

Teacher education for the 21st century: The social justice imperative

by

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B.A., Simon Fraser University (1994)

M.Ed., University of Victoria (2009)

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Abstract

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The first two decades of the 20th century have brought us to a critical crossroad that few could have predicted when the calendar ticked over from 1999 to 2000. The strife of world wars, of intolerance, of discrimination, of prejudice and oppression that were so evident in the 20th century should have provided the impetus for peace and acceptance in the 21st. Yet, world events early in this century have demonstrated that we have not learned from the lessons of history and thus, unless we intervene, we are doomed to repeat them.

Teachers and schools play significant roles in shaping future citizens – in helping learners develop character and integrity, to value others and the earth, and to work collaboratively to address problems new and old. Teacher educators play a critical role in developing the pedagogical understanding of pre-service teachers as they prepare to take up these roles in Canadian classrooms. Teacher educators working from and for a social justice mandate recognize that there are many factors that impact their ability to guide pre-service

teachers to a greater understanding and valuing of equity and diversity in their classrooms, schools, and communities.

This study's exploration of factors that constrain or enable this work has exposed the difficulty and intransigence of perceiving the work and ultimately, the world through polarized binaries of either/or – constrain or enable. This has resulted in a greater respect for the complexity in envisioning and enacting pedagogy and practice that strives to inculcate pre-service teachers with a commitment to creating classrooms focused on equity, diversity and social justice.

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Acknowledgments

In my work with pre-service teachers I try to coax them to a place where they start to understand that education is as much (if not more) about the process of learning as it is about the product. It is both the journey *and* the destination; the time spent en route, the trials, the successes, the tangents, the failures, the side trips, the rabbit holes, the joys and the heartaches. It is the time spent present in the presence of others. I have been fortunate on this journey (for it has been a journey!) to have had the unwavering support, guidance and friendship of my supervisor, Dr. Kathy Sanford who has always offered the most salient advice, asked the most incisive questions, and guided my journey with both a firm hand and a kind heart. I am mindful of and grateful for the wisdom of my committee members Dr. Lorna Williams and Dr. Darlene Clover whose perspectives I weighed and considered at each step of the writing process. I am thrilled that Dr. Ann Chinnery agreed to take on the role of External examiner for this project as I have the utmost regard and admiration for her exemplary work in shifting teacher education research and practice for more equitable ends.

When I started this journey seven years ago I knew my loving partner Catherine was in it for the long haul, but I don't think she knew it was going to be for this long, or this much of a haul...If not for her unconditional love and support this journey would have been longer, harder, and far lonelier. Her belief in me fueled my drive to keep going, to persevere. She bit her tongue while I dove down rabbit holes and consoled me when I emerged grasping common voles instead. I love you Catherine. Thank you.

For the last seven years, I have had weekly conversations with my now 94-year-old Dad who spent the post-war part of his career as a school principal. The conversation

inevitably comes around to “how’s your work going?” For seven years, I have told him “it’s coming along” to which he would reply, “you’d better finish that damn thing.” When I told him it was finished, he said “I’m proud of you, I hope you pass.” If not for his firm belief in the power of education to shift outcomes, I know I wouldn’t be here. I am ever grateful for his love and support. The rest of my family has been kind – they have asked enough questions to express interest, but not so many as to risk having to have a conversation. I love them for their understanding and support.

Lastly, I acknowledge the work of Canadian educators who have committed to teaching for social justice, equity, and diversity. Their practice is the mirror I hold up to measure the efficacy and anti-oppressive nature of my own work.

Dedication

For all the kids who don't fit in.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Canadians pride themselves on their democratic, multicultural and welcoming country. Education is at the center of how such inclusionary beliefs and practices are inculcated in current and future generations. Therefore, the preparation of teachers committed to goals of inclusion, equity and diversity – socially just educational practice – should be a key priority of teacher education programs. Yet, a review of current scholarly Canadian and international teacher education literature makes clear that there is a serious gap between espoused social justice theory and actual social justice practice within teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Solomon, Singer, Campbell & Allen, 2011; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009).

Solomon, Singer, Campbell and Allen (2011) noted that resistance to education for social justice within teacher practice is centered in teachers “misconceptions/ perceptions about its complex meaning(s), in addition to the contradictions between teachers’ articulated beliefs and their classroom actions... [and that these] profoundly affect... comprehension – often unconsciously – of what equity is, and how in turn these perceptions impact what [happens] in ... classrooms” (p. 35). Illustrating the sometimes-confounding misconceptions or perceptions surrounding meaning identified by Solomon, Singer, Campbell and Allen (2011), Abu El-Haj (2006) identified two dominant discourses of justice that “frame the remedies for...inequalities” ...a sameness approach and a difference approach, [that] emphasize, respectively, the fundamental similarities or differences between groups” (p. 12). According to the author, these approaches don’t “adequately address...the knotty and tenacious ‘problem of difference’—the persistent

tendency for...inequality to coincide with the oppressions of race/ethnicity, class, gender, disability, and so forth” (p. 12). Added to problems of definition and process is the current resurgence of social justice teacher education programs – many of which lack a coherent understanding of what the term means. Zeichner and Flessner’s (2009) research demonstrated that although many teacher education programs now profess a social justice orientation, the “sloganeering” or commonality of the term may result in teacher education for social justice “losing any specific meaning and... come to justify and frame teacher education efforts that represent a variety of ideological and political commitments, not all of them critical of the current social order or represent a change from the status quo” (p. 296).

Zeichner and Flessner (2009) also proffered that despite the proliferation of scholarly texts supportive of the implementation of social justice orientations within teacher education programs, “most of the scholars who have produced this literature have not articulated or elaborated specific conceptions of social justice toward which teacher preparation is directed in particular programs” (p. 297). This lack of specification within the research surrounding the transition from social justice theory in teacher education to subsequent social justice teacher practice highlights the necessity of exploring further the many factors that enable or constrain social justice teaching and learning.

Purpose

My initial intention in carrying out this study was to explore contemporary teacher education programs that profess explicit social justice orientations and through an explication of the data generated through the research, offer up to teacher educators findings that might provide a bridge over the divide between social justice theory and

action or practice. My hope was that the actions of those who enacted the recommendations from this study in their teacher education practice would help to increase the likelihood of producing critically minded, socially just educators for Canadian classrooms. In other words, in the programs identified for this study, I expected to find some very clearly defined structures, policies and practices that could act as a template or framework for others interested in infusing into their program or practice a social justice focus. As the process unfolded however, the hubris in my intention became more apparent. Where I hoped for clarity, I encountered murk. Where I hoped for certainty, I met hesitation and vacillation. What I did find was that unequivocally the work is so hard, the challenges so unique and idiosyncratic, and the rewards so inchoate because there is no such thing as (and nor should there be) a standard or norm for the articulation of social justice teacher education. Each day we reinvent ourselves, our approaches, our understandings and our interactions with each (other) as we work towards realizing greater equity, recognition and embracing of diversity and championing of inclusion in our own practice and in the practice of the pre-service teachers who we work with. Such reinvention defies the hegemony of practice and requires us to bear the burden of being ever present in and cognizant of the work that we do. To wit, the questions I explored throughout this study included:

Research Questions

- 1) How do those working, teaching and learning within explicit social justice oriented teacher education programs perceive of or interpret the structural, pedagogical, contextual and personal epistemological/ontological factors that either enable or constrain social justice teaching and learning?

- 2) Can these findings inform how teacher education programs are designed and structured, and more importantly, my own practice as a teacher educator to teach for socially just ends?

Background: Situating Myself in the Research

As a former high school teacher, a sessional instructor within the teacher education program at the University of Victoria, and a faculty member at Vancouver Island University, I have become increasingly aware of the tension that exists between preparing pre-service teachers for the practical/tangible/technical elements of teaching (unit and lesson planning, assessment practices, classroom management, meeting diverse learning needs, etc.) and the less tangible yet equally important goal of helping pre-service teachers develop inclusionary beliefs and classroom practices that should be foundational in meeting the Canadian vision and expectation of schools to produce a democratic citizenry.

As a high school teacher weighed down by getting through the content of the curriculum, I found that dealing with the day-to-day “tangibles” of teaching almost always superseded my broader goal of creating, cultivating and promoting socially just spaces and practices. Invariably, despite my desire to interrogate critically the British Columbia Social Studies and History curricula – for what and who was included as official knowledge and conversely, for whose voices, visions, and histories were absent, my daily practice reflected what Fleras and Elliott (1999) would deem pedagogical “enlightenment” – “a broader, analytical approach toward diversity not as a ‘thing’ but as a relationship, both hierarchical and unequal. According to this view, attention is directed at how minority-majority relations are created and maintained; it is also aimed at what

would be required to challenge and transform these predominantly unequal relationships” (p. 351). As the authors indicated, this approach to diversity “concentrate[d] on the needs of nonminority pupils” (p. 352) largely to raise awareness and understanding in my students of the disparities that exist between and amongst individuals and groups in society. Like most current social justice practice in both schools and in teacher education programs, this approach may signal an attitudinal shift in students and pre-service teachers, but as Fleras and Elliott (1999) noted, “there is no proof that...enlightened attitudes will lead to behavioural changes” (p. 353). A common adage amongst educators proffers that as teachers it is our job to plant seeds that we hope might grow and bear fruit at some later date. Such idealism lends comfort to the sometimes-frustrating nature of our work with students, yet, it is an adage that lacks the imperative of action – the incentive to move from a good idea “in theory” to an obvious transformation in practice.

This disconnection between social justice espoused and social justice practiced has also figured prominently in my work with pre-service teachers at the University of Victoria and at Vancouver Island University. This was made abundantly clear to me during a seminar class that I was teaching where a student suggested that pre-service teachers continually hear from their instructors the importance of social justice issues in education yet few give students any understanding/instructions/clear ideas of how to incorporate social justice into their practice. Her observations reinforced for me the points made earlier by Solomon, Singer, Campbell and Allen (2011) and Zeichner and Flessner (2009) regarding the lack of a concrete definition of what social justice means to theorists and practitioners; Abu El-Haj’s (2006) competing yet complementary discourses

centered on issues of sameness and difference, and Fleras and Elliott's (1999) classification scheme of approaches to diversity including enrichment, enlightenment and empowerment. That these discourses (and others) can and do inform teacher educators' approaches (and my own) in preparing pre-service teachers to teach for social justice is compelling evidence of the lack of cohesion between and amongst teachers, teacher educators and teacher education programs when it comes to dealing with issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in classroom pedagogy and practice.

Of course, the divide between theory and practice in education is indicative of a greater philosophical debate over the purpose of education itself and herein lies the difficulty: is it possible for public education to serve all masters? If competing educational discourses privilege certain viewpoints while obfuscating or minimizing others, where does preparing teachers to teach for equity, diversity and inclusion fit within the multiple perspectives and paradigms that drive educational policy and practice?

Overview of the Methodology

This study is situated within a qualitative research paradigm comprised of several components. The research involved the examination and interrogation of three western Canadian teacher education programs that explicitly address issues of equity, inclusion and diversity as threads running throughout their programs. Data collection and analysis methods included: in depth, open ended interviews with instructors and administrators in each program; content analysis of institutional documents; and a critical discourse analysis of transcribed interviews. The findings are juxtaposed with my own experiences

working in teacher education using an autoethnographic approach. More will be said about these methods and analyses in Chapter 3.

This dissertation is organized into several chapters; chapter 2 will provide an overview of the literature reviewed for my study. Chapter 3 provides a detailed summary of my research methods and analysis. Chapter 4 tells the story of the social justice educators I interviewed, in Chapter 5 I provide an autoethnography, Chapter 6 is focused on the analysis and implications of the findings particularly considering the implications of my learning to my own practices as a social justice educator, and the conclusion is found in Chapter 7.

Having provided a broad overview of the dissertation as well as an introduction to my research questions and their significance to teacher educators, I now turn to providing a literature review of both the research and theory related to social justice in education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Defining Social Justice

Defining social justice is akin to trying to define a concept like democracy; difficult to do without situating it in some contextual form – historical, theoretical, ideological, philosophical, practical or otherwise. Like definitions of democracy, definitions of social justice are heavily dependent upon one’s positionality, power, and interpretations of ‘what’ constitutes social justice, as well as ‘whom’ the recipients of social justice should be. Although conceptions of social justice are articulated in a variety of disciplines including law and social work, it is the educational context that informs this study. In this dissertation, I will provide definitions of social justice used in diverse contexts while considering the ontological and epistemological frames implied by each of these definitions. I will then attempt to explicate the various ways that social justice is conceptualized, theorized and debated in post-secondary teacher education. Thusly, that which follows will flow from generalized definitions of social justice, to its framing as an “essentially contested concept,” (Gallie, 1956) to broad philosophical considerations of social justice, and finally, to more narrow interpretations and applications as these relate to the field of education qua teacher education.

Social justice: Defined? Most definitions of social justice – especially as they relate to education – imply some form of analysis and interrogation of existing, inequitable reality to transform schools and by extension society into more equitable spaces. As Kaur (2012) noted:

Teaching and teacher education for social justice and equity is a moral and political undertaking...it entails engaging learners in critical thinking, caring about them and fostering relationships with them and their families and communities, getting to know their lives inside and outside the classroom, valuing and building on the experiences they bring with them into the classroom by making learning meaningful to their lives, noticing and challenging inequities and injustices that prevail in education and society, understanding and interrogating teachers' own positioning, beliefs and attitudes and their role in sustaining the status quo, and at individual and/or collective levels working with and for diverse learners to advocate for a more just and more equitable life chances for all students, to imagine and work for a more just society. (p. 486)

Kaur's (2012) definition is very broad and might be interpreted as somewhat simplistic in its attempts to cover every possible interaction within and outside classrooms without addressing directly the systemic processes working at the structural and perhaps sub/unconscious level to sustain inequity. Addressing this gap, Hackman's (2005) definition called for a socially just education that moves beyond the examination of "difference or diversity" to an analysis of both "power and privilege" and that "encourages students to critically examine oppression on institutional, cultural, and individual levels in search of opportunities for social action in the service of social change" (p. 104). Hackman's definition seems more critical in its calls for a more robust interrogation of systems of oppression and the ways in which power and privilege operate to maintain the status quo, yet it holds many of the same tenets as the previous definition provided by Kaur (2012).

Countering the similarities in definition above, there is some contestation of what social justice really *means* or *looks like* in terms of its application in real world settings. Hytten and Bettez (2011) averred that when the term is bandied about as frequently as it is, it loses any real sense of clarity:

In the abstract, it is an idea that is hard to be against. Yet the more we see people invoking the idea of social justice, the less clear it becomes what people mean, and if it is meaningful at all. When an idea can refer to almost anything, it loses its critical purchase... (p. 8)

Similarly, Zeichner and Flessner's (2009) research demonstrated that although many teacher education programs now profess a social justice orientation, the "sloganeering" or commonality of the term may result in teacher education for social justice "losing any specific meaning and... come to justify and frame teacher education efforts that represent a variety of ideological and political commitments, not all of them critical of the current social order or representing a change from the status quo" (p. 296). Expounding on the difficulty in reaching a shared understanding of what social justice means, numerous educational scholars (Moule, 2005; Zollers, Albert & Cochran-Smith, 2000) have intimated that coming to consensus on both social justice definition and practice can be especially difficult, even when there is consensus over its imperative nature for inclusion in both teacher education theory and practice.

Indeed, in the current educational context – driven by increasing standardization of curricula and an emphasis on student, teacher, and school performance, the lack of clearly articulated visions of social justice aids in the perpetuation of the status quo. Michelli & Keiser (2005) have noted that education committed to "developing critical,

informed citizens is increasingly seen as superfluous, complicating, and even threatening by some policymakers and pressure groups who increasingly see any curriculum not tied to basic literacy or numeracy as disposable and inappropriate” (p. xix). Given the current neoliberal political climate and the push for education that delivers and favours quantitative results as opposed to more qualitative, holistic improvement, it is imperative that educators, theorists and scholars continue to contest and critique the narrowing vision for the goals of education. However, to do so may require some form of consensus amongst proponents advocating and acting for a more equitable society.

An ‘Essentially Contested Concept.’ As described earlier, social justice is a concept that has been framed in numerous ways —albeit with similar foundational beliefs of creating a more equitable world. Thus, it is perhaps not the definitions of social justice that need elucidating, but its various articulations depending upon one’s particular philosophical, ideological, or theoretical perspective.

Gallie (1956) described a concept as essentially contested if it “implies recognition of rival uses of it...as not only logically possible and humanly likely, but as of permanent potential critical value to one’s own use or interpretation of the concept in question...” (p. 193). The essentially contested nature of the “who” and the “what” of social justice can result in single issue social justice groups perceiving or believing their fight for recognition as more deserving than other groups advocating for their own social justice issue (Fraser, 1997, p. 14). Working at cross purposes can have a deleterious impact on all social justice claims as exemplified in the words of hooks (1984), who argued that “individuals who fight for the eradication of sexism without struggles to end

racism or classism undermine their own efforts. Individuals who fight for the eradication of racism or classism while supporting sexist oppression are helping to maintain the cultural basis of all forms of group oppression” (p. 39). That being said, it is important to explore the philosophical underpinnings of various social justice positions.

Philosophical and Conceptual Considerations: Ontology and Epistemology

The debates over the “what” and the “who” of social justice have traditionally been framed by two concepts of justice itself: distribution – associated with socioeconomic equality, and recognition – the who – or one’s “social status as related to identity” (Rottman, 2008, p.977). Both liberal and critical theorists have weighed in on each of these frames as they relate to social justice and these are elucidated in the next section. However, Rottman (2008) has illustrated the different ideological considerations from each perspective and these are represented graphically here:

Ideological approach to inequality			
		Consensus	Conflict
Focus	Material Resources	Liberal Distribution (Rawls)	Critical Distribution (Marx)
	Identity & Status	Liberal Recognition (multiculturalism, liberal feminism, human rights)	Critical Recognition (anti-racism, critical feminism, queer theory, anti-colonialism)

Table 1 “Conceptions of social justice by ideology and focus”

(Rottman, 2008, p. 978).

In the next section of this chapter I explore the ontological and epistemological

perspectives evident in the liberal and critical conceptualizations of justice.

Providing some background on the ontological and epistemological roots of social justice will provide readers with a sense of the ideological orientations evident amongst teacher educators who espouse particular social justice approaches or orientations to social justice. I begin with the liberal social justice orientation.

Liberal Ontology and Epistemology

Rawls's (1971) liberal theory of distributive justice "applied to the basic structure of society" (p. 60) suggested that

First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and b) attached to positions and offices open to all (Rawls, 1971, p. 60).

As interpreted by North (2006), this theory of social justice can be described thusly: "as long as individual citizens have the capacity to agree to act in accordance with specified principles of justice, they should be able to pursue and revise their own particular conceptions of the good life without interference" (p. 512). A liberal theory, therefore, "assumes diverse and incompatible views of the good life and establishes a neutral framework of justice whose principles apply equally to all and wherein citizens decide for themselves what conception of the good to pursue, understanding that every other citizen shall enjoy the same liberty" (Reich, 2002, p. 35).

Paradigms of equality. Some scholars have indicated that public school systems based in the liberal tradition are committed to singular sets of policies applicable to every student to ensure an equal education for all regardless of socioeconomic status (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006; Rottman, 2008). In the liberal view of education, where the individual is the locus of analysis, notions of success are founded on the principles of meritocracy; i.e., students get what they have earned or deserve based on their individual needs or merit – a distributive form of justice. In other words, providing all students with equal opportunities means that in the end, it is a student’s ability that determines their success or failure, all things being equal. As Rawls (1971) described distributive justice: “In justice as fairness society is interpreted as a cooperative venture for mutual advantage...What a person does depends upon what the public rules say he will be entitled to, and what a person is entitled to depends on what he does” (p. 84).

Such meritocratic beliefs and policies do not question or critique the structure or goals of the traditional education system itself, but put the onus on students to fit into the general educational scheme and structure, both of which, according to Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg (2006), perpetuate inequality through “assessment procedures and discipline regulations based on the belief that achievement is the result of individual merit and White middle class assumptions about competence” (p. 266).

Similarly, liberal forms of justice as recognition in education rely upon what Rottman (2008) described as a “consensus approach to inequality” articulated as human rights for all and practiced in schools as both “recognition and celebration of diversity” through multicultural celebrations, the teaching of “toleran[ce], celebrat[ing] difference,

[and] empathiz[ing] with others” (p. 979).

“I don’t see colour...” “I have a gay friend...” “I treat all my students equally...” The trend towards equality is a normalizing feature of liberal discourses of social justice. This seeking of sameness provides education and educators with opportunities to remediate individual disadvantage for students to reach the predetermined norm of acceptable outcomes. These attempts to equalize however, do nothing to ameliorate the underlying and perhaps “intersecting hierarchies of power, wealth, and privileges associated with identity attributes, such as masculinity, whiteness, ‘middle-classness,’ heterosexuality, Christianity, youth, and ablebodiedness in... society” (North, 2006, p. 517).

As the above discussion illustrates, liberal conceptions of justice do not attempt to unseat inequity or transform society through questioning or critiquing the status quo. Liberal forms of social justice are formulated through the rationalist lens of Enlightenment views of humans as possessing inalienable, equal human rights (Caperchi, 2011). The concept of equality appears to connote a neutral state of being; no one is entitled to more or less than anyone else, but all should have the opportunity to reach one’s full potential, or as North (2006) put it, ‘the good life’ without interference from others. This ontological stance indicates that the ‘good life’ is based on a normative assumption of what is desirable. According to Caperchi (2011) and Kincheloe (2004) this ideal is founded on, privileges, and normalizes Western worldviews as superior, inevitably precluding the viability of other conceptions of reality. Subscribing to the claims of equal rights and equality of opportunity for all, couched in terms of individual freedoms and meritocratic notions of success, becomes the taken for granted,

commonsensical (Gramsci, 1971/1999) argument for liberal social justice claims. Such claims are hegemonic in that the liberal ontology “claims neutrality in regards to any conceptions of the good, the production of norms is not a mere exercise of blind scientific calculations, but the creation of statements which suggest the ‘right’ way to behave and think” (Caperchi, 2011, ¶17). Thus, Western notions of reality are assumed the right and the norm; and as such, it is against these premises that all claims to justice and its claimants are measured.

All students must read Shakespeare! Epistemologically, the liberal view of what counts as knowledge is housed in the established canon of predominantly Western worldviews. Given the normative, rational nature of liberal ontology, the relationship between the knower and the known is one of striving to meet the standard or norm of that which is believed to be worth knowing. In this sense, some will be better equipped than others and as noted by Rottman (2008), “inequality is inevitable”—it is only through ameliorative or remedial policies in society and in education that attempt to level the playing field that individuals can strive to meet the ascribed norm. In terms of social justice in education, this leveling is exemplified through traditional liberal renderings of recognition articulated through policies and practices of multiculturalism (p. 979).

Liberal Articulations of Social Justice: Multicultural Education

Johnson and Joshee (2007) noted that multicultural education became a dominant curricular paradigm in the 1970s in Canada and the USA rooted in the belief that equality was an attribute of a liberal democratic society and that school programs should reflect the diverse cultural communities of each nation (p. 4). The central goal of multicultural

education has been to address issues of diverse communities. May and Sleeter (2010) described the focus of multicultural education as promoting a means of “getting along better, primarily via a greater recognition of, and respect for, ethnic, cultural, and/or linguistic differences” (p. 4), resulting in heightened “awareness of multiple ethnic cultural histories, contributions, and points of view...organized into discrete lessons [and/or] wholesale curricular revision. Lesson plans based on this view, which teach about visible cultural differences, are easily available for teachers” (p. 5). In other words, increased awareness of difference should result in a greater affinity for those who appear different from us. However, in this description, differences that are not visibly apparent seem to go unaddressed, resulting in potentially superficial understandings of and interactions with diversity.

Some more demanding versions of multicultural education question the form, function and processes of formal education in diverse societies (Fleras & Elliott, 1999). Multicultural education has been critiqued for its conformist ideology that privileges dominant social and cultural norms – critiques which have led to the emergence of critical conceptions of social justice. More will be said about the critiques of multicultural education and critical conceptions of the same, after an elucidation of the ontological and epistemological roots of the critical paradigm.

Critical Ontology and Epistemology

As noted earlier, social justice has been defined in terms of both *distribution* – associated with liberal equality, and *recognition* – a critical form of which seeks to “replace unequal systems with equitable ones” (Rottman, 2008, p. 979). As Rottman (2008) noted, liberal forms of recognition “assume that inequity can be addressed through

education – teaching people to tolerate or celebrate difference and to empathize with others, while adherents of [critical recognition] depend on critique and protest of oppressive cultural norms followed by systemic action” (p. 980). These “oppressive cultural norms” result in “cultural injustice” which according to Fraser (1997), may be remedied through

...some sort of cultural or symbolic change. This could involve upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups. It could also involve recognizing and positively valorizing cultural diversity [multiculturalism]. More radically still, it could involve the wholesale transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change *everybody's* sense of self [critical theory]. (p. 15, italics in the original)

It is this radical transformation of social worlds that lies at the root of critical ontology and epistemology.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) asserted that a critical ontology conceives of reality as apprehensible and shaped by “congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors” that coalesce into “a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as ‘real’, that is, natural and immutable” (p. 110). These include taken for granted, common sense, hegemonic understandings of the nature of reality and of humans’ place in it. According to Kincheloe (2006), adhering to a critical ontology involves “understand[ing] how and why...political opinions, religious beliefs, gender role, racial positions, and sexual orientation have been shaped by dominant cultural perspectives” (p. 182). Such an ontology critiques the dominant liberal paradigm’s belief

in normative knowledge and culture, and the neutrality claims of justice couched in terms of equality.

A critical perspective views all knowledge as political, shaped by the forces and factors of power, positionality, history, and context. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) contend that in the critical perspective, “knowledge is value mediated and hence value dependent” (p. 111). In other words, what counts as knowledge and how one can come to know is dependent upon one’s interaction with, shaping by, and critique of historically reified structures.

In the introduction to his 2004 work *Critical Pedagogy*, Kincheloe described social justice as the central focus of critical educators (p. 6). This means working purposefully and intentionally to disrupt the marginalizing discourses of the status quo. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) defined this work and described workers for social justice as follows:

[They] attempt to use [their] work as a form of social or cultural criticism and...accept certain basic assumptions: that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted;...that certain groups in any society are privileged over others;...the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression has many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of the others...often elides the interconnections among them...(p. 139-140).

In other words, social justice educators seem to work from a position of hyper-vigilance, always scanning and searching for ways in which existing structures, practices and

worldviews celebrate some and marginalize and ignore others – drawing attention to these and working to disrupt them in their practice.

Critical Discourses of Social Justice

As mentioned earlier, critical social justice perspectives critique the normative and normalizing discourses of traditional multicultural education that seek to elide the “*difference between*” groups or individuals in favour of the “*similar to*” approach. The proliferation of critical theories of social justice highlight the transformative potential of discourses that seek to replace unequal systems with equitable ones as elucidated by the possibilities outlined below. I now briefly outline five approaches evident from the literature including anti-racist education, critical race theory, critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism and anti-oppressive education.

Critical Articulations of Social Justice as Critiques of Multiculturalism

Anti-racist education (Nieto, Bode, Kang, & Raible, 2008) is characterized by its emphasis on power and inequality, critical analysis of dominant discourses, and the active disruption of status quo thinking (Dei, 1996). Highlighting the critical assessment of multicultural education by anti-racist theoreticians, Brandt (1986, pp. 120-121) chose to interrogate the language involved in defining the issues, conceptual understandings, and objective differences found in both multicultural and anti-racist perspectives. In this view according to Brandt, the problem with multiculturalism is in the ideological underpinning of the way it frames problems associated with racial difference in society. Brandt noted where the multicultural viewpoint focuses on culture as the key concept at play, the anti-racist view sees racism as the crux of difference. As a result, multiculturalists look to

equality as their objective whereas anti-racists seek justice. According to Brandt, the solution to racism from the multicultural perspective is framed as a process of “interculturalism” that emphasizes the provision of “information, cultural exchange, cultural/ethnic awareness...” (p. 121) with the processes of anti-racism that employs more activist oriented language focused on “dismantle, deconstruct, reconstruct” (p. 121) emphasizing its oppositional nature to the potentially hegemonizing characteristics of mainstream multicultural education. Brandt’s delineation of the two perspectives is found in the table below.

Phenomenon	Multicultural Approach/Language	Anti-racist Approach/Language
<i>Perception of societal base</i>	Failure in consensus within cultural pluralism and minority groups	Conflict between racist state and individuals and racially defined oppressed groups
<i>The problem</i>	Institutional and interactional mono-culturalism/ethnicism and ethnocentricity Non-recognition, marginalization, negative image, intercultural misunderstanding	Institutional and interactional racism Racial exploitation, oppression, containment, cooptation, fragmentation (divide and rule), power maintenance, marginalization
<i>The key concept</i>	CULTURE Awareness, equality, parity, of esteem, racialism	RACISM Equal human rights, power, justice
<i>The objective</i>	EQUALITY Prejudice, misunderstanding, ignorance	JUSTICE Structure, power, context
<i>The process solution</i>	INTERCULTURALISM Provide information, cultural exchange, cultural/ethnic awareness, permeation, special interest	ANTI-RACISM DISMANTLE, DECONSTRUCT, RECONSTRUCT...

Table 2 The Language of Multiculturalism /Anti-Racism

(Brandt, 1986, p. 121)

Critical race theory was founded in the belief “that racism is normal, not aberrant, in... society and... [is] so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people...” (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 53). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), critical race theorists, offered this critique of multicultural education:

We assert that the ever-expanding multicultural paradigm follows the traditions of liberalism—allowing a proliferation of difference. Unfortunately, the tensions between and among these differences is rarely interrogated, presuming a “unity of difference” that is, that all difference is both analogous and equivalent... We argue that the current multicultural paradigm functions in a manner similar to civil rights law. Instead of creating radically new paradigms that ensure justice, multicultural reforms are routinely “sucked back into the system” and just as traditional civil rights law is based on a foundation of human rights, the current multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order (p. 62). This position echoes earlier critiques that inferred getting along with others who are unlike us is good enough – very much a liberal discourse of “live and let live.”

Critical pedagogy is another response critical of multicultural education. May and Sleeter (2010) contended that while critical race theory arose out of racial and ethnic struggle, critical pedagogy arose from the class struggles described by Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire (p. 9). Critical pedagogy differs from multicultural education in that it “emphasizes such concepts as voice, dialog, power, and social class that multicultural education too often either under-utilizes or ignores...” (p. 9). According to May and Sleeter (2010), critical pedagogues’ critiques of multiculturalism include the

tendency of multicultural education “to reify culture as a fixed ‘thing’ to teach about, its muted attention to complexities of identity and power in the classroom, and its inattention to social class and global capitalism” (p. 9).

Critical multiculturalism appears to be a “bridging” paradigm that seeks to envelop the critical theories noted above by “build[ing] solidarity across diverse communities...learn[ing] to embrace struggles against oppression that others...face...[and], rather than prioritizing culture, critical multiculturalism gives priority to structural analysis of unequal power relationships, analyzing the role of institutionalized inequities, including *but not necessarily limited to racism*” (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 10). This “cross-paradigm” hybrid emphasizing collective attention and action seems reminiscent of Gramsci’s (1971/1999) concept of “counter-hegemony” – translated in this case as a coalition of forces that Carroll (2006) deemed “counter-hegemonic blocs” stating, “if hegemony is deeply grounded then counter-hegemony needs to address those grounds. This stricture points to the *articulation* of various subaltern and progressive-democratic currents into a counter-hegemonic bloc that effectively organizes dissent across space and time” (p. 20). Critical multiculturalism seems to emphasize building community between diverse cultures and perspectives, looking for common ground in resisting the repressive hegemony of the status quo.

