnographer, I previously spent several year-long sabbaticals, seated alongside young readers of diversity while observing in classrooms in Finland, England, Northern Ireland, and on isolated Canadian reserve schools. Functioning as a teacher-helper or an extra-hand for a child of diversity I helped to generate solutions for writing tricky spellings or guessing non-phonetic words in texts. In these multiethnic and cross-cultural classrooms, I became more critically conscious of how the schools adapt and blend academic and cultural pedagogies that

focus on literacy learning. I had ethical permission to collect copies of class sets of writing, individual children's detailed literacy portfolios, and some of the assessments all of which I converted into a multitude of case studies in my professorial practice. To overcome the disconnection between university preparation and school experiences in our two year teacher education program, I began to involve prospective teachers in inquiry learning as social constructivist pedagogy. Inquiry is a process of learning that encourages students to ask questions, to work together to solve problems, to discover knowledge, and to construct their own meaning, with guidance, rather than lecture only format from faculty (Harvey & Daniels, p. 56). Training in inquiry helps teacher candidates learn how to view a panorama of the teaching and assessment practices from multiple perspectives, including those children in the classroom who have experiences that do not match their own. In working with teacher candidates in a number of reading and literacy courses, I use inquiry circles to dialogue in small groups about case studies, classroom-based research articles, cross-cultural literature for children and student generated field portfolios reflective of their guided teaching and work with individual learners in classroom settings during student teaching (first year) or internship (second year). The intent is to empower teacher candidates with greater understanding and problematizing complex situations or learning processes rather than to control them with scripted formulas, predictable routines or packaged programs (Meyer, 2002).

Teaching Cases

Teaching cases are constructed to foster a lively, academically charged discussion in the post-internship classes. The discussion that follows the presentation of the case allows the teacher candidates to deconstruct the multiple layers and perspectives that the case encompasses,

as well as construct new meanings from the case. Gunn (2010) instructs with teaching cases, as they do not present an overarching general situation. They are very specific scenarios: “This specificity makes them an excellent tool for preparing teachers for the cultural diversity in the classroom” (p. 56). In working with teacher candidates, I show slides of anonymous children’s triumphs, approximations, and first attempts which are insights into the multiple processes of learning as children are trying to make meaning as readers and writers. In turn, case studies are distributed within the class and lead to meaningful small self-study circles as teacher candidates begin to analyze and reflect upon children’s progression over time. Case-based instruction is a motivational tool for engaging teacher candidates into critical inquiry, where they were able to explore, analyze, and examine the reality that shapes not only their lives, but also the lives of the learners in the teaching cases. They soon realize the inaccuracies of standardized assessments, which fail to capture the richness of a child’s daily work. Test scores give grade levels or percentiles rather than pinpoint processes or approximations. As teacher candidates began to question, study and analyze details of children’s puzzlements, they stimulate an atmosphere of inquiry, which can be contagious. Using what they have learned about social constructivism, they called upon the theories of Vygotsky (1978), and Lave and Wenger (1991) and their articles on praxis, to comment on process and learning in the making. They tap a host of assigned articles on different literacy topics, which help to reference their insights and observations as theory and pedagogy need to be reflexive, rather remaining abstract. The social interaction is a critical component of situated learning – learners become involved in a “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998), which embodies certain beliefs and behaviors to be acquired as in Ahmed’s case study.

Teaching Case: Ahmed

Ahmed is a seven-year old boy and an Urdu speaker who is learning English as an additional language and on the cusp of learning to be an independent reader and writer. As a frequent storyteller he explained the highlights of the class Halloween party as he told the following story about “Guessing the number of seeds in a Pumpkin”:

Did you know we had a Halloween party and everybody at my table in my class carved small pumpkins and made them into Jack-O-Lanterns? Before we carved the faces, my teacher made some good games. I like playing the games. We had to feel the pumpkin and tell the teacher what it was like. She wrote the words on the board. She said to me, *‘Ahmed, what does your pumpkin feel like?’* So I put my hand on the pumpkin and I told her, *‘It feels round.’* My teacher said, *‘That is a good word, Ahmed’* and she wrote my word on the board.

