

Creating
circles of
hope in
teacher
education



edited by GEORGE SHEPPARD

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Preface

For the last two decades at least, the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE), the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and its Affiliates (AEFO, ETFO, OECTA and OSSTF) have run a joint conference (usually held annually but – this being Ontario – occasionally interrupted by political crises of one sort or another) to discuss shared concerns. Sometimes these symposia have been about associate/student relationships, classroom teachers as knowledge creators, or about equitable access to teacher education. Most recently a “teacher glut” in Ontario has led to employment difficulties for new graduates, with an estimated extra 40,000 trained professionals seeking work in the province. At the same time, the province has sought to reduce that surplus by demanding a doubling of requirements starting in 2015 (from 30 to 60 education credits, and 40 to 80 days in placement), hoping to halve the annual number of graduates. The current job situation, and the radical restructuring of initial teacher education programs in Ontario, has been disconcerting to many. Thus, “Creating Circles of Hope in Teacher Education” seemed to be a natural response to the challenges facing teachers in the field, faculties at the universities, and the pre-service candidates who inhabit both worlds. Two years ago the OTF/OADE conference on social media led to the production of an e-book, and this year the decision was made to continue with that innovation. The papers presented in this e-book are invited submissions that emerged from the twenty-eight workshop sessions held in February 2014 at York University. Two streams are represented here, including both peer-reviewed papers and a conference proceeding.

The editorial board for this e-book was comprised of G. Sheppard, P. Danyluk, and C. Crang. Our editorial assistant was E. Scola. Additional peer-reviews were completed by Y. Gwekewere, S. Demers, and S. Laroque. Financial support was offered by the OTF/OADE, as well as by Yves Alarie in Laurentian's Research, Development and Creativity Office. The board also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Ashley Thompson at the Demarais Library and Lindy Amato, Director, Professional Affairs, OTF.

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Introduction

The articles in this e-book exemplify the sense of optimism that was present at the “Creating Circles of Hope in Teacher Education” conference held at York University on 21-22 February 2014. A joint effort between the Ontario Teachers’ Federation, its four Affiliates and the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, the conference brought together teachers, students, academics, and other education partners to discuss selected topics. For 2014 the focus was on inquiry, identity, innovation, and integration in teacher education programs. Examples of research projects from a variety of perspectives were shared, with the focus on improving teaching and student learning. Practical resources were also presented, offering immediate and useful options to those ready to engage in supporting these four pillars. A focus on indigenous content, the connection between theory and practice, and reflection in teacher education were also common themes at the conference. Participants saw many examples of university faculty partnering with teachers from various school boards, bringing forth innovative and collaborative projects to be shared, while several participants from the Ministry of Education offered current best practices and ideas. The theme “Creating Circles of Hope in Teacher Education” was clearly evident in the presentations, as all walked away with an increased understanding of the importance of inquiry, identity, innovation and integration in education today.

A number of participants submitted papers for peer-review following their workshops. For example, the theme of identity was exemplified in the article “A recursive view of self in teacher education: Beliefs, values and action research within an evolving landscape“ which posits that when pre-service teachers examine their values, philosophical orientations, and attitudes toward education and teaching, they are in fact examining their own identity as individuals. Likewise, “Circles of Hope in Indigenizing Mainstream Teacher Education” is very timely in light of the growing numbers of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners in Canada. “Concurrent Education and Transition to Teaching: The Laurentian Experience 2007-14,” fit well with the inquiry theme in its examination of how factors, such as age at graduation, previous mobility, type and length of program (including embedded indigenous components) can affect pre-service candidates seeking employment. Innovation in teacher education was exhibited by several of the articles in this book. The fresh idea of providing pre-service teachers with the opportunity to practice their classroom skills using technology is presented in the article, “Virtual Classroom Visits in Teacher Education: An Innovative and Motivating Approach to Teaching and Learning.” Finally, the integration of curriculum, big ideas, and key values is examined in “Fostering Teaching for Relevance and Values Development: Insights from a Longitudinal Study of Teachers.”

One conference proceeding is published here as well. The theme of integration is represented by “Post-practicum Reflection on the Complexities of Classroom Life” which integrates Doyle’s (1986) six categories with post-practicum reflection.

As teacher educators we are always striving for continuous improvement in what we teach and how we teach. Conferences like “Creating Circles of Hope” provide us with the

opportunity to share our research and promote working together to improve teacher education in Ontario. Thank you to all of the authors who submitted their research and presentations for this E-Book. The innovative ideas expressed within provide hope for continuous innovation in teacher education.

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Peer Reviewed Articles

A Recursive View of Self in Teacher Education: Beliefs, Values and Action Research within an Evolving Landscape

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Pre-service education is a time of hope, intense growth and learning while shaping self-concept. The actions of pre-service teachers may be planned and deliberate however this can be distilled via research to learn about values, philosophical orientations and one's general stance in education and teaching. Accumulated data can be introduced in class reflective tasks and through review of practicum responsibilities, which ignites discussion, conflict and a need to explore experiences in pre-service. The need to reflect on self in relation to society is a fundamental developmental task within teacher training that can impact identity (self-concept). Making sense of an action taken in a practicum can be a recursive cyclical exercise as moments are revisited in conversation and writing. These exercises, when strategic and systematic can be labeled action research which is something that helps pre-service teachers professionally develop and revise teaching plans, actions and decisions in pre-service and beyond.

On February 21st and 22nd, 2014, at York University in Toronto, the Ontario Teachers Federation and the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OTF/OADE) conference, entitled: *Creating Circles of Hope in Teacher Education*, unfolded with purpose and vigor. The notion of hope in education is timely and a recursive element in the minds of teachers and learners alike. It has a timeless quality. Hope can be felt as people anticipate positive outcomes such as training to become a teacher and via professional development while a teacher. It is an ongoing quest to improve and discover while educating and teaching.

Improvement, hope, and the need to revisit and reflect upon teaching are some of elements located in good teacher training experiences and programs. Reflection for instance, is often located in a practice teaching model designed for pre-service teachers who are training to become qualified and registered teachers. Herein the act or action of "reflection is a state of mind, an ongoing constituent of practice, not a technique, or curriculum element" (Bolton, 2010, p. 3). Reflection can occur in many ways and at many times, before, during and after teaching (Ryan, 2013b). The act of reflection can embody and contain critical thinking as Dewey (1910) proposed, reflection was the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (p. 9). Reflection and reflective tasks are tools as "professional learning is not just an intellectual process (a process of acquisition and application of knowledge), but also a process of practical action in which knowledge is enacted in reflecting and developing a specific action" (Altrichter, 2005, p. 11). We reflect to revise our actions of the future and to revisit our actions of the past.

The practicum session is a recurring cycle of practice teaching in schools with a supervisor (qualified teacher) and a visiting advisor (University advisor) overseeing progress, performance and student-teaching. Simultaneously a pre-service person in a practicum could be

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completing an action research cycle or cycles, as action follows reflections and leads to revisions reflexively and naturally in the practice of teaching and learning. These are circles of hope for all involved as growth and development are usually witnessed, realized and used to move forward.

Some may see this opportunity or growth as a means to improve not only teaching practice but also the self-concept of pre-service teachers. “Students become what we model for them, and part of our influence on them depends on our own states of growth—our own self-concepts—and how we communicate them . . .” (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009, p. 340). Although tacit, self-concept is an important part of education for all students, advisors, supervisors, administrators, parents and communities. Its impact extends into the academic realm, into the realms of curriculum and *values education*, and ultimately into all parts of our complex lives. To acknowledge this and not study it or its development would be to ignore the obvious; something we should not do. Indeed, past research by Miller (2007) linked the development of self-concept to classical Greek philosophy termed the “*paideia*, the formation and enlightenment of the self” (p. 185). It was one of the basic ideals of Greek learning, and it carried significant weight because of its long history of philosophical justification (p. 183).

More recent is the work of Scott and Santos de Barona (2011) who defined self-concept as something “shaped by others and the environment . . . [and is] . . . hierarchical and multidimensional” (p. 293). For the purpose herein, self-concept is understood as a person’s (pre-service student) attempt to positively define and understand themselves in terms of values, philosophy (beliefs), and action via self-study (narrative). Self-concept is both fluid and flexible, and has the “capacity to adapt and expand the story we tell, so that it becomes a way of managing complexity and multiplicity” (Warin & Muldoon, 2009, p. 293).

Action Research

Action Research (A.R.) is a research mode that supports and guides, in this case, pre-service teachers, to investigate real-world issues to discover answers, solutions and remedies to teaching problems encountered in the practicum, the University classroom and beyond. The action researcher “addresses a specific, practical issue and seeks to obtain solutions to a problem” (Creswell, 2012, p. 577). A.R. is used “to improve the practice of education, with researchers studying their own problems or issues in a school or educational setting” (Creswell, 2012, p. 592). A.R., is not an event, instead it is more of a way of creating critical awareness over time which can induce specific ethical issues via the potentially problematic “. . . dual role of the teacher and the researcher” (Creswell, 2012, p. 588). McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) have argued,

To be action research, there must be praxis rather than practice. Praxis is informed, committed action that gives rise to knowledge rather than just successful action. It is informed because other people's views are taken into account. It is committed and intentional in terms of values that have been examined and can be argued. It leads to knowledge from and about educational practice. (p. 8)

As a pre-service teacher who returns to the practicum recursively throughout the teacher-training program this mode of inquiry is both complementary and pragmatic. It is expected that the pre-

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service teacher will heed the insights offered by mentors and via self-reflection enact a number of beliefs in overtly and covertly that align with profession, schools and the society at large. Socrates stated that a life without inquiry is not worth living (Fadiman, 1978). Socrates provided A.R., with a type of questioning where everything is questioned and truth was approached only through dialogues or the play of minds (Ryan, 2013b). Many dialogues can be thought of as art, open to criticism, especially when the interchanges are documented and given further consideration as in action research (Ryan, 2013a). Action research “is not a panacea for all ills and does not resolve specific problems but provides a means for people to more clearly understand their situations and to formulate effective solutions to problems they face” (Stringer, 2014, p. 8). Creswell (2012) details the *strengths* and *problems* in A.R., as follows:

1. Encourages change in the school
2. Foster a democratic . . . approach to education
3. Empowers individuals through collaboration
4. Positions teachers and other educators as learners who seek to narrow the gap between practice and their vision of education
5. Encourages educators to reflect on their practices
6. Promotes a process of testing new ideas.

Problems

1. Used by informal academic researchers
2. Less-than-scientific methods
3. Not objective

(p. 578).

In spite of the issues within A.R., it is quite a useful instrument and has been endorsed by many researchers, authors, educators and users such as, Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Mertler, 2012; Mills, 2010; Parsons, Hewson, Adrian, & Day, 2013; Ryan, 2012, and Stringer, 2014. What often makes the action within the research meaningful is the requirement to reflect, and write (journal) about experience in a manner that causes participants (pre-service teachers) to discover, decode, and process experiences such as teaching as well as the impact on self-development. Humphreys and Wolfson (2008) endorse journaling as “an effective way to build self-awareness and self-value” (p. 47). This act of writing can be a means to access and infuse self-concept, yet stressing how it should be freely produced, without “correcting, analyzing, or critiquing” (p. 47). A journal is a means of writing the personal narrative, not as a writing activity, but as a guide to personal understanding and growth. What can surface in the writing may be decoded and labeled as values, beliefs (philosophy), criticisms, needs, desires and other human traits that can be useful in the development of the person in training. Teacher training involves theory, which leads to an examination of “the social context of schools and their organizations, [and] teacher candidates investigate how changes in the values and composition of the Canadian population affect the nature of elementary and secondary schooling” (University of British Columbia, 2010, p. 2). Indeed, we “have a responsibility not only to introduce aspiring teachers to the traditions, practices and values of the profession to date, but to respect and encourage their capacity to act in ways that renew the profession” (Phelan, Erickson, Darling, Collins, & Kind, 2007, p. 20).

Values

UNESCO (2014) recently announced that “the values and attitudes we live by affect how we relate to other people and to all our activities in the environment, and so are a major influence on our prospects for achieving a sustainable future” (p.1). We can define the word, value(s) in many ways however, within this paper a value is “an enduring belief” (Rokeach, 1968, p. 160), which may be overt and tacit within a universal belief(s) about desirable and undesirable conduct (Feather, 1975; Rokeach, 1973). In fact, “a value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 43). Hence, a person’s value system can be examined by looking into the organization (rank) of specific values that inform beliefs and guide conduct (Ryan & Robinson, 2012). UNESCO (2014) further suggests, “values are generally long-term standards or principles that are used to judge the worth of an idea or action. They provide the criteria by which we decide whether something is good or bad, right or wrong.