Adding even more complexity to these conceptions of social justice in education are the differences between how Americans and Canadians – educators and indeed the general populace – define multiculturalism. As seen in the discussion above, American multiculturalism appears to be a blanket or umbrella term used to encapsulate all forms of difference, be they racial, ethnic, linguistic, class, socioeconomic status, gender, etc. This

catch-all term works to either essentialize or elide the experiences between and amongst marginalized groups in American society – perhaps a hallmark of the conceptualization of the United States as a “melting pot” where differences are excoriated in the pursuit of the “American Dream”. In contrast, the Canadian experience of multiculturalism seems to allude to the recognition and celebration of difference as characterized by the perception of a national “cultural mosaic”, a theoretical quilt of difference that represents the unique character and qualities of individuals and groups within the federation. Regardless of the different interpretations, neither understanding of multiculturalism has resulted in more equitable, inclusive, democratic societies or schools, thus hinting at the necessity of new approaches to promoting social justice in education (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Sachs, 2003).

As the last of the five critical approaches to social justice, *anti-oppressive education* evolved to address the limitations of the anti-racist approach (i.e., its emphasis on race) by focusing on the intersectional nature of oppression and marginalization and the multiple sites through which injustice or inequality can be maintained and reproduced (Kumashiro, 2000). It is understandable that those facing discrimination should seek out and band together in strength with others who face the same forms of discrimination. Unfortunately, a historical outgrowth of this monocular focus has been the creation of hierarchies of discrimination and single issue advocacy and protest. The subtle nuances of oppression, its insidious ubiquity and rapid metastasization are sometimes overlooked when we are unwilling to recognize and validate the ills suffered by other marginalized people. However, this perspective appears to be shifting. Kaur (2012) completed a study that involved the perusal of over 300 articles in the journal *Teaching and Teacher*

Education related to equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education.

She found that although cultural and racial difference were the most predominant themes, more recent articles addressed an increasing awareness of and interest in pursuing “the intersectionalities of differences...and their contextual manifestations” (p. 491).

The anti-oppressive approach to social justice draws on and makes connections to multiple activist theories including critical, feminist, queer, multicultural and postcolonial. Kumashiro (2009) noted that unlike other approaches:

Anti-oppressive education constantly turns its lens of analysis inward as it explores ways that its own perspectives and practices make certain changes possible but others impossible; and it constantly turns its lens outward to explore the insights made possible by perspectives...that have yet to be adequately addressed in the field of education. (p. xxxviii)

Kumashiro’s (2009) four-pronged approach to anti-oppressive education (Education for the other; Education about the other; Education that is critical of privileging and othering, and Education that changes students and society) sets the tone for the necessity of post-secondary teacher education programs taking a critical rather than a liberal stance in terms of preparing teachers to teach for social justice. One element of his approach, *Education that changes students and society* is elucidated briefly here to underscore the moral imperative of teaching and teacher education moving beyond multicultural celebrations of diversity and tolerance towards an emancipatory pedagogy that empowers all pre-service teachers and their future students to change society.

This strand of his approach seeks to push teachers and teacher educators beyond understandings and articulations of teacher preparation as rational, neutral, technical

tasks, to instead, teacher education focused on instilling in pre-service teachers the qualities of teacher as change agent.

Education that changes students and society. Kumashiro (2000) called for an anti-oppressive education that moves educators and students out of the comfort and safety of resting assuredly in their existing knowledge into a space unfamiliar, or “queer” where we “unlearn” and work to “relearn”. Stepping into the unfamiliar or uncomfortable is difficult as we are “often invested in the status quo” (2009, p. 54) and “find comfort in the repetition of what is considered to be common sense, despite the fact that commonsensical ideas and practices can be quite oppressive” (p. xxxviii). Our comfort levels – even our sense of self is maintained when we learn only that which reinforces our previously held beliefs about ourselves, our position in the world, our position vis à vis “other” and about the structures, institutions and modes of being with which we are familiar. For educators, discomfort occurs when we refuse to retreat from exploring the controversial – when we acknowledge the emotional and political nature of issues such as racism and homophobia yet proceed to explore them anyway, where disruption of dominant discourses can result in crisis, existential or otherwise (Kumashiro, 2009, p. 31), where we are aware of the “partial” nature of our knowledge, and continue to turn our lens not just outward, but inward to interrogate our own unconscious complicity “with different forms of oppression” (p. 31). As Kumashiro (2009) noted:

Common definitions of ‘good’ teaching often leave little, if any, room for the moments in education when confronting one’s own resistance to disruptive knowledge can be traumatic. In fact, ‘good’ teaching often means that crisis is averted, that lessons are doable and comfortable, that problems are solved, that

learning results in feeling better, that knowledge is a good thing... Yet, if anti-oppressive teaching requires disrupting the repetition of comforting knowledges, then students [and teachers] will always need to confront what they desire not to confront... (p. 55)

As suggested above, “good teaching” infers concise and well thought out lesson plans, strategies for classroom management, appropriate assessment techniques that mirror learning objectives – in essence, the practical, technical aspects of what it means to teach.

While no one would negate the importance of the technical aspects of teaching, it would be unwise to suggest that these skills, honed to perfection in teacher education programs, will adequately prepare students to teach in diverse classrooms that do not fit contrived notions of “normal”. Sumara, Davis and Iftody (2008) have noted,

In negotiating the tensions between their own educational biographies, the historical narratives of the institutions in which they learn, and the cultural myths that normalizes what teaching should be, the paramount concern of the beginning teacher often involves finding a way to ‘blend in’ with existing narratives of teaching by masking their individuality. In this way, the collective experience of teacher identity is given precedence over individual consciousness of what it means to be a teacher (p. 160).

Citing Britzman (2003), the authors proffered that, “when the context of teacher education is constrained by instrumentalist and normative discourses, so too is teacher identity. In an insidious way...student teachers are learning not who they are, but rather who they have to be to teach” (Sumara, Davis & Iftody, 2008, p. 161). Such discourses, both internal and reinforced by the hegemony of the normal, do nothing to prepare pre-

service teachers to confront their discomfort in dealing with both overt and insidious oppression to teach for an education that changes students and society.

To understand how social justice is framed in post-secondary institutional settings and to lay the groundwork to explore my research questions, particularly: *How do those working, teaching and learning within explicit social justice oriented teacher education programs perceive of or interpret the structural, pedagogical, contextual and personal epistemological/ontological factors that either enable or constrain social justice teaching and learning?* I will now highlight some of the ways in which social justice is conceptualized, theorized and debated in post-secondary teacher education.

Social Justice Teacher Education

Teacher education programs must deliver a multiplicity of theoretically and practically based skills and knowledge in the preparation of teacher candidates for service in formal education systems. It would seem in the early 21st century that there is increasing pressure to link educational outcomes to the economic needs of the state through a narrowing of curricula and more standardized forms of assessment (Brown, 2003; Sahlberg, 2006;). My own experience as a teacher educator affirms the presence of pressure from pre-service teachers whose concerns about learning to teach are firmly entrenched in the “how” of its technical aspects, not its holistic nature. These tensions can be boiled down to the differing perspectives on the purpose of education itself. To counter the pressure to “technify” teacher education, the call for educating for diversity, equity and social justice in pre-service teacher education has challenged teacher educators and teacher education programs to implement measures that adequately prepare novice teachers to take up critical pedagogical stances in both their beliefs and practices.

Addressing equity, diversity and social justice within pre-service

teacher preparation should create inclusive classrooms, yet it appears that the divide between theory and actual classroom practice remains largely unbridged (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Solomon, Singer, Campbell & Allen, 2011; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 2003; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009).

Recognizing the need to challenge the marginalizing effects of historically based and socially reproduced education systems, many teacher education programs have sought to modify pre-service teacher preparation programs to include some form of preparation and/or education to meet the reality of increasingly diverse student populations. Sleeter's (2001) work is seminal in this regard. She reviewed "80 studies of effects of various pre-service teacher education strategies, including recruiting and selecting students, cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education coursework, and program restructuring" (p. 94) to determine the level of efficacy in each of these categories in preparing teachers to teach in diverse schools.

Similarly, Zeichner and Flessner (2009) echoed three of Sleeter's (2001) components in promoting social justice within teacher education; these included recruiting minoritized students, recruiting minoritized faculty, and multicultural instructional strategies and curricula infused throughout teacher education programs. Zeichner and Flessner (2009) also advocated for strategic placement of pre-service teachers in field experiences designed to help them to develop social justice orientations, but cautioned that the success of such placements are dependent "upon the specific nature of these experiences and the quality of support provided to [pre-service teachers]" (p.

299), as field experiences devoid of explicit objectives, structures and supports can “actually strengthen and reinforce [pre-service teachers’] negative stereotypes” (p. 300).

While the two preceding examples highlight the structural elements of creating social justice oriented teacher education programs, what follows are two specific theories and practices that illustrate pedagogical approaches to critically informed teacher education programming. These are theorized respectively as *culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching* (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and *inclusive education* (Dei, James, James-Wilson, Karumanchery & Zine, 2000).

Culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching is based on the necessity of ensuring the academic success of *all* students. Ladson-Billings’ (1995) usage of the term was predicated on preparing teachers to work to improve the academic outcomes of African-American students. Added to the focus on academic success, Ladson-Billings (1995) described culturally responsive pedagogy as a “theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps student accept and affirm their cultural identities while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools...perpetuate” (p. 469).

Working within a Canadian context, Parhar and Sensoy (2011) identified culturally responsive pedagogy as pedagogy that “recognizes students’ differences, validates students’ cultures, and asserts that upon cultural congruence of classroom practices, students will discover increasing success in school” (p. 191-192). Their research illustrated four themes that they averred both supported and promoted success for diverse student populations. These included: “an inclusive classroom of meaningful

student-teacher relationships, collaborative learning, and a respectful classroom climate; expanded conception of the curriculum that validates students' cultures, developing critical consciousness and agency; a resource team including families and support workers; [and] purposeful renewal of knowledge via research and professional development" (p. 189).

In terms of the Canadian and specifically, the British Columbia context, increasing attention has been drawn to the importance of recognizing the historic marginalization of Indigenous peoples in both society and education. Such marginalization and subjugation of Indigenous knowledge and the privileging of "Western Cartesian-ism" has resulted in derisive and destructive discourses that have all but stifled the value of Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Kincheloe, 2006, p. 182) and has led to either a glossing over or inclusions of simplistic generalizations of Indigenous peoples in contemporary Canadian curricula. Attempts to remedy this gross injustice have included the requirement since 2012 for all pre-service teachers in British Columbia to take Indigenous course work as part of their teacher education program to receive certification from the BC Teacher Regulation Branch (Archibald & Hare, 2016, pp. 23-24), the creation of educational networks in support of creating more equitable educational opportunities for Indigenous students through culturally responsive pedagogy and practice (for example, the BC Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network), and the BC Ministry of Education's recent curriculum reform to infuse Indigenous perspectives throughout the public school system. These initiatives may sow the seeds of the imperative for a social justice orientation in some pre-service teachers, however, whether this knowledge is articulated in classrooms as more than simple tokenization or

“enrichment” exercises (Fleras & Elliott, 1999) is perhaps largely dependent on the ontological dispositions of pre-service teachers and instructors/faculty themselves.

Inclusive education. Over the past decade or so, the term inclusive education seems to have been co-opted by special interest groups, individuals and organizations traditionally aligned with Special Education. For example, a quick Google search using the term ‘inclusion’ turned up numerous articles intimating that inclusion and diversity were somewhat synonymous but not limited to special educational needs. For example, Alberta Education describes inclusion like this:

Inclusion is not just about learners with special needs. It is an attitude and approach that embraces diversity and learner differences and promotes equal opportunities for all learners in Alberta. Alberta’s education system is built on a values-based approach to accepting responsibility for all children and students” (<https://education.alberta.ca/inclusive-education/what-is-inclusion/>).

Similarly, Inclusion Press describes inclusion as greater than a focus on disability:

Inclusion is about ALL of us

Inclusion is about living full lives - about learning to live together.

Inclusion makes the world our classroom for a full life.

Inclusion treasures diversity and builds community.

Inclusion is about our 'abilities' - our gifts and how to share them.

Inclusion is NOT just a 'disability' issue...

(“Inclusion Network”, n.d.).

This widening of the umbrella in the two instances above is quite contrary to the way inclusion is defined by Inclusion BC who seem more focused on foregrounding

special educational needs under the inclusion banner while backgrounding ‘other’ forms of diversity. The power of the term inclusion around special educational needs has been amplified especially in British Columbia with the rise in popularity of noted teacher Shelley Moore who delivers professional development workshops on a frequent basis around and outside of the province. As inclusion appears to have found a new home under the special education banner, it is important to draw attention to scholarly interpretations of the term so that it does not lose its place in the social justice lexicon.

Dei, James, James-Wilson, Karumanchery and Zine (2000) have defined inclusive education as “intrinsically tied to how educational sites respond to the needs and concerns of all students from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, class, religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds” (p. xii). The “critical integrative approach” they applied to their research revealed the necessity on the part of educators concerned with inclusive education to recognize both “historical contexts and institutional structures that sustain educational inequities in Euro-Canadian...contexts” (p.22). Their findings, garnered through a longitudinal study in Ontario schools, identified seven themes that could inform curricula and pedagogical approaches to pre-service teacher education. A central tenet of the themes recognizes the importance of blurring the sometimes-disparate boundaries between “school” and “community” identity, and recognizing and validating the embodied, lived, and situated realities of both students and teachers within a broader context (p. 22). According to the authors, pedagogy and practice, from an inclusive education perspective, should seek to embody these themes: “recognition of the importance of Indigenous, traditional and culturally-based knowledges; promotion of

spiritual and intuitive learning; language integration; emphasis on co-operative education and a broader concept of educational success; representation in education; emphasis on community schooling and the important roles of parents and community workers in youth education” (p. 42).

Kozleski, Artiles and Waitoller’s (2011) definition of inclusive education “entails access, participation, and outcomes for all students who are marginalized in educational systems because of gender, caste, ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, race, language, immigration status, and ability level” (p. 9). The authors stated: “inclusive education is situated in larger cultural historical contexts (e.g., purposes of schooling, definitions, and responses to *difference* in educational contexts)” (p. 9). They argued that asking “critical questions” such as ‘what are the historical legacies that mediate the development and outcomes of inclusive education?’ require researchers to turn their attention *away* from the practicalities or “technicalities” of teaching for inclusive education, towards the less tangible “ideologically charged forces and processes (e.g., historical legacies of marginalization...) that enable and constrain the potential of educational equity in inclusive education” (p. 9-10).

As noted earlier, teacher educators intent on imbuing their practice with social justice must be able to understand or at least recognize the factors that either enable or constrain their attempts to inculcate students with values of inclusivity, equity, and a critical mindset willing to challenge the status quo. As the next section describes, regardless of teacher educators’ intent, personal and institutional factors can have a significant impact on the successful implementation and sustainability of social justice discourses and practice within teacher education. These factors and their impact are

explored further in Chapter 4.

Confounded From Within

Attempts to inculcate pre-service teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a social justice orientation requires moving their perception of teaching as a technical activity to one that embraces a more holistic approach to theory and practice. This requires that instructors not only be inclined to this, but be willing to engage with and authentically interrogate their own complicity in maintaining the status quo. Difficult work, as noted by Patterson (2013) who declared that while post-secondary institutions may provide opportunities for students to engage in “... authentic dialogue and interaction with diverse peers in order to truly develop a pluralistic foundation... academicians and practitioners struggle in facilitating this process...” (p. 9). The author goes on to state that the struggle to act as facilitators is exacerbated by the fact that “educators hold different levels of multicultural proficiency, and institutional differentiation makes it difficult to accurately implement theoretical models” (p. 9). Patterson concluded with this exhortation:

If educators are going to move beyond cursory conversations about difference and role model inclusive behaviors, we must engage ourselves in a dialogue that includes developing theories that emerge directly out of that dialogue...In order for us to serve as transformational change agents in the cultivation of holistic students, it is necessary for faculty and staff to define their...philosophy within the context of a theory that considers social justice themes. (2013, p. 10)

As this last example highlights, the challenges facing educators intent on pursuing a social justice agenda in post-secondary contexts form a complex layering and

intersection of notions of self and self in relation to both social and historical reality. To address this complexity in meaningful, authentic, reflexive fashion will begin to challenge the dominant discourses of the status quo.

In summary, as this review of the literature has shown, the concept of social justice is a complex one: there are multiple definitions of the term; diametrically opposed ontological and epistemological bases that inform understanding of the “who” and the “what” of social justice; multiple forms and articulations of both theory and practice; and, institutional, individual and structural factors that both collide and coalesce – to reinforce social justice’s position as an ‘essentially contested concept’. What is apparent is that given the multiple, sometimes competing conceptions of both understandings and articulations of social justice, post-secondary teacher education programs and educators must move to turn their “lens inward” to interrogate our own unconscious complicity “with different forms of oppression” (Kumashiro, 2009, p. 31) to produce future teachers capable of and willing to actively engage with issues of equity and social justice for all.

Methodologies: Situating Myself

Before describing which methodologies were best suited to investigate my research questions, it is important that I illustrate how I am positioned in pursuing this research, both ontologically and epistemologically, as my philosophical stance has swayed me towards some methodologies and away from others. In this next section, I trace my ontological and epistemological perspectives that informed my research and proceed from there to explore various methodologies that were helpful in this endeavour.

My Ontological and Epistemological Stance

My ontological and epistemological roots are planted in the social constructionist paradigm that "...resists the common view of language as merely descriptive, neutral and reflective, and set[s] out to explore the ways in which language may be seen as constructive, active and dynamic...most simply, constructionists explore the ways in which language is actively involved in the construction of social reality" (Tuffin, 2005, p. 67). This ontological viewpoint, along with my epistemological conception of knowledge as a social creation derived from interaction, are informed by Gergen's (2010) discussion on the nature of knowledge and of truth. According to Gergen, knowledge is relational, resulting from both "historically and culturally situated social processes" (p. 109) and not from a pre-existing canon of assembled facts; in other words, knowledge is created, not discovered. Likewise, the conception of objective truth(s) dissembles when one recognizes that "no one arrangement of words is necessarily more objective or accurate in its reality than any other" (p. 109). Both knowledge and truth then are derived discursively, arising from temporally, historically and spatially situated social interactions that push interactors towards contextual consensus. This means that neither truth nor knowledge is fixed, but shift and reform as new understandings are reached between interactors. Misra and Prakash (2012) noted that the favourability of a social constructionist worldview rests in the recognition of the "plurality and diversity of our social world [and that] instead of a singular or hegemonic view of reality, constructionism entertains multiple realities which emerge and therefore offers innovative ways of appreciating and shaping reality" (p. 122). Such a constructionist view also provides avenues for increased "interchange, collaboration, and sharing"

(Misra & Prakash, 2012, p. 122), an important perspective useful to researchers who see themselves as integral to and shaped by the research process in a co-constructed process of sense making. The constructionist paradigm also values the lived experience of participants and views their knowledges and perspectives as central to the enterprise of knowing and being known. Gergen (2001) differentiates constructionism from social constructivism in the sense that a “constructivist will often make [individual] mental as opposed to social process a major point of inquiry” whereas “the constructionist places the strong emphasis on the domain of the social...while... [c]onstructionist writings will focus on discourse, dialogue, coordination, conjoint meaning making, discursive positioning, and the like...” (p. 8). In other words, it is possible that constructivism adheres to a belief that a person is focused on how to make sense of the world – an individual process that Gergen (2001) described as anchored in objective empiricism, whereas the constructionist focuses on how to make the world make sense – perhaps a more emergent process.

While adhering to a social constructionist worldview, I am situating myself methodologically within a critical theoretical paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994) noted that the purpose of inquiry from a critical perspective is to “critique and transform...the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind...” (p. 113). Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) averred that:

Critical research can be best understood in the context of the empowerment of individuals. Inquiry that aspires to the name *critical* must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere within the

society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavor unembarrassed by the label ‘political’...critical theory and research are never satisfied with merely increasing knowledge. (*italics in the original*) (p. 140).

The critical theoretical paradigm was appropriate for this study in part because in tracing the literature surrounding social justice, I placed myself in a position to critique how effective the social justice teacher education programs and participants in this study believed they were in increasing the potential to “transform...the existing structure” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114). I was also able to turn that lens of critique towards my own practice to better illuminate where and how my actions were useful in challenging or transforming ‘the way things are.’

Kumashiro (2000) offered an important critique of critical theory that also informs my stance. He connoted a tendency among critical theorists to perceive reality as both objective and rational. In other words, critical theory espouses a form of ontological structuralism that seeks emancipation through critique and transformation of oppressive structures that serve to maintain the inequities of the status quo. My own view pushes past the limitations imposed by structuralism to consider oppression post-structurally – recognizing the intersectionality of structural and systemic oppression with dominant discourses, social practices, political and cultural contexts, ideologies, and the unconscious forms of “habitus” (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1977) that block anti-oppressive practice. Indeed, as Strega (2005) noted, echoing hooks (1984), “when poststructuralism is informed by the progressive politics of feminism or critical race theory, it has more to offer those who want their research to make radical change in the world than do analyses

based on hierarchies of oppression which inevitably pit those on the margins against one another” (p. 226).

Strega (2005) identified key elements that required me to evaluate my own research for its anti-oppressiveness, including “assessing the political implications as well as usefulness” (p. 228) of the research. Strega (2005) intimated that in this sense, my research must not only deconstruct, but also, be reconstructive to help envision new life worlds. To pursue anti-oppressive research, I needed to ask myself not only who the research is about, but also for whom I was doing it – and whether I have been able to “speak truth to power in accessible languages and formats” (p.228). I needed to think about how I have been reflexive in my work and mindful of the extent to which I considered my “own complicity in systems of domination and subordination” (p. 228); my work needs to be measured against the degree to which I have challenged or remained complicit with “dominant discourses” (p. 231).

Following these guiding principles has, I hope, resulted in not only a deconstruction of what already exists, but will contribute to a reconstruction of better life worlds via culturally appropriate means (Strega, 2005, p. 229) that can inform teacher educators’ attempts to inculcate pre-service teachers with the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Thus, each of the following methodologies were determined to meet the test set by Strega’s key elements for anti-oppressive research and were thus commensurable with the goals of my research.

Having examined my ontological and epistemological stance, I now turn to specific methodologies that helped me to explore how those working, teaching and learning within explicit social justice oriented teacher education programs perceived of or

interpreted the structural, pedagogical, contextual and personal epistemological/ontological factors that either enabled or constrained social justice teaching and learning.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Methodologies

There are numerous methodologies that could help to explore the many factors that either enable or constrain social justice within teacher education. In my exploration of methodologies to use in this study, I examined many. In each case, I considered the ways in which the methodology might provide a means of articulating my research question and served as a fit to my ontological/epistemological stance. After bringing this framework to my analysis, I selected three methodologies that in my view best served my research purposes. These included content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and autoethnography. I have tried to keep my ontological and epistemological stance as focal points in my exploration of each of these methodologies – in the end, I found each of them congruent with my philosophies of social constructionism and critical theory.

Using Strega's (2005) framework for evaluating research for its anti-oppressive nature was helpful in adjudicating whether the theory behind and enactment of each of these methodologies fit with my goals for my research. Finally, through the autoethnographic portion of the research, I was driven to reconsider my own practice as an educator through Kumashiro's (2009) critically reflexive lens of anti-oppressive education: now, and moving forward, I must

Look beyond what and how [I] teach and learn...raise questions about the necessarily partial and political nature of whatever approach [I] take. It means that [I] examine how the things that [I] teach and learn can both reinforce and challenge oppression, or why [I] teach only certain things in only certain ways, or

what might be alternative ways of teaching and learning and their implications for reinforcing and challenging oppression. (p. xl)

Participants

This study was conducted using purposive sampling in conjunction with snowball sampling to elicit participants (Berg & Lune, 2012). I intended to seek out a combination of faculty/instructors/program directors/administrators involved with the social justice oriented teacher education programs from a variety of Canadian universities. Because of my networking with colleagues across Canada through conferences such as the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE), I became aware of the existence of certain teacher education programs that purported to operate from a social justice perspective. This initial list was supplemented by a review of the stated purposes of teacher education programs in universities across Canada. In the end, I identified four institutions, and individuals from three responded to my requests for interviews.

In 2014, I received Human Research Ethics Board approval from the University of Victoria to conduct the research (see Appendices A and B). I sent recruitment emails outlining the study to multiple individuals in a number of Canadian social justice teacher education programs. These emails requested recipients to forward my contact information to other faculty/instructors within their department should they be unable or unwilling to participate. Because the purposive sampling produced few participants, I then relied on snowball sampling to provide additional participants for the study. In the end, I attracted five individuals representing three institutions to participate in the research. These participants have been provided with the following pseudonyms to protect their identity: Elaine is an ex-Dean of education and was also an elementary school teacher; Bea is a

Faculty member and has held the position of Department Head in her institution, Sonia is a Faculty member, was once a Department Head and was also a high school teacher; Jeannie is a Dean of Education and has also been a high school teacher, and Evelyn is a Faculty member in her institution. Upon providing informed consent to participate in the research, each participant received a copy of the questions I intended to ask and an interview time was arranged.

Situated as they are within social justice oriented teacher education programs, it was my assumption that this study's participants might already have a pre-disposition towards teaching and learning for equity, diversity and inclusion. However, noting the competing tensions apparent in the multiple conceptions of the purpose of education as well as the numerous definitions of social justice, it is difficult to know whether what they say they do actually translates into practice. Regardless of what their beliefs and practices were before engaging with me in the interviews, I would contend that through participation in this study, participants did, as Kumshiro (2009) describes it, turn the lens inward (p. xxxviii), and I believe that this intentional or perhaps, unintentional reflexivity enabled them to

look beyond what and how [they] teach and learn...rais[ing] questions about the necessarily partial and political nature of whatever approach [they] take. It means that [they] examine how the things that [they] teach and learn can both reinforce and challenge oppression, or why [they] teach only certain things in only certain ways, or what might be alternative ways of teaching and learning and their implications for reinforcing and challenging oppression. (p. xl)

This introspection was apparent to me in the audio recordings as I noted vocal starts, stops, hesitations, sighs and ponderings as participants attempted to address the complexity of the work they do. Such introspection, with the potential to turn into recursive praxis, can only enhance that which the participants are already doing in the name of education for equity, diversity and inclusion. As Sonia put it:

I hadn't thought about a lot of those questions, like the structure...I think you're identifying something that we talk about as part of social justice in education. You know, sort of the hidden curriculum and the hidden hegemony that exists within education that actually impedes the ability to enact social justice...I guess what I'm getting from your questions is a sense that there needs to be the same kind of analysis of those kinds of structures and kind of uncovering those kinds of hegemony that might exist even in teacher ed in order to teach from a social justice perspective.

And from Evelyn: "I was looking at the questions and I was like 'oh man, where am I going with this?' but um, it's been interesting to sort of think about it and try to articulate it. That's not something we often do, we live our practice...."

It is useful at this juncture to provide the list of questions that I posed to participants. These were fairly open-ended and allowed for tangential exploration as the conversations evolved. Figure 1 outlines the sample questions posed to program administrators (where applicable) and Figure 2 details questions posed to program instructors/faculty. In cases where a participant "wore more than one hat," I varied the questions to reflect their positions in both roles.

1. What is your position in your university and department?
2. Please explain how your teacher education program is structured.
3. Could you tell me how long your program has had an explicit social justice focus and how this came into being?
4. Could you please tell me how you situate yourself in terms of your identity and cultural background?
5. How do you personally understand or define social justice?
6. How does your personal understanding of social justice enable you to advocate for and communicate social justice values of equity and diversity within your department, faculty or with students and the general public?
7. How do you understand or define social justice in relation to pre-service teacher education?
8. Are you able to sustain the advocacy and centering of social justice within the program framework? What challenges are there to maintaining a sustainable focus?
9. How does your program define its social justice mandate and how is this communicated to students and the general public?
10. What are some of the structural factors that you think enable your program to teach for social justice?
11. What are some of the structural factors that might constrain this?
12. Can you give me some idea of how you gauge whether your program has been successful in educating and preparing pre-service teachers to teach for equity and diversity?
13. Would you be willing to document your understanding, observations or interpretations of social justice teaching and learning further by providing me with either a photo essay, narrative, poem, story, or other aesthetic representation of your experiences to provide a more nuanced and personal version of the data I am collecting for this study?

Figure 1 Sample interview questions – program administrators

1. What is your position within the university and department?
2. How long have you been employed in this position?
3. Could you please tell me how you situate yourself in terms of your identity and cultural background?
4. What courses do you teach within your faculty?
5. How do you personally understand or define social justice?
6. How does your understanding of social justice enable you to advocate for and communicate social justice values of equity and diversity in a sustainable manner within your department, faculty or with students and the general public?
7. How do you understand or define social justice in relation to pre-service teacher education?
8. How does your program define its social justice mandate and how is this communicated to students and the general public?
9. What congruencies or incongruencies exist between your understandings or interpretations of social justice and those of the program?
10. Can you tell me how you incorporate social justice into your pedagogy and practice?
11. What are some of the structural factors that you think enable you to teach for social justice?
12. What are some of the structural factors that might constrain this?
13. Are there other factors that influence your ability to teach for equity and diversity in preparing pre-service teachers? If so, could you please identify them for me and explain the role they have in either enabling or constraining teaching and learning for social justice?
14. Can you give me any examples of teaching experiences you have had where you encountered resistance from students when trying to address social justice issues? Can you explain to me what happened and how you addressed the resistance?
15. Would you be willing to document your understanding, observations or interpretations of social justice teaching and learning further by providing me with either a photo essay, narrative, poem, story, or other aesthetic representation of your experiences to provide a more nuanced and personal version of the data I am collecting for this study?

Figure 2 Sample interview questions – program instructors

Context and Data Collection Methods

The three universities selected for my study are all located within western Canada and purport to have or advertise a social justice orientation to their teacher education programs. The five participants who agreed to take part in my study are or were full faculty members in their universities. All but one participant has held or holds leadership positions within their Faculty of Education and spoke from both positions seemingly interchangeably – in other words, their perception of their work did not seem to be compartmentalized by role.

My research involved the completion of in-depth, open-ended interviews as well as content analysis of some submitted artifacts including a newspaper clipping, a course

outline, and an article related to teacher preparation. All interviews were conducted between the beginning of October and the end of November 2014. One interview was conducted face to face, the other four were completed via telephone, Skype or FaceTime. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and sent to participants for member checking. If errors were noted or additions and/or deletions were necessary, the requisite changes were made to the transcripts. The coding involved looking for and noting instances where participants identified factors that either enabled or constrained them in teaching from and for a social justice perspective. I then performed a critical discourse analysis of the transcribed interviews; searching for what was present but also what was absent as participants discussed their perception or interpretation of the many factors that either enabled or constrained social justice teaching and learning. The resulting data is presented and described in chapter 4, followed by an autoethnographic representation of my own experiences juxtaposed with those of my participants.

Open-ended interviews. I chose open-ended/unstandardized interviews over semi-structured or structured/standardized versions as a means of collecting data. Berg and Lune (2012) noted “researchers undertaking loosely structured interviews typically seek to learn the nature of the informants’ meaning system itself” (p. 112). This understanding regarding the nature of meaning underscores the theoretical basis of a social constructivist viewpoint that highlights the relational nature of meaning making. Berg and Lune (2012) explained that within the format of an unstandardized/unstructured interview, “while certain topics may be necessary and planned, the actual flow of the conversation will vary considerably according to the responses of each informant” (p. 110). In some respects, using this form of interview helped to alleviate one of the

conundrums that might have arisen using standardized interviews, namely the assumption that the questions we pose are actually the questions we want answered. This latter view intimates that knowledge is fixed, rational and transmitted or communicated context or value free, and that as researchers, we have a fairly coherent understanding of the answers we expect in response to the creation and framing of our questions. I am reminded by Kumashiro's (2009) discussion as to why this deductive/reductive approach can be problematic:

The knowledge of the world that we have produced often leads us to falsely believe that things in this world are permanent (unchanging) and independent (unconnected to other things). Such beliefs are problematic because they lead us to believe that we know the meaning of different things without acknowledging that things can mean different things in different situations, and that these meanings have everything to do with their relationships with one another. How we make sense of the world often "makes sense" only within a particular context and we should never feel comfortable that our knowledge will make sense in every context thereafter. The world will always exceed our knowledge of it (p. 47).