Then we played another game. We had to think in our head and write on our papers how many seeds in the pumpkin. I guessed 17 seeds and I wrote that number on my paper. The teacher cut the pumpkin and then we count all the seeds in the pumpkin. The pumpkin had 47 seeds. I raised my hand and told my teacher, *‘I am almost right. I am really close. Cause the right number, 47, has two numbers together and I guess, 17. It has two numbers together too.’* I was almost right. My teacher smiled ‘cause she thinks I am smart. I told my Dad this. My Dad said, *‘He is proud of my good work.’* (audio-transcribed)

What is important about Ahmed’s story is what it reveals about its author. Bruner (1986) sees learning as a dynamic process where learners construct or build knowledge, based on their existing knowledge. This is an active process of construction

and decision-making that builds on existing mental models. It brings meaning to the new knowledge allowing the learner to move beyond their existing structures. Ahmed's story genre, constructed dialogue, belongs to a particular mode of discourse, which is a way of thinking about what he knows. Not only did Ahmed reveal, through his constructed dialogue, how he follows the teacher's direction in describing the pumpkin, but he rationalizes why he did not have the right number of seeds. He approximates the correct answer by reasoning the positioning of his numbers, two digits. Being almost right is important to Ahmed who looks upon schooling as a place to uphold his father's values.

Students in a Self-Study Discussion

Each of the following comments provides insight into the ways teacher candidates construct the dilemmas of race, culture, and literacy. Case Studies link theory and practice-based pedagogy dialectically. In the discussion, theory becomes reflexive, rather than remaining abstract and unexamined. If teacher education is to have a transformative impact upon teacher candidates' understandings and practice then they must have opportunities to reflect, examine and generate alternatives making problematizing issues central to their own professional practice. We help them confront the realization that the current arrangement of schools and society provide unearned privileges for the majority and negate others. As a function of the teacher candidates' experiential learning activities, small classroom groups discuss insights about teaching and learning and make connections to their practicum experiences and their readings as a prerequisite to self-study. The Case Study discussion groups are often audiotaped so that teacher candidates have an opportunity to read on an overhead screen the transcriptions of how

others (classmates who remain anonymous) cited their ideas from classroom information, practicum experiences, or from the reading of scholarly articles.

Student 1: *“Ahmed overgeneralized the word write. He has the idea that it is in the past tense but he does not know that is an irregular verb. I think that I would model the word for him and say, yes, you wrote a good word.”*

Student 2: *“I would include the word “wrote” in the everyday practice. It could be a spelling word but first it needs to be embedded in a context. We could do a language experience or class story where we talk about some of the words we are using. Then goal would be that Ahmed becomes a code-switcher as he juggles a new language. We read about code-switching in an article and I saw some examples in my internship.”*

Student 5: *“This is like reading miscues and home language. I took another class with Linda and we talked about how readers substitute a word into home language which is part of the learning process.”*

Student 2: *“I know what you mean as there is boy who changes the language to fit his own way with words. In reading a book, the words read: The boy brought (tooken) his ball and bat to the park to play. Unfortunately, if you are doing reading recovery then tooken would be marked wrong. Remember, if you were doing the modified miscue analysis then you would not penalize the reader. The reader was making meaning in his own language and cultural pattern and transposing the word brought to a word in his world.”*

Student 3: *“Ahmed is just learning to read and write in class but we could support his writing and reading at home by sending the story home where he could read it with his parents. I am thinking about the Cummins article which encourages students to use their home language or approximations.*”

Student 4: *“Perhaps, we can ask the family if they could write his story in Urdu and make a dual language book with pictures or a storyboard of the sequence of event. In this way, we are strengthening the ties between home culture and school, so he does not have to give up his first language to acquire English. Several of our articles, Cummins, as well as Gee said that learners should express themselves in language which they are knowledgeable. Also, Wiltse argues that for Indigenous learners, as well.”*