In our 2012 study of pre-service teacher values we discovered convergences and divergences of choice centred upon gender and division of teacher training. We used the Rokeach values survey which was developed using a factor analysis elimination procedure, over several years, to move from over 100 words, to 36 words that represent Terminal (18 words) and Instrumental values (18 words) (Ryan & Robinson, 2012). Terminal values included freedom, health, and family security, which concern the "end state of existence” (Rokeach, 1973). The second list of instrumental values included helpful, and polite, which address "modes of conduct” (Rokeach, 1973). These values have been deemed universally applicable across cultures and borders, globally, Rokeach reported (1973, 1979) (Ryan & Robinson, 2012). Only the manner in which people rank these 18 values changes consistently from sample to sample, and over time (Ryan & Robinson, 2012). What follows are a series of self-explanatory tables that were developed by via statistical analysis of data over time by Ryan & Robinson, 2012.

Table 1
Mean Rankings of Terminal Values by Educational Division

Rank	Primary/Junior		Junior/Intermediate		Intermediate/Senior	
	Value	Mean	Value	Mean	Value	Mean
1	Health	5.26	Health	3.59	Family Security	4.52
2	Family Security	5.35	Family Security	6.12	Health	5.59
3	True Friendship	6.45	True Friendship	6.68	Freedom	5.84
4	Self-Respect	6.95	Self-Respect	7.17	Equality	6.91
5	Freedom	8.01	Freedom	7.71	True Friendship	7.91
6	Mature Love	8.57	Mature Love	8.27	A Comfortable Life	8.05
7	Inner Harmony	8.79	Inner Harmony	9.02	Mature Love	8.05
8	Accomplishment	9.17	A Comfortable Life	9.61	Self-Respect	8.6
9	Pleasure	9.49	An Exciting Life	9.63	An Exciting Life	8.75
10	A Comfortable Life	9.55	Pleasure	9.8	Inner Harmony	9.5
11	A World at Peace	9.81	Wisdom	10.29	Pleasure	10.3
12	Equality	10.09	A World at Peace	10.44	Accomplishment	11.25
13	Wisdom	10.18	Equality	10.51	A World at Peace	11.32
14	An Exciting Life	10.81	Accomplishment	10.54	Wisdom	11.82

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15	A World of Beauty	12.47	Salvation	12.41	Social Recognition	12.34
16	National Security	12.83	A World of Beauty	12.41	National Security	12.36
17	Social Recognition	12.84	National Security	13.1	A World of Beauty	12.73
18	Salvation	14.06	Social Recognition	13.49	Salvation	14.86

Note. Accomplishment = A Sense of Accomplishment. (Ryan & Robinson, 2012).

Table 2
Mean Rankings of Terminal Values by Gender

Rank	Female		Male	
	Value	Mean	Value	Mean
1	Health	4.99	Health	4.77
2	Family Security	5.39	Family Security	5.15
3	True Friendship	6.25	Freedom	6.74
4	Self-Respect	7.23	A Comfortable Life	7.68
5	Freedom	7.59	Mature Love	7.72
6	Mature Love	8.61	An Exciting Life	7.79
7	Inner Harmony	9.13	Self-Respect	8
8	Equality	9.23	True Friendship	8.51
9	Pleasure	9.70	Equality	8.57
10	A Sense of Accomplishment	9.72	Inner Harmony	8.83
11	A World at Peace	9.77	Pleasure	10
12	A Comfortable Life	10.03	Wisdom	10.45
13	Wisdom	10.74	A Sense of Accomplishment	10.87
14	An Exciting Life	10.83	A World at Peace	11.85
15	A World of Beauty	12.42	National Security	12.79
16	National Security	12.77	A World of Beauty	12.79
17	Social Recognition	12.82	Social Recognition	13
18	Salvation	13.51	Salvation	14.72

(Ryan & Robinson, 2012).

Table 3
Mean Rankings of Instrumental Values by Division

Rank	Primary/Junior		Junior/Intermediate		Intermediate/Senior	
	Value	Mean	Value	Mean	Value	Mean
1	Honest	5.05	Loving	5.85	Honest	5.66
2	Loving	5.23	Honest	6.00	Independent	7.18
3	Loyal	6.51	Responsible	6.51	Responsible	7.61
4	Helpful	6.86	Loyal	6.68	Loving	7.64
5	Independent	8.39	Independent	8.41	Loyal	7.75
6	Polite	9	Forgiving	8.54	Broad-Minded	8.11
7	Intellectual	9.26	Ambitious	8.98	Helpful	8.25
8	Broad-Minded	9.56	Intellectual	9.12	Forgiving	8.75
9	Ambitious	9.64	Broad-Minded	9.29	Intellectual	8.91
10	Forgiving	9.68	Helpful	9.51	Courageous	9.68
11	Responsible	9.72	Capable	10.00	Polite	9.89
12	Courageous	10.42	Imaginative	10.17	Imaginative	10.16

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13	Capable	10.71	Courageous	10.44	Ambitious	10.18
14	Imaginative	11.22	Polite	11.00	Logical	11.14
15	Logical	11.96	Self-Controlled	11.34	Self-Controlled	11.14
16	Self-Controlled	12.05	Logical	11.46	Capable	11.45
17	Clean	13.43	Clean	12.37	Clean	13.39
18	Obedient	14.55	Obedient	15.07	Obedient	13.41

(Ryan & Robinson, 2012).

Table 4

Mean Rankings for Instrumental Values by Gender

Rank	Female		Male	
	Value	Mean	Value	Mean
1	Honest	5.16	Honest	6.19
2	Loving	5.81	Loving	6.62
3	Loyal	6.51	Loyal	7.81
4	Responsible	6.76	Helpful	8.02
5	Helpful	7.86	Independent	8.04
6	Independent	8.08	Responsible	8.11
7	Forgiving	9.08	Broad-Minded	8.70
8	Polite	9.24	Intellectual	8.74
9	Broad-Minded	9.26	Courageous	8.91
10	Intellectual	9.29	Forgiving	9.30
11	Ambitious	9.53	Ambitious	9.83
12	Courageous	10.76	Capable	9.89
13	Imaginative	10.85	Imaginative	10.21
14	Capable	11.08	Logical	10.89
15	Self-Controlled	11.75	Polite	10.98
16	Logical	11.90	Self-Controlled	11.32
17	Clean	13.27	Clean	12.85
18	Obedient	14.67	Obedient	13.64

(Ryan & Robinson, 2012).

These tables display much of the data collected and analyzed in our 2012 study. The exposure of the convergences noted above in Tables 1 through 4 was not unexpected since “professional training and education also inculcate values and ways of thinking that are peculiar to the profession. Each professional group develops a characteristic stance toward the world, a language with which to interpret it and respond to it” (Lebacqz, 1985, p. 52). Another researcher, Pekince (2010) revealed that teachers with one to five years of practice chose a “sense of accomplishment, happiness, helpfulness and salvation [in the top 4 and for] 6-15 years of experience, inner harmony, clean, capable and imaginative were tops; and for 16 and more years, teacher’s chose clean, helpful, happiness and inner harmony as the most preferred values” (p. 18). Our study similarly revealed how highly ranked ‘True Friendship’ (relationship building) and ‘Inner Harmony’ (health) were. This outcome was perhaps a result of knowing that isolation is the enemy of emotional health (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Studies in the past twenty years, “involving 37,000 people show social isolation – the sense that you have no body with whom you can share your private feelings . . . doubles the chances of sickness and death” (Goleman, 1995, p. 226).

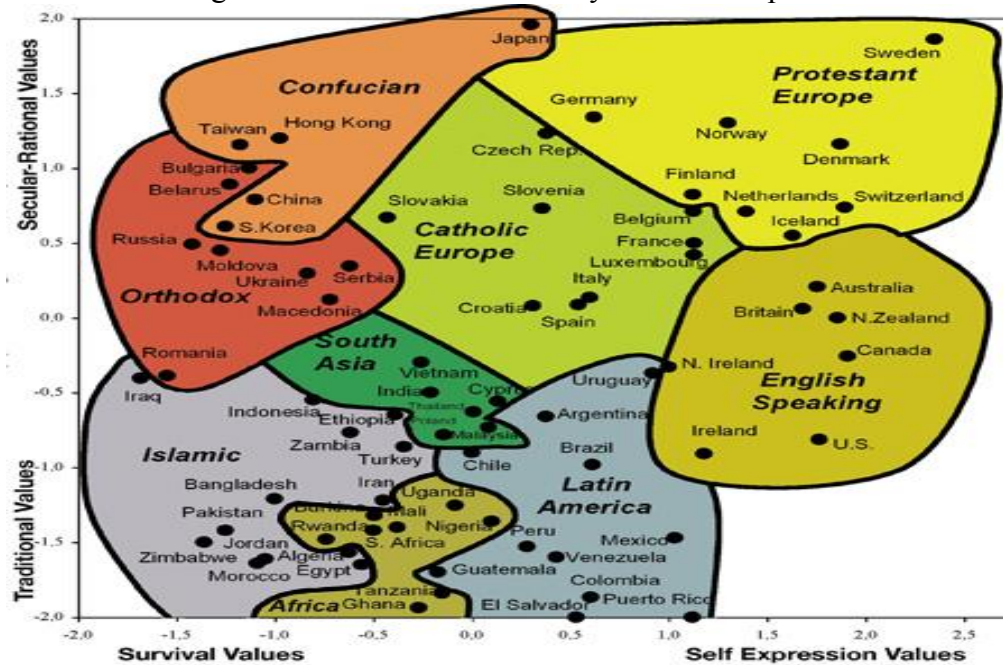
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University students who train to become teachers should be advised and encouraged to be aware of values—their own, those of the school system, and those of the community. It is a matter of axiological importance:

axiology is the study of values. Axiologies are expressed materially in patterns of choices that are both culture-bound and definitive of different cultures. They are expressed in the language we use; in the friends we keep; in the clothes we wear; in what we read, write, and watch; in the technologies we use; in the gods we believe in and pray to; in the music we make and listen to—indeed, in every kind of activity that can be counted as a definitive element of culture. (Graham, 2007, p. 1)

The study of values can be traced back to biblical times and continues to be an area of study and concern. For example, the 1981 European Values Study (EVS), the 1990 EVS and 1990 World Values Study (WVS) was carried out in 1995 (World Values Survey). The most current surveying was in 2010 and continues through 2012 (WVS). The usefulness and applicability of this research resides in the fact that we become aware of the distinct values of people from different (cultures) parts of the world. Teachers in training in Canada represent many nations as Canada is a growing mosaic of people who need to understand one-another. The following figure depicts a cultural map of the world, as shown in figure 1, (used with permission).

Figure 1.0. World Value Survey Cultural Map 2005-2008



(Inglehart, & Welzel, 2010, p. 554).

Values are taught “explicitly in classrooms and through the activities and relationships of the school and its community. In schools, core values influence how people communicate, work together, and make decisions. They are reflected in the policies and procedures of schools . . .” (New South Wales: Department of Education & Training, 2004, p. 2). Values permeate beliefs

and philosophical stances hence research illuminating philosophical orientations of teachers in training follows.

Philosophical Orientations: Pre-Service

Your personal philosophy “constitutes a moral and social compass, behavioral, attitudinal, and value guide-posts, essential personal and professional prescriptions, and a consistent but alterable assessment means for professional evaluation”(Petress, 2003, p.1). In other words, your personal philosophy is multifaceted, and your philosophical orientation is a significant foundation. This foundation is especially important for educators. An educator’s philosophy should be both known and accessible at all times to inform your thoughts and actions. This is essential because as educators, we can anticipate questions from our students concerning our beliefs, as students ask us not only what we believe, but also where did these beliefs come from, and what supports our beliefs (Ryan, 2008). Dewey suggested, “meanings and purposes of education must be actively constructed by individual persons” (Dewey, 1916, p. 96). More recently, Harris, Cavanagh, Giddings, and Reynolds (2004) explained how a,

philosophy of education addresses why we educate so that we make better choices about who, where, when and how we educate. A philosophical view of education involves asking questions about the role of education in a society and seeking answers to these questions. (p. 7)

Ideally, from the onset of a teacher training program we must be aware that teacher knowledge “begins with what teachers already know and enact in their practices rather than beginning with knowledge that needs to be given to teachers” (Clandinin, 2007, p. 15). Teacher training requires written reflective accounts since it is broadly accepted that, “understanding one’s philosophical approach would foster evaluation of teaching decisions” (Pryor, Sloan & Amobi, 2007, p.3). Being able to evaluate in education allows a person to judge, critique and discover their own voice within the teaching enterprise and this is essential because “if we are not equipped to talk about practice, we are not equipped to talk about theory. We must as far as possible address both theory and practice” (Beck, 1993, p. 2), in pre-service coursework. Pryor, Sloan, & Amobi (2007) claim,

the aim of reflecting on philosophical approaches is not to cement preservice teachers’ orientations into pre-figured, categories that could minimize their efforts to make sense of the complexities of classroom life. Rather, the aim is for preservice teachers to draw upon prompts such as a metaphoric image or an analytic survey to facilitate a self-examination process. The goal of this self-examination was the creation of a coherent philosophic framework, which makes possible the navigation of classroom complexities. (p. 4)

After all, “teacher knowledge refers to teacher’ narrative knowledge, their personal practical knowledge, composed and recomposed over time and in the contexts of personal and professional knowledge landscapes“ (Clandinin, 2007, p. 15). With these rationales in mind an

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examination of philosophical orientation was completed over a five-year period within a Faculty of Education in Ontario, Canada.