Therefore, to mitigate the impact of any presuppositions I might have imparted through the development of set, rigid questions, I chose to use the emergent nature of our conversations to generate the data to be used in a critical discourse analysis.

Content analysis. According to Berg and Lune (2012), content analysis is "chiefly a coding operation and data interpreting process" (p. 350). Content analysis is specifically applied to an analysis of material artifacts, such as documents, policies and

other texts. As such, this methodology was useful in counting and interpreting the presence of social justice iterations within a community of artifacts. This stage of data gathering and analysis focused on seeking both inductive and deductive themes that corresponded to an anti-oppressive/social justice orientation. In turn, I applied what Berg and Lune (2012) deemed an “interpretive approach” to the data that encompassed both a phenomenological (searching for “essence”) as well as general interpretation that required coding to “uncover patterns of human activity, action, and meaning” (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 350-351).

Artifacts that were publically available included program websites and calendar descriptions, all of which were accessed electronically. I also solicited and received artifacts from participants including a newspaper clipping describing the teacher education program. The combination of phenomenological analysis and inductive and deductive coding helped to shape a clearer picture of what is espoused or promoted (theory) via the collected artifacts; but it did not however, communicate whether the theory translated into actual programmatic/educator practice. As noted by Bauer (2000), “content analysis tends to focus on frequencies, and so neglects the rare and the absent... [and is] biased towards presence” (p. 148). In other words, content analysis could only show what was present/said/purported/visible, not what remained absent/unsaid/elided/invisible. In choosing this methodology, I note that Berg and Lune (2012) posited that a weakness of content analysis lies in its inefficacy “for testing causal relationships between variables” (p. 376). In other words, “we can use content analysis to say what is present, but not why” (p. 376). Thus, any content analysis of programmatic material might reveal multitudinous references to social justice; leaving one to infer (irresponsibly

and perhaps incorrectly) that what is said is being done and is translated into actual practice. Therefore, it was obvious that taken on its own, content analysis provided only a superficial description of the data and did not lend itself to meeting in any substantive way Strega's (2005) guiding principles for research.

To delve beyond description of data, an important yet incomplete picture of what I intended to portray through the research, I now turn my attention to critical discourse analysis that enabled a more substantial probing of the data.

Critical discourse analysis. Unlike content analysis, critical discourse analysis examines “not only what is being said, but what is left out; not only what is present in the text, but what is absent” (Rogers, 2011, p. 15). Critical discourse analysis differs from both content analysis and descriptive discourse analysis by virtue of the critical lens it brings to bear on all forms of discourse. As Rogers (2011) noted above, critical discourse analysis is concerned with reading a ‘text’ for its overt intentions, but also for its nuanced, perhaps obfuscated meanings.

In keeping with the tenets of critical theory, critical discourse analysis recognizes the centrality of context in both the construction and derivation of meaning. Rogers (2011) posited that critical discourse analysis recognizes that “systems of meaning are caught up in political, social, racial, economic, religious, and cultural formations which are linked to socially defined practices that carry more or less privilege and value in society [and thus] they cannot be considered neutral” (p. 1). Elaborating on one element of this recognition, Gee (2011) proffered that all language is political and that our interactions with others results in some form of ‘winning’ or ‘losing’ depending on our facility with mastering the rules of convention – be they language, culture, games, etc. In

other words, if we are proven proficient in whatever discourse we are engaged with we receive a social good – some form of affirmation. Gee (2011) described this in some detail as being accepted, and in some instances, being recognized as worthy of a particular identity including friend, ethnic or religious identity (p. 6). Gee noted that conferring a social good (acceptance) on others or benefitting from a social good is a political act:

Politics is not just about contending political parties. At a much deeper level it is about how to distribute social goods in a society; who gets what in terms of money, status, power, and acceptance on a variety of different terms...Since when we use language, social goods and their distribution are always at stake, language is always ‘political’ in a deep sense. (2011, p. 7).

Elucidating further, Gee (2011) contended “*language has meaning only in and through social practices, practices which often leave us morally complicit with harm and injustice unless we attempt to transform them*” (p. 12, italics in the original). In other words, it is only through the enactment of them that any espoused theories of social justice can be realized. There is a distinct call to action in Gee’s words, another hallmark of critical theory. Therefore, when teacher educators go through the motions of including what they may deem politically correct social justice language in their course syllabi (for example) yet fail to follow through in their delivery, they are complicit in reinforcing the status quo by not disrupting or dismantling dominant oppressive hegemonic discourses.

Using critical discourse analysis, I more deeply interrogated the ways that beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions impacted how participants framed their responses to social justice teaching and learning; how they interpreted and articulated/ did not articulate the

role of both external and internal factors in either enabling or constraining social justice teaching and learning – key questions that underpinned my research objectives.

Ideology & power. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), critical discourse analysis has as its foci two concepts: ideology and power. In their interpretation, the ideologies that critical discourse analyses are interested in making explicit are the “more hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs...”, dominant discourses that become naturalized and thus neutralized and that go “largely unchallenged” (p. 8); in other words, they become hegemonic. Fairclough (2003) averred that “ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation. They may be enacted in ways of interaction...and inculcated in ways of being identities. Analysis of texts...is an important aspect of ideological analysis and critique” (p. 218).

Considering critical discourse analysis’s concern with ideology, Luke (1995/1996) described the task of critical discourse analysis as making explicit the taken-for-granted – common sense ‘truths’ that govern and define self and community in relation to others (p. 9). In terms of disrupting the hegemonic nature of the taken-for-granted, Luke described the “job” of critical discourse analysis as “disarticulat[ing] and critiqu[ing] texts as a way of disrupting common sense [that]...can involve the analysis of whose material interests particular texts and discourses might serve, how their articulation works on readers and listeners, and strategies for reflecting and rearticulating these discourses in everyday life” (p. 20). In other words, the task of critical discourse analysis is a reflexive one, as Luke (1995/1996) noted; it should move the researcher

“beyond descriptive research...to use discourse analysis to critique and challenge dominant...practices” (p. 10). Similarly, Rogers (2011) posited that critical discourse analysis, ultimately concerned with critiquing and making explicit the hegemony of dominant structures and discourses, is also concerned with fulfilling another central tenet of critical theory: “the end goal is to hope, to dream, and to create alternative realities that are based in equity, love, peace and solidarity” (p. 5). In this sense, well conducted, mindful and reflexive critical discourse analyses should fulfill the key guiding elements of anti-oppressive research identified by Strega (2005).

In terms of power, Wodak and Meyer (2009) stated that critical discourse analysis “often analyzes the language use of those in power who are responsible for the existence of inequalities” (p. 9) because, as noted by van Dijk (2009) it is “interested in the way discourse (re)produces social domination, that is, the power abuse of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively resist such abuse” (p. 63). Jager and Maier (2009) described how dominant discourses can exert power in society as “they institutionalize and regulate ways of talking, thinking and acting” (p. 35). Where asymmetrical power relations exist, “dominant discourses...tend to represent those social formations and power relations that are the products of history, social formation, and culture...as if they were the product of organic, biological, and essential necessity” (Luke, 1995/1996, p. 12). This process of naturalization or normalization of the discourses of structural and systemic inequities helps to maintain the hegemony of the status quo. Indeed, as noted by Young (1990, citing Foucault, 1977), “to understand the meaning and operation of power in modern society we must look beyond the model of power as ‘sovereignty,’ a dyadic relation of ruler and subject, and instead analyze the exercise of

power as the effect of often liberal and ‘humane’ practices of education...” (p. 41). In essence then, critical discourse analysis seeks to determine and uncover how sometimes pernicious paradigms of ideology and power play out in the mundane, taken-for-granted, everyday-ness of dominant discourses so to perpetuate the inequities apparent in both schools and societies.

Performing critical discourse analysis on the data allowed me to delve more deeply into the “subtexts” of social justice educational discourse, allowing for both a critique and reconstruction of discourses apparent in social justice theory and practice to help illuminate what is being said and what is currently being done but also what is absent or elusive. An interrogation of the discourses at play – textual, verbal, and visual -- did help to reveal *some* of the elements that enabled or constrained the translation of social justice educational theory into social justice educational practice.

Critiques of critical discourse analysis: The “tragic gap.” As my discussion of critical discourse analysis has demonstrated, it is a method that offers a means of gaining insight into the beliefs and intentions of participants, and considering overt and covert, or unintentional frames of meaning brought to conceptions of social justice teacher education by teacher educators. Yet critical discourse analysis has its critics: Mosley and Rogers (2011) identified four criticisms aimed at the usefulness of critical discourse analysis in analyzing multicultural discourses. Two of these are especially pertinent considering the ontological and epistemological roots of the two social justice philosophies (liberalism and critical) examined earlier. Mosley and Rogers (2011) proffered that critical discourse analysis tends to see the world through binaries – two mutually exclusive categories of either/or. They contend that this results in worldviews

that “value explanation rather than complexity” (p. 306). In terms of multicultural or anti-oppressive theories of education, the authors used the binaried example of racist/anti-racist to illustrate the potential “neglect [of] the dialectical spaces of social problems and solutions” (p. 306). Additionally, Mosley and Rogers identified a critique that has also been leveled at both critical discourse analysis and critical theory in general: both are primarily concerned with “critique of domination and oppression rather than the construction of liberation and freedom” (p. 306). They alluded to the use of either “positive discourse analysis” (Martin, 2004) or performing critical discourse analysis from a “reconstructive stance” (Luke, 2009) as potential alternative modes of analyses to offset the binaried, deconstructive nature of typical critical discourse analysis.

Positive Discourse Analysis

In terms of Strega’s (2005) elements of anti-oppressive research, critical discourse analysis, whether traditional or reconfigured as “positive” or constituting a “reconstructive stance”, obviously seeks to disrupt dominant discourses in such a way as to make explicit the hegemony of status quo policies and articulations of social justice education that do not marry theory to practice. In terms of interrogating my own data, positive critical discourse analysis resulted in the emergence and documentation of what Luke (2002) described as the potential for a positive discourse analysis including:

1. Emergent discourses of hybrid identity generated by learners counter to dominant pedagogic discourses.
2. Idiosyncratic local uptakes...where human subjects take centrally broadcasted dominant texts and discourses and reinterpret, recycle, and revoice them in particular ways...

3. micropolitical strategies of interruption, resistance, and counter-discourse undertaken by speakers in face-to-face institutional and interpersonal settings. (p. 107)

In documenting instances of emancipatory discourses and actions as exemplified in Luke's (2002) description, I believed I would be helping to bridge what Palmer, 2009 termed "the tragic gap", avoiding the structural constraints of critical theory while explicating the struggle and tensions, failures and successes that occur in the interstices between oppression and emancipation.

In the next section of this paper I turn my attention to autoethnography and the role it played as a research methodology.

Autoethnography

"There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard." Arundhati Roy (2004)

Recognizing that research is never value-neutral, I have chosen to incorporate myself *into* rather than detach myself *from* the research through a self-reflexive autoethnographic accounting of the experience. Berg and Lune (2012) noted that "giving voice to the researcher provides insights into the world of research for the reader... [and that] rather than merely heaping results, findings, and even analysis upon the reader, the researcher can share a... portion of the research experience" (p. 210). Echoing this point, Richardson and St. Pierre (2008) proffered that qualitative writing "directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times... [and that] nurturing our own voices releases the censorious hold of 'science

writing' on our consciousness as well as the arrogance it fosters in our psyche; writing is validated as a method of knowing" (p. 477).

Like the anti-oppressive practices identified by Kumashiro (2009), autoethnography can add a form of "critical reflexivity" – turning the lens inwards as well as outwards to assess the implications of one's own positionality within the "fieldwork practices and relationships particularly with respect to power" (Walsh, 2009, p. 80). Such reflexive practices ensure that the researcher is always cognizant of how their "own perspectives and practices make certain changes possible but others, impossible..." (Kumashiro, 2009, p. xxxviii). In other words, "factors such as gender, class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, education, and the personal beliefs and perceptions of the researcher will influence every stage of the research, including the research questions they choose, their interactions with the researched, and their interpretations of the material they collect..." (Walsh, 2009, p. 80). This is a hallmark of Strega's (2005) point that anti-oppressive researchers make attempts to disrupt dominant discourses, knowing that our situatedness will in some instances make us complicit with the same discourses we attempt to disrupt.

In describing the potential for autoethnography as methodology, Maguire (2006) explained that:

...autoethnography genres...intentionally blur the traditional lines between social science and literature, subject and object, and subjectivities and cultures.

[It]...offers much dialogic and expressive potential...it challenges traditional epistemologies about whose knowledge is privileged and whose voices are expressed, recognized and heard. It boldly calls for alternative, more expansive

ways, creative forms and textual spaces in which researchers construct research texts, position themselves and others. (¶ 4)

Autoethnography then, founded in critical reflexivity, recognizes the distinctly embodied experience of the researcher embedded in the research itself and indeed, as noted by Richardson (2003), understands that “the researcher self is not separate from the lived self” (p. 197). The effort to reflexively account for my own perspectives, perceptions and emerging meaning making is a critical component of my study and speaks to my desire for blurring the boundaries between the rational, objective data and subjective and sometimes messy, and sometimes irrational lived experience.

“Maybe stories are just data with a soul” (Brené Brown, 2010). Finally, as Nielsen (2004) observed, “we must put ourselves in the context; we must feel, taste, hear what someone is saying. Sometimes we must learn to listen under the words, to hear what is not being said...” (p. 42, cited in Prendergast, 2009, p. xvi). The critical element in this is to “learn to listen under the words, to hear what is not being said...”

This is exactly the element missing in traditional forms of data exposition. For example, in thinking about my own research in equity, diversity and inclusion/voice and silence/power in educational discourses, I think of the stories that go untold, data that are contextually barren, stripped of any meat on bones – factual, yet partial, incomplete because there are no asterisks alluding to a “back story”, an explanation, a “why”. It is perhaps easier to describe reality empirically in terms of objective clinical clarity, numerically and rationally-explicit than through lived experience – context sensitive, nuanced, potentially protectively obfuscated, implicit- sensed meaning and value. This is especially true when dominant discourses dissuade and discourage dialogue through data

derived and driven decision-making. It is hard to argue with “common sense” when ownership of such is the purview of the elite sometimes far removed – geographically, ideologically, culturally, economically, socially, demographically from the “storied” lives of those whom their educational policies purport to serve. Equality and homogeneity are easier to champion than equity and diversity when individual stories—including my own—go untold.

This is more than adequate justification for the use of autoethnography in my research. Recursively revisiting and revising the research helped to illustrate that reality is continually being constructed and reconstructed as we act in, are influenced by, and interpret the world. Such introspection, turned into recursive praxis, can only enhance that which I am already doing in the name of education for equity, diversity and inclusion.

To echo Maguire’s (2006) point from above, autoethnography “challenges traditional epistemologies about whose knowledge is privileged and whose voices are expressed, recognized and heard. It boldly calls for alternative, more expansive ways, creative forms and textual spaces in which researchers construct research texts, position themselves and others” (¶ 4). Maguire’s (2006) championing of autoethnography as creating space for diverse representations of research offers hope, one of the hallmarks of critical theory for new discourses of social justice anchored in equity and diversity.

Data Analyses

Crystallization. Given the tendency of research validity to be established using traditional, rational, scientific measures, I established validity primarily through triangulation—that is, through the multiple methods of data collection (interview, content

analysis, and critical discourse analysis). At the same time, however, I tried to problematize or contest this scientific approach to validity by adopting poststructural conceptions of *trustworthiness* – what Richardson and St. Pierre (2008) deemed “crystallization.” Crystallization results from a deconstruction of triangulation (the “rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object” that reflects only three sides of the world) and replacing or supplementing it with the recognition that the interpretation of our research findings—what we see—is entirely contingent on where we stand (p. 478). Such a crystallized or nuanced perspective “deconstructs the traditional idea of ‘validity’; we feel how there is no single truth, and we see how texts validate themselves. Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic” (p. 479). This nod to poststructuralism is echoed in the arguments favoured by Kumashiro’s (2009, p. 10) approaches to anti-oppressive education that recognize the inherent partiality of knowledge and the recognition from a social constructivist perspective that both knowledge and truth are socially constructed (Gergen, 2010, p. 109).

In seeking to hear the voices of participants I have recognized that their stories represent their truths and that their lived experiences are their truths. As such, I developed a deeper appreciation of what crystallization really means in terms of qualitative validity; where participants stand completely reflects their understanding of and being in the world, and my interpretation of that represents only what I can view from my position. A representation of crystallization then must reflect this complexity; I have tried to communicate that in the Findings section of chapter four and in chapter 6, the Implications section of this study.

Coding. As the earlier description of my analysis and methodology contend, I essentially engaged in a process of emergent coding of the interview data. I approached the data from two perspectives, noting factors that either constrained or enabled participants in teaching for social justice in teacher education. The themes I noted as constraining factors were then analyzed via critical discourse analysis. Here, articulations of ideology and power emerged both explicitly and implicitly in the data. Conversely, I engaged in a positive discourse analysis (echoing Luke, 2002) when analyzing the themes that correlated to enabling factors, or factors participants believed assisted them in their work. In particular, I used Luke's (2002) lens to note evidence of hybrid identities emerging from participants' reflections on their experience as well as the re-visioning and re-articulation of dominant discourses of teaching and learning as potential opportunities for disruption and the struggles of crafting strategic measures to counter all forms of resistance. These are elaborated further in Chapter 6 in the implications section of this study.

While I initially believed that my codes would fall neatly into the categories of constrain or enable, as the data unfolded and I struggled to be definitive with placing themes under these labels, it became apparent that the binaries of 'enable' and 'constrain' were limited in their capacity to communicate the complexity of social justice work. Because of this, I maintained the two themes throughout Chapter 4, documenting the findings of this study. However, the recognition of the futility in trying to neatly box humans interacting with their worlds required me to seek an alternative means of exploring the reality of participants' as well as my own lived experiences in teacher education. When I found the overlaps, the contradictions, the confounding data I began to

recognize the emergence of a third theme which I detail in Chapter 4 as liminal space – or, the ‘in-between’ of black and white. The possible space between every binary – what Palmer (2009) identified as ‘the tragic gap.

Chapter 4: Findings

...the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into a dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side (Freire, 2000, p. 39).

In this chapter, I tell the stories shared with me by my participants. As I discussed in chapter 3, I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with each person, recording these conversations to transcribe later. As mentioned earlier, one meeting was face to face, the others took place over the telephone or via Skype or FaceTime. A complete list of the questions I asked during the interviews can be found in Chapter 3, but in general, the questions I posed to my participants were framed around the first of my two research questions which was:

How do those working, teaching and learning within explicit social justice oriented teacher education programs perceive of or interpret the structural, pedagogical, contextual and personal epistemological/ontological factors that either enable or constrain social justice teaching and learning?

What follows is my representation of participant data. And as I noted in the conclusion of Chapter 3, as the data unfolded in each category, it became apparent that the binaries of 'enable' and 'constrain' were limited in their capacity to communicate the complexity of social justice work, therefore I go on to explore the overlapping and

sometimes contradictory nature of the findings in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

Factors that Enable

Teaching is a hard job. Teaching that irritates or troubles – that challenges pre-service teacher thinking and beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning— can be exhausting. Teacher education programs with explicit social justice orientations, such as the ones chosen for this study, have made some progress in creating processes and structures that facilitate and support educators committed to the hard work of helping pre-service teachers develop a critical lens towards their understandings of teaching and learning. These lenses turned both outwards to question systems and structures that oppress, and inwards to uncover conscious and unconscious beliefs and practices that serve to maintain the inequitable status quo (Kumashiro, 2004).

In this section, I will highlight factors that emerged from the data that in the opinions and experiences of this study's participants, were critical enablers in their attempts to teach for social justice within their teacher education programs. Those factors that resonated or appeared consistently throughout the interviews are elucidated here.

I will begin with intentionality which emerged as an implicit characteristic or moral purpose/underpinning in the descriptions provided by all participants, and then turn my attention to resources, both material and human, external supports and catalysts for change, as well as the numerous components that compromise programmatic structures (including faculty composition and program size), and finally, I will focus on my participants' identity as factors that enable them to prepare pre-service educators to teach for social justice. I turn my attention now to the concept of intentionality.

Intentionality. This specific factor was not identified explicitly by the participants but was apparent in the descriptions they provided of many facets of their programs. According to participants, teaching for social justice was largely facilitated through concerted, concentrated, and conscious commitments to creating the conditions for the work to occur. In other words, everything done in the service of social justice teacher education was done intentionally. This was most obviously apparent in programmatic structure as these programs self-identified as having a social justice mandate and were built intentionally on that foundation. A perusal of institutional and faculty websites revealed explicit social justice language that informed potential students (or the curious browser) what to expect from teacher education course work and field experiences centered on principles of equity and diversity. For example, one of the institutions (Institution A) has social justice explicitly as one of their program values alongside other values that could be easily interpreted as socially just in their articulation (see Fig. 3):

PROGRAM VALUES

Our Bachelor of Education is informed by these values:

Pedagogical Sensitivity

The TED supports a pupil-centered view of teaching. Educators must develop an understanding of the primacy of the pupil-teacher relationship and its ethical underpinning while honouring and respecting the needs of each pupil. Educators must have the knowledge, skill and confidence to adapt and develop curriculum to meet the specific needs of the pupil.

Reflective Practice

The TED believes that educators must engage in reflective practice, the ability to reflect in a thoughtful way on the significance of different teaching situations and on their role in defining a learning environment. Educators must demonstrate self-knowledge by openly identifying personal biases and projections. Reflective practice, guided by the principles of self-evaluation and self-directed learning, is considered the foundation of continuous professional growth.

Critical Mindedness

The TED believes that educators must understand the complexity, subtlety, and difficulty of contemporary educational questions and issues. In an attempt to solve problems, educators must show a high degree of flexibility in comparing various perspectives and alternative solutions.

Social Justice

The TED believes that educators must be open to and respectful of diversity and difference. Educators require the ability to see beyond their own ways of defining the world and to be advocates of social justice and the inclusive classroom. A high value is placed on the ethical responsibilities of educators.

Integration of Knowledge and Practice

The TED supports the seamless connection between knowledge (academic disciplines), educational theory, and practice (methods for achieving educational ends). Educators must constantly engage in the recursive interplay of knowledge, educational theory and practice throughout their professional lives.

Figure 3 Program Values: Institution A

The concept and practice of intentionality was expressed by participants in different ways, but a core theme that emerged was the notion of consistent messaging. Consistency of message was important particularly if it was ‘purposeful’, ‘deliberate’, and ‘frequently’ delivered. By consistency of messaging, the participants were describing how social justice ideas and practices were woven throughout all elements of the programs including its presence in various forms of text (for example, in course/program descriptions or website content), in course content and delivery, or critical pedagogical approaches and perspectives that challenged status quo thinking and practice. Sonia expressed her certainty towards consistent intentionality this way: “I feel very confident and I can say that – and trust that what’s happening in other courses and how – because I

know my colleagues so well that how they're teaching in other courses and what they're highlighting in other courses would support the ideals of social justice." In this and in all cases, intentionality was expressed as 'explicit disruption' of status quo discourses and 'advocacy' for socially just thinking and practice in pre-service teachers.

The intentional disruption and advocacy stances seem to indicate a movement outward from traditional didactic pedagogy or 'talking about social justice' to engaging in pedagogical practices that problematize and irritate pre-service teacher conceptions of teaching and learning – conceptions that historically tend to be fairly traditional and conservative in nature. Bea expressed the belief that consistent messaging resulted in increased understanding of social justice amongst pre-service teachers. She noted: "Last year's group... would identify social justice as one of the strong principles... they've come out with in this program... If you asked... students... 'what's something that really identifies the program in terms of the orientation of the way... it's designed'... they would identify it as a social justice focused program." Bea indicated that less than 10% of their students enrolled in the program because of its social justice orientation and "...the rest of them really didn't have a clue what that meant... it's not necessarily something that the students understand when they come in." The shift in understanding, from approximately 10% of pre-service teachers comprehending the premise of social justice teacher education at the start of the program to what would seem to be the majority of a cohort having the same comprehension at the end, seems to underscore her earlier point that the consistent messaging and other elements of social justice teaching were having the desired impact on student learning.

Whether this increased understanding or identification contributed to or resulted

in a shift in teaching practice is not known, and is beyond the scope of the current research, but the translation from theory to practice is certainly problematic, as Britzman (2003) noted,

The last form of fragmentation—between theory and practice—is most apparent when prospective teachers live the dramatic shift from learning about teaching in university settings to teaching in actual classrooms. Throughout student teaching, it becomes the work of prospective teachers to put into practice the knowledge obtained from college courses. At the same time, they are expected to transform this received classroom knowledge, shifting from a student’s perspective to that of a teacher. However, this transformation—of both knowledge and identity, and hence involving the transposition of knowledge and experience—is highly problematic. For it is not just the university that fashions the student teacher’s pedagogy; the student teacher’s life history, both in and out of classrooms, offers definitions of what it means to learn and to teach. (p. 61).

In other words, intentional repetition or iterations and utterances of social justice ideals or mantras, even course work and program foci, do not necessarily translate into transformed pre-service teacher beliefs or practice; the reality is much more complex.

While intentionality is critical to helping unseat long held pre-service teacher beliefs and practice, it is insufficient in and of itself to create the conditions necessary to allow teacher educators to teach from and for a social justice perspective. I now turn my attention to resources, both human and material, and how these can play a role in supporting teacher educators to teach for social justice.

Resources. According to this study's participants, relying on the power of one's personality, charisma, knowledge or experience in trying to disrupt hegemonic pre-service teacher beliefs about teaching and learning will only be sufficient in the short term. At some point, having the material resources to support anti-oppressive curricula and pedagogy is crucial in establishing the veracity of social justice worldviews that some students may find challenging or difficult to reconcile with their existing schema.

Sonia identified Egbo's 2009 work *Teaching for diversity in Canadian schools* as significantly supportive and useful as a reference for both instructors and students as they worked through what Britzman (1998) described as "difficult knowledge" in content and course work. Similarly, the documentary *Schooling the world* was deemed 'instrumental' in helping to interrupt pre-service teachers' sometimes 'messianic thinking' about their role in working with and as saviour of 'other' – traditionally identified as racialized groups with generalized identities living in and subjected to what are perceived as multiple poverties – of race, of ethnicity, of economy, of geography, of gender, etc.

According to Sonia, the video is

perfect for the students in our area who come with the notion that with their privilege they're here to help those who are less privileged and that's why they're going to become teachers. To save the masses. And what it does is it suddenly nails for them this idea...students were like 'okay, this is not about being a missionary to go and convert you know, those poor kids into educated citizens, this is about recognizing that everything I do is going to have an impact and I can do it in a way that takes away from somebody else, or I can do it in a way that brings out who they are.

Other instructors interviewed for this study also cited their intentional choice and use of resources that provided alternative perspectives to the dominant misunderstandings of equity and diversity that pre-service teachers brought with them into teacher education programs. Evelyn pointed out that she chose course texts for use in Language Arts methods courses that de-centered English as the language of power: “I...work a lot with introducing alternative texts...having students read...Aboriginal authors, exploring literature they haven’t read that moves out of the standard school canon...using a postcolonial lens to read literature...would be really significant in terms of how I’ve chosen to teach ...language arts with a social justice focus.” Sonia described a resource review activity where pre-service teachers would be exposed to resources traditionally used in schools that depicted Indigenous people in a deficit light: “Anyways, they would rate them [the resources] and what they’d realize is there’s a lot of negative stereotypes and so on portrayed about Aboriginal writers, so let’s get some [different] stories in there.”

Participants emphasized the idea that although the material resources they could utilize in their course work were critical supports for them in teaching for social justice, it was the invaluable role played by human supports from within their own and other faculties as well as from outside sources that made a more significant difference. These ‘resources’ provided knowledge, expertise, and professional development to supplement, strengthen, and in some cases, shore up faculty knowledge and understanding, especially as this related to learning about ‘other’ in particular. More recently, these human resources have played a significant role in guiding faculty as well as pre-service teachers to a better understanding of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing and being.

Canadian universities and especially faculties of education have started to respond to the *Calls to Action* of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report (Archibald & Hare, 2016, pp. 23-24). The report admonishes us to recognize and address the systemic oppression of the Indigenous populations of Canada (especially as they pertain to the redressing the wrongs committed against Canada's indigenous population) by explicitly addressing these in Canada's public education systems ([Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#)). In describing the importance of expanding on required social justice coursework, Sonia noted, in reference to an increased focus on Indigenous issues, that "it cannot be a final thought, it needs to be a continuous thought, so, that notion of the continuous thought meant that I could open up space in my...class to say, 'why don't you come and teach and introduce us to Aboriginal worldviews and how different they are from western epistemologies.'" Bea echoed this point, noting,

...that instructor comes in as part of our main social justice course, she comes in as part of the planning...doing professional development with all of our faculty. So that some of the concepts that she found resistance for with students, they're actually getting exposure earlier on using a variety of different voices so that when they do hit that course...next May, is there that same resistance or have we somehow managed to make it so that we're not having to you know, we're not making that shift difficult, we're actually making it more accessible for students.

I will address the possible pitfalls of relying on 'expert' knowledge further on, but in these instances, the credibility and 'right-ness' of anti-oppressive approaches and course content and delivery was elevated through the presence of 'primary source' individuals who could use their social and/or professional identities to "speak truth to

power” – sometimes to their detriment, for as Elaine described a course laughingly, “It’s a bugger to teach because they get rotten reviews from students because [instructor] was not very good at making it comfortable either....I think that’s a cultural issue...”

Even though material and human resources were identified as instrumental in supporting and promoting a social justice mandate, there were other external factors that were also tapped as key enablers in these selected programs. I turn my attention to these next.

External factors. Participants described many different factors that they believed enabled them in their role of providing social justice focused teacher education programs. As noted earlier, a reliance on individual strengths and/or external experts is useful to a certain extent and perhaps lends credence to viewpoints that differ from traditional expositions of curriculum, teaching and learning. There is also a benefit in knowing that there are factors external to a program and/or institution that can drive and direct change that happens within. This was the case in each instance as participants described existent and emerging provincial education policy as well as the advent of curricular changes in the K-12 sector as catalytic in terms of supporting the mandates of their programs’ content and delivery.

Curricular changes and 21st century skills. Provincial ministries of education have responded to the global economic push that now demands a workforce with a ‘softer’ skillset, with curricular changes that emphasize what have been called 21st century skills and include elements such as collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and

social responsibility. This move towards ‘competency based education’ has heralded a shift towards modifying the existing education system to try to strike a balance between the neoliberal agenda for outcomes-based education and a more holistically focused education. Neoliberal impacts on education are manifested in an emphasis on high stakes testing, accountability contracts, school choice, and the academic sorting, ranking, and comparing of individual schools by right wing think tanks such as the Fraser Institute and the Frontier Center for Public Policy. A more holistic focus recognizes that education needs to concern itself with more than the intellectual measurement and comparison of children and schools; it should work towards ensuring the whole child has been educated to reach their full potential and to be successful in whatever way is meaningful for them. This shift has supported teacher educators as they have attempted to broaden the scope of traditional teacher education historically focused on the technical or “how to” teach discourse, to embrace the complexity and increasing diversity of 21st century classrooms and students. Sonia expressed excitement at the new directions the Ministry of Education was taking with curriculum in her province, describing it as “the transformation of curriculum...I love it, I really like where they’re going with it that kind of transformation that presumes a kind of total radical new vision of what schools and classroom and all that that looks like.” Jeannie discussed how in her province, treaty education as a “mandatory curriculum initiative...” was manifested in her class as “spen[ding] a lot of time, and a lot of time in the context of my own practice talking with my students about what it means to be a white settler...some of them have never thought about themselves as a white settler...”. Further, this province also mandated a “comprehensive school community health” program for schools which, as Jeannie

described, “is really teaching about and for gender and sexual diversity...a fantastic mandate [with] an amazing set of resources to go with it...” She went on to explain, “We do have a ministry that is very supportive of more socially just approaches in *some* respects” (emphasis in the audio transcript). So, in this description, provincial curricula helped to set the tone and provided the foundation upon which Jeannie was enabled in addressing issues of privilege and oppression with pre-service teachers.