Student 5: *“I noticed the teacher talk and the use of qualitative words like good. Teacher talk such as right and wrong is not productive as it showcases some and shuts others down who are afraid of the risk. In my internship, I heard ‘good job’ all the time. When it was not used, I am not sure what the students thought of their efforts. It is far better to respond with acknowledgements such as, “thank you for sharing your word, that is a different word,” or “it is nice to add a word to our list that you are thinking about.”*”

Student 2: *“I wonder what Piaget might say about Ahmed’s number sense and his two digit estimation. Ahmed is using reasoning to validate his answer and probably does not consider the gap in the relationship between place value—47 and 17. He sees 2 digits and 7 is a match in both numbers. Close? It is for him!”*

Learning through Inquiry

In the inquiry-circle, teacher candidates reflected on cultural differences and the approximations they may face in the classroom. Teaching cases, therefore, allow their users to reflect on individual students, as they need to be able to envision learning through the eyes of the students (Gunn, 2010). Learning through inquiry opens up the written curriculum. Professors and teacher candidates become co-constructors, the end point is not pre-determined, and as such the curriculum is emergent or generative. This practice-based instructional model requires the teacher to let go of some of the leadership (Stacy, 2009) and embrace a teaching philosophy of difference. When learning is problem-based, teacher candidates explore real life situations that occur in the daily rhythm of the classroom. In listening to the student responses, I noticed how important being social is to learning. Social experiences provide authentic experiences. When prospective teachers are in these real-life situations they are compelled to learn. Taking a problem-based learning approach to self-study permits teacher candidates to shift to a higher level of thinking. Lave (1991) argues that learning as it normally occurs is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs. This contrasts with most classroom learning activities which involve knowledge which is abstract and out of context. Social interaction is a critical component of situated learning as learners become involved in what Wenger (1998) calls a “community of practice” which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired. As the beginners move from the periphery of this community to its center, they become more active and engaged within the culture and hence assume more expertise. Furthermore, situated learning is usually unintentional rather than deliberate. These ideas are what Lave and Wenger (1991) call the process of “legitimate peripheral participation.” Other researchers have further developed the theory of situated learning (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989) emphasizing the idea of cognitive apprenticeship.

Cognitive apprenticeship supports learning in an area by enabling teacher candidates to acquire, develop and use cognitive tools in authentic activities. Learning, both outside and inside school, advances collaborative social interaction and the social construction of knowledge. In cognitive apprenticeships, the activity being taught is modeled in real-world situations. A cycle of questions becomes a tool of self-study or a form of critical reflection. Hamilton and Pinnegar (2000) propose self-study for developing a pedagogy of teacher education that responds to the current and emerging needs of practicing faculty. In the same way, from self-study, teacher candidates can use books, scholarly articles read, and case study class discussions to discuss public and private theory to reflect on individual practices and understand teaching better. Teacher candidates problematize teaching by theorizing rather than parroting theories. Segall and Gaudelli argue (2007) that when we shift teacher candidates' thinking towards critical and public discourses they take the social responsibility "to actively re-examine their own presupposition, and potentially, towards a social construction of new meanings about teaching" (p. 90). Additionally, they suggest "not only that which takes place is textualized (reflected upon), but that the process of making meaning of experience (reflection) is also textualized" (Segall & Gaudelli, 2007, p. 90). As they move from student to emerging teacher the self is always critically thinking not remaining static.

Emergent theories support teaching decisions based upon knowledge of child development and learning, learners as individuals, and the social and cultural context of the classroom. Teaching is not based on an inflexible set of expectations, but on a philosophy of working with children by attending to what we learn about the individual needs and interests of each child who constructs and represents knowledge in multiple ways within a learning context. For non-mainstream students, engagement in learning is most likely to occur when they are

intrinsically motivated to learn. This motivational framework provides a holistic and responsive way to create, plan, and highly developed problem-solving activities, lessons, and assessment practices that are tailored to their needs. Developing knowledge begins with the educator's reflection on their own beliefs and biases about other cultures and desire to advocate for change by way of self-critical consciousness and exploration of their own history, which will ultimately assist them through understanding their students' individuality. Villegas and Lucas (2002) identify a variety of characteristics that define responsive teachers. The most noteworthy characteristics are that teachers have a sociocultural consciousness; recognize there are multiple perspectives to one situation; view themselves as agents of change; and hold a (social) constructivist view of learning. They state: "without this insight (a sociocultural consciousness), teachers are unable to cross the sociocultural boundaries that separate too many of them from their students" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 22).