The investigation, carried out over a 5-year period (longitudinal survey) included a sample of 2600 teachers in training (pre-service education students). In each year, 520 pre-service teachers (enrolled in a one-year full-time, after degree professional Bachelor of Education program in Ontario, Canada) completed the survey (Ryan, 2008). Annually, each of the students completed an educational philosophy survey to identify their philosophical orientation. Overwhelmingly, 90% or more pre-service students selected and identified with the statements emanating from the progressivist school (Ryan, 2008). The majority (+90%) of pre-service student teachers who completed the survey strongly agreed with the statements underpinning progressivism. A small minority were strongly aligned with other philosophical ideologies often branded; Behaviourism, Essentialism, Perennialism, Progressivism, Existentialism, and Social reconstructionism. These outcomes demonstrate a level of homogeneity that signifies agreement with the tenets of progressivism. Ryan and Cooper (2004) have suggested,

progressive educators believe that the place to begin is with the student rather than the subject matter. The teacher identifies what the student's interests and concerns are and tries to shape problems around them. The student's motivation to solve the problem is the key and posing problems based on student interests helps heighten their motivation. (281)

To align oneself with Dewey is not a problem in education or schools in general since "progressivism views nature as being in flux, as ever changing and therefore, knowledge must continually be redefined and rediscovered to keep up with that change" (Ryan & Cooper, 2004, p. 281). In addition, Dewey (1916) claimed that progressivism involved the whole student, their interests and abilities, and endeavors to produce independent thinkers within a democratic society. Progressivism is activity based and inclusive as all students are prepared to live and contribute to a democratic society (Dewey, 1916). The purpose of thought as action and truth is relative, which is popular in contemporary society. The suggestion for our pre-service programs is to confront change and respond accordingly, in a democratic manner putting students first.

Conclusion

What we have realized in the development of this paper is that a few theorists, researchers and teachers have decided that action research is an approach that fits (complements) the daily lives of educators and even pre-service educators. However, in order for the fit to be enhanced and the understanding deepened it is necessary to reveal your own personal philosophical orientation and the values you hold highest in order to identify your stance in the world and within the walls of the schoolhouse, even before you begin to engage in action research.

Research is full of error and the best research keeps this error at an acceptable level, so that anyone consuming the research can do so in a confident and trusting manner. By building this recursive view of oneself in teaching, beliefs, values and action research exploits have been

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recognized in an evolving educational landscape. Perhaps you would rank the values in the same order, or perhaps not. What does this mean and how can we use this information to move forward? Readers are invited to locate the published research noted herein and replicate the studies to compare results and reveal answers to questions that may surface while reading this article. Chances are you will be a progressivist and embrace Dewey, as many have in the past.

Many continue to support action research not because it is without criticism nor weakness as a research mode; it helps people in education to professionally develop, move forward and enrich their self-concept. Most of us want to give back and help those who may even take our places once we retire from academe.

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Circles of Hope in Indigenizing Mainstream Teacher Education

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Abstract

After three years of implementing a specialized Honours course in Indigenous education and data analysis of 40 pre-service candidates' experiences, we present a conceptual model for understanding new teachers' responses to decolonizing and indigenizing their education practices. We describe how we have prepared (mostly) non-Indigenous pre-service teachers to re-envision and then enact the goals of renewing treaty relationships of peace, mutuality and equity (Kovach, 2013; Toulouse, 2013; Tupper & Cappello, 2008) while teaching their future FNMI students from a standpoint of hope. Using a teacher research methodology that is Indigenous-respectful, we continue to inquire and refine our methods to shift mainstream non-Indigenous teachers towards a new relational standpoint and teacher identity that honours Indigenous peoples, perspectives, cultures and knowledges. We share both our inquiries into how to indigenize new teacher education more deeply while attending to the multiple movements of beginning teachers' stances as they grapple with challenging concepts of de/colonization and indigenization. The course model works to integrate new teachers' personal and professional experiences by immersing them in relational, Indigenous-centric, community events and culturally responsive, respectful teaching practices with Indigenous students. The course intends to inspire new teachers to identify as allies with Indigenous students, families and community while advocating for improved education through their teaching practices.

Introduction

We begin this paper by acknowledging the important teaching framework or Anishinaabe worldview that we received from Roy Thomas' friends and family who shared a set of identity questions or traditional Anishinaabe circle teachings (see Figure 1). We were part of an audience at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery (September, 2012), for the closing presentation of a retrospective exhibit of Roy Thomas' lifetime work. These four identity questions or circle teachings orient our work with pre-service teachers in Indigenous education and help ground our course in a holistic model of interconnectedness, community, and culture. To acknowledge and honour this Anishinaabe knowledge, we start by situating ourselves with our stories.



Figure 1. Roy Thomas' Circle Teaching. These four identity questions orient our research and are at the heart of the IPPE teacher education course's philosophy.

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Who are we: We are a team of teacher educators from the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. We are Indigenous and non-Indigenous treaty partners living on the traditional territory of the Fort William First Nation, learning, story-telling and inquiring how to braid our lives together in respectful relations (Nicol and Korteweg, 2010), on this boreal forest land, beside Gitchigoomi (Lake Superior) that is called northwestern Ontario, Canada.

Where have we been: Between all of us as a research team, we have more than 50 years of teaching experience in K-12 contexts as well as undergraduate teacher education. We have all worked with Indigenous students—either in provincial or federal schools or outdoor centres—and we have all had pivotal experiences that made the joys and agonies of Indigenous education extremely apparent and moving. We have seen the greatest lows of schools where Indigenous students are alienated or forced due to avoidance or negligence on the part of educators or excluded due to irrelevant curriculum or inappropriate representations. And we have also seen the best teaching in schools that was healing, deeply engaging, and holistic by Indigenous knowledge holders with all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who were fully attentive and present with their complete selves—mind, body, emotions and spirit.

Where are we now: With the institutional support and insightful leadership of our Dean, Dr. John O'Meara, and our Undergraduate Chair, Dr. Teresa Socha, the two core instructors, Tesa Fiddler and Lisa Korteweg, have been co-teaching and researching an innovative, Honours (students self-select) concurrent course entitled, *Indigenizing Perspectives and Practices in Education* (IPPE). Our instructional partnership, as an Indigenous (Tesa) and non-Indigenous (Lisa K) teaching pair, has been focused on how to role-model to (mostly non-Indigenous) teacher candidates concrete and nuanced ways to actively improve the Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationship on a daily basis and to continuously recognize and acknowledge that this relationship is the core of Canadian history, society and curriculum. This year, Alex Bissell, Lisa Primavesi, Martha Moon and Michelle Clarke—graduate assistants who have all taught and worked with Indigenous students, mostly in Indigenous-focused settings—joined us in the intensive teaching and researching of this transformational course. Together, we encourage and sustain circles of hope in this mammoth ongoing project of indigenizing mainstream teacher education.

Where are we going: We are in the process of analyzing the substantial data that we have collected after two cohorts or 40 BEd students. The journeys of these students have been captured in their journal reflections, course assignments, student interviews, and participatory community projects which make up the core components of our data. This data will be included in a larger SSHRC-funded research project (Korteweg (PI), 2011-2014) where we are combining the new teacher stories with in-service teacher and Indigenous student accounts in order to map the socio-cultural landscape of the impacts and shifts of teachers' journeys in Indigenous education. Along with mobilizing the outcomes of this research at conferences and in publications, such as this OTF/OADE conference and publication, we are aware that our research efforts are coming at a crucial turning point in teacher education. The implementation of the 2-year BEd, and subsequent elimination of concurrent (5-year) teacher education programs, poses a threat to time and flexibility required to offer this specialized intensive course.

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Research Context

Indigenous scholars and education researchers have established the urgent importance of honouring Indigenous cultures, histories, perspectives and knowledges in all levels of education, including teacher education (Battiste 2013; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2009; Dion, 2009; Kanu, 2005; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Strong-Wilson, 2007). This urgency is in response to the underachievement of Indigenous students (see graduation rates, Statistics Canada, 2011) as a result of alienation, disengagement and higher than average rates of attrition (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Richards & Scott, 2009). Meeting the educational needs of these students will be increasingly important as the Indigenous population is growing four times faster than other segments of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2011). Reformed or transformed teacher education through honouring and integrating Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies will enrich and expand the education of all Canadian students—Indigenous and non-Indigenous (Toulouse, 2013), while addressing and abating mainstream cultivated ignorance (Godlewksa, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010). Non-Indigenous teachers and, by extension, teacher educators are regularly placed at the center of new policies and reform efforts to improve the crisis state of Indigenous education (Association of Canadian Deans of Education, 2010; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007).

In our specialized Honours BEd course, *Indigenizing Perspectives and Practices in Education*, at Lakehead University's Faculty of Education, we have been inquiring into the two-pronged challenge of unsettling, disrupting or decolonizing non-Indigenous teachers' perceptions of Indigenous peoples and Canadian colonial history (Dion, 2009; Higgins, Costello and Korteweg, 2013; Kanu, 2005; Tompkins, 2002) while modeling a holistic, relational, culturally responsive or indigenized pedagogy (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Goulet, 2001; Little Bear, 2009). We work to prepare (mostly) non-Indigenous pre-service teachers to acknowledge and enact the goals of (re)membering (Haig-Brown, 2005) and renewing treaty relationships of peace, mutuality and equity (Toulouse, 2013; Tupper & Cappello, 2008) while inspiring them to teach their future FNMI students from a standpoint of hope. Through teaching, researching and re-designing this innovative course, we seek to understand how teacher education programs can do more to decolonize and indigenize new teachers' perceptions towards a new relational stance and collective identity that honours Indigenous peoples, perspectives, knowledges and cultures.

Chapter Outline

In this chapter, we outline a teacher education course designed to initiate change in Indigenous education, describe its impacts on new teachers with data examples, and reflect on our ongoing inquiries into this course as a cycle of hope. Following the introduction, we describe the course's context, components, topics and teaching methodologies. Next, we discuss the study's research methodology and methods before presenting the analytic framework for the new teachers' experiences and responses to the IPPE course. In the data analysis section, we place the new teachers' voices (examples) onto our analytic model or mapping of decolonizing and indigenizing articulations. Further consideration reveals that these data examples of the new teachers are extremely complex with a secondary analysis unpacking their movements or shifts as stuck, stumbling, and swimming. Finally, we conclude in the last section that the inquiry cycle into the IPPE course, while daunting and challenging given a myriad of institutional and systemic factors, continues to generate hope as we remain steadfast in our commitment to impact

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teaching for reconciliation and improve the relationship of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians in classrooms and schools.

Course Context

This paper addresses some of our initial analysis in examining the new teacher voices as they experience and respond to our intensive course, *Indigenizing Perspectives & Practices in Education* (IPPE), a course worth 1.5 FCE credits or 108 hours of contact time. In terms of credit hours it is the largest course in the professional BEd program at Lakehead, equivalent to two classroom sessions per week (or four hours) for the full academic year (or 18 weeks of course contact time). The IPPE course was designed to take pre-service teachers through four critical components of decolonizing and indigenizing stages (see Figure 2).

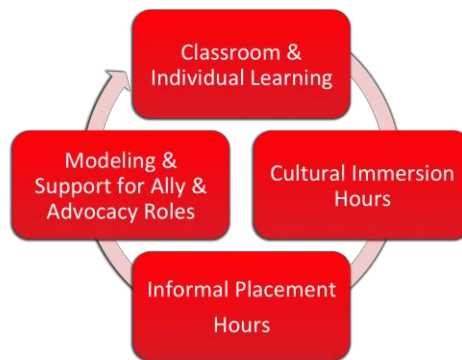


Figure 2. Indigenizing Perspectives and Practices in Education (IPPE) course model. This image depicts the four main course components and illustrates the varying types of learning that the teacher candidates engage in during the IPPE course.