While content/curricular knowledge and technical skill are of critical importance to good teaching, so too is recognition and understanding of the myriad factors that impinge on student learning and the role that education has historically played in maintaining systems of oppression. The tension that exists between these and other potential understandings of what education and schools are for is negotiated daily as teacher educators attempt to build bridges between perspectives.

Responding to the TRC. In all cases, the lead up to and impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (which described the gross injustices committed against Indigenous populations through forced assimilation and cultural annihilation via residential schools and the ‘60s Scoop’ resonated through all institutions and has resulted in an increased focus on ensuring pre-service teachers have a much deeper understanding of the role education has played in the systemic marginalization of First Peoples.¹ This was expressed by participants as they described their programs’ inclusion of course work in Indigenous education, as well as in one case, the recent creation of a Canada Research

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[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring the Truth Reconciling for the Future July 23 2015.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring%20the%20Truth%20Reconciling%20for%20the%20Future%20July%2023%202015.pdf) p. 138)

Chair position for Reconciliation Education in the Faculty of Education. These institutions also responded to a number of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* by making an increased effort towards integrating greater Indigenous content and perspectives into coursework and addressing, with pre-service teachers, the intergenerational impact of residential schooling on Indigenous populations.

The teaching profession. An additional external factor that has enabled these educators to persevere in their social justice mandate has been the support of the field, by which I mean public/independent boards of education that hire graduates of these programs. Jeannie indicated that she had been contacted by a local school district-based senior administrator who, having interviewed numerous graduates, indicated that they were very impressed with new teachers' depth of understanding in regard to all facets of teaching and learning – including a social justice perspective. She described the conversation thusly: "...I've had directors of education approach me unsolicited and just say 'wow, I've just interviewed several of your fourth-year students for positions and they're amazing. They understand the complexities of schools, they have a sense of the whole child, they understand inclusive education principles and practices..." As Jeannie noted, as graduates of these programs start to enter the field and eventually take on leadership roles in their schools and districts, their commitment to social justice teaching and learning starts to have an impact on their colleagues and small localized shifts in thinking and practice start to occur – what she described as "capacity building". She went on to describe how she has observed these fairly new teachers/administrators go on to create networks of support with like-minded colleagues – many of them members of the same university cohort or graduates from the same program: "...some of them...are I think

really leaders in their respective schools in term of anti-oppressive approaches to...education”.

At another institution, Bea described how the local public school district (geographically situated within a densely religious region) acknowledged and appreciated the social justice focus of their teacher education program. It could be surmised that graduates from that institution would be valued by the school district as they perceive that in some ways, the social justice mandate offered a counter-balance to some of the more fundamentalist viewpoints held by much of the region’s population. Such public ‘official’ support lends obvious credibility to the teacher education program as students can recognize the pragmatism in choosing this institution for their teacher education – the opportunity to find work in what was, at the time, a shrinking job market was perhaps as or more important than any appeals to their social justice orientation.

Thus far I have described three external factors identified by participants as enabling them to teach for social justice. In this next section, I turn my attention to the many elements of the educational structure itself. In referring to the structure, I have broken it down into three components: the large system or ‘macro-structure’ of the university, the ‘meso-structure’ of the teacher education programs, and the smaller or ‘micro-structures’ that comprise the meso structure of the teacher education program such as faculty composition, size of program and field experience opportunities. I begin with the macro-structure of the university and how it can and has supported these individuals and programs in their efforts to prepare teachers to teach for equity and diversity. I then turn my attention to the meso and micro structures before concluding

with an examination of the role that teacher educator identity plays in facilitating social justice programs.

Structural Enablers

Macro-structure: The university. Given the bureaucratic structure of most universities, it is safe to venture that the adjectives ‘flexible’ and ‘nimble’ are not frequently used to describe the ways in which universities respond to changes taking place outside or in some cases inside their realm. The image of the ivory tower atop a hill, or the perceived philosophical/intellectual gap between the average citizen and academia as denoted by the term ‘town and gown’ indicate the apprehension of difference that exists between the ‘real world’ and places of higher education. However, each of the participants in this study identified institutional support – or, non-interference in one case -- as significant factors in enabling them to proceed with their social justice mandates in teacher education. For example, Jeannie noted that their faculty had a certain amount of autonomy within the university to operate as they saw fit – as long as they were able to meet the university’s criteria for ‘quality programming and delivery’. We did not explore what ‘quality’ looked like or how it was defined in this institution but it would be an interesting subject to explore further in relation to the implications of adopting value orientations such as ‘quality’ at face value without interrogating it for the assumptions about what quality is and who gets to define it inherent in the concept itself. Bea described how their program was developed with a social justice focus from its inception – independent of the university, but fully supported by the institution. Given this, it would seem that while perhaps not necessarily nimble or flexible, these particular

institutions allowed their teacher education programs the time and space to develop and redevelop to reflect the changing perception and nature of education and schooling in each of their jurisdictions.

While the overarching structure of the university was identified as a significant factor in enabling teaching for social justice, a structure ‘closer to the action’—the teacher education programs within faculties of education—were also instrumental in the role that they played in facilitating social justice teaching and learning. I have located the teacher education program at what I call the meso-level in terms of structure. This space exists between the largely unwieldy structure of the ‘big P’ policies of the university and the potentially reflexive ‘in the moment’ personal interactions that occur at the micro-level between and amongst faculty and students. This meso-structure is important in that it sometimes acts as the filter through which ‘big P’ institutional and external policies are interpreted and enacted to facilitate the ongoing work of equity-oriented teacher educators. It is to this level that I now turn my attention.

Meso-structure: The teacher education program.

Bureaucracy and accountability. Teacher education programs as part of faculties of education are beholden to the same levels and dictates of bureaucracy as are every other department within university settings. In addition to institutional bureaucracy, these programs are bound by external adjudicatory bodies like the Teacher Regulation Branch in British Columbia or the Ontario College of Teachers whose policies dictate program content, course requirements, contact hours of pre-service teacher practica, success criteria and provincial standards for successful teacher certification. The bureaucratic

nature of these structures and the accountability processes and measures they demand highlight the tension that may exist between the university's desire for the economic boon that results from a swift turnover of the student body afforded by shortening existing teacher education programs, and the prescriptive, time-intensive curricular requirements of external regulators.

While there are certainly challenges in the relationships between university faculties *qua* faculties of education and institutional administration (who must focus on both academia *and* the bottom line), as well as the dictates of external bodies who weigh in on all curricular and practicum details, there is still a significant amount of freedom afforded to the programs described here in reaching institutional or provincial standards for teacher certification. For instance, Jeannie described how their faculty was able to negotiate the institutional (macro-level) requirements of the traditional and mandatory course evaluations by shifting the way these are perceived and interpreted by their faculty. Surveys, completed by students at the end of each term, serve to evaluate courses and instructors based on a number of criteria. In many institutions, these survey results are used to determine merit increases amongst full time or tenured faculty. "Better" course evaluations may result in more merit points that could translate into a raise in salary. In cases of sessional instructors, satisfactory course evaluations can guarantee continued work, but unsatisfactory course evaluations can mean not being offered teaching positions in subsequent semesters. Given the financial implications of both positive and negative course assessments, it would seem obvious and sensible that instructors might go out of their way to teach in such a way as to avoid harsh judgment on student course evaluations. While playing safe and avoiding controversy in class

might result in financial security, it does nothing to challenge students to think critically about issues such as privilege, heteronormativity, racism or any other marginalizing discourse operating in our educational systems. Jeannie noted that because their faculty do not shy away from teaching from a social justice perspective – bringing to light issues of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, ableism, etc.—they can almost guarantee poor evaluations from pre-service teachers who face cognitive dissonance and discomfort as their normative beliefs and understandings are challenged. She noted,

when we are teaching for social justice and using anti-oppressive pedagogies, and challenging students to think differently about themselves, their experiences with school, about how others experience school, it can be very unsettling and uncomfortable for them and they can often respond with subtle and more overt forms of resistance. Which can be difficult to navigate as an instructor of a class, and so we've had many conversations as a faculty about how we manage those resistances – what do we do with them? Um, how do we, how do we read course evaluations differently as a result of our social justice orientation, recognizing that when students feel affirmed, in a class where their identities are affirmed, where they're not being destabilized, where they're getting what it is they think they need and want, then they're going to respond more positively in the course evaluations. So, we've actually built that right into our criteria document which is a document we use for performance review. So, we are overt about our social justice orientation in our criteria document and we acknowledge ways in which that can play out um, in teacher evaluations and in other ways as well.

Because of this understanding at this institution, negative evaluations do not come as a shock – they are expected and are interpreted as indicative of doing a good job at disrupting hegemonic and marginalizing discourses of the status quo. At another institution, a course that resulted in poor course evaluations was described by Elaine as “...a bugger to teach because they get rotten reviews from students because [the instructor] actually [was] not very good at making it comfortable...” intimating that at least in this institution, the impact of negative course evaluations still had the potential to influence how courses were taught. In other words, institutional policies and procedures around the evaluation process had not seemed to shift to support instructors as they worked to have pre-service teachers adopt a critical awareness of their own complicity in maintaining schools and classrooms as oppressive educational structures. On the flip side, Jeannie described how the absence of an institutional review policy or document was quite liberating in that it afforded the faculty a certain degree of autonomy – “recognizing that there are still expectations in terms of teaching, research and service that need to be embedded in that [faculty review] document. But how that looks is really up to faculty. And so we collectively...did an overhaul of our criteria document to fall into alignment with that social justice orientation more intentionally.”

Formal and informal leadership. Earlier I described how it is at the meso-level or faculty level that institutional and external policy can be interpreted and enacted to reflect the context of individual teacher education programs. Interpreting and articulating policy that may seem devoid of any of the characteristics associated with the holistic nature of teacher education would not be possible without the kind of leaders who are willing to advocate for social justice values, pedagogy and practice within the larger

institutional structure. In other words, the ways in which both formal and informal leaders within faculties of education qua teacher education perceive, interpret and articulate their mandate and role is critical to either enabling or constraining social justice teaching and learning. I will discuss the enabling role that identity plays later in this section. For now, I turn my attention to discourses of leadership and the role that gender plays in the realization of a social justice mandate within the institutions in this study.

Discourses of leadership. All but one of the participants in this study currently hold or have held formal leadership roles within their respective institutions, faculties or departments. It is interesting to note that all the participants in this study described their ability to affect change within their institutions or faculties from their occupation of a formal leadership position; none of the participants mentioned their capacity to shift thinking or practice from their roles outside of the official structure. This would seem to suggest that these participants do not perceive or value incremental, incidental or inadvertent change but only significant and/or more public programmatic changes as worthy of mention.

Leadership and gender. All participants in this study identify as female. This is significant in that in traditional discourses of leadership (what Fletcher described as “transactional leadership” 2004, p. 650), gender and gender roles seem to be borne out in each of these settings. In other words, these women rose to positions of power within the existing hierarchical structures and had to negotiate how to ‘be’ within these frameworks. Whereas males are perceived to hold or are acceded power regardless of where they are

located within a structural hierarchy – in either formal or informal roles – females sometimes tend to perceive their hold on power only as a result of having ascended to a formal, traditional leadership role within a structure and in some cases, taking on and leading with male characteristics. As noted by Marshall and Young (2013):

There is no question that the percentage of women in educational leadership has slowly increased...the standards that inform leadership preparation, certification, practice and now evaluation do not reflect the perspectives and experiences of women. They were developed from a white male perspective. Thus leadership has added women, but the values and the canon of leadership have been re-asserted, ensuring that the token women who do gain power will have been trained to (and licensed for) traditional values and dispositions and those showing alternative values and insights will be weeded out... (p. 215).

Female politicians such as ex BC Premier Christy Clark and ex British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as well as US Presidential candidate Hillary R. Clinton have all been described as exhibiting male leadership traits – traits described by Eagly and Koenig (2014) as “assertive,’ ‘forceful,’ ‘dominant,’ and ‘competitive’” (<http://www.footnote1.com/research-reveals-how-stereotypes-about-leadership-hold-women-back/>). This may be a result of the traditional gendered conceptions of the exercise of power and of leadership styles that seem to be masculine-normed and the perception that these types of qualities are superior to the softer traits generally attributed to females.

Fletcher (2004) discussed two forms of leadership, heroic and post-heroic, through a gendered lens and identified the qualities of heroic leadership — our traditional conception — with males and masculinity. This form of leadership is generally conceived of as transactional, and is characterized by “...individualism, control, assertiveness, and skills of advocacy and domination” (p. 650). Fletcher then described an emerging form of leadership known as post-heroic which is more transformational, and aligned with femininity. Here, traits include “...empathy, community, vulnerability, and skills of inquiry and collaboration—...[traits] socially ascribed to women in our culture and generally understood as feminine” (p. 650). Yet there is a problem for women enacting post-heroic leadership practices, because as Fletcher (2004) described “...the kind of leadership practices that share power or enable and contribute to the development of others, [women] are likely to be seen as selfless givers who ‘like helping’ and expect nothing in return. In other words, when women use their relational skills to lead, their behaviour is likely to be conflated not only with femininity but with selfless giving and motherhood” (p. 655).

It is interesting to note that each of the female participants in this study are negotiating or have negotiated how their faculty adhere to traditionally transactional conceptions of leadership and the historically bound technical rationality of education and schooling, or the transformational potential of post-structural paradigms of equity and diversity as manifested through authentic post-heroic leadership. As Jeannie noted, this is largely evident along gendered lines:

Now, in terms of faculty, I’m not going to lie and tell you everyone is on board, because that’s not the case. There are outliers and there are resisters and they

resist sometimes in very obvious ways and sometimes in really subtle and dangerous ways. Um, and sometimes, it's really hard on students because they're getting competing messages, and so, you know, it's — you have to understand the context from which the resistance comes. And recognize that it is about, how can I say this diplomatically...the resisters in our faculty are the individuals who have the most privilege. So, they are senior, white men...and so they opt out in all kinds of different ways. They don't come to faculty council, they don't participate in program meetings, or you know, they will say 'well, I already do that in my class so...' you know, 'it doesn't have to be overtly in my syllabus' or, you know, 'oh, [social justice] education, oh, yeah, yeah, there's no place for that in ed.' So. So those are the challenges...

In other words, when new leadership doesn't fit old conceptions, some faculty opt out rather than buy in — an unfortunate situation for pre-service teachers trying to balance their need to know how to teach with a deeper understanding of the characteristics that make teaching and learning authentic, relational, and equitable.

Elaine discussed how when she held positions of authority within her institution she felt she had the most power to shift discourses around teacher education. As she described it:

that was when I had the most influence, because, I really went under the radar and changed what was going on in field experiences and started to shift it from a very technical rational process to actually having our supervising people who were going out — many of them were retired teachers actually working with groups of

teachers. We ended up having 500 at a time, it was a really large program – having them start to look at some of these big issues and what was going on in the classroom. And we talked about post-colonialism ...

The outcome of which was described thusly:

I remember one time actually getting a little comment beside somebody's notes "WTF" – some of the older guys who were going to go out as representatives – well of course what happened actually was... I was the lead and some just didn't come back, I mean they didn't apply to do it which was great – they sort of self-selected themselves out...It was actually very interesting and valuable and it was actually a good way to do it because things started to change without people realizing what was going on.

While describing how the negative gendered responses to transformational leadership is reflective of power relations at work, other participants noted how females in other leadership roles were also able to contribute to a social justice mandate. Sonia described how gender played a key role in the development of their program as one of the initiators was a prominent woman academic whose sole focus was on social justice and whose values were then instilled in the program from its inception. Bea described the 'post-heroic' work of a program advisor who was able to intervene on behalf of an Indigenous student who had suddenly become homeless and wasn't receiving assistance from her local Band "...[she] came up with housing opportunities and being able to stay here on campus and activate all of these different processes which were extremely important to [the student] to be able to continue [their] journey to becoming a teacher..."

So, whether these participants were engaging in overt or covert actions or holding formal or informal leadership roles, the understanding of traditionally *female* characteristics (as described by Fletcher, 2004) and perhaps more importantly, the understanding and embodiment of *feminist* characteristics (and how they operate to promote equity and diversity), did have an impact on their ability to enable and sustain a social justice focus in their respective teacher education programs.

Course work and scheduling. Another element of the meso-structure that supports teaching for social justice is the program structure itself, (although this was also identified as a constraint by several participants who recognized the limitations apparent in the ‘silo-ing’ of social justice into discrete course boxes). Each participant indicated that the deliberate social justice mandate of their program allowed for the creation of courses that focused explicitly on social justice issues. For example, a course entitled ‘Self and Other’ at one institution allowed pre-service teachers to explore their own identity and positionality vis a vis ‘other’ and to come to understand their own complicity in maintaining educative systems that oppress some while elevating others. As noted earlier, the inclusion of specific and explicit course content and the deliberate social justice program structures gave instructors the latitude and permission to push pre-service teacher thinking and to challenge normative beliefs and attitudes with a certain degree of impunity. However, participants noted that these factors in themselves were not sufficient; each participant indicated that it was imperative that social justice was embedded and threaded throughout all courses and consistently and recursively revisited in order for it to become what they identified as the ‘normative’ discourse or ‘foundational’ to the way in which their programs functioned. Emboldened by their social

justice mandate, some instructors indicated that they were less anxious about being overt and unapologetic in adopting an advocacy stance in and through their courses and course work. For example, Sonia laughingly described her in-class persona: “I guess that sometimes I’m not very socially just in my approach, I become a bit passionate, a bit bull-headed about it, but that’s okay, it’s I think focused on good things, on important things...” Countering this perspective, Elaine posited that it was a subtle approach that enabled her to address equity issues:

Interestingly, I think in some ways it was easier to include social justice issues within what I was teaching, which was basically ELA [English Language Arts] methods so it wasn’t, I mean it was part of it, but it wasn’t...we did address specifically but not throughout the course, it was there and pretty evidently there, but it, I think that made it easier ‘cause you could kind of sneak it in [laughing] so, back to the opportunistic aspects of it, and I wonder about that really, I do wonder do we need to have specific courses or should it be, you know theoretically it is, interwoven through all of the courses, but the reality is it doesn’t always happen because some teachers don’t bother doing it right?

In describing some of the course work on offer in their programs, each participant noted how the programmatic scheduling of courses as well as course content acted as a foundational enabler for their work. Sonia described it as a “bookend model of social justice issues threaded through the program.” What this meant was that specific courses related to social justice themes opened and closed pre-service teacher course work while other courses – more traditional methods-type courses – had components of social justice embedded within them. Elaine described some of her programs’ course work like this:

I think because our program is supposed to have a social justice focus and that our students come in with the [prerequisite] anti-racist/anti-oppressive course, that certainly facilitates teaching for a social justice perspective because while in some cases students refer to that class frequently as the “bashing white men” class and that, but at least they are whether they believe it or not, they’re paying lip service to it, the ideas aren’t new. So, I would say that that structure certainly helps.

Despite the importance of the overarching structural features at both the institutional and faculty level, some of the greatest enabling factors were present at the micro level. In this instance, I define the micro level as the place where programs and policies are operationalized and include the impact that faculty composition, program and cohort size, field experience opportunities, and pedagogical approaches had on contributing to or supporting a social justice mandate in each of these teacher education programs. I now turn my attention to faculty composition and the enabling role it can play.

Micro-Structure.

Faculty composition. In every instance, participants identified the composition of their faculty as imperative in terms of creating a milieu supportive of a social justice mandate. As each of the programs researched have explicit social justice orientations, it is expected that postings for new faculty contain some form of language identifying the desired applicant characteristics – as noted in this posting for an Assistant Professor from one of my focus institutions:

The Faculty of Education....is inviting applications for a tenure-track position beginning... The Faculty has a strong orientation towards social justice issues in education and is committed to enacting the themes, vision, values and mission of the University's Strategic Plan...

The specific language around the social justice focus reflects this institution's desire to attract applicants who are interested, willing and able to engage students with an anti-oppressive pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. Jeannie indicated that their social justice teacher education mandate is now an attractor for new faculty, noting that in interviews some potential hires identified this characteristic as a significant factor in deciding to apply to the institution. Bea discussed that, because they are a small institution, who they hire into their faculty is critical to their social justice mandate. She offered that "because we are able to make changes on a year-to-year basis...we need to have that common vision and strength of purpose so that the decisions that we're making year to year align with [our] values..." While these examples bode well in terms of attracting the right applicants, Elaine did note that targeted hiring practices do not guarantee that once in a position, successful applicants will put into practice what they preached in an interview, an unfortunate by-product of faculty autonomy. She stated:

...the new thing is too, people can say all kinds of things in a job interview so, there's no way to know how they're actually going to turn out right? I mean it's a challenge. On a level, you sort of have to trust that at least it's what a person thinks they're doing although I'm always interested even with teaching when someone says, "this is what I'm doing" and you actually go and watch and it doesn't look like it to me, but....

Perhaps as important as attracting the “right” applicant to a faculty position is the development and nurturing of collaborative and collegial relationships with existing faculty. In every instance, participants pointed to the necessity of having supportive colleagues who are also committed to the hard work of challenging normative discourses within education and teacher education in particular. At one institution, this was described by Bea as part of a process of

implementing collaboration days amongst instructors...we have a lot of sharing between...instructors to look at ‘okay, what is it that you’re doing in your course, what is it that I’m going to do in my course, and how do we have those connections?’ because it’s simply not enough to have a course on social justice if you can’t then integrate that component into other courses.

Bea went on to note: “...we actually combine classes together, social justice class and my lesson planning course...it’s that idea of recognizing it’s not separate courses, it’s something that needs to be integrated across the entire program and therefore, a mission taken on by each of the...instructors.” This collaborative process was echoed by Sonia who described the ‘momentum of collegial thinking’ that pushes or pulls other faculty along in a movement towards a more critical articulation of teacher education program delivery, while conversely, Elaine described how the shift away from a focus on the strictly technical/rational practice of teaching and learning resulted in the ‘loss’ of individuals who were not on board with the changes taking place. The loss of those who were opposed to or not supportive of the shifts or program renewals were seen as positive or enabling factors in that they could be replaced by those whose vision was more aligned

with a social justice orientation. This personnel factor is an interesting one in that the naysayers or resisters in both faculty and in field experience supervision were described as ‘old white men’ for whom a shift towards a social justice approach in teacher preparation signaled a loss of their status and power as the traditional scientific paradigms of objectivism, impartiality and absolutes are replaced with a recognition and understanding of the contextual, relational and social construction of learning. Jeannie noted that shifts in teacher education that dig deeply to uproot normative discourses of gender, ability, race, etc., are “...dangerous to their sense of identity because it challenges – it challenges privilege, it challenges dominance and names white supremacy and things like that, and so they opt out in all kinds of different ways.” She went on to describe the positive impact of this exodus, noting that “what began to happen is we began to have a critical mass of people that are committed to renewing the program in such a way that the technical is still there, but there is a commitment to thinking more deeply about the complexities of teaching and learning from an anti-oppressive stance”. So, in this instance, the momentum or disruption generated by like-minded faculty and administration resulted in both attraction and attrition in terms of those working within teacher education programs. The resistance noted above will be addressed in more detail when discussing what participants identified as constraining factors in their mission to teach for social justice. For now, I turn my attention to a second micro-factor, the size of teacher education programs and their cohorts.

Program and cohort size. Two of the most significant enabling factors identified by participants were the size of their programs in terms of number of students/faculty,

and the batching of students into cohort groups that moved through their elementary, secondary, or post-degree programs together.

Sonia and Bea noted that being a small program enabled them to be flexible and nimble in their approach and response to working with pre-service teachers. They pointed to their size as integral in allowing them to be adaptive to meeting their students at whatever level of understanding or acceptance that they had reached. They recognized that learning is co-created and so could adapt pedagogy to reflect the reality of their immediate contexts. Being adaptive also allowed and created space for addressing the tensions that arose as their students were confronted with, and began to learn of, the ways in which privilege, power and oppression operate within educational systems. Pre-service teachers learned how these are recursive and accretive processes – deepening and thickening over time – and how they are complicit with these processes unless they are actively working against them. When pre-service teachers become aware of or are (some for the first time) exposed to the real impact and ubiquitous nature of social *injustice*, many experience a jarring dissonance that disrupts their long-held beliefs about themselves, others, and their place in the world. As Kumashiro (2004) noted, “And since learning what we desire not to learn (as when learning that the very ways in which we think, identify, and act are not only partial but also problematic) can be an upsetting process, crisis should be expected in the process of learning, by both the student and the teacher” (p. 55).

Centrality of relationships. Because such unsettling experiences can be traumatic, each participant emphasized the absolute necessity of establishing supportive relationships within the cohort (including the instructor) and between and amongst

faculty and students that provided a safe space to express and discuss the emotions that arose in response to the disruptions that occurred. Bea and Sonia noted that this support was made possible by and facilitated through the intimacy afforded by small programs and small cohorts, and all participants noted that within the context of smaller groups, it is much easier to develop the kinds of trust necessary to allow both students and instructors to feel safe in being vulnerable in allowing authentic emotional reactions and responses to surface in the face of difficult learning. As Sonia stated,

...I feel safe to teach the course because I know it's a part of a structure of the program. Like, I feel safe to go there in certain ways because I know this is something that my colleagues – if my colleagues know that disruptions are happening in that course you know and whatever mutterings they might be hearing – and you know, that's part of the beauty of it because we all teach the same students...I feel safe enough to know that that's not going to be like 'oh well, you know, so and so isn't doing a good job of that course' or you know, 'what's going on'? They expect some of that disruption – they want some of that disruption...

Bea described her response to dealing with the tensions and ultimately resistance that can surface when pre-service teachers face disruptive or discrepant events:

...resistance can be approached by banging on the head or you can try to approach it gradually...we sort of go 'what can we do in the program' and that's one of the nice things about our program, that's one of the strengths of our program in that

we are small and we are able to be very responsive...we meet as a team, sort of 'how do we address this, how do we figure out some way of minimizing this...

She went on to note "We actually alter what we're doing, because you know, that's actually how we wind up...having equity...achieved – when we alter to meet them where they are. It's not about getting everybody to the same point...it's a really big shift for them..."

Underscoring this idea, Evelyn described how it is much easier to be responsive to and develop meaningful personal relationships with a group of thirty than it is with a lecture hall filled with three hundred students.

As I noted in the last section, the development of relationships and relational trust, as well as the creation and maintenance of safe spaces, allows both students and faculty to explore and express their vulnerability and are integral in establishing the kind of environment that can nurture and support pre-service teachers' growing commitment to building socially just schools and K-12 classrooms. Entering trusting relationships with others requires us to be, to a certain extent, our authentic selves. That is not to say that we lay our souls bare in every situation or context, but that we engage others authentically with the same spirit of care and concern that we hope to receive in return. As Evelyn put it,

Because as a teacher I believe that teaching is about relationships with my students in my classrooms and I think that enables me to have that vulnerability and to express a range of emotions. To really say what I think and believe, because we teach cohorts so frequently I will teach both first and second term

with small groups of 30, teaching them three hours at a time which is very different in relationship building than if you're teaching three 50 minute slots in a week. There's a sense of community and trust that builds up there that allows for vulnerability and expression.

However, pre-service teachers are enrolled in programs that have a beginning and an end and some form of evaluative component that requires them to perform to a certain level. We can hope that in spite and because of all the course requirements and requisite learning experiences, they will start to develop an understanding that authentic reciprocal relationships of trust and mutual concern are foundational to teaching and learning in today's schools and classrooms. Unfortunately, teacher education programs are largely divorced from school contexts. The perceived division or discrepancy between university education (theory) and real-life classrooms (practice) is sometimes exacerbated by course assignments that require student teachers to engage in university based practice teaching – or micro-teaching sessions that are meant to, but in no way mimic real classroom contexts. Pre-service teachers have expressed annoyance with the contrived nature of these scenarios and complain that they have too few opportunities during their time in teacher education programs to immerse themselves in real classroom environments with real learners. This is where the last micro structure – field experience opportunities— comes into play and it is there that I now turn my attention.

Field experience. I described the micro-structure as the place where elements of teacher education programs and university/external policies are operationalized. I have included field experience in this section because it is here that the two worlds—theory and practice—merge and where there could be opportunities for instructors and field

experience personnel to collaborate to provide student teachers with tailored yet authentic field experiences in diverse contexts. These personalized opportunities could be provided to challenge pre-service teachers' understanding of 'other' through immersion in unfamiliar demographic or geographic settings, or to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to work with populations that they would not normally be exposed to through non-traditional or alternative placements. As an example of this, Evelyn described how pre-service teachers had the opportunity to work with incarcerated populations inordinately comprised of Indigenous youth. The potential for reinforcing stereotypical perceptions of Indigenous people may have emerged as an unintended consequence of this situation, especially if pre-service teachers have not been exposed to a critical consideration of the historically systemic incarceration of Indigenous people. Diverse field experience placements are not always possible and student teachers find themselves placed in classrooms where pedagogy and practice reflect the age-old traditional conceptions of diversity and difference which may stop at what Fleras and Elliot (1999) termed "multicultural enrichment" (p. 363) with an emphasis on colour blindness, conceptualizing Indigenous culture as frozen in time and stereotypically represented as 'beads and bannock' or, what Sonia called the 'food, flags and festivals' approach to addressing or 'celebrating' diversity.

In terms of its enabling potential, field experience was described by Elaine as the place where changes towards a social justice orientation could be made surreptitiously and unobtrusively noting,

we didn't take it [talking about post-colonial education] all through the faculty at that point, it was kind of making changes in field experience. It was actually very

interesting and valuable and it was actually a good way to do it because things started to change without people realizing what was going on.

Field experience is handled differently at different institutions, but for the most part, teacher educators are not usually involved in the supervision of pre-service teachers on practicum. This lack of involvement obviously paved the way for changes to be made at one institution as noted above, however, at another institution, faculty were far more involved in the process including trying to find the ‘best’ fit to support pre-service teachers in their growth towards becoming social justice-inclined educators. As Bea described it, “We look at where’s the best placement for students, what kind of additional supports do they need to have in place? If you can imagine it’s almost like IEPs [Individual Education Plans] for some students as they need it...especially when they head out onto their practicum.” Bea went on to describe how they tailor practicum experiences for their students by noting “one of the things that we try to make sure we do as they’re heading towards the end of the program is to make sure they’re provided with a whole variety of experiences with different populations...” and then noted how the field experience is dialogic by sharing that “we have a lot of opportunities for debriefing [after practicum] where students are sharing what’s happening in their experiences for the practicum...” The provision of a diversity of experiences provided through practicum placements were perhaps largely in response to one of the factors identified by most participants as a constraint (and described more fully later), i.e., the homogeneity of the pre-service teaching cadre who are mostly white, middle class, and predominantly, female.

While diverse field experience placements on their own may not be sufficient to shift pre-service teacher thinking, when coupled with critical pedagogical approaches in teacher education programs, the potential for deeper understanding and changed classroom practice is amplified. More than one instructor described keeping track of the types of teachers their graduates became in terms of their social justice orientation, as well as the schools/positions that graduates sought out upon completion of their programs. These were considered indicative of their students having experienced significant shifts in thinking about teaching and learning. As described by Bea,

we do look at – we do keep track of where they do wind up teaching and which schools they're in and that itself helps us a great deal. Because you know, some of them go specifically looking for very challenging schools and that's where they want to be because you know, that's where they can effect the most change... So, they actually go away to look for ways that they can impact and support the school as a whole and the community as a whole.