Responsive teaching is more than just pedagogy of high quality teaching as it must include assessment practices that allow students multiple ways of demonstrating their knowing at different points in times; during authentic assessment tasks; or in portfolios and process-folios. Universities seem to follow the precedence of secondary education, which promotes the principles of extrinsic reinforcement. Teaching and testing practices, competitive assessment procedures, grades, cumulative averages, and eligibility for select vocations or colleges form an interconnected system. This system is based on the assumption that students will strive to learn when they are externally rewarded for a specific behaviour or punished for its absence. These efforts can be misleading. In working with children of difference, it is more productive to teach in the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) using dynamic assessment as a tool with a scoring rubric. Dynamic assessment is a social constructivist tool that can be diagnostic or

formative linked to mediated interventions not to a ascribe grade or level. As an assessment it measures performance during a collaborative learning task to discover a student's potential development, which includes a learner's attempt to interpret or communicate using symbols. In contrast with formal testing, informal assessment or dynamic assessment is part of instruction, thus it is window on the learning process, not separate from the teaching/learning process. Hence, this informal assessment is continuous and does not take time away from instruction the way standardized testing does. As an advocacy-orientated assessment tool, it includes looking for the cause of a student's academic difficulty within the social and educational context, focusing on a student' strengths and how the student learns. This is in contrast to "legitimization-orientated assessment" which is static and attempts to locate the cause of a student's academic difficulty within the student. What really matters in assessment means revisiting the question of what really matters in the preparation of teachers?

Lessons Learned

All students deserve teachers who are primarily guided by student needs and interests who are willing and able to construct and examine their practice in conscientious, principled and judicious ways. Teacher candidates are part of a larger struggle as they have the challenge to reform, not just replicate standard school practices. According to Cochran-Smith (1991), working to reform teaching or "teaching against the grain", is not a generic skill that can be learned at the university and then "applied" at the school. Like Zeichner (2010), this work creates hybrid spaces in teacher education where academic and teacher candidate knowledge and knowledge that exists in cultural communities come together in less hierarchical ways representing a paradigm shift in the epistemology of teacher education programs. When teacher candidates are

invited into a teaching community that promotes self-critical and systematic inquiries about teaching, they learn to construct pedagogy that is intended to help children learn to be the best they can be (Segall, 2002). They are prepared to take social action against institutional inequities that are embedded in schools.

Teacher candidates learn to see themselves as inquirers adopting quality-based research-based pedagogies and assessments that are responsive to the learning, emotional, individual, and social needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students in university classrooms who are often on the cusp of underachievement. Rather than using just a culturally responsive frame (Ladson-Billings, 1995), which assumes an essentialism about cultures, there is need to utilize responsive teaching that respects the individuality of each student as unique and use learner identities, funds of knowledge, ethnic, cultural and linguistic variation as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments for all including learners of Indigenous ancestry. Responsive teaching builds bridges of meaning between pre-existing social and school experiences as well as between academic concepts and lived socio-cultural realities. It draws on a wide variety of challenging learning experiences involving higher order thinking that are connected to different learning styles. Significantly, problem-posing education (Freire, 1970) solves the student-teacher contradiction by recognizing that knowledge is not deposited from the teacher to the student but is instead formulated through dialogue between the two. A critical inquiry, and addressing relevant, school-world issue in an action-oriented manner and encouraging discussion of relevant experiences that incorporates student voice and their community into classroom dialogue is a beginning. In addition, there is the option of critical questioning; guided reciprocal peer questioning; decision making; historical investigations; inquiry based projects; art; simulations; and case study methods go a long way in eschewing the

traditional lecture followed by a multiple choice test tradition that has had a long run at universities. Responsive teaching can challenge and reshape the academic content knowledge and practices within a teacher education program and renew its focus, for teaching is inquiry and always in the making and there are many possibilities for teaching for social justice so every student has fair access to success.

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