Classroom Learning

The fall term of this full-year BEd course is a period of intensive classroom work where the teacher candidates are taught in detail with a large repository of web resources (authentic representations by Indigenous peoples) and knowledge holder guest presenters, including a Residential School survivor, on the following nine topics: 1) Teacher identity or multiple narratives and visions of what it means to become ‘teacher’; 2) Indigenous content such as Canadian history, geography, contemporary issues, and basic facts of colonization; 3) White privilege and Euro-centrism; 4) Indigenous worldviews, ways of knowing and Indigenous-centric education models; 5) Treaty history and colonization in Canada; 6-7) Indian Residential Schools and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (2 weeks); 8) Who are Indigenous students, families and communities; and, 9) Engaging Indigenous students and Decolonizing curriculum. To deepen their understanding and knowledge of each of these topics and modules, the pre-service teachers needed to write a weekly journal entry that was prompted by an open-ended question. For example, during the study of Residential Schools, the new teachers were asked:

For this week's reflection paper, I'd like you to comment on and think through the need and implications for teaching Residential Schools in your grade/subject levels.

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Remember that education has been the colonizer's tool of choice for assimilation/colonization historically and internationally. Given that we are all entering the profession of education (as new teachers), what legacies, responsibilities and important opportunities do we need to assume and grapple with, given the history of Residential Schools in Canada? And what opportunities do we have as classroom teachers to exercise real reconciliation in our teaching practices?

In the fall term of the IPPE course, the largest assignment for the new teachers is the decolonizing and indigenizing curriculum project. Teacher candidates are encouraged to focus on a model lesson or unit plan from another subject, methods or teachable course, that they then deconstruct for colonial methods, Eurocentric emphases or misrepresentations (decolonizing the curriculum). Once they have identified those colonial or Eurocentric elements, teacher candidates transform, re-design and indigenize the curriculum to honour Indigenous knowledge, integrate cultural teaching methods, and emphasize localized authentic representations.

The winter term of the IPPE course continues with eight more topics, field trips and guest presenters; however, the teacher candidates facilitate the teaching of these topics through group presentations. The topics include: 1) place-based to Land-based IPPE teaching; 2) arts-based IPPE; 3) (later) literacy strategies for Indigenous students; 4) Indigenous Language across the curriculum; 5) healing, mental health and well-being in IPPE; 6) digital tools and story-telling in IPPE; 7) strengths-based and resilience teaching with Indigenous students; 8) culturally appropriate representations in IPPE.

The last and largest assignment of the course is the IPPE Toolkit. In reference to the Ontario Ministry of Education's FNMI Teacher's toolkit, we ask the teacher candidates to assemble a collection of 8 teaching artifacts (lesson plans, unit plans, field trip agendas, community integration activities, etc.) that they weave together as a narrative of their emerging IPPE teacher identity and a statement of their capabilities as a specialist teacher of Indigenous (and all) students. Each toolkit item is to be anchored by a strong Indigenous artist/author/community representation that is relevant to the local community and culture and the pre-service teachers are coached to annotate each item in terms of its decolonizing and indigenizing potential for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

In the fall term, teacher candidates are required to complete 16 hours of *cultural immersion experiences*. We work closely with community members and organizations, the Aboriginal Initiatives Office of the university, outdoor education centres, the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, and Fort William Historical Park to locate and post notices of community-focused culturally immersive experiences such as the Fall Harvest, Indigenous film festivals, tipi construction, sweat-lodge ceremonies, medicine walks, powwows and vigils. Teacher candidates then choose from this rich offering of community events, those cultural immersion experiences that they want to witness, engage in or volunteer. Every cultural immersion event attended requires a response form where the candidate describes the event (5Ws—what, where, when, why, who) as well as the new or deepening knowledge that they directly experienced with/from Indigenous community and knowledge holders. For many of the candidates, this was their first experience of being in a minority position or immersed in a cultural environment different from the dominant non-Indigenous or mainstream culture.

In the winter term, candidates are required to finish 36-40 hours of *Informal Placement Experiences* or volunteer teaching in an Indigenous-focused classroom setting. Again, we work closely with the local provincial school boards as well as the Indigenous high school of the

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Nishnawbe Aski Nation to locate, organize and post opportunities for volunteer teaching in classrooms that have a high representation of Indigenous students and/or in-service teachers who want to work with our pre-service teachers to address and inquire into the topic of Indigenous education. Each teacher candidate needs to account for their active indigenized teaching and interactions with Indigenous students (and/or Indigenous content) through response forms.

Finally, in the design of the IPPE course, we are consciously modeling and giving direct advice and examples to our teacher candidates on how to stand up for Indigenous students as teacher-allies or in advocacy roles. Tesa, in particular, brings stories from her “day job” or full-time school board position of how she extends her teaching role beyond the classroom to advocate for Indigenous children’s holistic needs that may not be addressed in the school’s timetable or organization, the provincial curriculum, or in the social services of the urban community. The need to act as an ally for Indigenous students and families in schools is furthered emphasized by Tesa’s gracious and eloquent sharing of her personal challenges to work within the system as an Indigenous parent. The course’s core philosophy or mandate, as embodied in the co-teaching relationship of Tesa and Lisa K, is advocating for improved Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships and reconciliation in education.

Research Study Methods

We have collected data from two full cohorts of this specialized course for a total of 40 pre-service teachers out of a BEd program that graduates 500 new Ontario teachers per year. Currently, this year’s IPPE cohort is our largest group at 31 (self-selected) teacher candidates; however, we do not yet know how many students have consented to this year’s study because we need to protect the students’ right to freely consent until after the completion of the course and submission of final marks (REB approved procedures). During the second week of classes, Lisa K presents the research study with the information letter and then exits the room while the Chair of Graduate Studies in Education oversees the consent letter distribution and collection of signed forms. The Chair keeps the signed forms in a sealed envelope in a locked drawer that she does not release to the researchers until she is presented with proof of marks submission to the Registrar’s Office. Similar to professional BEd year student composition across the province, our classes have been overwhelmingly female (75%) and evenly split between P/J and I/S levels. Particular to our situation here at Lakehead University, we have been very fortunate to have 1-2 self-identified Indigenous students registered per year in our course.

We collect all student assignments electronically (through our course D2L site) as well as conduct final assessment or exit interviews as part of the IPPE course. When students consent to the research (and the consent rate has been 90% over the last two years), we return to these assignments and our instructor notes to review them as data for the research project. We have already collected more than 200 pages of data (interview transcripts, course assignments, reflections, journals, portfolios/toolkits and teacher-researcher field notes) and have begun to analyze the first-person narratives of 40 new teachers as they go through the course components and think through issues of decolonizing and indigenizing their teaching. All teacher candidate participants’ data have been anonymized through the transcription process and all the voices or ‘quotes’ in this chapter are composite voices. As part of our data management process, the research team members amalgamate or synthesize responses of multiple teacher candidates into singular voices or composite characterizations, representative of similar experiences and responses across a number of new teacher data examples.

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Teaching the IPPE course has become a critical case study for Lisa K's larger SSHRC research inquiry into decolonizing and indigenizing teacher education for improving urban Aboriginal education. Our teacher-research work has dual purposes: to iteratively design and deepen the goals of the IPPE BEd course while concurrently researching patterns of decolonizing and indigenizing experiences as narrated by the teacher candidates, mapping shifts and modes of critical reflexive processes through the stories of their lived experiences throughout the course's seven-month duration. In our teaching and in the data, we have repeatedly observed pre-service teachers grapple with similar concepts and issues as they experience the course components and as they shift their teacher identities through a possible four cycles or stances of relational pedagogy with Indigenous students—awareness, engagement, responsive practices and advocacy/ally. 1) The teacher candidates develop new (and often uncomfortable) *awareness* during the first term's classroom topics and assignments; 2) through the cultural immersion experiences into community events, candidates begin to experience personal *engagement* in Indigenous culture and issues; 3) during the required volunteer teaching or informal placement hours, candidates attempt and enact *responsive practices*; and, 4) opportunities are opened to the candidates to advance their teacher identity towards *advocacy* for and *alliance* with Indigenous students/community.



Figure 3. Circle Continuum of Teacher Identity Growth or Cycles of Decolonizing and Indigenizing Teaching as encouraged through the IPPE course components. This image demonstrates the relationship between shifts in pre-service teacher's pedagogical stances and the course components of IPPE.

Researching and Mapping the New Teacher Voices

We provide here composite quotes of these (mostly non-Indigenous) teachers' shifts through the IPPE course components. These snippets of voices are blended and representative of a range of pre-service teacher experiences rather than direct, verbatim quotations, attributable to singular people. To further the research, we have mapped or categorized these new teachers' responses as they encountered not only the four IPPE course dimensions but also as they developed their teacher identities through four decolonizing and indigenizing cycles of growth: 1) *awareness* of Indigenous history, content, issues, worldviews, cultures and knowledges; 2) *engagement* in developing Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationships with students, families and community; 3) *responsive practices* that transform teaching towards culturally responsive, proactive, land-based activities to honour Indigenous knowledge and peoples; and, 4) *advocate/ally roles* when new teachers think and work as non-Indigenous allies and advocate for

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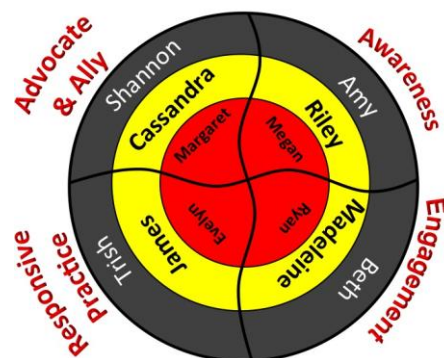
their Indigenous students beyond the four walls of the classroom. We describe these four conceptual dimensions in greater detail to explain an analytical model that is helping us reveal and unpack new teachers' emerging identities.

1. *Awareness* refers to candidates' developing appreciation of Indigenous peoples, histories, values, knowledges and worldviews as the core part of the Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationship that equals Canada. As the pre-service teachers work through this quadrant of the model, they begin to shift towards a heightened awareness or stages of understanding that Indigenous peoples exist, that they have traditional, treaty and constitutional rights, that they have a stake and contribution in Canadian society, and that they are the “first” pillar of our country and history (see Saul, 2009). In this quadrant, we examine how teachers become aware of and grapple with difficult knowledge and unsettling topics such as colonialism, Residential Schools, systemic racism and White privilege.

2. *Engagement* requires teacher candidates to move away from disengagement or a distant, removed, mythically neutral “perfect stranger” (Dion, 2009) stance into first-person contact, engaged relationships with Indigenous students/people through direct experience. Engagement allows teacher candidates to learn directly from knowledge holders of this territory about their language, values and worldview; however, the degree of engagement varies greatly according to the candidate's readiness: from passive observation to active involvement and participation in cultural events and activities.

3. *Responsive practices* should translate as respectfully integrating Indigenous knowledge, values and pedagogies into classroom practices. To be more responsive, teacher candidates are encouraged to engage in practices that require acknowledging and honouring the Indigenous people and territories of the local area and expanding their practices to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, culture, Elders (knowledge holders), Land, language and communities. While teacher candidates are provided with ample opportunity to engage in these types of responsive practices, their attempts can range from exploratory to inappropriate to very satisfactory.

4. *Advocate/Ally* roles refer to the actions that non-Indigenous teachers take to advocate for their Indigenous students in their classrooms, schools and into the larger community. In particular, we emphasize that non-Indigenous educators have a responsibility to teach all students and non-Indigenous Canadians about Indigenous issues, cultures and knowledge. And we also role-model how non-Indigenous educators can support the cause and self-determination of Indigenous peoples as the caretakers/protectors of their territories, communities and culture.



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Figure 4. Placing new teacher voices into the analytic research model. This image maps teacher candidate voices into the pedagogical quadrant undergoing the most significant shift based on the responses in the candidates' journals and interviews.

Examples of New Teacher Positions Identified in the Data

New Teacher Voices of Awareness:

A-a) Amy: In her reflective journaling, Amy describes and reflects on the experience of writing the Aboriginal Content Exam, an unannounced 55-question multiple-choice exam meant to demonstrate the embedded systemic ignorance of accumulated K-12 curriculum (Godlewksa, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010).

In our last class, I wrote the Aboriginal Content Exam and was shocked by how little I knew. I have lived in Thunder Bay all my life and was barely able to identify any Aboriginal words in this city. I had to leave most of the questions on the exam blank, especially the ones asking about treaties and other historical information. I feel ashamed of how little I know. It seems really unfair that we were asked to write this exam without any warning.

In this reflection, Amy demonstrates a new awareness of her lack of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous peoples in Canada but she has also associated “shame” or negative emotion attached to the exam as some type of individualist responsibility.

A-b) Riley: In her weekly journaling, Riley describes a state of cognitive and emotional dissonance resulting from new course learnings about ‘Land’ (see Styres, Haig-Brown and Blimkie, 2013) that conflicts with her own formative experiences of place-based, outdoor environmental education.

I feel so confused and kind of angry. We have been talking about colonization in class and it was suggested that when summer camps use Indigenous practices and artifacts they are actually perpetuating colonial discourse. My experiences at camp have been so important in shaping who I am today. How can this place that taught me so much about our natural environment also be teaching us all a way of seeing the world that does not respect Indigenous people?