As noted above, isolated field experiences are not sufficient to change mindsets or practices in pre-service teachers. The pedagogical approaches employed by those working with pre-service teachers is critical to helping them to shift their understanding of the agency they bring to their role as teachers promoting diversity and equity agendas within their schools and classrooms. Bea described how crucial the role of classroom teachers is as partners in this endeavor:

Some teachers are very focused on practice alone. And so any sort of a social justice goal or sort of overall aim, isn't what they focus on when their student teachers are in their classroom. It's about implementing curriculum in a very

effective way and they don't sort of.... look at going beyond that, they're sort of like "well, that's extra, that's not something that we need to focus on" right? [laughter] to those who view their role with students as being critical. I find the more students we place in high needs schools, the more we come across teacher mentors who are on board and focused on you know, having teachers who are able to enable students to become socially just citizens. There's more of a focus on that in your more challenging schools. Which I think speaks a lot to being able to place students in more challenging environments.

I now turn my attention to the role that pedagogy plays in enabling these teacher educators to teach for social justice, equity and diversity within their respective institutions. I will then end this section with a discussion of participant identity and how those individual characteristics are implicated in participants' understanding of factors that enable them in their mission.

Pedagogical intentionality. Earlier on I discussed the concept of intentionality and the role it played in pushing a social justice agenda forward in the selected institutions. In this next section, I will extrapolate from that concept to include pedagogical intentionality which will be explored as a critical component in bringing an inclusive mandate to bear. By making explicit, critical, curricular and pedagogical choices, participants describe how they are forcing pre-service teachers to face their discomfort head-on and to recognize their own place of privilege in the world and their complicity in maintaining structures and discourses of 'better and less than.' Whether pre-service teachers are open to uncovering their biases, exploring their privilege, or recognizing oppressive beliefs and practices is beyond the scope of this project, but as Elaine noted,

pre-service teachers need information, knowledge and language to confront these issues, and perhaps, some of the pedagogy discussed by participants is helping to create cracks significant enough for the light to get in (with sincere gratitude to Leonard Cohen).

Earlier in this chapter Sonia described how she wasn't always very socially just in her approach to promoting a social justice agenda with her pre-service teachers. While this may seem anathema or contradictory to the philosophy of social justice, it seems to me more reflective of a deep passion for and commitment to a set of values, beliefs and actions focused on disrupting oppressive discourses and promoting more inclusive worldviews. Sonia seems to have wed her passion to her pedagogy and is consciously crafting opportunities and experiences that will challenge pre-service teachers as they move forward in their learning. In describing the work she does with her students Sonia noted,

I often draw a circle on the board – a huge circle on the board for my students and I say ‘right in the middle is where many of you have lived. You’ve lived as part of the dominant majority, you’ve done the right things, you’re in school, you’re part of the... privileged middle class, this defines many of us’. But part of that with our jobs as teachers is to teach at the margins. So, if we start teaching at the margins we then decenter the center. We make the center something other than us and so that kind of notion is really important.

She went on to describe the work the faculty does in relation to the explicitly social justice oriented and worded program values and how these are considered when approaching content and pedagogy and by extension, modeling to students:

...one of the things I've tried to bring forward all the time is our program values need to be threaded into and inform all of our course work. To the point where they should be part of our course outlines. They should be in our course outlines...we need to reference them just the same way as we reference our goals. And say, 'so, from a social justice perspective, how would we consider this notion of lesson planning?' or 'how would we look at this...pedagogical instructional model, how would we problematize that from a social justice perspective?'...I actually say to students, 'those are the questions you need to ask all the way through your program, like who's being left out? Who's not being served by this? What are the hidden structures within the curriculum? What is the hidden curriculum within this school? You know, whose voices are not being heard in your lesson if you're teaching it this way? What kind of resources are you using? Why are you choosing those resources? And, you know there's a purpose for everything, you can choose your resources very, you know, if you can say the word conservative, whatever, not socially just, but still use it in a very educational way to teach something of a value to social justice'. So, I would say that has become more of an ongoing conversation in the department where our vision around our curriculum now is more thematic, it's more threaded through.

Jeannie described her pedagogy through the lens of her identity as an anti-oppressive educator:

But for me, being a social justice or anti-oppressive educator means speaking back to symptoms, structures, practices and policies that perpetuate dominance and re-inscribe dominance in such a way that minoritized students are always

going to be disadvantaged in the context of school. So that's...so I think with my students, what it involves are critical conversations about the knowledge that is of value in the context of K to 12 education...whose knowledge, for what purpose, whose identities are affirmed within that knowledge and whose are not affirmed, and what can – what are our responsibilities as classroom teachers to speak back to dominant knowledge systems so as to invite all of our learners into an educational experience that is affirming and supportive and in which they can have success... We spent a lot of time, and a lot of time in the context of my own practice talking with my students about what it means to be a white settler, and some of them have never thought about themselves as a white settler. The majority of my students are white, and they come from middle class backgrounds...many come from rural areas that are fairly homogenous, so it's a difficult conversation for many of them to engage in.

Evelyn discussed teaching language arts methods from a social justice perspective which included using “the spectrum of neo-Marxism lenses to read literature, so postcolonialism, feminism, queer theory, so looking at who has voice, who doesn't, learning to resist a text...” This included posing questions such as “so why does the author take us down this path, should we perhaps be pushing against it?” As well as “...asking them to question school structures and even the curriculum, why is there a school canon around English literature?” Evelyn also identified taking service learning trips with pre-service teachers as instrumental in helping to shift mindsets:

...that's also been really about seeing the way in which colonialism, and center and margin, privilege and lack of privilege plays out in another context so, most

of the work that we do in...[other] communities, students then begin to make connections between Indigenous issues [there] and Indigenous issues in North America, right? Because there's some really strong similarities in that.

Bea discussed how collegiality and a common social justice vision played out in the creation of pedagogical tools that acted as a bridge between theory and practice:

...it's simply not enough to have a course on social justice if you can't then integrate that component into other programs. A concrete example of that would be, [my colleague] and I are working together to create a checklist – a culturally responsive and Indigenous inclusivity checklist that students can use for both resource choosing and for developing lesson plans. So, we actually combine classes together, social justice class and my lesson planning course to...run a whole day workshop on that. So, it's that idea of recognizing it's not separate courses, it's something that needs to be integrated across the entire program and therefore, a mission taken on by each of the individual instructors... it's a big shift for them, and we do it directly in relation to assessment and planning, so that's pretty powerful 'cause anything that's very practice based, focused on what you actually do in the program, and how we can bring this to fruition, they're usually much more open to receiving it. They're able to look at practice in the classroom, and 'this is what I need to do, and this is why I'm doing it'...they swallow that a whole lot better than just looking at it from a theoretical perspective.

In terms of the impact that pedagogy can have as an enabling factor, Bea put it rather poignantly:

One of the things we really focused on here is when we're teaching something, we teach it in a way or using the method so they can take that method and apply it to the content and implement it in their own classrooms...[we are] doing something to develop our student teachers understanding of social justice...they can then take those activities and apply them to the curriculum that they're teaching their students...in many ways we look at these student teachers...these are the teachers of the future, they're going to be the ones who are determining the direction that education is taking. We want that to have a social justice focus so we need them to be on par and having that same vision and valuing it.

To facilitate the articulation of that vision, Bea described the role that pedagogy plays out in her institution:

And one of the things we can do to enable it, well, part of it is the content that we teach, part of it is the structure we set up in our program, part of it is even being flexible with things like, you know, when they submit their assignments. The amount of stuff around social justice for assessment is astronomical. And it's fascinating when we go through and we look at things for grading and reporting and that idea of giving zeroes if they haven't handed it in, that doesn't actually show you a measure of what they do or don't know about that content area. Or saying to students "well, you have to have this level of font, and it has to have this, and it has to come in on this date" and all this kind of stuff, well, why? Does that have anything to do with your ability to measure what they know? No, it doesn't. So, it's about you know, the restrictions that instructors are placing on

them and that we need to be more flexible in how we do that and what does that look like. And we need to do that ourselves here. So, you see that flexibility in the types of assignments and the timelines for assignments, and being able to adapt and alter so that they themselves as students experience the value of that? And it's very different and it comes across as very much respect. And they don't handle it well when other faculty or sessionals come in and teach them as if they're undergrads – with that same sort of very rigid university model of 'do what the instructor tells you to do and that's all there is to it'. 'Cause there's that empowerment and that ownership and then they go out and when they're in the schools I hear them say "well, oh you know, I have to give them this opportunity" or "I have to give them this second chance because that's what I had, and it's really important, so, you know, I need to make sure that I do what was done for me".

The foregoing discussion has helped to illustrate that making intentional pedagogical choices in service of a social justice mandate can be perceived as enabling teacher educators to teach for diversity, inclusion and social justice. Significantly, these choices were expressed as being more meaningful to pre-service teachers as they could be articulated as a way of putting theory into practice because they were relationally conceived and delivered. In other words, the pedagogical choices participants made were perceived by them as enabling pre-service teachers to recognize the inherently humane value in interpreting and articulating theory through socially just practice. Importantly, it could be inferred that course content came to be understood as only as valuable as the relationally focused pedagogy employed in its delivery.

The preceding section provides a natural segue into the final element of the first half of this chapter: participant identity. I make this connection to a natural segue because pedagogy does not enact itself; it is comprised of and driven by teacher values, beliefs, lived experiences, life histories, stories, and social and cultural positioning, and it is to these participant characteristics that I turn my attention next.

Participant Identity and Definitions of Social Justice

As mentioned earlier, all participants identified as female. None of the participants when asked how they identified themselves alluded to being anything other than cisgendered. Elaine was an immigrant to Canada, Evelyn was a first generation Canadian, Sonia was a second-generation Canadian, Bea implied that her connections to a country or culture other than Canada went back six or seven generations, and Jeannie did not mention her ethnic or racial origins at all. The three educators who identified as immigrants or recent descendants of immigrants to Canada described either their experiences or the experiences of their ancestors as instrumental in sculpting and shaping their understanding and views of social justice. Jeannie framed her identity through a critical lens in describing herself as a “white settler scholar”, intimating that she perhaps came to maintain a social justice perspective because of her educational experiences as both student and teacher. Bea indicated that her view on social justice was/is largely defined and framed by circumstance; in other words, she developed her social justice perspective through immersion in a context with an explicit social justice orientation. Bea described herself as “one of those typical, white, middle class females...I don’t have a strong spiritual influence, I don’t have strong cultural tie in anyway...the things that we do as a family they’re not actually linked to an ethnicity or to a nationality or anything

like that...” In describing her understanding of social justice, Bea framed herself as in a deficit position, inferring that she relied on sources outside of herself to make up for her lack of first-hand experience with social injustice. She described her understanding as follows:

...the most important thing about my view of social justice is that I don't know even close to anything...you know, you need to ask a lot questions, need to bring in a lot of different people...constantly questioning how things are being done, who is feeling involved, who is feeling excluded, what individual needs are there...you need to be able to ask questions and surround yourself with people who can be of assistance to you – you can't rely on yourself as any one person to identify where social justice needs to exist. You have to first be able to gather in resources.

Bea seems to define social justice primarily through actions designed to mitigate deficits or to offset policies or processes that exclude. This approach seems to be focused on more individualized responses to injustices more so than on exploring systemic oppression and marginalization to inculcate pre-service teachers with the capacity and/or desire to effect systemic change. Unable or unwilling to draw on personal experience with social injustice, Bea seems to derive her pedagogy and practice from a more academic and procedural place than do other participants who identified as having experienced social injustice personally or historically. However, when asked the last question in my list of questions: “Would you be willing to document your understanding, observations or interpretations of social justice teaching and learning further by providing me with either a photo essay, narrative, poem, story, or other aesthetic representation of

your experiences to provide a more nuanced and personal version of the data I am collecting for this study”? Bea supplied the following, very nuanced representation of their conception of the essence of social justice.

Social Justice and Teacher Education



In a course I am taking, [an Elder asked viewers](#) to picture a table of corn...the first image popped into my mind. She then showed an alternative image...[similar to](#) the second above...demonstrating the great variety of corn that exists. She used this as a metaphor for understanding the importance of diversity and perspective...which I believe are key to a social justice perspective. This Elder discussed the assumptions made by “yellow corn people”: they value sameness/uniformity, they want things to be black and white, and they want learning to be easy. If we stray from these three, there are often negative feelings and reactions. Instead, she encouraged others to rethink their reactions. If things are different, we will learn more. If things are complex, we can move to a place of depth. If things are challenging, we will be able to move beyond what we traditionally assumed and [actually see](#) things from different points of view.

I find this particularly power for teacher education. In many [ways](#) the students that come into teacher education are viewed as “yellow corn people” and we work to turn them into those who value and seek the multiple [colours](#) of corn. Much research into teacher education even describe most teachers as white, middle class, female...as though they are a uniform group.

However, I believe that there [is](#) no such thing as uniform teachers...even when they first come to us. No matter the communities they may assign themselves to, they have all had very different experiences...they are all multi [coloured](#) corn...but they see themselves, they see teachers, as “yellow corn.” As a result, one of the first steps in teacher education is to help students see their own diversity...they can then move to recognizing the diversity in others...which enables them to move to a position of awareness, to a place where they can value diversity, to a place where they can [take action](#) in support (or protection) of diverse perspectives, histories, and needs.

Figure 4: Bea’s understanding of social justice

In some ways, the seeming contradictions between the way Bea verbalized her understanding academically and her more metaphorical, embodied, artistic response is

reflective of the tension that exists between seeing the work of teacher education as an either/or proposition: we are made to feel as though we should respond academically to focus on the technical preparation of pre-service teachers, when we are perhaps attracted to a more holistic approach with our students; educating the heart as well as the mind.

When asked to describe how she identified/situated herself, Sonia viewed herself as a product of her ethnicity, race and culture and illustrated how her lived experiences have resulted in a hybrid existence:

I realized that I've lived in sort of the space between...that third space that Homi Baba talks about, that sort of liminal existence all my life...So, I do situate myself as somebody who is experienced and has experience and lived in hybrid identities her entire life...and recognize that a fundamental piece that has always kept me grounded in my work as an educator has been around that notion of equity and non-judgmental, unbiased acceptance...I thought at least I had the right disposition and I guess a clear vision of that's what I'd really like to promote in future teachers is that notion of you know...complete acceptance of anyone who walks through your door. And not only complete acceptance but honouring the gifts that they bring...

As the conversation continued, Sonia braided two strands of personal identity and professional identity and how she experienced social injustice in both:

So I guess I have experienced social injustices, not just based on my identity and not just based on my race and not just based on my gender, or my sexual orientation, but I have faced it even in the way that I feel school sometimes

promote a socially unjust kind of structure and framework for learning...as a teacher sometimes I felt that the injustice was, as a professional, I couldn't do some of the things that I wanted to do because well...we didn't have enough money or a textbook – you know, we're all taking a test at the same time and you know, my students wouldn't have been ready. So there were some multiple layers so I address that as well with my students... it's the identity piece around who I am and my own cultural background...growing up as a first-generation immigrant and living in all of those kind of spaces. And then my background confronting social injustice as a professional....

A braid must have a third strand, and in this case, Sonia described the agentic role she embodies as a social justice educator – weaving the elements of her personal and professional experiences with injustice together with an activist role in her teacher education classrooms as she defined social justice:

One is this notion of equity as being sort of different from equal treatment, recognizing that there are times when a differential treatment is really necessary and knowing when those times are. I think knowing when those times are I think being able to make judgments about that. And that's something I still struggle with but I think that's something I would say is part of my vision of it. And the second thing I would say for me I define social justice as um, a kind of way of blurring the margins of the minority/majority and teaching in a decentered way... And then I think the third part of social justice for me is the whole piece...the research that's been done now about teachers as civic agents. So, civic agents...how can I cultivate a vision of...a kind of a stance or an inquiry in the

world and about the world and about natural phenomena that's going to create some kind of action orientation in future learners – whether they're teachers, whether they're students. So that notion of action and being able to walk the talk.

In this instance, Sonia draws on both her personal identity as well as her professional in advocating for social justice with her students. Although she expressed reluctance in terms of being conceived as the “social justice person” in her faculty, as a visible minority, her physical identity sets her apart as ‘other’ compared to the predominantly white faculty and pre-service teacher population in her institution. And whether she accepts it or not, her personal identity can add a layer of veracity to her position as students can assume that she speaks from personal experience when she is describing the role of teachers in disrupting marginalizing practices in schools. At the same time, she can draw on her professional expertise in both content and pedagogy to provide tangible examples of ways in which content and pedagogy can be enacted to effect change. She is using her perspective and experiences as a first-generation immigrant as well as her academic position in a doubly powerful way to underscore the importance of social justice in today's schools.

Evelyn described a value system based in a religious background as an integral part of her identity and one that seemed to be an inherent facet of her social justice understanding. She described herself as a second-generation immigrant descended from a minority religious culture in eastern Europe. She described her ancestors as refugees who came to Canada in the early part of the 20th century and noted that this factor was also

significant in her identity. She described herself as still very much connected to her community of origin noting,

that's a very central part of who I am. I guess that cultural aspect plays into what we eat and how we celebrate things and the religious aspect feeds into a value system and a way of seeing the world, so that's pretty central to who I am and how I try... a reason why I have engaged with the social justice perspective on life. It's something that's been almost nurtured from the cradle in ways of seeing the world. Pacifists, tradition, humanitarian, and all sorts of things.

Evelyn spent a significant amount of time working in Indigenous communities which helped to shape her interest around issues of colonialism and Indigenous issues in Canada. In terms of the ways she defines social justice, Evelyn was hesitant in providing a definition, alluding to the difficulty in finding a suitable one. However, she proffered that:

There's three big areas that I look at in terms of social justice and that would be gender, class and race. And then looking at the ways in which people either have privilege or lack of privilege because of where they're situated in one or all of those areas. So, in many ways those are aspects that people have very little control over...gender and race you certainly have no control over and class is a circumstance of birth in most cases. And then you end up either with privilege or with lack thereof. So, in post-colonial terms we talk about margin and center, so for me, social justice is about creating some leveling – giving people who are marginalized access to power, diffusing the power that people who are in the center have, so, eradicating prejudice which is frequently based on assumptions

that aren't examined or understood. So, I see social justice as attempting to create a society where the circumstances of your birth don't relegate you to the margins forever.

This perspective seems focused on providing tools in a compensatory way to those who are deemed less fortunate by virtue of the circumstances of their birth. It is interesting that Evelyn seems to allude to the intersectional nature of oppression, yet only focuses on three aspects – race, gender and class. From the description provided, one can infer that white, rich, males are the benchmark against which these three are measured and that a socially just approach to mediating injustice would be focused on addressing deficits of birth through some form of redistribution of power more so than increased recognition and validity for identities and cultural positioning outside of the traditional 'norm'. There are of course other areas of oppression that Evelyn did not identify including age, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity, and one must wonder whether if at least in the last two instances these are unintentionally/intentionally elided due to her religious background or whether they are perceived as characteristics of choice – unlike gender, race and class and therefore, personal characteristics over which an individual has control.

Elaine identified as an immigrant to Canada and the first person in her working-class family to have an education past the age of 13. Because of her lower-class upbringing, she experienced discrimination on a personal level. This resulted in a heightened awareness of discrimination, including recognizing overt racism in the small, largely Indigenous community where she began her teaching career. Echoing the notion

that social justice is what Gaillie (1955/1956) called an “essentially contested concept”, Elaine preferred to not define social justice beyond noting:

I think it’s actually probably not a good idea to make a definition. I sound like a cop-out but it’s not intended to be – I think there’s a continuum, so I think you can imagine social justice within your own classroom with how you teach your own children. It’s a very micro level – like James Banks and his books on multiculturalism, so I think you can have an environment in your classroom that treats children with the hope that there will be equity of outcome. And that you treat children with respect to accept different points of view – you can deal with different points of view, but you can also actually use things like *The rights of the child* if you’re working with the middle years group and talk about...so when you’re thinking about your own reading about children, when you’re thinking about difficulties that we might have in our classroom, this is the UN Charter, so how does that fit? I mean when we talk about freedom within the classroom, is that freedom for all for everything? Or are there some freedoms that you have that might interfere with freedoms of others, and so I think you can have that kind of safe environment where you can talk about difficult issues and I think that’s part of what social justice is – it’s to understand that we have rights and responsibilities, but we also have different backgrounds to help us understand it. Now, I think you can also start with a small and encapsulated level but you can deal with the ethical issues, you can deal with difficult topics around gender and religion and sexuality, violence all those things, bullying whatever you want to do. You can deal with it in such a way that gets children to think about their own

world but also to think beyond their world and I think that's pretty important also. Then you've got the school level and then you've got the community level and then of course you've got the national level. The teachers I worked with and I have to say I feel this way myself, that they are quite comfortable with trying to redress issues of inequity within the classroom and the school, but I think probably to be a fully committed teacher for social justice whether it's about sustainability, the role of people, or whatever it is, to actually have projects that take you into an advocacy role – that's actually very difficult I think. Most teachers really don't manage to do that or are not comfortable – I'm not sure I would – I mean I've done some things usually it was on behalf of a particular child though – rather than going out and trying to reform the world.

In relation to the earlier discussion around liberal approaches to social justice, Elaine's response echoes Rawls's (1971) and North's (2006) description of justice as focused on individual rights and equality. This view is in keeping with a liberal interpretation of social justice and can be articulated as a belief that systemic or more revolutionary approaches to solving social injustice may be perceived as futile; change is afforded through action on behalf of individuals within the status quo more so than in a critique of or challenge to the underlying causes of injustice.

Jeannie described herself solely through an academic lens, stating "I would describe myself as a white settler scholar. And I always situate myself [on the land where the university] is. And I would also say I'm an anti-oppressive educator." Jeannie did not describe how she identified herself beyond the academic, and when asked, provided a critical, anti-oppressive definition of social justice:

...It's contested, as you know from the literature, there are a lot of different understandings of ways of taking up social justice. But for me, being a social justice or anti-oppressive educator means speaking back to symptoms, structures, practices and policies that perpetuate dominance and re-inscribe... dominance in such a way that minoritized students are always going to be disadvantaged in the context of school. So... I think with my students what it involves are critical conversations about the knowledge that is of value in the context of K to 12 education, whose knowledge, for what purpose, whose identities are affirmed, and what are our responsibilities as classroom teachers to speak back to dominant knowledge systems so as to invite all of our learners into an educational experience that is affirming and supportive and in which they can have success.

What the transcript does not convey is the passion that came across in Jeannie's voice as she provided her definition of social justice. In each instance, the participants spoke thoughtfully – deeply considering not just the words they used, but the way they were communicated. When asked to define social justice, there was definite discomfort expressed on all their parts, implying that they had some fear in getting the answer 'wrong.' This discomfort manifested itself in vocal hesitations, in false starts, in long pauses, in uptalk at the end of sentences – inferring that participants were seeking confirmation of or approval for their perspective.

What was more interesting was how each participant took (or didn't take) the opportunity to share how they identified themselves. The two participants who did not come from recent immigrant backgrounds chose to define or describe themselves largely

through an academic lens; almost, but not quite seeming to apologize for not presenting with a more oppressed identity than their femaleness. The other three chose to weave their backgrounds into the picture they painted of who they are and how that identity or identities manifested in their understanding and articulations of social justice in working with pre-service teachers. This is interesting in that their personal narratives of social justice seem to emanate from opposite places - a place of negation of oppressive experiences may have had on the one hand, and an embracing of those multiple experiences on the other. In other words, the three participants who chose to incorporate their life experiences into how they identified seemed to have a greater sense of acknowledging and owning the historical and modern day systems and processes that have impacted and shaped the identities they bring to their work - it appears this provides the impetus for them to push forward with a social justice message in their pedagogy and practice.

Whether they understood their background as fundamental or incidental in their role as social justice teacher educators, each of the participants in this study has found ways to enact pedagogies and practices that lend themselves to encouraging more socially just beginning teachers. The factors that enable them to do this work are critical – the personal, social and institutional components of their work worlds coalesce into a dynamic force that moves the work forward. At the same time, each of the participants acknowledged that the challenges to their work were not insignificant. It is to these that I now turn my attention.

In the preceding section of this paper I have provided a detailed description of the various factors that were perceived as enabling the participants of this study to teach for

social justice in their respective teacher education programs. In the next part of this chapter, I will present factors that were considered barriers or constraints to their efforts to teach for social justice. These factors include the perception of teaching as a technical-rational process, faculty resistance to adopting social justice pedagogy and practice, faculty and more importantly, pre-service teacher demographics, and lastly, pre-service teacher resistance to confronting unsettling discourses of privilege, culpability and implication. The chapter will then conclude with a brief discussion of how all the preceding enabling and constraining factors can be perceived and/or act as their antithesis depending on one's perspective and the context in which they are enacted.

Factors that Constrain

What does it mean to “become a teacher”?

...there's also real fear amongst teacher candidates about 'I need to know how to make a lesson plan, make a unit plan – you know, how to teach verbs...' so there's a push back and I think that some of the really key social justice components that were identified and recognized in the program are being diluted in the actualization. (Jeannie)

One of the key constraints in trying to create momentum around a social justice teacher education mandate is the almost constant struggle to transcend the technical rationality that binds pre-service and practicing teachers to the 'how' and the 'what' of teaching and learning. This ideological reduction of teaching and learning to a series of inputs and outcomes carries over into program length and structure as well, and is so pervasive that as the above quote from Jeannie illustrates, much of social justice that is

espoused in theory fails articulation in practice. At the core of this tension lies an oft debated, but rarely solved philosophical conundrum as to the purpose of education itself and who it is that gets to decide what knowledge is of most worth. This has become, at its most basic level, a fight between the global forces of neoliberalism that reduce every interaction – including education – to a transaction, a service or **product** provided, and those who believe that education is not just a product but that it is also the educative **process** that matters – the relational aspects that are as, if not more important, than the product itself.

Along with the push for a technical/rational instrumental approach to teacher education, participants identified other constraints that will be elucidated further in later parts of this chapter. These have been identified primarily as faculty resistance, pre-service teacher demographics/identity, pre-service teacher resistance to social justice teaching and learning and the lack of control over what occurs in pre-service teacher field experiences. These are all very powerful and insidious factors that can operate as impediments to changes in programs, structures and/or beliefs and perspectives that would result in more equity oriented policies and practices. It is very hard to shift institutions much less mindsets and practices – especially when in so doing, those whose voices have historically been heard and those who have wielded the most power are asked to confront their privilege and to recognize how the status quo marginalizes and oppresses great swaths of the population. I will explore the first constraint – technical rationality first before turning my attention to the other identified factors.

Technical rationality. The question of ‘what is schooling for?’ is one that resonates for all of us who work within teacher education. We pose the question to our

students and to ourselves as we do the hard work of trying to broaden pre-service teachers' understanding of education, teaching and learning, and to remind ourselves of the deeper purpose in what we do when we get caught up in worrying whether we've done enough to ensure our students have mastered lesson planning and classroom management. When all parties are aligned with a shift in teacher education (that requires a more nuanced understanding of who teachers and learners are and the roles that both play in the educational relationship) then the work is perhaps less difficult. However, when we face push-back from multiple sites, the work is that much more onerous – but, that much more necessary too. Jeannie described how a shift in a traditionally focused teacher education program heralded resistance from the teaching profession as it believed that the university had abandoned its mission to prepare teachers for classrooms. She described the situation thusly:

There was really a very strong focus on the technical rational, and, I think the faculty had gained a very strong reputation in the field for preparing teachers who were technically competent with their practice...In terms of the structure of the program, there really was very strong focus on the technical rational through the methods courses...and the curriculum courses as well.

In other words, pre-service teachers were well prepared in terms of how and what to teach, but as she noted, were ill prepared in terms of working with a student population that was far more diverse than their teacher education program had prepared them for:

There'd been some gaps in the program – some absences slash omissions that had been noted...including a lack of engagement, um, with cultural I guess, intercultural understanding or cultural studies. There was almost no attention to

inclusive education or adaptations and there was very little in the area generally in terms of anti-racist, anti-oppressive teaching and learning.

High ground or swampy lowlands? The lack of engagement or attention to the less technical components of teaching and learning represents the difficulty that Schön (1983) described when positivist approaches – technical solutions applied to thorny problems – fail to yield desired outcomes. The tension in teacher education lies between, on one hand, the drive for the technical preparation of teachers whose teaching (input) should produce predictable student achievement results (output). I would define this as visualizing the educative process as one of a cause and effect relationship between teaching and learning; in other words, teaching equals learning. On the other hand lies the less quantifiable, yet equally important focus on helping pre-service teachers embody the “essence” of teaching that recognizes that true transformation and deep learning require more than the application of logical solutions to very human dilemmas. Underscoring the need for a more holistic approach to professional practice, Schön (1983) proffered: “We have become aware of the importance to actual practice of phenomena – complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value-conflict – which do not fit the model of Technical Rationality” (p. 39). Schön described this conundrum further in conceptualizing professional practice as a “varied topography” – comprised of a high, hard ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and...a swampy lowland where situations are confusing ‘messes’ incapable of technical solution. The difficulty is that the problems of the high ground, however great their technical interest, are often relatively unimportant...to the larger society, while in the swamp are the problems of

greatest human concern. Shall the practitioner stay on the high, hard ground where he can practice rigorously, as he understands rigor, but where he is constrained to deal with problems of relatively little social importance? Or shall he descend to the swamp where he can engage the most important and challenging problems if he is willing to forsake technical rigor? (p. 42).

For practitioners and pre-service teachers who adhere to a traditional, transmissive view of education, Schön's high-ground is not just more appealing for its lack of ambiguity, but also for the predictability it offers for pre-service and novice teachers who are often swept up in trying to simply "manage" a class – to get from planning, through instruction to assessment. Having to deal with the complex, muddy, "swampiness" of real-world problems that present as social justice issues in classrooms may seem unmanageable and overwhelming to beginning teachers and sometimes results in a clarion call for the clinical, technical preparation of new teachers more so than in engaging them in authentic discourses around critical pedagogies of inclusion. As Jeannie noted, a shift in their program met with overt resistance from the field – resistance that had been instigated by some faculty whose vision of teacher education did not mesh with a renewed direction:

...there was resistance from some people in the faculty; they leveraged that resistance through relationships they had with people in the field – with teachers in the field, with administrators. So, there began to be this discourse circulating out there that we'd thrown the baby out with the bath water. That now we had this social justice orientation we weren't preparing our students to be classroom ready.

And isn't it interesting that there's somehow this perception that social justice and um, the practice of teaching were mutually exclusive.

The suspicion and distrust, if not outright dismissal of changes in teacher education programs, seemed at least in two instances to be exacerbated by what two participants described as the conservative nature of both education and the teaching profession itself. Evelyn described how the narrowing impact of neoliberal accountability policies had a negative impact on authenticity in classrooms and instruction:

...the very conservative nature of education and the sense that the ministry is becoming more conservative as well and caught up in the accountability. So people are stressing about meeting these accountability goals, which are standards of excellence, etcetera which perhaps makes it more difficult to have an authentic classroom that recognizes the diversity of needs of students...I think you always have to have accountability, but when you're measuring it with standardized tests...

Similarly, Jeannie discussed how in joining the field, new teachers are confronted with age-old discourses of tradition and how that impacts their ability to effect change in their own practice in the long run:

...teachers in this province are still a very traditional group and my students have really struggled with that, both in terms of internship and as beginning teachers...I stay in touch with many of them who talk about how they felt – they couldn't be the kind of teacher they wanted to be in the early years of their teaching careers because of the pressures of conforming to those traditional

practices. And that's a whole 'nother layer of complexity that I think exists for teachers, for students that are coming through our program...

In describing the field more fully, Jeannie let out a long sigh before continuing:

Well, K-12 education hasn't...classrooms look pretty much the same way as they did forty years ago so that's a challenge, you know? And, I think the teaching field is a tradition – there's so much tradition in teaching and learning and you know, the propensity to teach the way we were taught, to do as we were done to, so I think for sure that's a challenge. Some of the constraints would be the heightened culture of accountability that teachers are faced with, limited resources and supports for professional development and ongoing learning, also the ease with which our graduates can be re-socialized into dominant ways of teaching and understanding learning. And I think another real challenge is racism, right? Racism is a big one. And it's ever present.