In this entry, Riley deepened her awareness of the ways in which Indigenous knowledge and culture have been appropriated by Euro-settler Canadians and this causes her to question and critically reflect on her formative relationship with and embedded (unconscious) images of Indigenous peoples.

A-c) Megan: In the journal entry, Megan reflects on course activities prompting students to examine White and settler privileges. These activities include working through McIntosh's (1989) invisible backpack of White privileges and mapping out student's social location by identifying factors contributing to their own privileged locations in society. These factors include gender, race, socioeconomic status, education and ability.

After last week's class I have been thinking a lot about my own White privilege. I realize I never have to worry about people following me when I am shopping because they think

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I might steal; and how I can afford to make small mistakes (like swearing for example) without people judging me too harshly; and, no one ever says that I am a “credit to my people” because I am in university. In short, people tend to expect the best, rather than the worst from me because of the colour of my skin. Recognizing the extent of my own privilege also makes me understand just how many barriers First Nations students experience.

In this example, Megan’s heightened awareness of personal privilege is allowing her to develop a deep understanding of her relationship with Indigenous peoples. She is able to identify her participation in, and benefit from, institutionalized systems that continue to marginalize Indigenous peoples in Canadian society.

New Teacher Voices of Engagement:

E-a) Beth: Cultural immersion hours are a course component that requires teacher candidates to participate in, and reflect on, several Indigenous-based community activities over the fall term. These activities vary greatly in their degree of interaction with Indigenous people and culture, from large public events such as the Biindigate Film Festival to more intimate events such as the Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women’s Vigil that Beth reflects on below.

I attended the “Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women’s Vigil” as part of my cultural immersion hours. I was shocked, disturbed and very saddened by this event. I had absolutely no idea about how many Aboriginal women are missing or murdered in Canada. The police seem to do very little about these cases. I think about the families of all these women; there must be so much pain.

Although Beth’s experience certainly raised her awareness of this important Indigenous issue, her experience was placed in engagement due to her direct involvement with Indigenous people.

E-b) Madeleine: During a field trip involving Indigenous youth and teacher candidates, Madeleine had opportunities to interact with Indigenous youth through loosely structured activities.

When we went to Fort William Historical Park with a school, I had 4 Indigenous students in my group. We got to talk a little bit as we were playing Indigenous games. They were a little bit shy at first, but it was really interesting to hear about their communities and hear what they thought about coming to Thunder Bay for high school.

Madeleine uses this engagement opportunity to learn directly from Indigenous youth about their experiences of moving to Thunder Bay, a White-dominant urban centre, to attend high school leaving friends, family, and community.

E-c) Ryan: The Medicine Walk with an Indigenous Elder allowed Ryan an opportunity to directly interact with an Elder and to experience the Elder’s way of teaching or sharing knowledge on the Land.

On the Medicine Walk, I was amazed at how much knowledge this Elder had. He pointed

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out countless plants and their possible medicinal uses. He also shared his outlook on relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, stating that we are all equal and have abilities to learn and contribute to the world. I was so humbled.

In this example, Ryan's reflection demonstrates a deepening understanding of and respect for the knowledge, values, teachings and worldview of Indigenous people. It was this direct experience of walking on the Fort William First Nation's homeland while an Elder would stop and engage the university students in stories and medicinal knowledge about the plants that made a great impact on Ryan.

Voices of Responsive Practice:

RP-a) Trish: In her weekly journals, Trish (and all the students) was able to reflect on and process difficult topics and troubling history such as Indian Residential Schools (IRS). We consciously asked the pre-service teachers to consider the Residential School legacy of oppression and colonization that they would be inheriting as non-Indigenous teachers in classrooms and schools. Teacher candidates have to think about their role as 'teacher' and how they would address Residential Schools in their teaching practices.

Over the two weeks of our course focused on Residential Schools, I have been exposed to a chapter in Canadian history that was completely unknown to me during my K-12 education. I was deeply moved by the personal story of our guest speaker, the IRS survivor. It made me really understand why many Aboriginal people can be messed up with drugs, alcohol and abuse [sic]. I feel really helpless and guilty about residential schools, but I also want to do something to educate children about this history from a position of hope. I am really excited by the teaching resource "Project of Heart" because it is a way to teach this IRS history respectfully.

Trish's reflection shows that she is thinking about reconciliatory teaching practice by acknowledging her feelings of guilt and confusion, yet at the same time feeling inspired to do something to change the ongoing painful legacies of the IRS by directly addressing the history. It seems that Trish is not entirely sure how to go about this work but is open to explore the "Project of Heart" resource in order to help herself create lessons that will work against the non-Indigenous historical amnesia and lack of accountability for the history of Indian Residential Schools.

RP-b) James: In a reflection that looks back on his first practicum, James explores how he believes he taught or impacted Indigenous students by performing responsive practices.

During my practicum, I was placed in a primary classroom in a school with a very high Indigenous population. I feel that the strategies I used to engage the students, as well as my lesson content, design and assessment were helpful in welcoming, supporting and respecting Indigenous students in the same manner as modeled by my Associate. I still do not know what to do about the high Indigenous student absenteeism.

James' associate advisor was a good role model of responsive practice and was able to support James in implementing lessons that respected Indigenous students and their culture while

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educating non-Indigenous students to acknowledge and appreciate our shared histories. James' comment about absenteeism may reflect his being unsure of how to create this welcoming, supporting and respectful environment outside of the formal classroom setting.

RP-c) Evelyn: In this journal entry reflecting upon her teaching practicum, Evelyn shows a lot of insight into her growing understanding of working with and for Indigenous students.

I am beginning to realize that while it is important to be aware of the barriers that Indigenous students face and to understand the intergenerational trauma resulting from the residential schools, it is perhaps equally important to recognize the strength and beauty in Indigenous culture. Rather than just compensating for challenges that they face, I need to start looking for the strengths that Indigenous students bring to the classroom.

In this reflection, Evelyn demonstrates responsive practice by being able to acknowledge the damage done by residential schools and yet also move to a place that highlights the strength and resilience of Indigenous culture and people.

New Teacher Voices of Advocate/Ally:

AA-a) Shannon's experience on her teaching placement was communicated in a conversation with a course instructor:

On my teaching placement, I asked if I could help run a field trip similar to the one we did in our IPPE class. I wanted students to have the opportunity to hear teachings right out on the land, like I did, from an Anishinaabe person. The school principal said to forget about field trips because the school just has no money for that.

Shannon's desire to connect students with land-based experiences and local Indigenous expertise and to actively bring these concerns to the attention of her administrator shows growth as a teacher-advocate.

AA-b) Cassandra's personal reflections on the experience of listening to a Residential School survivor's story demonstrate her shifts towards advocacy. She presented this shifting consciousness in her weekly online journal:

I told my boyfriend about [the Residential School survivor] presentation and his experiences at Residential School. My boyfriend had never heard of Residential Schools. He was really shocked like me, and had a hard time believing that it was really that bad. I have to admit that my boyfriend is still racist against Aboriginal people, even though he knew nothing about any of the things I have been learning in class. I've tried to talk to him a few times about this but he doesn't seem that interested.

In her closest interpersonal relationships, Cassandra stepped beyond her own learning and practice to engage those around her. By sharing the story she had heard, Cassandra took an ally stance, advocating for an Indigenous perspective that was not known or honoured by those close to her.

AA-c) Margaret's journal entry demonstrates a deep commitment for the process of taking an

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ally/advocacy role in a high school:

On my teaching placement, I presented to my Native Beliefs and Values class—almost all Aboriginal students—about the historical agreements such as the Royal Proclamation and the Treaties which give Indigenous people rights to education, contrasting this with realities of what was going with the proposed First Nations Education Act. By building trust and relationships, I opened up the opportunity for students to share their beliefs, bring in personal and family stories, and share with each other. The students took the lead in deciding to write the MP a letter, and to invite him to the class so they could share their concerns.

Built on developing relationships with students and families, Margaret was responsive to the political direction that her Indigenous students took in exploring democracy and Indigenous-settler or treaty agreements in education in both historical and present-day contexts of legislation. Margaret was able to facilitate and accompany the students' critical thinking as an ally-teacher by helping them pursue their inquiries with an MP (local Member of Parliament) visit.

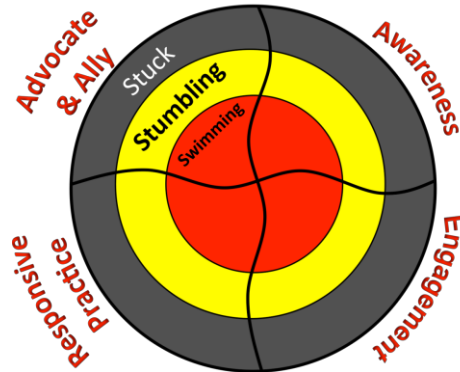


Figure 5. Layers of stuck, stumbling and swimming within the analytic model. This image demonstrates the stratification of movement or shifting stances that the teacher candidates can experience within the IPPE course and as revealed through the research model.

Research Layers in the Model

In each phase of the analytic model (awareness, engagement, responsive practice, and ally/advocate), we want to emphasize that there are at least *three levels or layers* of movement or shifts in resisting/familiarizing the new knowledge and experiences that are dynamic and *in situ* inside the four quadrants of the analytic model: 1) teachers being *stuck or sticking* in one phase when encountering difficult knowledge of colonization or trying to embrace relational indigenized pedagogies (the black ring); or 2) teachers *stumbling towards* some type of change in their teaching and unsure or hesitant of what this acknowledgement and relationship-building will entail (the yellow ring); or 3) teachers *swimming* in a new culturally responsive or indigenizing approach to classroom teaching for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous and all our relations (the red ring). We analyze one new teacher voice or quote from each dimension to explain the movement or shifts' categorizations of the research model.

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Black Ring Example: Amy 'stuck' in awareness

We have placed Amy into the “*stuck*” dark ring of the research model because we recognize that Amy is currently located in a place of discomfort, causing future movement to be difficult. Writing the Aboriginal Content Exam made Amy aware of her ignorance and lack of knowledge about Indigenous peoples in Canada. This is an extremely common realization for students in the IPPE course; however, some students react with a resolve to gain the information and understanding they lack. In contrast, Amy has reacted with anger and shame. These emotions placed her in a difficult position where she is overwhelmed by what she does not know, causing her to be resistant to further learning. It will be important for Amy to take part in other learning or cultural experiences to push her out of this “*stuck*” position. For example, we have observed new teachers who begin to move in their identities through reading compelling narratives such as our course text, *My Name is Seepeetza* (Sterling, 1992), or participating in land-based activities such as medicine walks with knowledge holders or dog-sledding with Indigenous youth.

Yellow Ring Example: Madeleine 'stumbling' in her engagement

We interpret Madeleine’s reflections of her field trip experience as an example of “*stumbling*” into engagement. Madeleine demonstrates her openness to learning directly about and from the Indigenous students through her willingness to interact and converse with them. Her conversations with the youth, which she describes as ‘*interesting*’, may indicate that Madeleine is willing to listen more deeply to the lived experiences and education realities that these students regularly face while still uncertain as to what she may discover and then feel compelled to confront.

Red Ring Example: Evelyn 'swimming' in responsive practices

Evelyn exemplifies a “*swimming*” ability in her shift towards responsive practice. Discussing her practicum in her volunteer teaching reflection, Evelyn comes to a realization that she must not only understand the challenges that her Indigenous students face but she must also help these students recognize their personal strengths and their community’s cultural resilience. Evelyn’s first-person narrative is an example of a new teacher swimming into responsive practice because she has shifted away from simply teaching a single lesson on the history of residential schools to a fuller, embodied understanding of how to transform her pedagogy to emphasize Indigenous people, culture, history, Elders, knowledge, land and community across the curriculum.

Red Ring Example: Margaret 'swimming' as ally/advocacy

We see Margaret’s work with her practicum class as “*swimming*” in the ally/advocate role. Margaret actively builds relationships with students and families with the positive result that students feel confident enough to engage with the wider urban community and become active in a participatory democratic process. Margaret’s adaptability and attention to Indigenous voice and struggle in the classroom, school community, and Canada as a whole (through current events and historical documents) demonstrates a sense of flow, synthesis of roles (teacher and ally), ability to realize in embodied practice, and commitment to act: in other words, the ability of “*swimming*” or shifting smoothly into an indigenizing teacher identity.