A common understanding amongst teacher educators is that unless their trajectories are interrupted by theories, practices or pedagogies that force them to see the teacher/student interactions differently, pre-service teachers will generally and perhaps naturally gravitate towards replicating their own school experiences in their classrooms because these proved largely successful for them – regardless of whether they defined success socially, academically, athletically or some other way. Whatever the experience they had, they were successful at school. This might have meant that they found success in complying with the system or the teacher, or that they had figured out how to traverse the hidden curriculum – the educational and social terrain that tacitly values some practices, qualities, people and devalues others. This is largely reminiscent of what

Bourdieu and Passerson (1977) identified as ‘habitus’ – the unconscious deferral to unquestioned norms drawn from past experiences, stories, and perhaps, mythologies. In other words, if the structures, resources, routines and practices from their student past enabled their success, then so too should similar pedagogy enable the success of their students (Meierdirk, 2016; Sumara, Davis & Iftody, 2008).

As Jeannie noted above, holding on to newly-learned beliefs, pedagogies and practices of inclusion that allowed them to practice school differently is very difficult for new teachers emerging into an established and conservative field. ‘Going with the flow’ is much easier, less exhausting, and far less vulnerable than is confronting and challenging pedagogies and practices that maintain discourses of marginalization and oppression. Jeannie described teacher friends trying to practice anti-oppressively in public schools thusly:

They’re tired. We have a reading group we meet every other month and the last meeting we had they were all exhausted – because they don’t necessarily feel supported by their administration or if they do feel supported by administration they don’t feel supported by their colleagues. And they feel often that they are, they are in a position where they always have to be justifying the work that they’re doing. Always be justifying it.

That social justice teacher educators persist in trying to inculcate pre-service teachers with inclusionary pedagogy and practice, all the while knowing that their work will be fraught with challenges, is testament to the commitment they bring to the work and to what they believe are our moral and ethical obligations to create better life worlds for all learners.

Neoliberal assaults on education. In addition to the resistance mounted by traditional teacher education preparation proponents in both universities and in the teaching profession itself, participants outlined other factors that would fit into the neoliberal, technical rational agenda that tends to view all things through a cost-benefit analysis lens. In a neoliberal world, the market is the final arbiter of value (Hursh & Henderson, 2011). In education, this has translated into heightened competition for students and their dollars as governments have pulled back spending and are forcing universities to attract their own funding (Sleeter, 2007; Zeichner, 2010). In post-secondary teacher education, this has manifested in some universities shortening the length of their teacher education programs to attract students and to churn out graduates in short order, enabling them to move students through quickly – much like table turnover in restaurants – to maximize the bottom line; a growing mandate for universities in a neoliberal world. Given the short time frame, tensions exist within this model in determining what course work is most necessary for delivery in a condensed format, and how a program can maintain its integrity and identity as social justice focused – both literally and figuratively (Sleeter, 2007). This tension is palpable in participants’ descriptions of their programs and structures. Sonia described this tension in terms of the time constraints the teaching education model at their university puts on their practice, noting “we structure the time in [practicum] schools so much that there isn’t a space for...inquiry...”. Jeannie discussed how she worried when she talked with colleagues in other parts of the country where

teacher education is eight months or nine months, or ten months or eleven months – I just don’t know how you could do the work that I think needs to be done in

teacher education with respect to social justice and anti-oppressive teaching and learning in that period of time. And I think that with universities subject to shrinking budgets and shrinking resources, you know, how much longer will we be able to hold onto these [social justice] programs? That's a worry for me. It's the neoliberal assault on education and I think it's the neoliberal assault on K-12 education; it's the neoliberal assault on post-secondary as well.

Shortened traditional teacher education programs must prepare pre-service teachers for their work in schools in very few months; it is therefore hard to imagine how effective condensed social justice teacher education programs can be at unseating old ideas and practices and solidifying new social justice understandings, all while dealing with the demand for solid technical rational grounding in the 'how' and the 'what' of teaching and learning.

One element that needs to be explored further in relation to the above scenario is the reduction of course work and content to a potential series of check boxes that need to be ticked for pre-service teachers to complete their respective programs. While this issue was not mentioned by many participants, it is significant enough in terms of the elision of social justice in traditional teacher education programs that it needs addressing here. In one instance, Sonia described the process of herding pre-service teachers through their program as creating (for her) a philosophic disconnect that seemed contrary to the social justice vision of the program. Sonia described it as

...a tendency for some of our faculty and in some of our courses to, to, how do I say this? To tell – teach as telling – telling as teaching I guess. They just tell people 'this is how you should do it, this is how you should do that' without that

kind of ‘well, what do you think?’ and ‘how would you construct that?’ Because if the curriculum isn’t owned by the students, then the outcomes and the way it looks becomes determined by the teacher. So, that’s one disconnect I have.

In this instance, it appears program expedience has dictated the depth and degree to which the instructors are able to go or the time they are able to dedicate to helping pre-service teachers explore the non-technical aspects of classrooms – of teaching and learning in relationship.

In terms of conceptualizing course work as a series of boxes to be ticked, Sonia identified the presence of a stand-alone social justice course as a potential constraint to teaching for social justice, noting:

...because it’s locked into this ‘okay, so we’ve done social justice...’ so the notion that that thread may be carried on in the mind of faculty...through the curriculum in our broader, more esoteric vision of it, may not actually be as explicit as it needs to be for the students...So we do have this kind of nice bookend model of social justice issues threaded throughout the course, but I don’t think the students get that...I think we need to do a better job of being explicit with our curriculum map.

The deleterious effect of teacher education programs focused primarily on the nuts and bolts of technical rationality cannot be emphasized enough. When teacher educators choose to enter the swampy territory described by Schön (1980), they forego the solidity of the higher ground, a draw for their more traditional peers who are “[h]ungry for technical rigor, devoted to an image of solid professional competence, or

fearful of entering a world in which they feel they do not know what they are doing...they choose to confine themselves to a narrowly technical practice” (p. 43). On the other hand, teacher educators committed to social justice work in “the swampy lowlands...deliberately involve themselves in messy but crucially important problems and, when asked to describe their methods of inquiry, they speak of experience, trial and error, intuition, and muddling through” (Schön, 1983, p. 43). While there is little in Schön’s description of the swampy lowlands to reassure the social justice practitioner, the allusion to methods of problem solving that rely on human relationships and judgment are much more in keeping with the constructionist nature of education than are the application of formulaic responses offered through technical rational approaches to thorny problems.

I have addressed technical rationality first in this section because I believe it is a thread that is woven through each of the subsequent constraints identified by participants. Although the weave may not be overt, it can be inferred in the beliefs, practices, and structures described. It is to the remaining constraints that I now turn my attention.

In the preceding section I described how neoliberal ideas of technical rationality have encroached on the field of education qua teacher education and the challenges or constraints this has placed on those doing the work in social justice programs. I now turn my attention to another major constraint identified by the participants. I mentioned earlier that the constraints I will describe are insidious; they are also parasitic in that they tend to piggy back on, and exacerbate, the impact of other constraining factors, and, if not disrupted, have the power to topple practices and pedagogies of equity, diversity and justice in teacher preparation.

Faculty resistance. In the earlier part of this chapter I discussed what participants described as factors enabling them to teacher for social justice in their respective teacher education programs. Amongst those factors was their ability to circumvent individuals and/or narratives of resistance by in some cases, working ‘under the radar’ or using their positions to push their agendas forward. These heroic efforts aside, the reality of the conservative nature of education exemplified through faculty resistance to change is significant. For example, Bounos (2001) noted how “liberalism, the predominant philosophical basis for formal education in the Western world, focuses on the transmission of expert knowledge. The teacher, as the expert, exercises power over the learner, who is the recipient of knowledge” (p. 198). For pre-service teachers who “don’t know what they don’t know” the power of expert knowledge can be seductive as they struggle with trying to understand what it means to be a teacher. Therefore, faculty immersed in the technical rational transmission of teacher education curricula who question the necessity of engaging pre-service teachers more deeply can use their power to influence the ways in which pre-service teachers perceive the more holistic conceptions of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, faculty resistance can have a dramatic impact on the ability of social justice educators to effect lasting change in pre-service teacher pedagogy and practice. It can also impact the degree to which pre-service teachers take up social justice worldviews if these are presented as extraneous to the process of learning to become a teacher, or treated with scorn and derision by faculty who defer to the high ground of Schön’s (1983) technical rationality. In some cases, faculty resistance can be attributed to discomfort, reluctance, assumptions, or unfamiliarity – as we will see, but in other instances, resistance is calculated and vengeful, as a re-visioning

of teacher education might be perceived on some parts as a threat to the power they hold in the status quo.

Earlier I mentioned the potential pitfalls of relying on “expert knowledge” in the transmission of social justice. An example of that is how Sonia detailed how, perhaps as a reflection of faculty discomfort, she was made to be the social justice ‘person’ in the department because of an identity marker:

I have to be the wearer of the social justice hat in the department. I don’t feel that although I’m sometimes turned to for that, so, it’s interesting because I think that’s part of the little identity struggle I have with you know, ‘okay, so you’re now our social justice person’ and I – and just by virtue of my skin colour, or my race or my identity or my gender or whatever, I shouldn’t have to be molded into that.

Sonia’s colleagues seem to have transferred their reluctance or discomfort with social justice issues to someone they have assumed can speak authentically from a position of affiliation with ‘other’. They have, through this attributive process, essentialized her experiences as one who speaks for an entire identity group. Rather counter-intuitive and counter-productive from a social justice perspective! Perhaps Sonia has the kind of relationship with her colleagues where she can share her discomfort with the label they have affixed to her, or perhaps she does not; either way, this example underscores the difficulty of doing social justice work even within teacher education programs with explicit social justice orientations.

Elaine described resistance at her institution by acknowledging that faculty had different degrees of comfort with social justice ideas and practices noting:

The faculty all have different levels of comfort themselves, right?

With social justice issues and different levels of belief as to whether it's important or not. So, somebody is quite likely if they're say in math education for instance, to say 'what's this got to do with me?' right? And so, in a program where everybody is supposed to be kind of having the same ethos, that's a challenge actually... we had a lot of discussions and some quite unhappy people, but...you just keep plowing forward and recognizing who they are and talking to them individually afterwards and recognizing their strengths...some came along with us and others didn't.

In describing some of the other ways that resistance manifested itself, Elaine talked about how explicit social justice orientations to teacher education programs provides no guarantee that faculty will take up the work. This may be a function of program size and perhaps the historical narrative of the institution, and it may also reflect the pragmatism in publicly "going along" with a faculty vision of social justice, but privately – behind closed classroom doors – reverting to the delivery of a curriculum based in technical rationality. Although, in the program described above, it was noted that social justice was ostensibly woven through all courses, "the reality is it doesn't always happen because some teachers don't bother doing it – right?" She described potential problems arising from a lack of buy-in amongst reluctant faculty thusly: "[you need to] ...understand that sometimes people have had particular ways of doing things for a very long time and those beliefs that people have around how we are in the world are very emotional...you pull them out too quickly all you'll get is defensiveness, antagonism..." In other words, mandating an approach or an orientation to course

delivery can result in further faculty entrenchment and intransigence which may manifest in subtle or not so subtle sabotage. It is perhaps due to the potential for any gains being lost because of faculty antipathy towards change that Elaine holds the perspective that it is imperative faculty have some knowledge of and comfort with social justice issues *before* being able to talk about those issues with pre-service teachers. This perspective infers that there is finite knowledge around social justice issues that already exists ready to be imparted to pre-service and infers a certain amount of expert knowledge is required before one can embark on dismantling discourses of inequity and marginalization in teacher education course work. It also brings up the issue of whether the potential vulnerability in admitting a learning mindset undermines the authority ascribed to academics in positions of power as afforded through their roles as teacher educators. While the latter perspective is understandable (based on the earlier discussion of participants' discomfort in "wearing" their role), the former seems less defensible as it appears to undermine the necessity of preparing activist teacher allies for diverse Canadian classrooms.

In relation to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada, Elaine noted that faculty resistance can arise when people do not see the impact of the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as their problem, or that they lash out against efforts towards reconciliation due to 'white guilt':

It requires a sustained effort from somebody, and if they're not very interested to start with which is often the case...then people start feeling guilty as a settler white person in Canada. It's easy to feel bad about that, so I think sometimes that long term engagement is actually hard to come by – certainly faculty...many of

them had not grown up in Canada so they didn't in fact know anything about Indigenous peoples – that was a challenge, and nor did they see why it would be important for them...

This abrogation of any responsibility to engage with social justice issues could be considered as morally reprehensible as feigning ignorance when faced with instances of obvious injustice; in the former, one can plead lack of knowledge, and in the latter, a lack of awareness – neither position offers justification for inaction, especially not for those working within social justice teacher education programs.

In addition to being described or excused as ignorant, oblivious or recalcitrant, faculty resisters were also described as overtly passive-aggressive by Jeannie who noted:

There are outliers and there are resisters and they resist sometimes in very obvious ways, sometimes in really subtle and dangerous ways. And sometimes, it's really hard on students because they're getting competing messages...you have to understand the context from which the resistance comes...the resisters in our faculty are the individuals who have the most privilege. So, they are senior, white men...They don't come to faculty council, they don't participate in program meetings, or you know, they will say 'well I already do that in my class, so...you know, it doesn't have to be overtly in my syllabus...' or, you know, 'oh, [reconciliation] education, oh, yeah, yeah, there's no place for that in ed.' So those are the challenges, not everyone is on board...

It is very difficult, uncomfortable, and some might consider it unprofessional to confront individuals who respond to social justice issues in this way as there is a certain amount of autonomy afforded to colleagues to deliver their courses and present the

content however they wish. However, one might suggest that choosing to work in an institution that has or has adopted a social justice focus precludes the affordances of autonomy that one might expect in other institutions. Elaine identified faculty resistance as a “personality” issue before moving into a deeper explication as to why some faculty feel as though a shift towards a more socially just focus would signal a shift away from the “content” of their classes:

...sometimes [I] feel some difficulties because our whole program is supposed to be from a social justice perspective and [long pause] the personality issues always come into play, right? Like, everybody thinks that they teach from a social justice perspective, but sometimes I would question whether or not they recognize their own position or privilege...it's a trickier situation when working with colleagues and adult peers...it's more likely to become contentious where everybody assumes they're doing it so it's a bit trickier there...There are other faculty that don't ever really go there. You know, like they may pay lip service in public to the things that are important, but, they don't actually have to ever step outside of their comfort zones to do that...It's been a real interesting exercise in recognizing how conservative the teaching profession actually is and how resistant to change people are...when we were developing the new program we had comments like 'but, I don't see my class in here' right? So the notion that you might have to go out and actually design new courses is not something that everybody acknowledges.

In other words, change is hard, and overcoming resistance, especially when that might involve ceding some autonomy and power, is incredibly difficult, particularly for

academics whose entire identities may be bound up in their expertise with and transmission of subject area knowledge.

In this section I have shared participants' experiences dealing with faculty resistance and/or discomfort with social justice pedagogy and practice. Understandably, the resistance seemed strongest at institutions that had long tenured faculty and long established teacher education programs that had more recently shifted to espousing a social justice orientation. Participants working in programs with a social justice focus from their inception did not seem to face resistance to the same degree or in the same form. This implies that there needs to be some consideration for the discomfort and dissonance that existing faculty may experience when shifts in mandates in teacher education programs occur. Although Sonia joked that she sometimes didn't have a very socially just pedagogical approach, it would be in our best interest coming from positions where we recognize the centrality of relationships in the work that we do, to consider the very real implications that changes in focus can have on our colleagues and do what we can to support them through the dissonance as they struggle with what may be very new understandings.

Having addressed the role that faculty resistance plays, I now turn my attention to the role that the traditional pre-service teacher demographic plays as a constraining factor in teaching for social justice. I will then shift to looking at pre-service teacher resistance to pedagogies and practices that discomfit and how this constrains efforts towards inculcating future teachers with a deep commitment to pedagogies of equity, diversity and social justice.

“White, middle-class females need not apply.” The monocultural demographic that pervades the Canadian teacher education landscape has long been touted as a stumbling block to shifting educational practices away from replicating mid twentieth century ideals of teaching and learning. This plays out as predominantly young, predominantly white, and predominantly middle-class female novice teachers seek to replicate their own school experiences with students in their own 21st century classrooms. Although this is an intentionally facile description of the traditional demographic of pre-service teachers, it is largely accurate – at least from the perspective of this study’s participants, several of whom highlighted this as a key constraint in shifting mindsets towards an understanding of diversity and difference. Participants described many of their pre-service teachers as bringing monolithic social and cultural experiences and perspectives of schooling into their teacher education programs; experiences and perspectives that did not seem to validate or recognize viewpoints, experiences or identities other than their own. As Sonia described this phenomenon, the challenges the monoculture poses become very apparent:

We still draw...all teacher ed programs start out with this, we still draw from sort of the white middle class, heterosexual female population, so our inability to draw the diverse set of applicants makes it difficult for us to work in a space of diverse pedagogy – diversity pedagogy. It’s getting much better, but I could be the only colored person in the room, so of course, I should be, you know, talking about social justice and diversity. Well, no, I mean, white, straight, middle class, heterosexual females need to talk about diversity too – and talk about their own

issues with social injustice too, because they have them, they just don't recognize them because they're so wrapped up in their privilege.

The lack of diversity and the outward homogeneity of the teaching profession presumes a “common story” of pre-service teachers’ experiences. What is important here is the presumption of a common story; if pre-service teachers are not made to confront their own privilege and to explore their own history, then they are very unlikely to recognize their own innate diversity and the role identity plays in their understanding and articulation of teaching and learning. Here I am reminded of what Sumara, Davis and Iftody (2008) indicated was the “paramount concern of the beginning teacher . . . finding a way to blend in with existing narratives of teaching by masking their individuality” (p. 160). Thus, it would seem as though to blend in, pre-service teachers elide ‘self’ to adopt a homogenous teacher identity. This omission of self – of experiences as both oppressor and oppressed -- could presage future elision of student diversity – both visible and invisible -- and might result in the calcification of an equality mindset to avoid dealing with the discomfort of difference that requires us to form equity-based responses and to recognize and validate ‘other’ – including the children and adults in our schools and workplaces. Unfortunately, those whose stories are widely represented in traditional, common narratives of schooling – the white middle class – still wield enormous power over 21st century discourses of school, the roles and identities of both teachers and learners and the persistence of pedagogy and practice that refuses to acknowledge diversity. Those whose stories and identities differ from the common discourse are largely silenced by the power of the majority group who present and presume as a uniform whole.

Bea described her institution's pre-service teacher demographic as similar to the one above, noting that their pre-service teachers were "primarily white middle class female." She expressed a quandary with "how to attract and bring in different groups" while Evelyn noted the difficulty pre-service teachers had in dealing with diverse populations, stating that working in schools in urban areas of the province meant pre-service teachers were engaged in practica in places with many social issues including "...a high Aboriginal poverty rate, [in] the very rough part of [town] with the gang violence and all of those things". Evelyn expressed how pre-service teachers' social make up played out in this kind of an environment noting that

...the majority of teacher candidates come out of nice middle class existences, predominantly white, predominantly female, a mix of urban and rural. So, fear, lack of knowledge and understanding...it's a great place to bring awareness and open up education but... there's...students who aren't aware of any of those things and don't ever want to go there.

It is difficult to know whether a more diverse pre-service teacher population would be more willing to embrace teaching and learning opportunities that challenged their understanding of teaching and learning, and such a surmise is beyond the scope of this research. However, it is probable that the stereotypical profile of the pre-service teacher population as a constraining factor for social justice teaching and learning has very real implications for the re-ossification of long held beliefs about other as 'less than' and a cementation of belief around their roles as teacher/saviour of the masses. To that end, in terms of the roles that pre-service teachers *believe* they play in relation to their students, many have a vision of diverse or different students as deficit – in need of

rescuing by the power of education and by a caring, benevolent educator.

These deficit narratives seem to be amplified when pre-service teachers are made to consider learners who are not like them due to some identity or social positioning marker. As Sonia described it, “students in our area...come with the notion that with their privilege they’re there to help those who are less privileged and that’s why they’re going to become teachers. To save the masses.” The belief that others need rescue or salvation is a great barrier to pre-service teachers recognizing the validity of multiple stories and histories – of multiple ways of being and knowing, and of the existence of multiple truths. The messianic zeal that many bring to the profession in some ways mirrors the conversion tales told by religious missionaries who have led the “heathen” to the light. It is only when pre-service teachers are made aware of marginalizing educational discourses and practices, when they are exposed to critical pedagogy that unsettles their perception of reality, when they are made to recognize their own privilege, that the potential for shifting their understanding towards equity, diversity and inclusion is possible. Those shifts are not easy. When confronted with unsettling knowledge that challenges their long-held beliefs, many pre-service teachers respond emotionally – lashing out at those who would shake them from their comfort zones or perhaps retreating into a fortress of denial, advocating for learning only the tools and strategies they will need to teach, and nothing more. Pre-service teacher resistance to confronting unsettling discourses of privilege, culpability and implication are indeed constraining factors identified by participants in this study. I will touch on this briefly here and will then turn to the constraints of field experience before concluding this chapter with a brief discussion of how all the preceding enabling and constraining factors can be perceived,

and/or act as, their antithesis -- depending on one's perspective and the context in which they exist.

Preservice teacher resistance. As mentioned earlier in this paper, there is a renewed sense of urgency in Canada in addressing the centuries of wrongs committed against Indigenous peoples through policies of assimilation and annihilation. Where pre-service teachers are open to embracing many aspects of multiculturalism in their classrooms, they are sometimes less enamoured with a renewed emphasis on addressing the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples. According to Sonia:

They're okay with the whole idea of, oh, you know, let's celebrate culture, let's celebrate Diwali, let's do all of these things in our schools because well, we've got a large Indo-Canadian population -- let's celebrate all of this...the resistance comes around issues about First Nations people...there's this funny kind of resistance, like 'why do we need to include so much Aboriginal culture, isn't there like eighteen cultures?'...and I think they've become a bit resistant to that, so I've had students say or write in journaling reflection 'well, you know, I think it's important that more cultures other than just an Aboriginal focus should be there' you know? And then, 'do I really need to teach it if there aren't any First Nations students in my classroom?' that kind of thing...There's resistance to 'that whole Aboriginal thing'...

Bea described the evolution of pre-service teacher resistance as they become more immersed in the teacher education program. She described how there would be trigger points where students would bristle at the subject area and push back against difficult knowledge:

We usually hit these certain spots where there's a bit of resistance that comes from students...with regards to 'well, that is not how I view this' or, 'this is not my experience' or you know, 'I'm not comfortable talking about homosexuality' and how to deal with that that. And you know, those things come up or 'why do I have to try to incorporate Indigenous perspectives?' you know, 'the [curriculum] doesn't have anything to do with Aboriginals, so why am I having to do this?' Right? Like, you get that push from students.

There were several instances where participants spoke of how in some cases, pre-service teachers' religious upbringings contributed to their reluctance and resistance in addressing issues of diversity that fell outside of the traditions and teachings of their faith. While the pre-service teacher demographic described earlier might intimate that Judeo-Christianity was probably the faith of most, there were also other religions referenced in relation to religious belief as a source of resistance. For the most part, the issues that caused the most difficulty were lack of recognition for and validity of diverse sexual orientations, races, cultures, and ethnicities. The reality that some children's lives revolved around dealing with systemic issues such as poverty, homelessness and addiction proved difficult for some pre-service teachers to reconcile in any other way than to describe their students through a lens of deficiency – as noted earlier, in need of saving. It can be inferred that the deficit discourse helped pre-service teachers avoid interrogating the broader social and educational inequities impacting their learners and reinforced their belief that the problem lay in the individual child more so than in the status quo operation of structures, policies and practices that continuously re-inscribe marginalization and othering. In that vein, pre-service teacher resistance can be deepened

and deficit discourses cemented in field experiences where the sponsor or mentor teacher discredits, disregards, or dismisses the validity of the work the university teacher education program does in preparing new teachers. The field experience is the last constraining factor that I shall address.

The field experience. Earlier in this chapter there was some discussion of the conception of education, teaching and teachers as bastions of conservatism. This was made apparent as participants described how pre-service teachers faced pressure to conform to the traditions of the field and how pernicious discourses of “fitting in” superseded articulation of commitments to social justice for pre-service or novice teachers in vulnerable power-under positions. Many of the points surrounding field experience were addressed in relation to both enabling and constraining factors, however, there was one component that did not receive the attention it needed in relation to the factors that constrain, and it is to that I turn now.

Pre-service teachers need to serve multiple masters throughout their teacher education. When they are on practicum they are sometimes torn between what they are taught at university and what they are told by their sponsor/mentor teachers is the ‘real world’ of the classroom. Because they are grappling with the technical elements on top of trying to create an inclusive, non-oppressive classroom, many pre-service teachers find it easier to marry their practice to that of their sponsor teacher who, in many cases, is writing their final report for certification purposes. Being in a vulnerable power-under position is difficult for pre-service teachers who may feel forced into practices that they do not agree with. Bea described the difficulty of maintaining a social justice focus when pre-service teachers move into the field for their practicum experiences:

It is mixed. You know, working with their teacher mentors it is, it is mixed. Some teachers are very focused on uh, practice alone. And so any sort of a social justice goal or sort of overall aim, isn't what they focus on when their student teachers are in their classroom. It's about implementing curriculum in a very effective way and they're sort of like 'well, that's extra, that's not something that we need to focus on' right? (laughter) To those who view their role with students as being critical. I find the more students we place in high needs schools, the more we come across teacher mentors who are on board and focused on having teachers who are able to enable students to become socially just citizens. There's more of a focus on that in your more challenging schools. Which I think speaks a lot to being able to place students in more challenging environments.

This speaks to the need for extensive debriefing and perhaps even a re-indoctrination period for pre-service teachers who return from practicum experiences where the pressure to focus on the technical elements of teaching supersede any conceptions or articulations of social justice.

It's Not as Black and White as it Could Be...

Thus far, I have highlighted elements of teacher education identified by participants as either constraints or enablers in relation to their mandate to prepare pre-service teachers as social justice educators. Earlier on in this chapter I described how the delineation between 'enable' and 'constrain' was not appropriate in describing the complexity of teacher education work. In reality, as the data unfolded what appeared were the elements identified by Luke (2002) as possibilities afforded through reconstructive discourse analysis in that each factor has the potential to act as or be

perceived as its antithesis – depending on one’s perspective and context. In other words, it would seem as though none of the factors identified are static but are instead both opportunities and stumbling blocks completely dependent on minute by minute interpretation and articulation by all parties. Such a realization infers that trying to find a definitive set of principles, policies, structures or practices to facilitate social justice teacher education is akin to seeking out formulaic responses to messy problems as per Schon’s (1983) “high ground” of technical rationality described earlier in the chapter. On the other hand, miring oneself in the “swamp” is exhausting as reality is constantly reinvented in response to emergent problems, claims, and evolving injustices. Neither position in its absolute form seems particularly tenable, but understanding the possibilities afforded by the agentic space between them does offer some insight into how we might move in recursive arcs towards more equitable pedagogy and practice. So, where sometimes a practice is an ‘enabling constraint’, it is possible and preferable for social justice work to tease out the catalytic potential or ‘paradoxical agency’ (O’Neill, 2012; O’Neill & Gaffney, 2008) of working and becoming in the agentic ‘space between’ – to inhabit what Palmer (2009) called the ‘tragic gap’ - the liminal space between constructed binaries of either/or, black/white, absence/presence, racist/anti-racist, and in this case, constrain/enable.

Inhabiting the “Tragic Gap”

Mosley and Rogers (2011) proffered that a tendency to see the world through binaries – two mutually exclusive categories of either/or —results in worldviews that “value explanation rather than complexity” (p. 306). The authors used the binary example of racist/anti-racist to illustrate the potential “neglect [of] the dialectical spaces of social

problems and solutions” (p. 306). Palmer (2009) described this space as the “tragic gap” and discussed the possibilities afforded by this space as “inhabiting the tragic gap” and offering us a choice:

I can hold the tension between reality and possibility in a life-giving way, standing in the gap and witnessing with my own life to another way of living, slowly and patiently calling myself and my part of the world toward something better. But if I cannot abide that tension, I will try to resolve it by collapsing into one pole or the other—the same quick “resolve the tension” reflex that creates the fight- or-flight response. When I collapse into the reality of what is, I am likely to sink into corrosive cynicism: “Community is impossible, so I’m going to focus on getting my piece of the action and let the devil take the hindmost.” When I collapse into pure possibility, I am likely to float off into irrelevant idealism: “Oh, how lovely it would be if...” Corrosive cynicism and irrelevant idealism may sound as if they are poles apart, but they take us to the same place: out of the gap and out of the action, out of those places we might make a life-giving contribution if we knew how to hold the tension (pp. 8-9)

Mosley and Rogers (2011) portrayed inhabiting the tragic gap as “neither standing in reality, with its cynicism, nor standing in possibility, irrelevant idealism, will move the nation forward in becoming a...just society. Instead, standing in the gap between reality and possibility, and learning to live in that gap rather than resolve it prematurely, is key to the pursuit of democracy” (pp. 306-307).

The “tragic” nature of the gap alludes to the absence of dialogue that is a consequence of fervent adherence to positions bound in the certainty of one’s

interpretation of reality. These entrenched binaries are, as Kumashiro (2004) alluded to, problematic in that “even practices of anti-oppressive teaching are partial and contradictory, are momentary and situated, and thus, are always in need of being rethought (p. 15).” And underscoring the potential of the tragic gap or liminal spaces, Kumashiro went on to describe how:

An anti-oppressive teacher is not something that someone is. Rather, it is something that someone is always becoming...No practice, in and of itself, is anti-oppressive. A practice can be anti-oppressive in one situation, and quite oppressive in another. Or it can be simultaneously oppressive in one way and anti-oppressive in another. So, too, with the practitioner...The anti-oppressive teacher, then, is akin to an ideal. It is something we strive for and transitionally become in our practices but never fully are (p.15).

Turning to a correlative idea in psychology, Gestalt theory describes how we must occupy “the middle mode – the space between active and passive functioning where the person is accepting, attending and *growing into the solution*, and the substitution of readiness...for the security of apparent control” (O’Neill, 2012, p. 14, emphasis mine). In other words, occupying this middling ground affords us the opportunities to function as activists – “inhabiting the tragic gap” encouraging and drawing from the experiences and histories of others in an effort towards finding equitable solutions to thorny problems (Mosely and Rogers, 2011). Embracing the uncertainty and fluidity of the space between enabling and constraining may provide a way forward for those of us committed to preparing teachers to work for equity, diversity and inclusion.

The tragic gap as lived experience. In coding participant interviews, I was looking for and found both enabling and constraining themes in the data. These emerged as participants described elements that either hindered or facilitated their ability to teach for social justice within their teacher education programs. I believe that our western minds steeped in the scientific method, seek certainty, categorization and absolutes in our observations of and interactions with the world and each other. It became apparent as I listened to the interviews and re-read the transcripts, that in many cases the delineation between enabling and constraining factors was not as clear cut as one might assume. In other words, factors that in some way could be perceived of and interpreted as constraints are in other ways potential enablers. For example, the limitations or constraints imposed by teacher education program timetables, schedules and stand-alone courses focused on social justice were also perceived as enabling factors in that the inclusion of an actual social justice focused course within the schedule indicated that some effort towards preparing pre-service teachers to teach for social justice were being made. These ‘enabling constraints’ (and ‘constraining enablers’) appeared consistently throughout the data as participants expressed hope and frustration concurrently as they described their own programs and their understanding or interpretation of the factors they believed enabled or constrained the teaching for social justice. The paradoxical nature of these factors are echoes of the earlier critiques leveled against the black and white/binaried nature of critical theory: in trying to come up with absolutes of “is” and “isn’t” in relation to social justice teaching and learning, the potential for engaging in dialog, for engaging with the sometimes contradictory and unpredictable, the messy, and emergent nature of the work and thus, the possibility of transformation of self and by

extension, society (Kumashiro, 2009) is lost in the dogged pursuit of the conviction that there is a “right way” of doing and being. This is the complex conundrum that emerged from this work.