Implications

The relationship of the IPPE course design and delivery with the SSHRC-funded study

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into indigenizing teacher education revealed clearly and with evidence of the new teachers' responses that this innovative approach to decolonizing and indigenizing mainstream teacher education requires serious investments of time and significant institutional flexibility. Our teacher candidates required multiple lived or immersive experiences of Indigenous culture, community, knowledge holders and teaching approaches (e.g., story-telling, sharing circles, Land-based activities) that were experientially driven and often outside the four walls of the university classroom. Teacher education programs at other Faculties of Education need to design Indigenous (immersive) education courses that take new teachers into Indigenous-focused settings where they gain new knowledge and begin to appreciate Indigenous ways of knowing through first-person experiences. Along with the indigenizing or experiential approach to Indigenous perspectives in education is the “unsettling” of normative non-Indigenous assumptions through critical self-reflections or deconstructions (see Higgins, Costello and Korteweg, 2013) in order to decolonize new teachers' “perfect stranger” positions to Indigenous children and youth. Our new teacher candidates have to invest considerable time, intellectual energy, and emotional processing on this journey to rethinking and reframing their relationship with Indigenous people and students. It would be deeper, richer and more effective if this processing and journeying to decolonize and indigenize teacher identities were addressed and integrated in some way in all BEd (teacher certification) courses to emphasize and support the efforts and goals of the Indigenous education focused course(s).

Gaining Hope for Indigenizing Mainstream Teacher Education

As we finalized the writing of this chapter, we read the poignant and powerful report, *Feathers of Hope: A First Nations youth action plan* (2014) that reminded us how important this movement to improve the Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationship through education is for all teachers, but especially new teachers. *Feathers of Hope*, a moving report written by and for Indigenous youth, presents strong perspectives and action recommendations for education and teaching.

We are worthy of the same opportunities and advantages every other Canadian child enjoys in this wealthy country. We deserve the same opportunities, equity in education funding and to learn in ways that are in line with our cultures. We have a right to succeed and to access the same resources as young people in the rest of Canada. As we begin to believe in ourselves and come together to realize the change we deserve, our voices will become louder and stronger. (p.76)

The voices of the Indigenous youth in the *Feathers of Hope* report remind us of the massive work that remains while instilling hope and resolve that we as teacher-educators can engender a new teacher identity for authentic reconciliation. Our first priority and commitment in transforming new teacher education is to focus on halting neo-colonial ignorance, repairing or (re)membering (Haig-Brown, 2005) mainstream pedagogies to become culturally responsive, and advocating for teachers to acknowledge and teach for Indigenous students' voices, strengths and resilience. The way we maintain our hope in teacher education research is to transform teaching for Indigenous and all students by engaging new teachers to believe and invest in reconciliation as the core of who they are (and we are) as Canadian teachers.

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Concurrent Education and Transition to Teaching: the Laurentian Experience 2007-14

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Abstract

This paper describes the results of two related research projects undertaken in 2012 and 2013. The first sought employment information relating to the 362 graduates of Laurentian's English-language concurrent education program from 2007 to 2012. The second smaller investigation, begun in 2013, was directed at respondents who had indicated they had attained work in northern, rural/remote, or First Nation, Metis, Inuit (FNMI) communities. Together the data suggest that recent graduates from this program, for a variety of reasons, enjoy rates of employment about five times higher than the provincial average. Much like other Ontario B.Ed. holders these individuals are mostly women who have chosen to complete their teaching qualifications at a publicly-funded university and are facing an increasingly precarious job market in their home province. Other factors, however, such as age at graduation, previous mobility, type and length of program (including embedded indigenous components) distinguish them from most pre-service candidates. The targeting of particular practicum experiences, teachable subjects, and job markets have also combined to set Laurentian concurrent students apart. Essentially the vast majority are unattached early "twenty-somethings" who hold a professional degree considered valuable in a variety of jurisdictions. In addition, almost all have already spent five years living quite a distance away from home and a significant proportion are willing to continue to travel to places throughout Canada and the world to find work in education.

Introduction

In March 2012, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) reported that more new teachers were unemployed than ever before. The long-term *Transition to Teaching* research project began in 2001 when boards across Ontario instantly absorbed up to 96% of new graduates (OCT, 2002). As late as 2003 the OCT was predicting that a wave of 56,000 "Baby Boomer" teachers were set to retire as the province welcomed the creation of three new pre-service programs (*Professionally Speaking*, 2003). Within a year, however, the situation in that Canadian province had become much less rosy. Suddenly fewer than half of Ontario's new teacher graduates reported finding "regular work" -- defined by the OCT as supply, long-term occasional, or full-time permanent work (OCT, 2005). Declining levels of retirements, more people seeking B.Ed. degrees in Ontario, and thousands of Canadians acquiring credentials in New York, Britain, and Australia led to an increasingly flooded market (MacDonald, 2011). Laurentian University played a role in this over-supply. In 2003 a group of already enrolled first year students transferred into the newly accredited concurrent education program with the inaugural cohort of 13 matriculating in 2007 (Danyluk, Buley, & van der Geissen, 2009). By that time only about one in four newly minted English-language teachers in the province were reporting that they found regular work in the field (OCT, 2008). However, anecdotal evidence from Facebook contacts, and emails sent to old professors, seemed to suggest that Laurentian B.Ed. holders were apparently having much less difficulty in finding employment.

Methodology

In August of 2012 researchers at the School decided to more formally track its 362 graduates from 2007-2012. After Research Ethics Board approval was granted, a website survey was constructed and invitations were sent via email to graduates. A total of 93 graduates completed the online survey over the next few months (see appendix A). That response rate of 30% is comparable to OCT's annual survey rates of return, being 22.4 to 33 per cent from 2000-2008 (OCT 2009). Their replies confirmed that Laurentian concurrent education graduates were indeed working more than other recent Ontario B.Ed. holders. Information from the respondents indicated employment rates for regular work in education ranged from 100% for members of the 2007 inaugural group to 75% for some of the more recent graduating classes:

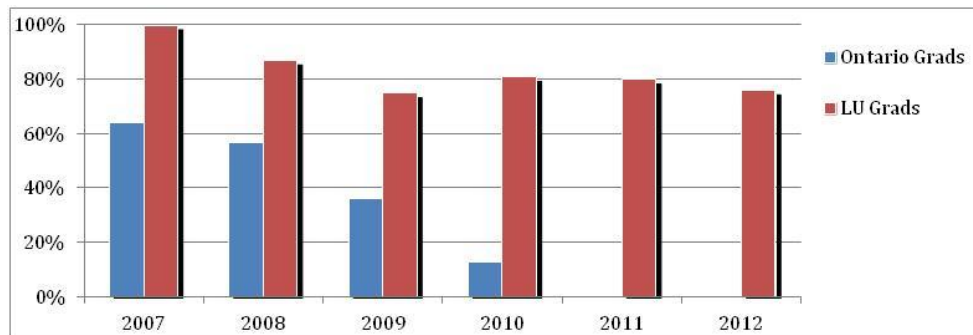


Figure One – Laurentian vs. Ontario Regular Teaching Positions 2007

Those results were much higher than the provincial average for the same period. For example, only 13% of graduates across Ontario reported regular teaching work in 2010. Laurentian results, on the other hand, were approximately five times higher (OCT, 2011).

Preliminary results from an REB-approved 2013 companion investigation – looking only at those graduates who had gone on to work in northern, remote, rural and First Nation/Metis/Inuit communities – confirmed that a number of reasons seemed to account for the much higher employment rates amongst Laurentian concurrent graduates. Essentially, the reasons are multi-faceted and wide-ranging but the results appear to owe something both to the nature of the program and the type of person who graduates from it. Put simply, because of their age and tendency to have already moved significant distances away from their hometowns, they are often able to adjust their plans and move to where work is.

The Nature of the Program and Candidates

In 2003, along with Trent and UOIT, Laurentian opened an English-language teacher education program (Professionally Speaking, 2003). All these primary/junior and junior/intermediate candidates were to be concurrent education students, with approximately 97% of them pursuing a four-year undergraduate degree. At the same time they were expected to simultaneously complete half-courses in educational foundations and psychology, attend at least a dozen workshops offered by a variety of organizations, undergo twelve hours of training by the Learning Disabilities Association of Sudbury in order to complete 15 days of undergraduate placement, as well as finish an 18 hour practicum preparation course in their final

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year of their undergraduate degree (Danyluk, 2013). After their last round of undergraduate examinations in April, they were assigned to an Associate's classroom for the month of May. About 10% of those Initial Placement students generally decided not to reappear for their Professional Year the following September. During that final "Pro Year" the remaining candidates finished all the methods and subject-specific classes required for a Bachelor of Education in Ontario and enjoyed approximately 60 more days of practicum. It should be noted that all courses in Laurentian's education program have an embedded indigenous component and opportunities exist to undertake a lengthy practicum placement at a band-run school on Manitoulin Island (Sheppard & Danyluk, 2012).

That 10 semester course of studies is grueling for many students and the majority of the incoming frosh leave concurrent education long before they get a B.Ed. due to low marks and/or a realization that teaching is really not for them. Each year a number of pre-service candidates discover they cannot handle the additional expectations associated with a concurrent course of study and others simply decide they really do not like children all that much. Everyone must also complete a series of undergraduate placements somewhere in the surrounding community and the region's bus system is not the best. So an average annual intake of 200 may see only 50 to 90 or so graduate five years later (although most former students stay at Laurentian to complete their first degree). Of this winnowing process one graduate observed: "The various placements throughout the program give the person a clear indication of whether or not this career would be suitable for them. On that point I believe this program puts undergraduates at a significant advantage not only from the practical perspective (more time discovering the field) but also from a personal perspective - you have the opportunity to opt out if it is not for you, thus saving time and money." In the end, the 75% minimum average required for entry into the final B.Ed. Professional Year means a nearly 80% entering grade in reality, so the annual "Pro Year" class constitutes a rather elite cohort compared to a number of similar programs in the province, some of which have program status cut-offs in the mid-60s.

In some respects Laurentian students are much like pre-service colleagues elsewhere in the country. For example, in terms of gender, Ontario teachers for a century or more have been about 80% women, and our graduates have also been overwhelmingly female (Milewski, 2012). But our students are even more overwhelmingly female than the current Ontario pre-service average of 75% since just 10% to 15% of any year's graduating cohort is male (see figure two below showing gender divisions from 2007 to 2012 versus the Ontario average from 2000 to 2010).

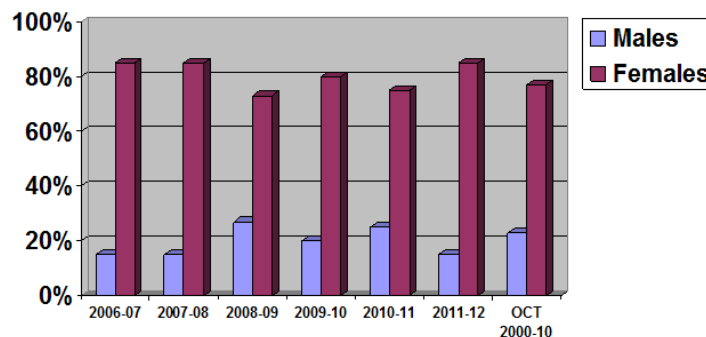


Figure Two – Laurentian B.Ed. Gender Division 2006-2012 vs. Ontario Average

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Our gender profile for frosh classes resembles that of the general Ontario B.Ed. experience, but four years later the 75/25 ratio has skewed to something like 85/15. The reason for this gradual feminization of the program likely rests with the fact that, across the academic spectrum, females are outperforming males in school. Generally, girls get better marks than boys in elementary grades, they are less likely to drop out of secondary school and post-secondary programs, and are more prone to acquire good grades in university (Turcotte, 2013). So, over time, our program tends to retain an increasing proportion of young women who are clearly determined to both succeed in university as well as complete their teaching qualifications in order to enter their chosen profession. Figure three below, for example, reveals how the Pro Year class of 2013-14 gradually shed male pre-service candidates at a higher rate than female.

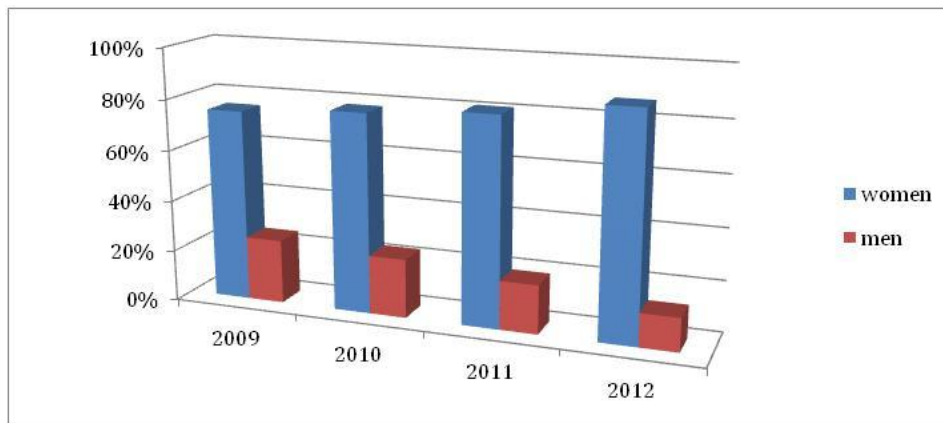


Figure Three – Laurentian Pro Year 2013-14 Gender Divisions 2009-2012

Like students acquiring teaching credentials across Canada, our candidates are also young, but they are significantly younger than the average new B.Ed. holder. Since almost all concurrent entrants have just left high school, the vast majority of Laurentian education students complete their studies at 22 or 23 years of age. But most B.Ed. candidates in Ontario are acquiring their first professional degree at a much later age. For example, the average age of students at OISE crept steadily upward from 27.2 in 2000 to 29.2 in 2005 (MacLeans, 2006). Not surprisingly consecutive candidates elsewhere have often spent a few years in the workforce and have sometimes settled down and bought homes and started young families. That is not the case at Laurentian's School of Education where almost everyone in their final year has yet to acquire a full-time job, a mortgage, or a spouse.