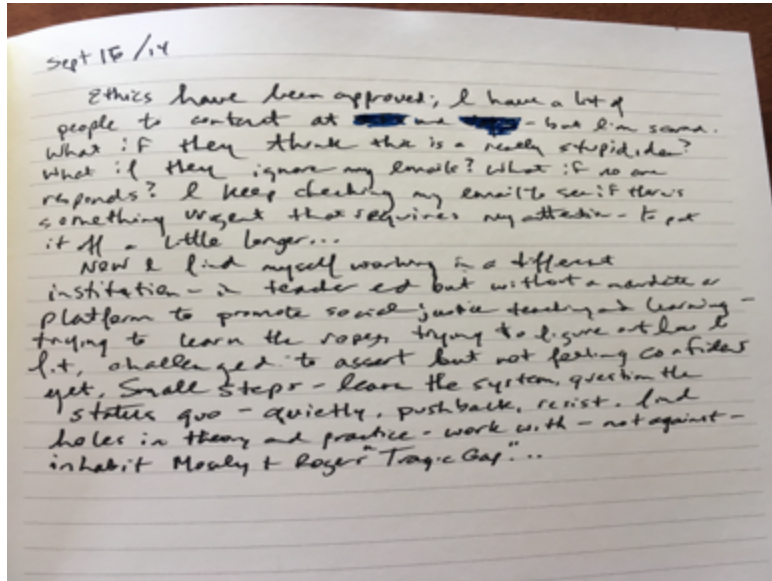
In this chapter I have shared how each of the participants have identified and interpreted the factors they believed were instrumental in either facilitating or hampering them in their work in social justice teacher education. As is evident, some of the factors have clearly positive or negative impacts, yet other factors are more ambiguous and can only be identified as constraining or enabling as they unfold in context, as per the state of apprehension - of always becoming, of expectation, of constructing reality as we encounter it that is so central to a social constructionist understanding of the way the world unfolds. While this chapter has focused on my participants’ understandings and beliefs in practice and pedagogy, the next chapter will focus on an explication of my autoethnography as I wrestled with my own interpretations and reactions to the data as well as my experiences in trying to teach as a social justice educator.

Chapter 5: Autoethnography

I think it was about five years ago that I bought this book to keep track of my thinking. I've always been attracted to journals and will frequently seek out that section in a book store to see whether there is some novel size or cover that draws my attention to a place of "must purchase." This one caught my eye because of its *Handmade in Italy* stamp on the inside back cover and its smooth, soft, finish – it felt like how I imagined "rich, Corinthian leather" might feel (as described by Ricardo Montalban - although Corinth is a city in Greece and this was made in Italy – small point). I thought it looked mysterious and worthy of conveying my deep thoughts. I envisioned carting it around, the oils from my hand burnishing the leather like a favourite worn jacket. I anticipated this would become VOLUME ONE in what was sure to be a multivolume series as I recorded my thoughts, my inner turmoil and angst as I contended with data that confounded me. I would spew anger and effuse joy. I would record "aha!" moments and document dark instances of despair. So, here it is. The book.



Here is page one.



Here is a transcription for I know my handwriting is messy:

Sept 16/14

Ethics have been approved; I have a lot of people to contact at _____ and _____ - but I'm scared. What if they think this is a really stupid idea? What if they ignore my emails? What if no one responds? I keep checking my email to see if there's something urgent that requires my attention - to put it off a little longer...

Now I find myself working in a different institution - in teacher ed but without a mandate or platform to promote social justice teaching and learning - trying to learn the ropes, trying to figure out how I fit, challenged to assert but not feeling confident yet. Small steps - learn the system, question the status quo - quietly, push back, resist, find holes in theory and practice - work with - not against - inhabit Mosely & Rogers "Tragic Gap" ...

That's it. There is no page 2. Or 3. Or any other number – sequential or random that follows this entry. The pages are blank. The book spine is not broken. The cover is unscuffed. The leather thong and wooden bead to cinch the secrets together are pristine; unfrayed and unblemished. I think the almost pristine state of the book reflects the way many of us respond when dealing with issues of social injustice - we are tentative; we scrape the surface, we raise our voices, we shake our fists, but for the most part, our shell remains intact – no evidence of disruption to our inner core. The tendency to protect is heightened when we recognize the way that fear operates on us when we are faced with the potential of being vulnerable; we have choices – we freeze, we dive in head first, or we test the waters to determine whether the reward (or work) is worth the risk.

See what I did there? I just made this about “us” – implicating you too...

I'm sure that my intention to keep an accurate record of thoughts, experiences, feelings across this process were founded in the belief that there could or would be black and white instances where I could pore over the entrails of an experience, conduct a post-mortem on attempts to disrupt dominant discourses in my teaching, or to hit the motherlode in participant data mining. But that didn't happen. I was too busy living that world to dissect and analyze it to any great degree.

A lot of what my participants in this study had to say really rankled me. I can admit it. The way they couldn't come up with the answers for me really pissed me off. I wanted them to know and then to tell me so that my life could be easier. So that my

classes could be less fraught with anger and resistance as pre-service teachers were confronted (I think gently?) with the messier parts of teaching. When their body language was so loud that I could barely hear myself think over the pounding of my heart. *Boom, boom, boom*. The young woman who refused to take part in the privilege walk exercise – because it was, in her words, “ridiculous”, her power to sway others evident in the half-hearted participation that waned further the longer the experience went on – we never made it to the end...*Boom, boom, boom*. Finding the words to save face. To not look “ridiculous” in regrouping and moving on. How to make this a lesson without drawing specific attention to the resistant behaviour of the individual student? To avoid confrontation but still get the point across? To minimize the potential for bad course evaluations...Ah, there’s the rub.

The thing of it is, in that situation I felt little. I felt inferior and humiliated and wondered if my students would put any trust in the “technical” aspects of teaching that was also part of the course that I was supposed to teach. Unlike Sonia who described not always feeling safe when she taught her course but persisted anyways, I retreated. I backed down. I shut up. I gave in to someone who had more social power than I did. *Boom, boom, boom*.

Man, oh man. The hardest part was the looks of sympathy from the few who felt ostracized from the larger group – the misfits – I was getting empathy from the misfits. Because they understood. They recognized that the privilege walk exercise was really only the tip of a very vast iceberg.

They participated. They were hopeful that their classmates might see them through the statements that set them apart, that they would understand them differently,

that they would recognize them as individuals if they were only paying attention. And if that iceberg started to melt, well, we might find markers of oppression that singled them out and maybe we could start to understand how standardized discourses of normal had marginalized them and trivialized or minimized their lived experiences too. But that didn't happen. I think they knew it wouldn't – they'd been down that road before. They didn't get their hopes up.

When I was speaking with this study's participants, asking them the interview questions, it was difficult to hear them describe the factors that they said enabled them in teaching for social justice in their teacher education programs. It was difficult because I didn't want to hear them tell me that simple practices, policies and structures worked.

Sort of.

I think I wanted to hear that there were no enabling factors beyond their own heroic efforts; that nothing helped. Perhaps I hoped in hearing that there was nothing but constraining factors, obstreperous people, monolithic structures, political intransigence, assholes, you name it, that I could be justified in my indignation at what I perceived as watered down efforts towards social change. Not really accomplishing much. Maybe I wanted to find that my participants had some intrinsic golden ticket, some inherent super-power that allowed them to “leap tall buildings in a single bound” – just like Superman did...because then maybe I could be justified in giving up. Not my job. Not my circus, not my monkeys.

Or perhaps, it was realizing that I might have to let go of my latent dreams of revolution – of tearing the system down and starting over as the only route to social

justice teacher education. Perhaps it was the recognition that incremental change is still change. I'm still not happy about it. I think it probably has to do with the fact that I see incremental change as the correlative to liberal articulations of social justice; sort of mealy-mouthed, lacking any sort of sense of urgency, kind of like sitting around a campfire singing "Kumbaya" – a "nice" way to spend an evening... On the other hand, the either/or of purely critical approaches to social justice might see us toss the baby out with the bathwater, or, cut off our noses to spite our faces – you get the picture. So, when I considered the responses I got from my participants, I wasn't very charitable:

But here's what I'm really thinking.

I just know that I am tired. We're all tired. Everyone I talk to is tired. We plug away. We toil. We rely on the power of our positions, the authority of our credentials, the permanence of and reverence afforded our structures to propel us forward, like witches on brooms speeding through the maelstrom of distance and time – bombarded, goggles on. "Full steam ahead, damn the torpedoes!" "It's only a flesh wound" we spit on our hankies and wipe the metaphorical pricks of drying blood from our external and internal wounds. Oh, the martyrdom, oh the sacrifice, oh the resilience, oh the moral imperative, oh my god.

You know what? I can't tell your story because you only told me part of it. How am I supposed to tell your story when I only know parts of it? You get to tell me the parts you want me to hear like how much work this is, how hard it is, all of those fucking obstacles that keep getting in the way. And then you turn around and tell me about the good parts. And how you're tired – but in a good way because you're fighting the good fight how you're driven by moral purpose because you know it's the right thing to do. But

that good feeling, it's not like the feeling you get when you get up early and spend the whole day doing a job that has a visible pay off – like building a shed or helping the neighbour put up a new fence. You're kind of sweaty and weary at the end of that day but it's a good feeling because you know you made some progress and you can see it. No, this work isn't like that. I guess you have to have faith that somewhere down the line it'll all pay off, otherwise, how could you keep going?

But I can tell my story and we can compare notes. I'll be honest and you can be whatever you feel is doable. Because as much as I'd like us to come to some sort of universal understanding of what's good and what's not, I know that we'll never be able to. Your reality is yours and mine is mine, so I guess we'll just have to nod and smile and then later in private we can be pissed off for real because each of us will think we're right.

The thing is, I undertook this study because I was looking for answers, but not just any answers, I was looking for definitive answers. I wanted black and white answers. “Do or not do” (there is no try as Yoda would say) I think I wanted to stand on Schon's technical-rational high ground in the swampy lowlands and be able to figure it all out. Fat chance.

I wonder if I knew in advance that I wouldn't find them. That I would find very human people doing very human things the best they could with what they had. Making do. Celebrating small victories. Holding on to relentless hope. Kicking at the darkness until it bled daylight – to paraphrase Bruce Cockburn. And being tired. Always struggling. Sigh.

Maybe I'm getting old. Maybe I'm becoming more mature (fat chance really) but I'm not as angry anymore. I'm not as dogmatic, pneumatic, maybe I'm more phlegmatic. But I'm not mad at my participants' responses anymore because you know what? I came to realize is that in their own way, they are heroic. They do have superpowers because they stand as a bridge between two vastly different ideas about what education is for and they bear the weight of that responsibility with patience, with kindness, with forgiveness, with generosity, with selflessness, with humour.

How do they do that? I've been standing in the middle of the river shaking my fist at the water because it's cold, and cursing the bridge because I can't cross it from where I am.

And so I write. I write myself into the experience – into the data – interrogating my 'self' and the authenticity of my experiences and feelings and observations. I can feel the cold water starting to numb my toes. It is painful but I know it will end. I am writing to stop the numbness spreading upwards – from hitting my heart. *Boom, boom, boom.* For then I will stop feeling.

When I was a high school teacher many of my colleagues told me that I needed to go back to school and get my PhD because then I wouldn't have to deal with all the stupid decisions and mundane debates over minutiae that enshrouded my life as both teacher, department head and member of various school committees. Some might wonder if that's how I perceived those events, why I tortured myself so by taking on those roles?

The answer is simple: I wanted to have a voice in the decisions that were being made in the school – I wanted to influence the direction that we were moving as both a social studies

department and as a school. I wanted those in power to hear my voice and enact my ideas. I wanted them to see how smart I was, I wanted them to see what a creative problem solver I was, I wanted them to value me as an irreplaceable asset to the school – a sage who could see the big picture – beyond the details to the broader view of making a difference beyond solely the academic for kids. I wanted those in power to regale upper management with tales of my thoughtful, pragmatic and innovative approaches to slicing through the mire of inarticulate policy and practice. I wanted to be special.

When I would speak up in meetings about issues that really mattered to me (which wasn't too often) I would find my heart started to pound and I would feel a clanging of alarm as words that I didn't expect came foaming from my mouth. As the alarm grew I would speak faster, no longer tentative – the words got bigger – the argument got more vehement and eight times out of nine it wouldn't make any difference. I think in retrospect it was all a gigantic power drunk 'fuck you' from administration framed as "that's just the way we do things here".

To me, standing up to those in an administrative position felt like a big risk because I considered them "smarter" than me because of the position they held. I had also moved outward from the comfort of my microsphere, my classroom, to take on the bigger challenges of the mesosphere, the systemic issues that stymied kids who were different, different in multiple ways. The kids in Communications 11 who had to slog (with me) through Macbeth – entertained and engaged only temporarily when lustily hurling Elizabethan insults at each other and during multiple re-watchings of the 1971 movie scene where Macbeth's recently severed head tumbles over the parapet. Students who were told they needed to read "real" books without pictures during school wide silent

reading (magazines didn't count and magazines about cars *really* didn't count). Kids with kids, kids who worked night shift to help support their families, kids who were hungry, kids who were broken.

So.

If I couldn't make a difference there (the nerds on staff commiserated with me then too) I needed to find a different field to play on – so to speak. This brings me to now – sort of.

I don't think I'd ever really heard the term social justice until I started working in teacher education. I knew there was an arm of the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF) that dealt with “that kind of stuff” but didn't really have a sense of the kinds of things someone did to be socially just. That's not to say that I was a socially unjust person by default, I just mean that I didn't really have a name for the activist role of working for better life worlds for kids. And I'm sure that I wasn't very good at that either because I, like many of the pre-service teachers I have encountered since starting this work, also held deficit views of students who were “different” from the mainstream. But it was when I started working with pre-service teachers in a post-degree program that the imperative of helping them to develop not just a social justice perspective but a critical lens on the world became so apparent. Because what I saw coming into my classroom was a virtual cross-section of humanity who all believed that they could and would be teachers. And because they were all enrolled in a secondary stream, they all viewed their role as inculcating their young charges with their years of accumulated knowledge in their very distinct subject areas. I was told often that “I am going to teach History 12” or “I'll be teaching Physics AP” when in reality, I knew they would probably be teaching

Social Studies 8 and Science 9 and probably Planning 10. Because they knew everything there was to know about their subject areas, all they really needed from me were the nuts and bolts of how to teach. Boom!

I always hear people in teacher education describe pre-service teachers like this: “they don’t know what they don’t know”. I agree, but even if they don’t know what they don’t know, they pretend that they do. What that means is that pre-service teachers spend a lot of time engaging in trying to fit in, as noted by Sumara, Davis & Iftody (2008). No one wants to look like the one who doesn’t get it. We all come from that place where we want to appear confident and competent, to gain the approval and acceptance of our peers.

Wait a minute, that’s me.

The way I looked at it, I figured if I could just get my students to like me, they would forgive me for not really knowing everything that I felt I should know to be an effective teacher/teacher educator. Because really, I knew more than they did, right? And as long as I could keep paddling furiously under the surface and remain unruffled above, everything would be all right. And it was.

I understand and believe to the depths of my soul that education is about relationships. Full stop. I work incredibly hard to build authentic relationships quickly with the pre-service teachers in my courses because I know that anything that follows day one must emerge from a burgeoning sense of trust that is developed early on. I try to break down walls between us by engaging in a silly introductory activity that requires pre-service teachers to reveal some ‘thing’ about themselves that no one (in the room) really knows. I am the only incomer to the group – they have been together for at least a

full term if not longer so they know each other quite well. I frame it lightheartedly and have experienced rooms bursting with laughter as personal oddities, anecdotes, experiences are revealed. Pre-service teachers learn an invaluable lesson about getting to know their learners and I get an opportunity to ‘read’ the room and note idiosyncratic, novel or noteworthy characteristics that I can draw on as I build relationships with each of them. They marvel at my ability to remember names and anecdotal details of their lives – and they like me because of it. I am involved in this too. This term I told them I could listen to music through my hearing aids. They thought that was cool. Then I would show them this PowerPoint slide and because the quotes supported the activity they knew there had been a real connected pedagogical purpose behind what they had just done. Score one for me.

“When I know my students well, I am a better teacher”

- “Effective assessors know that they have to build time into their work week to get to know and reflect on who their students are as people”
- “Effective assessors use what they learn from the data to improve their practice. They know that learners are more willing to take a risk when they know the teacher cares about them as people” (Tovani, 2011, p.33)

(Fleming, 2015, Day one PowerPoint, EDTE 613)

So, on we would go – building trust and ploughing ahead - challenging their understanding and beliefs about assessment, deeply entrenched beliefs about meritocracy in learning and achievement – truly social justice issues! Back and forth we would go, considering the implications of viewing assessment as part of the learning process rather than simply the product of it. Raising questions about the kids who could versus the ones who couldn't and trying to get them to see that this is sometimes more about the kids who have versus the ones who have not. Unfortunately, more often than not I let them dictate the degree to which they would be pushed in their thinking about issues of social justice in education and by extension, in their classrooms and schools. In other words, I met resistance with concession. I didn't (often) push back – at least not forcefully.

I've never worked in a place that had a Social Justice label attached to its teacher education program. I've never taught a Social Justice course (although it's a requirement for pre-service teachers in the teacher education program I work in). I tried to frame a course that I was teaching that was less content/discipline oriented than most from a social justice perspective, (re)making that the curriculum, with mixed success. In every course I teach I try to make sure that I am pushing pre-service teachers to see beyond the constraints of an equality paradigm to recognize that education isn't the great equalizer and how pedagogy and practice based on the norms of an historical representation of education still must always marginalize, exclude and label students who do not fit the prescribed norm as 'less than'.

The thing of it is, though, that as soon as I hit a rough patch, when the room gets restless and I can feel their resistance growing, I retreat. I turtle. I let them get away with

telling me: “I know that’s important Allyson, but I need to be able to manage a classroom and teach and then I can worry about that other stuff”. And then I tell them: “Try. Just try to think about the choices you are making and the assumptions you are carrying with you about the kids in your classroom when you plan, when you structure, when you teach.” At that point, it’s become a bit of a plea on my part and my fervour and fevered pitch for socially just practice has waned and cooled from what I intended. And then the pre-service teacher goes off and gets her class’s attention by calling “Boys and girls!”, hones her skills of delivering colour blind curriculum and lessons, and becomes fluent in discourses that frame and label ‘other’ as deficit.

So, when I consider the research questions that I framed for my participants – the enabling and constraining factors – I think I was looking for something that didn’t implicate me as a significant part of the process. Another way of looking at it is that I was hopeful they would identify for me some concrete ‘things’ that either paved or got in, the way, not expecting to come to the realization – epiphany if you will -- that in all of this, in my context, classroom, faculty, what have you, I am the hinge point. I am the lynch pin. I am the constraint and I am the enabler. There is no way around it. And that sucks. Because that means in order to “be” an anti-oppressive educator, I need to be hyper-vigilant and as per Kumashiro (2009), I need to try to commit to recognizing my own complicity as either a catalyst for change or as a cumbrance – but even these two positions offer up a binary of either/or that do nothing to help to fill the tragic gap. There is a critical component to Kumashiro’s (2009) call for what anti-oppressive education could look like. Note the quote below:

Anti-oppressive education constantly turns its lens of analysis inward as it explores ways that its own perspectives and practices make certain changes possible but others impossible; and it constantly turns its lens outward to explore the insights made possible by perspectives...that have yet to be adequately addressed in the field of education. (p. xxxviii).

I think it is here that I sense a call to never ‘being’ something because that intimates arrival, end, finish, stagnation. I think what is apparent is that we always are becoming; we are present in each moment, we navigate each experience anew, drawing from experience, from knowledge, moving to praxis or what Schön (1987) called reflective practice, seeming to indicate that we might have to keep one foot in the swampy lowlands and another on the hard, high ground – to be able to pivot into and out of as necessary, assuming the self we need to be *at that moment*.

What this means, then, is that all of the other constraining or enabling factors are really secondary. What it really comes down to is the lens we bring to bear on our role as teacher educators. We can get by without disrupting the status quo – we can teach the tools and tricks of the trade and pretty much guarantee ourselves good course evaluations, a happy, conservative teaching cadre ready to welcome new teachers into the fold who are ‘just like them’, and weekends around the teacher ed cohort campfire singing ‘Kumbaya’. We can sit back and watch ‘good lessons’ taught by ‘good pre-service teachers’ and be totally oblivious to the fact that we have re-cemented the status quo because:

Common definitions of ‘good’ teaching often leave little, if any, room for the moments in education when confronting one’s own resistance to disruptive

knowledge can be traumatic. In fact, ‘good’ teaching often means that crisis is averted, that lessons are doable and comfortable, that problems are solved, that learning results in feeling better, that knowledge is a good thing... (Kumashiro, 2009, p. 55).

On the other hand, we can bring a critical lens to bear on our work knowing that we will not always feel safe doing this work – that crises will not be averted and may in fact be amplified by the approaches we take to confronting discourses and structures that condone, promote, or ignore policies, practices and pedagogies of prejudice, of oppression and marginalization. But we forge ahead knowing that “...if anti-oppressive teaching requires disrupting the repetition of comforting knowledges, then students [and teachers] will always need to confront what they desire not to confront...” (Kumashiro, 2009, p. 55).

For me, this means owning who I am, being me in the moment I am there, and resting when I can. Here is a revised script of a first semester day – might as well put it all out there and start feeling vulnerable from the get go. *Boom, boom, boom...*

Today we are going to engage in an introductory activity that is probably a little bit different from what you’ve done in your other courses. I know that you already know each other, but I don’t know you and rather than just going around the room and telling me your names, we’re going to do something different. Okay, first off, I want you to find someone you don’t know that well (laughter ensues as most of them know each other quite well). Okay – find someone whose house you haven’t been to and get into partners with that person. Okay, okay, okay, quiet! Now, I want you to each take out a piece of

paper and make four columns – do it landscape – you’ll need lots of space.

Okay – now in the left column at the top write ‘name’ in the second column write ‘teaching area or degree held’, in the third column ‘hometown/where they were born’ and in the last column, ‘unique characteristic’. Okay? Everybody got that – four columns. Awright. Now. I want you to take 10 minutes in your partnership – five minutes each to interview each other – any questions? Pay attention because you are going to have to introduce your partner to the rest of the class. Okay? Ready? You have ten minutes – go!....

My name is Allyson. My teaching areas are Social Studies methods, Principles of Teaching and Learning, and Becoming a teacher, understanding professional and educational issues. I was born in Prince George – anyone else? Yes? No? Yes? Cool! Do I know your mom and dad? REALLY????? I went to high school with them – get out! Okay, we’ll talk later! Back to this, yes, Prince George... Hmmm. I see myself as a social justice educator. A unique feature that not many people know about me is that I am a lesbian and I am married to a wonderful woman and we live a very normal life with our cat in Cobble Hill. And I am telling you this today because in the curriculum that you teach, in the classrooms in which you will serve, I and others like me who are ‘different’ are largely invisible – we don’t show up in your resources as default images or stories, we are not present when you create your groupings based on gender. We do not see others like us in the histories you teach. But we are there and we need you as pre-service teachers to understand that when you come into this profession that you need to see beyond the stereotypes, beyond the labels, beyond your own experiences of what it means

to be – in order to recognize us. To value us. To accept us. To make us a very important part of your classroom community. To make sure that you have considered the ways in which your practices and pedagogies might isolate us further, disregard our backgrounds, our histories, our experiences, and the ways in which you can challenge the tired trope of multicultural education and schooling and work to reinvent and re-vision classrooms and schools as places that critique and reject discourses that divide, and instead, celebrate the diversity of all of its people as 'de rigueur', or, 'just the way we do things here.'

I am standing in the water. I am tired. I am ready to get out. I have run out of curse words. I look towards the right shore and see a branch hanging down from the bank. I look to the other shore but it is a steep bank for about 25 feet down river. I turn back to the branch. I lift my yellowed, shriveled foot carefully and place it on a wide boulder – I can't feel a thing. I reach out for the branch but it is still too far. I move my other foot but numbly slip on algae slime. I plunge into the water. Submerged. Immersed. Invigorating. A sharp intake of breath. Exhale. Breathe. Now that I am wet, I might as well swim.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Implications

“Freedom would be not to choose between black and white but to abjure such prescribed choices”.

Theodor Adorno²

This study was undertaken to try to illuminate the ways in which academics working and teaching in explicit social justice oriented teacher education programs identified and understood factors that they believed either enabled or constrained them in their goal of instilling pre-service teachers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to shift their own thinking as well as that of their schools and perhaps their communities’ thinking and (in)action in relation to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. To that end, I posed my first research question (documented earlier) which formed the root for the subset of questions that I engaged participants with during my interviews with them. An explication of the data that emerged through the course of our interviews are found in chapter five; the implications of the findings are described here and reflect the spirit of my second question which was intended to be more pragmatic than theoretical:

Can these findings inform how teacher education programs are designed and structured, and more importantly, my own practice as a teacher educator to teach for socially just ends?

² Theodor Adorno. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Retrieved June 21, 2017, from BrainyQuote.com Web site:

<https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/theorado212709.html>

I identified pragmatism as my motivation in crafting the second research question as I hoped (as I have indicated elsewhere), that the research and explication of the data would result in clearly defined solutions for addressing the challenges of effecting change in structures that are historically entrenched in tradition and designed to provide stability and immovability. This hope extended to ways of effecting change in people who are at best, products of multiple personal and societal ways of seeing the world, who are at heart creatures of habit (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and who are at worst, unpredictable and fickle. However, hopes aside, it emerged very early on that definitive solutions to these challenges are elusive and the way forward in this work is murkier and much less clearly defined than I had originally believed they might be.

Crystallization and Metaphor

In Chapter 3, I discussed Richardson and St. Pierre's (2008) concept of "crystallization" and its relationship to triangulation as a method of establishing validity. This poststructural viewpoint relies on an understanding that 'what is' or reality, appears differently depending on the perspective or lens one views 'it' through. In other words, there are only representations of truth; not a sole, common, objective understanding of reality. In relation to this study, I am drawn to Polkinghorne's (2007) discussion of validity which intimated that "readers are asked to make judgments on whether or not the evidence and arguments convince them at the level of plausibility, credibleness, or trustworthiness of the claim" (p. 477) as opposed to the apparent black and white 'certitude' of scientific inquiry.

Given that my understanding of the way the world works is based in the belief that reality is constructed as we move in the world and that as per the idea of crystallization, what I see depends on where I stand, I return to the metaphor of water introduced in my autoethnography. I use a fluid metaphor in this instance because it moves away from what Richardson and St. Pierre (2008) deemed the “old worn-out metaphors...[of] stodginess and stiffness” that reflect “traditional social scientific writing” in the hopes of “demystify[ing] writing” to perhaps make the implications more accessible to the reader, and to “serve the processes of discovery about the self, the world, and issues of social justice” (p. 492). I also employ water as a metaphor for work in social justice teacher education as a nod to Pinar’s (2012) curriculum method of “currere” translated from Latin as “to run the course,” (p. 44) in relation to curriculum theory, as well as to animate the sometimes void-like space between binaries. Water is a powerful symbol in that it has the potential to carve new paths across and through landscapes but also to flow placidly or not at all. I acknowledge that the “current” of teacher education ebbs and flows in response to many factors and that I cannot and do not want to provide solid bridges over the rivers of teacher education discourses for the reader to cross. This is because I know that the readers’ realities - their “discovery about the self...” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, p. 492) are yet unfolding and to provide bridges of certainty would be to disregard and discredit their journeys of meaning making.

I can however, provide pathways along the river with reflective pools of contemplation as the reader meanders along their way. Placid pools cast near mirror-perfect reflections, but when a stone or object is dropped into the water, the reflected

image is changed, distorted, different, unique. As the reader encounters each implication of this study, I ask them to drop them as stones into a reflecting pool, to consider how their context, pedagogy and practice appear through the refracted waves, as “crystalized” representations of ‘what is’ that allow space for contemplation of ‘what might be’. In relation to curriculum Pinar (2012) describes this work as “akin to phenomenological bracketing; one’s distantiating from the past and extrication from the future functions to create a subjective third space of freedom in the present. This occurs in the analytic moment, wherein we attempt to discern how the past inheres in the present and in our fantasies of the future” (p. 46). As you the reader engage with the possibilities and potentialities, I would like you to consider what the following implications might mean in your context for helping pre-service teachers become more cognizant of their role as social justice change agents in their classrooms, schools, and communities.

Critical Self-Reflection

The concept of reflection and contemplation is significant in that I am reminded of Kumashiro’s (2009) descriptions of anti-oppressive research; particularly his point that anti-oppressive practice requires us to not only look outwards, but also to look inside ourselves - interrogating the ways in which we are complicit in maintaining systems and practices that oppress. In the same vein, Strega (2005) identified critical self-reflection as crucial to anti-oppressive research (and by extension I would infer equally as important, teaching pedagogy and practice as per my insertions in the quote below) noting that it

...highlights rather than obscures the participation of the researcher

[practitioner] in the research [pedagogical] process. It makes clear that

interpretation is taking place, and by implication calls into question the alleged

neutrality and objectivity of other research [pedagogy]...thus offering an important political and methodological challenge to standard research [pedagogical] practices. It calls into question whether standard means of assessing rigour and validity are the ‘proper’ or best means by which to assess research [pedagogy] (p. 228).

Additionally, as Strega (2005) noted, I have focused and reflected on this research to present it to a teacher education audience using the language of the discourse enabling me to “speak truth to power in accessible languages and formats” (p.228). In other words, I am asking readers to engage critically with what follows and to consider whether the implications I have identified are familiar or not, and how you consider or have considered them in your own context, pedagogy and practice.

Accessible Representation

To facilitate accessibility, the next section of this study does not adhere completely to standard academic writing. I am reminded again of Richardson’s (2008) words as she described the possibilities afforded by postmodernism and poststructuralism to qualitative writers:

Qualitative writers...do not have to try to play God, writing as disembodied omniscient narrators claiming universal and atemporal general knowledge. They can eschew the questionable metanarrative of scientific objectivity and still have plenty to say as situated speakers, subjectivities engaged in knowing/telling about the world as they perceive it...[poststructuralism]... directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times...it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at

once to everyone. Nurturing our own voices releases the censorious hold of “science writing” on our consciousness as well as the arrogance it fosters in our psyche... (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008, pp. 476- 477).

Being cognizant of the positivist, objectivity attributed to scientific inquiry and data explication has allowed me to draw parallels between the limitations imposed by such black and white conceptions of truth, and the limitations imposed by the binaries of constraining and enabling factors explored in this study. Moseley and Rogers (2011) and Palmer’s (2009) exploration of the “tragic gap” the space that exists between binaries of either/or, is especially pertinent as an explanation for approaching this section through a less formal lens. Employing “accessible language” as per Strega (2005), I am opening up the possibility of dialogic space between what is perceived as the black and white representation of scientific reality and the kaleidoscope of colour apparent in poststructural, crystallized representations of possibility.

What follows are highlights of some of the key themes that emerged from the study and the implications these have for my own and possibly others’ teacher education practice.