At the moment there are thirteen publicly funded faculties of education, as well as independent faith-based teacher-training institutions at Redeemer and Tyndale, and a number of foreign consent-holders - including Charles Sturt and Niagara - operating in Ontario. As well, each year hundreds of people return to Ontario with teaching credentials acquired in other provinces, from neighbouring border colleges, or even from institutions located overseas. In the face of this flood, Laurentian concurrent grads have never accounted for so much as 1% of the new instructors seeking work in the province (with the range being from 0.5% to 0.8%). See figure four below (compiled from a variety of OCT publications and Laurentian records) which shows how the number of Ontario certified teachers ballooned from 1999 to 2011.

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Year First Certified	Ontario Grads	Laurentian Concurrent Education Grads	US Border College Grads	Other Provinces	Other Countries	Total New Teachers	Laurentian Concurrent Education Grads
1999	5931	0	431	1142	805	8309	0
2008	9130	60 (0.7%)	1494	408	1716	12748	60 (0.5%)
2010	9024	90 (1%)	1048	395	1371	11838	90 (0.8%)
2011	9247	65 (0.7%)	675	245	1059	11226	65 (0.6%)

Figure Four: Ontario B.Ed. Certified Graduates 1999-2011

While our graduating classes have always been small, the origins of individuals in them have changed noticeably over time. At first, the vast majority of candidates graduating from the program came from the Greater Sudbury region (see Figure Five).

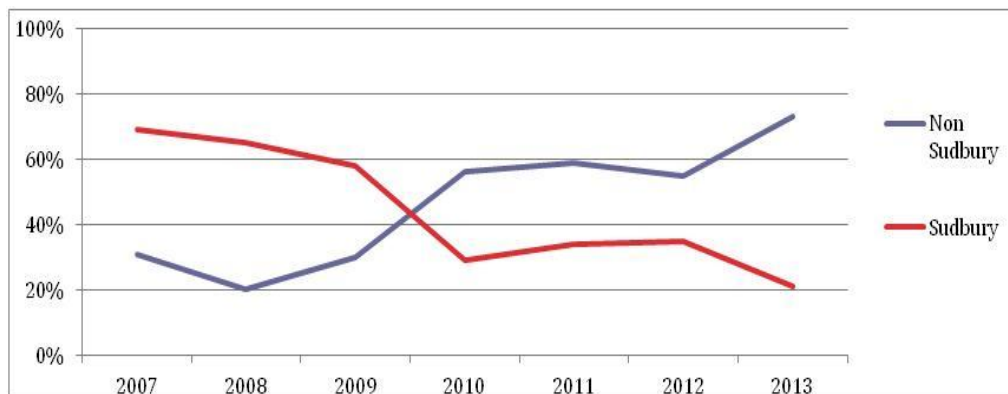


Figure Five: Origins of Graduates 2007-13

The changing complexion of the program really became noticeable in 2010 when the number of students from outside the region overtook candidates from the local area. That trend has intensified over time, so much so, that by the spring of 2013 residents of Greater Sudbury amounted to just one in five of all graduates in that year.

Lastly, the Laurentian students seem to have been increasingly targeting teachable subjects and divisions that will more likely earn them regular work. Currently, across Ontario in the English school system, job prospects are lowest for primary teachers and highest for French as Second Language (FSL) instructors. In 2007 we produced no FSL teachers and almost half our graduates were primary level teachers. Now regularly two thirds of our candidates choose to avoid primary, and nearly 10% of our graduates acquire FSL qualifications each year. This strategy seems effective. For example, at least 40% of the 2013 group that emerged with FSL

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credentials managed to find full-time work within Ontario this past year, and we know of at least one other graduate who has acquired a permanent position elsewhere in Canada.

In general, Laurentian graduates constitute a tiny proportion of the number of teachers certified each year in the province, most individuals in those graduating classes are young even by the standards of other first professional degree programs, and they are often travelling very long distances to spend five years studying to become qualified teachers. In the end, the process seems to produce graduates who are determined to find work and, in comparison to their counterparts across the province, they appear extraordinarily successful in that pursuit. A closer look at the survey results may provide some extra insight into why that is.

Survey Employment Results and Satisfaction Levels

Of the 93 respondents who completed the 2012-13 survey, 34 indicated they had full-time employment in schools (37%), 42 said they had long-term occasional or regular supply positions (45%), and 17 indicated they were not teaching in schools at all (18%) (see figure six below).

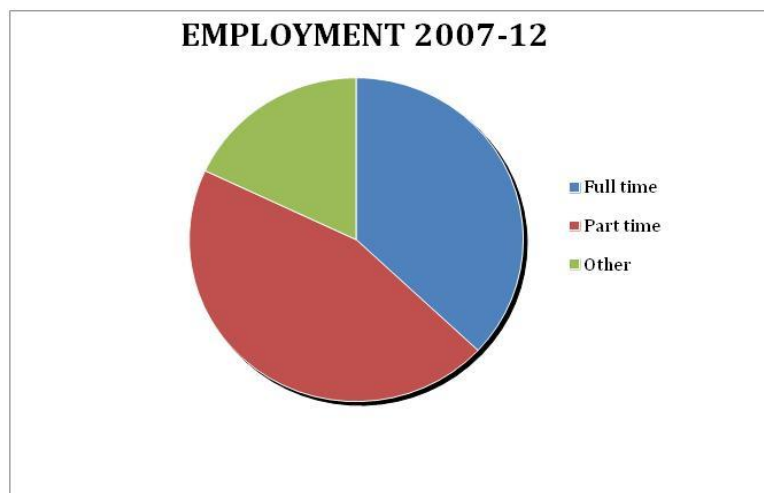


Figure Six Employment Type 2007-13

For the latter category, four individuals had gone on to enroll in graduate school or other post-secondary education and those taking non-traditional teaching jobs included a number working in the service sector and others who had gone on to employment in the civil service.

When asked whether they would recommend the program to someone else, four respondents failed to answer the question or answered in an ambiguous way (yes/no). If those answers are removed from the group, a total of 89 clear responses remain. Of those, a total of 77 (or 87%) said they would recommend Laurentian's concurrent B.Ed. to others. When asked to describe the program with one word the responses included educational, interesting, enjoyable, helpful, opportunity, growth, personal and excellent.

For those who gave explanations they regularly cited small classes, plenty of practicum experience, and caring faculty and staff. Typical of the explanations offered was this assessment by one graduate:

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I entered university having a pretty good idea that I wanted to be a teacher. I left after my 5th and final year in the Concurrent B.Ed. program feeling that I definitely wanted to be a teacher and believed I could do it. This was due to an incredibly supportive faculty and a wonderful group of peers – some who became lifelong friends. The ability to do placements throughout the five years of the program gives such valuable experiences.

Another said that the five year stretch meant “You learn so much about yourself and the type of teacher you want to be and can be.... You learn to be creative, observant, professional, patient and realistic.”

Significantly, there were also a dozen graduates (13%) who said they would not recommend the program for a variety of reasons. One said the institution was simply too far from home and eight others (9%) grounded their non-recommendation on the fact that there were very few jobs available in the province. Significantly, only three graduates (3%) based their “no” answer on dissatisfaction with aspects the program itself.

There was only a partial correlation between those who acquired full-time teaching and the level of satisfaction with the program. Certainly the enthusiastic response of one 2012 graduate who found permanent teaching work in her hometown is understandable: “I was able to obtain a position right out of school in Ontario! So it all paid off and did exactly what it was supposed to do.” At the same time, one full-time teacher remarked that he simply would not recommend the concurrent program to others. “I found that I learned the most from placements,” he lamented, “and for the most part the in class portion of the degree wasn’t very useful. When topics were discussed in class I found them to be idealized and not transferable to the real world.” Finally, it should be noted that the majority of those who had abandoned the quest for a traditional teaching position - opting instead for employment in other fields or more schooling - still recommended the program (13 of 17). One concluded it was “a great life skill” and another observed that while opportunities to acquire traditional teaching jobs were “slim at this time, the possibilities are endless for education-related employment in other fields.”

Several survey respondents complained about certain classes and professors, or about disorganization or inconsistencies at the School, and as noted above eight others referred to the dismal job market for teachers in Ontario. Many of those same respondents indicated, however, that they did not wish their specific complaints to be published. Typical of those who were willing to be quoted was one individual who observed “I felt like Laurentian did a good job of teaching me about teaching. I don’t feel as if it did a great job of teaching me how to deal with the job as it is in Ontario.” Surprisingly even most of those who complained about aspects of the program still recommended it for others. One who did not, and agreed to have her response quoted, felt a number of classes were simply “a waste of time.” This individual, who had acquired both supply and long term occasional positions since graduating, pointed out that they had learned too little about how to organize literacy blocks, how to assess students in each subject, and how to manage a classroom: “Your students,” she noted, “should be leaving at the end of the year feeling confident in their abilities as teachers, not frustrated from the inadequacy of their training.” Another disappointed graduate who had gone on to seek employment in a different field simply could not recommend the program for others since – in that person’s opinion - to find guaranteed work you generally had to go overseas.

Mobility

Our graduates seem to be much more willing to leave the province, and indeed the country, to find teaching jobs. While originally Laurentian graduates reliably went on to find employment with both the local Sudbury boards, and sometimes with other educational authorities across Ontario, increasing numbers in recent years have gained positions in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, with large numbers working overseas (particularly in Britain). The OCT reported that 10% of Ontario graduates would consider leaving the province to find work, but our investigations have revealed the Laurentian percentage of graduates who have actually taken that step generally ranges from 15% to 20% per cohort. The tendency for our graduates to leave Ontario, or even Canada, at a much higher rate than other B.Ed. holders might stem from the nature of the Laurentian University experience itself. Due to the location of the school of education, in Sudbury Ontario, nearly 400 kilometres north of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the majority of our teacher candidates have already moved a considerable distance to get an education. The graph below shows how, over time, an increasing number of graduates have come from places well away from the Greater Sudbury region.

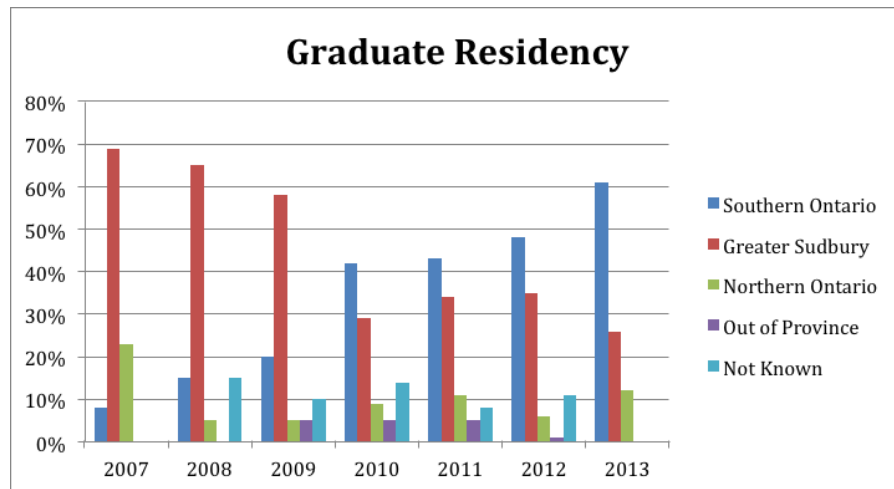


Figure Seven: Graduate Residency 2007-13

For example, the first cohort was comprised of 69% local students, with the remainder being from Manitoulin, Blind River, and Sault Ste. Marie. Just one student in that original group actually hailed from south of the French River. For the most recent graduating class of 2013, however, the local contingent had dropped to just over 20%. Almost two-thirds of the 2013 class was from southern Ontario, and the remainder mostly came from northern communities including Kapuskasing, Sault Ste. Marie, Kirkland Lake and New Liskeard. It should be noted that even those other northern towns are all hundreds of kilometers from Sudbury and for most concurrent education students – whether they hail from Timmins or Toronto - it is not unusual to settle into a four to six hour drive just to make it home for a holiday or study break.