Implication Pool 1: Living with Ambiguity

One of the unintended consequences of undertaking this study has been the realization that it is imperative to continually remind myself and others that there are very few instances, events or experiences in life that are absolutes. In other words, a result of doing this study has been the recognition that the search for certainty, for answers, for ways of *doing* social justice teacher education is probably far less important than searching for ways of always *becoming* a socially just teacher educator. This entire study

has been focused on trying to illuminate how people working in social justice teacher education programs perceive of or understand the factors that either enable or constrain teacher educators working in social justice teacher education. As I framed the questions for this study, it was not apparent that looking for answers that corresponded to the binaries of ‘either/or’ would have such a powerful impact on the subsequent interview data or analysis. This is because my overarching research question and the subset questions set up a binary distinction between “constrain” and “enable”. The polarity of these positions generated data that exposed the tensions that are created and exist when we try to impose certitudes or black and white templates onto a grey world; we end up with contradictions, militating and mitigating factors, conundrums, and ambiguity. And in this case, in the end, exposing the intransigence of binaries was a good thing. Because in identifying the factors that participants considered both constraining *and* enabling, they were articulating and becoming aware (as was I) of the contingent nature of those factors: how in some instances/circumstances/contexts they facilitated the work, while in others they made it more complicated/complex. This was exemplified in how Sonia described her work:

I think the other constraint is that it is a course, so enabling it because there’s a course is great, but it’s constrained because it’s locked into this “okay, so we’ve done social justice...” so the notion that that thread may be carried on in the mind of the faculty, then thread it through the curriculum, you know, in our broader, more esoteric vision of it, may not actually be as explicit as it needs to be...

Elaine explored the uncertainty inherent in the work thusly:

I think it's the shift away from a straight disciplinary course offerings, I think it's a shift away from the technical aspects of teaching, to understanding what teaching is for. I think it's a response to the truth and reconciliation commission, an understanding that we do need to be a post-colonial society, and how do we do that, I think not having the answers, but thinking seriously about what does that mean. I think understanding the privilege that we have, but also thinking about that in a practical sort of a way. So what does that mean we do differently?...One of my issues with foundations is that they're very good at standing at the top of a hill and telling everybody what's wrong with the system, but not very good at saying, "okay, so given that, what do we need to do" and in fact, one of the responses often is "well, let's just not have much to do with the school system" it's just being a critique, you know when you're educating teachers, it's just not enough you can't do that.

Sonia noted two instances that she described as "disconnects" in the way teacher education is delivered, as well as in the over-prescription of pre-service teacher experience:

I would say there's a tendency for some of our faculty and in some of our courses to, to, like, uh, how do I say this...Telling as teaching I guess. They just tell people "this is how you should do it, this is how you should do that" without that kind of "well, what do you think?" and "how would you construct that" and that "no, I don't really have a set plan for a lesson plan, you come up with what you think the way you that content needs to be organized and then I'll work from that." It's more of a "here's how to do it, now you do it." So, the "I do, you do, we

do” kind of approach can be a little pervasive, um, in some courses, so for me that’s actually – it’s actually a social justice issue. Because the curriculum then isn’t owned by the students, then the outcomes and the way it looks becomes determined by the teacher...

In the second example, Sonia described the tension that is created as a consequence of over prescription:

I guess the other disconnect I have is this whole idea of experience being their teacher. So, we have a program that is so front-load heavy that we teach them right down to how to orchestrate learning centres before they’ve even stuck their foot in schools. So, philosophically, that to me is kind of flipped.... That worldview for me is “let’s get them in the classroom” you know, they should be generating 100 questions from three days in schools and come back to us and say, “how do we do that...I want to explore this” okay, great here’s some time, go and spend some time in the library, go and check out resources...and come back to me with some kind of a plan on how you’d address that. ‘Cause we need to decenter the notion that the teacher is the only expert in the room and I think some of our courses and our faculty aren’t far enough along in that...

In articulating the tensions noted above, participants are acknowledging the constant mental negotiations they make in deciding whether their teacher education pedagogy and practice is deductive didacticism or inductive, co-constructed sense and meaning making.

Inhabiting the tragic gap. The implications for those of us working in teacher education is that rather than balking at the ambiguity we encounter in this work, we

should instead acknowledge and try to embrace it, knowing that the friction and tension generated in the space between binaries or fixed positions may be the catalyst that gives us the energy and the freedom to continue doing this work. In doing so, we are no longer married to positions, policies or practices of either/or, but can *become* and *reinvent* ourselves and our practices in the spaces between certainties. Occupying the space between binaries – or “inhabiting the tragic gap” as described by Mosley and Rogers (2011) and Palmer (2009), also forces us to continually question the decisions we make – or don’t, the choices we make – or don’t in terms of our approaches to all facets of our work; not just the daily tasks of teaching, but the bigger issues such as how we deal with faculty and/or student resistance to adoption of and adaptation to social justice centered pedagogy and practice. Being present in every moment creates possibilities that may have seemed inconceivable to us before. Rohr (1999/2016) advised:

...we often remain trapped in what we call normalcy— ‘the way things are.’ Life then revolves around problem-solving, fixing, explaining, and taking sides with winners and losers. It can be a pretty circular and even nonsensical existence. To get out of this unending cycle, we have to allow ourselves to be drawn into sacred space, into liminality. All transformation takes place here. We have to allow ourselves to be drawn out of ‘business as usual’ and remain patiently on the ‘threshold’ ...where we are betwixt and between the familiar and the completely unknown. There alone is our old world left behind, while we are not yet sure of the new existence. That’s a good space where genuine newness can begin. Get there often and stay as long as you can by whatever means possible... This is the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart, and a bigger world is

revealed. If we don't encounter liminal space in our lives, we start idealizing normalcy... (¶ 2, p.155-156)

Given that the participants I interviewed for this study work in teacher education programs with explicit social justice orientations, the notion of "idealizing normalcy" is antithetical to their work and indeed, each spoke of their focus on intentional disruptions of normative and normalizing discourses. Consistently drawing attention to and trying to *be* in the liminal space described above echoes the concept of *intentionality* that arose from the way participants described their approach to their work: Creating the conditions for the old world to fall apart and a bigger world to be revealed – to paraphrase Rohr (1999/2016).

To address each day, each interaction, each contemplation from a place of conscious intention is a powerful symbol of the catalytic potential of being present in each moment and of making each moment matter. This is not an easy task; commitment to a conscious social justice agenda can be exhausting and if pursued on one's own without the support of the university, can be unsustainable. As Baltodano, (2015) noted: "Critical educators need.... strong alliances, and, more importantly, the unconditional support of the top university administrators if they are committed to contest the dominant culture of their teacher education programs" (p. 12). This work requires energy, commitment, patience and supportive networks of like-minded (or at least sympathetic) friends, family and colleagues and perhaps above all, the willingness to work surreptitiously, effecting change at the micro rather than macroscopic level of teacher education.

Avoiding complacency. As noted in the quote above, it is very easy to become complacent to avoid the tumult of pursuing a critical agenda in teacher education. Finding the path of least resistance in the work we do can be attractive, especially when that work is situated within structures that offer intransigence against our efforts to shift them. It is as though we start to become part of the edifice ourselves, slowly but surely being cemented into place, into pedagogy, into practice, into stasis as time slips by. It is imperative that we do not allow ourselves to become overwhelmed by the magnitude of the work, but to continue to pour our energy into shoring up our pre-service teachers with the ability to not only stand up, but also, to reach out, to seek balance, to move with the nuances of change, to ride the ebb and flow. And to model this for them in our own pedagogy and practice.

I now turn to the second key theme that emerged from this study: coming to an awareness that in naming something – anything – the named thing takes on an identity of its own with the power to shape and mold reality. The discourses that emerge from or have emerged in teacher education are incredibly powerful in the ways in which they are able to influence pedagogy and practice. Therefore, it is imperative that as teacher educators, we pay close attention to the language we employ in service of our work.

Implication Pool 2: The Power of Language

Language and discourse are powerful tools in our construction of and interaction with reality and subsequently, our relationship to the world and with each other. We say, ‘words matter’ when we want to draw attention to the hurtful ways that they are wielded on school yards, in business, in relationships. We use language to communicate, to create, to obfuscate, to project ourselves into and protect ourselves from the world. We have

come to a new understanding of how much words, language and discourses matter as our reality has been shaken by the recent and terrifying proliferation of alt-facts, ‘fake news’ and the power of both text and subtext to convey overt and covert messages about how we should “be” in society and who does not belong “here”. The current political narrative emanating from the US would have us believe that narrow-minded essentialism is a quality to aspire to, to ‘Make America Great Again’. Counter narratives to the dictates of the ‘alt-right’ decry the homogenizing and hegemonizing rhetoric flowing from the top political echelons to their xeno/homo/phobic, racist, misogynist supporters. Yet the veneer of civility and by extension, acceptance and even tolerance of difference is wearing very thin and we are experiencing a world where what we as a western democratic, far from perfect, society believed to be true and right are being upended, mocked, and disregarded by those who vilify anyone who does not meet their white, Christian, predominantly male, able-bodied, heterosexual norm. The proliferation and acceptance of discourses of intolerance, of vilifying ‘other’ is particularly disturbing as these notions are finding their way into mainstream culture and by extension, into educational settings. When divisive discourses can circulate without challenge, when in teacher education we do not call out discriminatory, hurtful actions, attitudes or words we are giving tacit approval for these ideas to find their way into Canadian classrooms.

Disrupting labels of difference. When we essentialize and generalize and label other, we cut off any potential to see the world differently. Our worldviews grow narrower and our communities grow smaller. We become more insular and less accepting. We develop fear, distrust, and hatred. Unfortunately, what can be said of society can also be said of our schools. Schools are largely a microcosm and a reflection

of society. To mitigate the potential damage of ever more prevalent discourses of exclusion, it should be our mandate in pre-service teacher education, to ensure that we are as intentional with our words, and our labels as we are with our actions. Most of us working in education shy away from labels because they tend to insinuate that we regard students who have a designation of some description, as the label attached to that designation. In other words, when a child has autism some of us label the child ‘autistic’. Rather than seeing them as a person *with* a condition, we see them *as* the condition. This may prevent us from going beyond the designation, to explore all the real and potential assets or strengths an individual brings to our schools, places of work, etc., instead of labeling *them* as deficit or deficient based on a singular characteristic of their persona.

Developing a ‘professional’ persona. Similarly, pre-service teachers fold their existing social and cultural identities or “personal labels” into their burgeoning teacher identity which may impact their perception of their students who are different from them. Sonia described her experiences working to disrupt pre-service teacher conceptions of what is “normal” especially in relation to faith:

How do we teach acceptance of you know, multiple gender identification, social justice around sexual orientation, social justice around multiple faiths and beliefs, or the fact that within the context of the public system...the whole idea of education is sort of anti-religious...it’s against doctrine, it’s against being espoused as a way to think, it’s about cultivating your own ways right?...When you are entering a profession that has to find a place, voice, space and equity of power and privilege for all of those different faiths, how you identify yourself becomes very important, so can you identify yourself now as the teacher who

happens to be Christian, or do you still see yourself as the Christian teacher? I say that doesn't preclude you from bringing that piece of your identity forward, but it cannot blind you to the other identities that are present because it becomes a veil. Whereas if you identify as professional teacher first, well, your role is very clear and that embodies a whole different set of epistemologies than does your faith as a Christian or a Sikh or a Muslim or whatever.

Inhabiting an identity. Gee (2000) described four distinct yet interconnected perspectives on identity that are useful here in terms of explaining how the label “social justice teacher educator” or “education” provides a solid foundation and justification for engaging in this work and in encouraging pre-service teachers to conceive of their identities as in formation rather than fixed. Amongst Gee's (2000) four identities, he described both an institutional identity as well as an affinity identity as ways in which people – in this case teacher educators, can and do align themselves with both their identity role within an institution as well as their role in like-minded or, ‘affinity’ communities (such as an identity as a social justice educator) in approaching their work with pre-service teachers (p. 101, 105). Their power and perhaps momentum derives from the labels that have been attached to their respective teacher education programs – identifying them as a particular kind of institution, as well as to the labels they have attached or have had attached to themselves as social justice teacher educators. The assumption of an identity/title/name seems to provide a justification or foundation for owning the qualities attributed to the identity. In other words, if I were to identify as a member of some social grouping – i.e., a ‘hipster,’ you as a reader conjure images of who I am and what sorts of activities I engage with. Once you have made a mental image,

complete with expectations of how I will *be*, then I am free to embody the qualities of that identity with impunity – it is what is expected of me as a member of that social grouping. Similarly, working in a social justice teacher education program provides teacher educators with the latitude to evoke and elicit emotional as well as pedagogical responses from pre-service teachers to prepare them for work in diverse environments. Many of us are hesitant to challenge pre-service teachers to look at their own complicity in maintaining systems of dominance because we feel vulnerable in doing so. However, if one were to consider any form of named, specialized program – i.e., a physical education program, one would expect to engage in all aspects of physical education – including exercise. To expect differently would be foolish, and for a pre-service teacher to rail against that component of their program would be silly and untenable. One of the significant findings of this study was coming to an understanding of how the simple act of designating a teacher education program “social justice oriented” makes many things not only permissible but possible. In other words, labels work. In this case adopting the identity of social justice oriented teacher education allows a program to scrape out a unique existence amongst other teacher education programs, offering something different from the norm with distinct protocols, understandings, expectations, structures and course offerings.

Building an identity. Given that we all cannot rush out and label our programs, we need to find other ways of impacting the direction our programs take. So, with that in mind, in the absence of an official label or identity affixed to our own institutions or our roles within them, it would be beneficial to the social justice cause for us to take on as many opportunities as possible by volunteering for committees focused on mission and/or

faculty/department visioning, as well as committees tasked with crafting career postings to lure new faculty who may have a social justice bent. Elaine described that process as follows: “you can actually do preferential hiring...which doesn’t make everyone happy when that happens but I think it certainly is a way to be deliberate about what you want your faculty complement...”

Hopefully over time, shifts in mandates or missions will occur and existing programs can be brought into closer alignment with adopting a ‘social justice’ identity.

Again, both activities require extra time and commitment to engaging in processes that may or may not have the impact we desire, which brings me to the third theme emerging from this data: the necessity of surrounding oneself with allies and critical friends to both support and to challenge us; to help shoulder the weight of the work, especially when that work is carried out in contrast but parallel to program delivery from Schön’s (1980) hard, high ground of technical rationality.

Implication Pool 3: Developing Critical Self-Reflection and Building Critical Relationships in order to Counter Hegemony

Two participants noted they had not spent much time ruminating on their roles in “teaching for social justice” as it was just something they did; they lived their practice. Having them identify factors that in large part determined the degree to which they could carry out their daily routines, shed light on places in themselves, their institutions, programs and practices that as Kumashiro (2009, p. xxxviii) noted, made some things possible (such as overt disruption of pre-service teacher thinking) while making others impossible (like dismantling systems and structures that repressed or suppressed their efforts). Drawing attention and awareness to those taken for granted practices may have

helped to expose the potential hegemony in the daily *doing* of the work but not *being* present in it. In other words, in not challenging institutional policies and practices that seemed to serve no purpose other than to control or gate keep, or making or allowing assumptions about the impact of one's work to proliferate without critical self-reflection, educators are complicit in equating superficial change with systemic renewal. Bea described an occurrence at her institution as indicative of this:

[We] decided to do a three-year study on our admissions process and ...we used a lot of quantitative measures where we compared [student] scores on admission variables with their performance on practicum. But we also included a qualitative review of the different rubrics that were used and the rubrics had basically sort of been co-opted from [a different institution]. They didn't actually match any of our program values! [laughter]. That's one of the first things we realized when we did this review was "okay, we have these program values but they're not actually part of our admissions process." Whoops! So, then we went and revised all of our rubrics around admissions so they focused on our...values. So, it was interesting, 'cause you're right...those structural things, they're not automatically in place, you have to be quite purposeful. About having that sort of alignment.

In this instance, aligning structures and processes allowed this institution to ensure that there was a deliberate set or principled criteria by which they were able to assess potential teacher candidates' readiness for their program. Co-opting material or ideas from one jurisdiction and engaging in wholesale imposition in another does not necessarily confer successful implementation.

Critical conversations and relationships. One of the principal understandings that emerged from this study was that it is imperative that people working in social justice teacher education make space in their world to engage in critical conversations with themselves and others to ensure that they have not fallen into the alluring trap of complacency in their practice or thinking about the way they approach the work and their perception of pre-service teachers. The same can be said for those whose dogmatism isolates them from engaging in useful conversations with their colleagues: ultimately their vehemence may contribute to even greater resistance to social justice education from pre-service teachers and from less enlightened colleagues.

The crux of this implication is recognizing that what is possible and sustainable in this work is entirely contingent on the relationships we have and that we develop in both our work and in the broader community. A perusal of many Canadian teacher education program websites reveal the preponderance of female faculty working in teacher education yet the preponderance of men in positions of administrative power. I note the gender intentionally here, in consideration of attempting to counter the hegemony of white male privilege so prevalent in maintaining the status quo in society.

Disrupting from within. It is important to note that when describing factors that constrained them in doing their work, participants identified the prevalence of resistance from ‘old white men’ on several occasions. It is still an unfortunate reality that in terms of power, men are perceived to have and to wield more. However, this reality may provide the impetus for female, non-binary individuals or academic ‘others’ to aspire to positions of power and influence within institutions, faculties of education and teacher education in particular. Building alliances/making allies across identities creates the sort

of counter-hegemonic bloc identified by Gramsci (1971/1999) and Carroll (2006) as integral in overcoming the hegemony of the status quo, in that the fluidity and transitory nature of individuals, identities and causes inhibits the sedimentation of complacency. Having the support of allies and critical friends provides us the ability to be responsive *in the moment* allowing us to “live” our pedagogy, recognizing that the dynamism of possibility exists in the liminal space – the threshold of becoming described by Rohr (1999/2016).

If we are serious in developing the kind of consciousness that all the preceding implications direct us toward, then it is also imperative that we remain alert to the tendency we have to generalize, essentialize, and stereotype, especially as we seemingly continue to welcome the same sort of students into our programs as we have done for generations.

Implication Pool 4: Learning to Recognize and Avoid Stereotypical Depictions

What I noted in the interview data was the presence of stereotypical descriptions of the pre-service teacher population as predominantly white, middle class and female. While their physical representation may reflect that reality, it is crucial that as teacher educators, we do not slip into seeing those who choose to do the hard work of teaching, those who choose to enter our programs – social justice oriented or not – as “just like all of the other young women who have passed through our programs.” While this reductionist approach may lend a degree of comfort in the familiarity of having trod that road before, it also has the potential to create a standardized approach to working with pre-service teachers who we have essentialized through our assumptions about and pre-judgments of them.

In larger institutions and teacher education programs it is far more difficult to develop personal relationships with students, especially if the model of teacher education is not cohort based and there is not a cadre of teacher educators who collaborate and share responsibility for the holistic well-being of pre-service teachers. This is also true where, regardless of size, programs are being forced into offering truncated programs to compete for students against other similar institutions in a geographic region. The students in our schools need novice teachers in their classrooms who know that there is more to teaching than curriculum delivery. Imparting that idea is one thing; having pre-service teachers internalize it is another. When teacher education classes are so big that there isn't time to get to know students more than superficially, or our programs are so short that we feel pressured to cram everything in, especially the how of 'how to teach' we will not develop the depth of relationship necessary to effect deep and lasting change.

Building relationships. If knowledge is socially constructed and emergent then there really is no such thing as a set curriculum that needs to be “got through” in preparing pre-service teachers for working in Canadian classrooms. What this means is that we can take the time to get to know our white, middle-class students to understand the nuances of their personalities and characters and how they are not a monocultural, clichéd trope of teacher education, but unique individuals whose voices need to be heard. The same can be said for all students who enter our teacher education programs; the default assumptions that we as teacher educators might make on fleeting first impressions can contribute to generalizing and essentializing the stories and histories of those we do not take the time to know well, minimizing the potential deep learning that might occur in

safer spaces of relational accountability. Maxine Greene (1995) describes this along these lines:

All we can do is speak with others as passionately and eloquently as we can; all we can do is to look into each other's eyes and urge each other on to new beginnings. Our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive. They ought to resound with the voices of...people in dialogues always incomplete because there is always more to be discovered and more to be said. We must want our students to achieve friendship as each one stirs to wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility. (p.43)

Again, to enter into a space of withholding judgment, of welcome, of patience, and of forgiveness as our students struggle with difficult knowledge (Britzman, 1998) is to court transformation in our pre-service teachers and perhaps, ourselves.

The next section requires the reader to consider their willingness to engage in ways of being that may invoke some trepidation. To move our pedagogy and practice to a place that helps pre-service teachers develop the ability to eschew the certainties, boundaries, rules and conditions of technical rationality, teacher educators must model both risk taking and vulnerability as these are required from us if we desire a transformation in our teacher education programs, pedagogies, practices and, more importantly, pre-service teachers.

Implication Pool 5: Willingness to be Vulnerable and Take Risks

What is required of teacher educators is perhaps less a rearrangement of external structures and more a reconsideration – or paradigm shift in the way we think about the work that we do. If, as I hope this study has revealed, it is desirable to exist – at least some of the time—in the liminality of becoming, then we need to free ourselves from the mental constructs that bind us to conceptualizing and categorizing the work that we do. In other words, we need to try to set beginning and end points of our courses or programs and then start engaging with the contingent and disruptive nature of evolutionary praxis, which I would describe as the unfolding of a curriculum in the in-between – the “in the moment” interactions and experiences we encounter with our students. We need to have faith that the learning that happens in our classrooms will be based in pedagogy that understands that authentic relationships are at the heart of any curriculum and that in that space of safety, many things are possible. Walstrom (n.d.) noted:

Words are deficient to really grasp the in-between. Some of the words being used to describe the in-between are silence, void, and emptiness. Some of the qualities that are said to come from the in-between are clarity, peace, love, creativity, and wisdom. To try to describe the in-between, however, is to contain it. Even my attempts to convey the idea of the in-between are frustrating and seem ridiculously limiting (§ 8).

Going back to the premise of this chapter, I cannot provide the reader with a degree of certainty or answers to the questions of “how does one do this” because embracing the vulnerability apparent in admitting one does not have all the answers is not an idea that I am comfortable with. However, I am willing to try, and so, as an

implication for teacher educators, the ideas may not be coming across with the same level of urgency I feel in my body as I type this. My brain is wired for sensible sense-making; for logic and structure, for beginnings and ends, black and white, yes and no. I am terrified of what I have just suggested because it means that I must pass into the threshold and learn to be comfortable or at least not terrified with the not knowing. I must become a little less panicked over the vulnerability inherent in a state of becoming something and someone else. Sonia described the work this way:

So, I'm going to start by saying that I feel safe to teach the course because I know it's part of a structure of the program. Like, I feel safe to go there in certain ways because I know this is something that my colleagues – if my colleagues know that disruptions are happening in that course you know and whatever mutterings they might be hearing – and you know, that's part of the beauty of it because we all teach the same students...um, I feel safe enough to know that that's not going to be like “oh, well, you know, so and so isn't doing a good job of that course” or you know “what's going on?” or, “here, we've got a problem to deal with”. They expect some of that disruption - they want some of that disruption. So, I think there's a structural – an administrative component of the program that does a lot for and does monitor that disruption that could happen. Do *I* always feel safe teaching this course? No. I call it my love-hate relationship, no I've changed it – love-fear relationship [laughing] with the course, like, I love teaching it, and I love engaging with students in these kinds of topics but I – it's so difficult and it can be so scary. I mean, that vulnerability is something that I... it's interesting, I've had students say to me, you know, “you're just so composed and so poised,

and I just wish I could do that when I'm talking about these" and I say, "oh, well, that's what good teachers do, because right now, there's a storm going on in my brain and my heart's fluttering. And, if I'm not letting you see it then that's great." Have I let students see me get kind of like ruffled? Yeah, sure, but I think what they're starting to recognize is that as a professional you kind of hold that space – your container has to be really big right? To be able to kind of just hold it, and then, and then to let it go too.

Brené Brown (2013) seems to echo the sentiments expressed by Sonia above, noting,

I spent a lot of years trying to outrun or outsmart vulnerability by making things certain and definite, black and white, good and bad. My inability to lean into the discomfort of vulnerability limited the fullness of those important experiences that are wrought with uncertainty: Love, belonging, trust, joy, and creativity to name a few (in Schawbel, 2013, ¶ 3).

In the end, if we want our pre-service teachers to create and nurture classrooms where social justice is "just the way we do things here" then we need to model the characteristics of openness to change, a willingness to be vulnerable, to not know, to be wrong. Because when we embrace these, we are opening ourselves to a deeper connection to our students, to our work, to our colleagues and ultimately, to ourselves. To my mind, this is the rejuvenation and reenergizing that we will need when we give so fully of ourselves. This is a call I think, to not leave the work at work. It is a call to become, always.

The last implication or pool of self-reflection in this study is probably an encapsulation of all that has come before. In some ways, it might seem to negate the possibilities described throughout this last section, but looked at another way, it offers the anti-oppressive lens that Kumashiro (2000/2009) has described so eloquently – in that we can “queer” the way we consider, visualize and approach our work if we recognize that boundaries are rarely impermeable. In other words, there will always be tensions between accepting ‘what appears to be’ and imagining ‘what is possible’.

Implication Pool 6: Recognize the Catalytic Potential Inherent in Tension

Most humans spend their lives trying to avoid confrontations and uncomfortable situations, to negotiate away unproductive tensions that hamper daily life, as no one would desire to go through life careening from one battlefield to another, crisis to crisis if they could help it. The unproductive tension in our work is always greatest when we are forced to adhere to binaries of absolutes in policy, in practice and in theory to the apparent neglect of the freedom inherent in recognizing the non-binary, contingent nature of our work with students and how we need to be mentally present with them in each moment, as learning unfolds. We all are shaped and contoured through our interactions; we are in a constant state of becoming, yet at the same time we are beholden to the sometimes-intransigent nature of departmental, faculty and even university ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Conversely, there is a positive form of tension – productive tension that keeps us alert and aware – present and conscious in our worlds. This form of tension enables us to respond to circumstances that seem out of our control such as the imposition of institutionally mandated policies that seem contrary to a social justice vision. This was

evident in the story that Jeannie shared in relation to the way her faculty have co-opted the judgment-laden accountability process of negative course evaluations as a sign of doing good social justice work. As a way forward, working within community with like-minded faculty or department members to subvert the unsubvertible – the ivory-clad policies and practices of monolithic institutions (like mandated course evaluations, antiquated assessment policies and practices and traditional school-based practicum placements) may provide the kind of catalytic tension needed to spark conversation, debate, and perhaps changes on a grander scale.

The tensions in education will always exist, and as teacher educators, we may be tempted to place both of our feet on the hard ground of Schön's (1980) technical rationality to avoid the quagmire of the swampy lowlands. But such firm footholds may only reconfirm and strengthen an understanding of the world as black and white – just and unjust, right and wrong. In certainty, we lose possibility and the uncovering of new ways of knowing and being that might exist just outside of our field of vision and perhaps, just out of our reach. But that we strive to become more, to be reconciled with only a partial understanding, is to ensure that we do not succumb to the ennui of merely existing.

This particular path along the river has wended to an end. The six pools of contemplation encountered along the way have provided the reader with the opportunity to contemplate their own experiences and to decide whether any of the ripples generated by the stones of implication will have or do have an impact on their pedagogy and practice.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I am mindful of the commitment I made early on to follow Strega's (2005) framework for determining whether my research is indeed anti-oppressive. One of the key facets of that framework was to consider the degree to which I have not only deconstructed the elements of teacher education I chose to study, but whether I also offered a reconstruction to help envision new life worlds for others as well as my own work in teacher education. I know that I have been somewhat successful in that realm in terms of my own practice as I chose to analyze and engage with what it truly means to live and work as authentically and consciously as possible as someone committed to social justice in education. There will be moments of vulnerability going forward as pre-service teachers encounter new knowledge and experiences that lay bare our complicity in maintaining systems and structures of oppression juxtaposed with our long-held narratives of who we are in the world and our place in it.

Social justice teacher educators – in social justice programs or not, have fought equality discourses and their normative and normalizing insidiousness in classrooms where education alone is not enough to mitigate the damages inflicted by inequity and discrimination against the marginalized Other. As was evidenced through the descriptions provided by Sonia and Bea, they have worked very hard in their pedagogy to try to confront and to mediate the impact of policies and procedures and structures and ideologies and rules and regulations and prejudice and bias and taken for granted narratives of old stereotypes of failure and labels to help pre-service teachers develop into champions of equity and diversity. Bea described how working for equity and social justice revealed that the liberal paradigm of equality is largely false; that its promises of

wealth trickling down to the masses, of a meritocratic society, are no more than panaceas of common sense, hegemonizing rhetoric. That each participant described sites of disruption – large or small – within their practice or their pedagogy is testament to their attempts to unseat oppressive, taken-for-granted discourses of education.

Jeannie and Elaine described the fight against the reductionism inherent in a rational/technical understanding and practice of teaching and learning. Teacher educators like the women in this study have fought the rationale for and technicality of assessment procedures that seek to rank, label and pigeon-hole students as greater or less than. They too have pushed for balance in curriculum, recognizing that education is for the heart as well as for the mind. They have railed against bureaucratic, neoliberal political systems that narrow and whittle away what matters in education while at the same time, mandating educators churn out ‘good’ citizens.

For all of this and more, social justice oriented teacher educators have continued in their efforts to educate future teachers to rise above liberal discourses of “equal to,” to question the structures and policies and beliefs that Evelyn described as keeping some in the center and others on the periphery, and have sought to give pre-service teachers the language and tools to confront and address discourses of exclusion and complacency. As described by Sonia, the work involves challenging common sense narratives that do nothing to make the world and our classrooms more equitable spaces. Social justice teacher educators work very hard to help their pre-service teachers envision and hopefully create classroom environments that champion diversity, are inclusive of all and that advocate for social justice.

In the introduction to this study I laid out the rationale for taking on this research and how much of my desire to carry it out was based in my experiences as both a high school teacher and as a teacher educator. I really wanted to know if there were concrete methods that I could share with my students to make sure that they would become the kind of teachers that the world needs to enable us all to address inequity and injustice; to be teachers who see the whole child, not just the student, the diagnosis, the minority, or the label. Instead, what I found was a very complex terrain of teacher education that defied simple explanation. This study has explored this terrain and has exposed the impotence of binaries as positions from which to enact transformational change in teacher education and by extension, in pre-service teachers' understanding of themselves, their pedagogy and practice and their roles as change agents.

In the end, teacher education devoted to equity and social justice should be focused on not only preparing students technically for teaching, but on building and nurturing relationships of esteem, respect, concern and care for each other. As per Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, these are fundamental to human flourishing and matter more and have a greater impact on learning than any technique, strategy, pedagogy, or structure can ever have. And it is these qualities that are needed in our teachers now.

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Appendix A



Human Research Ethics Board
 Office of Research Services
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 PO Box 1700 STN CSC
 Victoria British Columbia V8W 2Y2 Canada
 Tel 250-472-4545, Fax 250-721-8960
 eethics@uvic.ca www.research.uvic.ca

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Allyson Fleming	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER 14-283 Minimal Risk - Delegated
UVic STATUS: Ph.D. Student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 09-Sep-14
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDCI	APPROVED ON: 09-Sep-14
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Kathy Sanford	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 08-Sep-15

PROJECT TITLE: Teacher education for the 21st century: The social justice imperative

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER: None

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: SSHRC (pending)

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
 To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
 Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures
 When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.


 Dr. Rachael Scarth
 Associate Vice-President Research Operations

Certificate Issued On: 09-Sep-14

14-283
 Fleming, Allyson

Appendix B



Office of Research Services | Human Research Ethics Board
 Administrative Services Building Rm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
 T 250-472-4545 | F 250-721-8960 | uvic.ca/research | ethics@uvic.ca

Certificate of Renewed Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Allyson Fleming	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER 14-283 <i>Minimal Risk Review - Delegated</i>
UVic STATUS: Ph.D. Student	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 09-Sep-14
UVic DEPARTMENT: EDCI	RENEWED ON: 04-Sep-15
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Kathy Sanford	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 08-Sep-16

PROJECT TITLE: **Teacher education for the 21st century: The social justice imperative**

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER: None

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
 To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

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This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.


 Dr. Rachael Scarth
 Acting Associate Vice-President, Research

Certificate Issued On: 04-Sep-15

14-283 Fleming, Allyson