That is not the case for many education students in Ontario. For example, of the 336 concurrent candidates enrolled in their final year at York University in 2011/12, only 18 (less than 5%) came from areas beyond the GTA (York, 2012). In other words, the vast majority of

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those students were drawn from the surrounding region and they could take Go Transit or even a city bus from home to their classes. Other southern Ontario faculties of Education would also have many daily commuters. For example, in 2011, Brock University in St. Catharines drew 30% of its student body from the surrounding Niagara region, 38% came from the neighbouring GTA, and only 31% hailed from the rest of Ontario (Brock, 2012). It could be argued that students attending Nipissing in North Bay or Lakehead in Thunder Bay face the same challenges as Laurentian students, but in both of those cases the overwhelming majority of education students have been enrolled in short eight-month consecutive programs, so they generally stay just over four months in those towns, while those choosing Sudbury overwhelmingly commit to a lengthy five year course of study. One Laurentian B.Ed. graduate now working in Canada's north recently summarized the situation this way:

My parents say it the best: when ... people say to them 'Oh, she is so far away,' well she was already far away to begin with. Not that far, it was only a four hour drive. I only came home at Christmas and summertime anyways so it's not that big of a difference.

Another commented that he realized early on in his university education that his "dream job" in Ottawa was not likely to appear on the horizon any time soon. But having been away from home for so long he was able to take a teaching position along the coast of James Bay without much fuss. He said simply that coming to Laurentian years before had "made that transition a lot smoother and a lot less ... intimidating in a lot of ways." Similarly, one 2013 graduate, when asked about going to a remote reserve halfway between Sudbury and Timmins for work that can only be reached via the often treacherous Highway 144, shrugged it off nonchalantly, insisting it was just over "two hours away" from her hometown.

The first graduates to venture overseas came from our third cohort (2008-9). By that point, the local market was saturated with new graduates and it was becoming increasingly difficult to get on supply lists either in Sudbury or other areas of Ontario. Over the summer of 2009 one graduate acquired a teaching position in Asia, while three others embarked on a United Kingdom adventure. Those four individuals, from a class of 58, represented pioneers of sort as their choices have been increasingly adopted by others. Over the following years groups of graduates have gone to Asia, Africa, continental Europe, the Middle East, or Australia, but the vast majority have chosen the United Kingdom as a destination. In fact a number of commercial recruiting operations (such as Protocol, Elite Education, Engage Education Canada) have begun to deliberately target Laurentian concurrent students, especially for work in England. Typically they promise "plenty of work" and "great pay," so not surprisingly novice teachers hungry for a first pay cheque are attracted to the pitch (Protocol). Of the most recent 2012-13 graduation cohort, for example, 17 of 97 B.Ed. candidates - or about one in six of the total - have taken up teaching posts in Britain. For that group most signed contracts which ensure a minimum of three days teaching work per week, but many quickly discover that they do not have to settle for offers of intermittent supply work and instead they find full-time positions are readily available. Since most Laurentian B.Ed. students spend five years in the program, candidates still studying in Sudbury are well aware of this potential career path because of shared courses, friendships, and social media, and they regularly determine upon it even before finishing their first undergraduate degree. They know from their friends and acquaintances who have graduated ahead of them that there is work available overseas. And because of their particular circumstances - most are

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unattached early “twenty-somethings” who are emerging from university with a professional degree that is still in demand in a variety of jurisdictions – they actually have options. So while other university graduates without those credentials are forced to survive on part-time work in the service sector back home or perhaps take a gap year to backpack in Europe, these B.Ed. graduates can enjoy both regular teaching employment and the chance for exciting adventures somewhere else. One recent Laurentian graduate located overseas bragged openly on social media about getting a full time teaching position: “Tests, assignments, exams, report cards; living the dream!”

It seems, therefore, that over the course of five years these young pre-service candidates have time to mull over the educational landscape about them. Unlike many consecutive enrollees, who might enter a course of studies for a B.Ed. in September and then suddenly emerge eight months later into a glutted local job market, Laurentian students have the advantage of an 8 or 10 semester program to decide if teaching really is the right life choice for them. For the minority of Laurentian pre-service students who decide to complete the B.Ed., they are generally well aware that moving again to another unfamiliar region to find regular teaching work is the new reality. As one individual who left Ontario with a friend for employment in a remote community in northern Saskatchewan remarked: “I have friends who are still subbing here [in Sudbury] and like have trouble finding long-term occasional. So that’s one of the reasons why we wanted to live up north ... we actually have jobs.”

Extended Practicum and Embedded Indigenous Component

The Laurentian program involves completing both undergraduate and lengthy Pro Year placements that amount to over 90 days in classrooms, or more than double the current provincial minimum. The undergraduate placements allow students to observe in host schools in the Sudbury area, as well as in their home community, and all pre-service candidates have the chance to work one-on-one with a young student with an identified learning disability. That experience is then followed by three long-term placements – anywhere in Ontario - involving about 75 days of whole class instruction within their approved teaching divisions. These placements are primarily supervised by Associates in the field but students are also guaranteed two visits from faculty advisors or part-time consultants. Because of the length of the practicum component, students generally complete at least double the minimum 40 days teaching and observing within their divisions, and there are also ample opportunities to observe outside their division, or engage in non-traditional placements. Over the years these have included accompanying Ontario schools on educational tours of Europe, an annual May trip to teach in Ecuador, and a long-term relationship with a band-run school on Manitoulin. Almost one fifth of survey respondents referred positively to this rich field experience and one summarized the situation by noting: “I loved the fact that I did placements in all grades, from grade 1 all the way to grade 10. It really affirmed for me that I love and prefer teaching the older kids. It gets your toes wet to prepare for teaching in the real world doing a placement each year.”

Also of some importance in acquiring work has been the embedded aboriginal focus of the program. All courses – whether in the undergraduate portion or the Pro Year that follows- are required to include indigenous content. In addition, for more than a half-decade, our Pro Years have attended inaugural sessions at the Killarney-Shebanong Environmental Education Centre

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or nearby Camp Falcona, where they are exposed to aboriginal teachings from local elders or community leaders. A few weeks later the whole cohort visits M'Chigeeng on Manitoulin to tour the Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute and familiarize themselves with Lakeview School. The Lakeview partnership, which has seen a half-dozen candidates a year complete a two month practicum, has been important in a number of respects. It is organized so that teachers from the school help whittle down the applicants for these prized positions, all participants engage in organized training sessions, and the Associates and their principal offer valuable feedback each year to our program. In many respects this is an ideal practicum placement for everyone concerned. A 2012 Ministry of Education report on Associate Teaching observed that partners in the field recommend improving the associate teaching experience – aside from things like increased release time - by “improved screening of teacher candidates into teacher pre-service programs; and improved screening and matching process for teacher candidates and associate teachers”(Associate Teaching Survey, 2012). Quite a few of our candidates have gone on to acquire work with band-run schools in northern Ontario (including in Kashechewan, Mattagami, and on Manitoulin Island) and in northern British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan (particularly with the Northern Lights School Board). Continual exposure to aboriginal ways of thinking and learning, and knowledge of the impact of residential schools, seem to offer Laurentian students a “leg-up” on the thousands of other B.Ed. holders who emerge each year seeking interviews for teaching positions. Certainly the Lakeview partnership has proven its worth over time (Glasby-Debassige, Payette, McColman, Buley, Buley, & Danyluk, 2012). Those who have gone to M'Chigeeng for a practicum placement are five times as likely as other Laurentian graduates to have gained employment as a teacher in a First Nations, Metis, or Inuit community.

Conclusion

Although the Laurentian concurrent program has been in existence for only a decade, its products are teaching in positions across the country (from Bella Coola, B.C. to Corner Brook, NL) and around the world. Survey results indicate most who have acquired a concurrent education degree are pleased with what they have accomplished. One graduate succinctly offered her take on the experience this way:

... the Laurentian University Concurrent Education program provides 18-19 year old would-be teachers with a clear sense of direction and a taste of what the job entails. In their final year these recruits are molded into lesson planning, differentiating, multi-intelligence accommodating machines. Upon graduation they leave with a strong feeling of belief in themselves and a sense of pride for the program they have successfully completed.

It is true some graduates have been disappointed in both the program itself and in the job opportunities they found after graduation, but nearly 90% of respondents felt the experience was beneficial and most unreservedly recommended it to others. One reason for that level of satisfaction is probably related to employment outcomes. Unlike most B.Ed. graduates in Ontario, Laurentian pre-service teachers have generally gone on to find regular work in their chosen profession. As shown above, that is undoubtedly related to a number of factors. Some have to do with the candidates themselves – their relative youth and life situation, their

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determination to acquire qualifications most likely to lead to employment, as well as their clear embrace of mobility – while others seem to be related to the nature of the program. Interestingly, both indigenous components and lengthy practicums are considered so worthwhile they are about to be mandated in teacher training institutions across the province starting in 2015. Lastly, it is manifest that concurrent B.Ed. degrees offer graduates the luxury of time to survey job markets and reconsider or reaffirm their future career decisions. One survey respondent – who had just completed a graduate degree and was preparing to start a teaching post on a reserve in Northern Ontario - concluded that “growth” was the one word that best described her time at Laurentian. She went on to note:

I think anyone grows over the course of several years in university, but the LU concurrent B.Ed. program is structured in such a way that it allowed me to develop my skills as a teacher throughout my years in university. Through the varied types of placements and assignments I was able to, I think, grow into a well-rounded educator who is confident in the classroom. The family-like atmosphere of the professional year of the program also allows students to feel comfortable learning and taking risks, which is not something I had previously experienced in school. I hope that I will be able to provide the same types of experiences and growth in my students when I start teaching in September.

Appendix One – Survey Instrument

Laurentian University - School of Education – Graduates Survey

- 1) First Name
- 2) Last Name
- 3) Gender
- 4) Age
- 5) Division at Graduation
- 6) Teachable if J/I
- 7) Town/City
- 8) Postal Code
- 9) When did you graduate from LU Concurrent Education Program
- 10) What degrees did you graduate with?
- 11) Did you take/are you taking any AQs or ABQs? Please list.
- 12) Have you completed any other courses/programs/degrees since graduation? Please list.

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13) If not currently working in Education, what field(s) or position(s) are you currently employed in?

14) Have you been employed in any of the following teaching related positions:

- Full-time
- Long term occasional
- Supply
- Other (please specify)

15) If you ever supplied or worked as an occasional teacher after graduating, did the situation last?

- Months
- Years
- Other (please specify)

16) Did you ever have to:

- Leave Ontario to find a teaching position?
- Leave Canada to find a teaching position?
- Neither?

17) If you are currently teaching in a permanent position, how long did it take you to secure that position?

- Months
- Years

18) If you could use one word to describe your experience in Laurentian's Concurrent B.Ed. program, what would it be?

- Which word?
- Please explain

19) Could we contact you to clarify any of these responses?

20) I would like my data to remain anonymous (i.e. do not quote me) and refer to my data using a pseudonym.

- Yes
- No

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**Virtual classroom visits in teacher education:
An innovative and motivating approach to teaching and learning**

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Diverse practicum experiences are central to teacher education programs, yet opportunities to visit and explore exemplary models of classroom environments as well as link course content to practicum experiences are often limited. Virtual classroom visits, based on virtual tour technology, offer an innovative and interactive approach to learning about the classroom environment and associated teaching practices. This exploratory study examined the use of virtual classrooms by pre-service teachers. Screen-capture technology recorded participants' experiences as they navigated a website that featured virtual classrooms. Retrospective think alouds and semi-structured interviews were then conducted to gain insights into the potential benefits of including virtual classroom visits in teacher preparation courses. Qualitative analysis confirmed the usefulness of virtual classroom visits by pre-service teachers. During their navigational experiences, participants moved about freely and explored classroom details, viewed video clips of expert teachers explaining educational practices, and accessed selected student work samples and related materials. Furthermore, findings from the think alouds and interviews revealed that virtual classrooms have the potential to be a motivating and valuable tool for course assignments and in-class discussions. The results of this study can offer teacher educators an innovative approach to linking course content to classroom environments via virtual tour technology.

Perspectives

The practicum experience is a valuable component of any teacher education program and provides multiple opportunities to observe models of teaching practices and instructional approaches (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Programs that expose pre-service teachers to a variety of classroom contexts help to mold pre-service teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching. Furthermore, teacher preparation courses that connect theory to practice offer pre-service teachers a foundation on which they can develop their philosophies of education. While practicum experiences are central to teacher education programs, a lack of time and resources sometimes limits opportunities for pre-service teachers to visit and explore diverse models of classroom environments (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Course content and the practicum are also sometimes disconnected and viewed as two separate components (Sorin, 2004). Yet, a theoretical foundation is a crucial element to a teacher's daily activities (Kosnik, Beck, Cleovoulou, & Fletcher, 2009). This paper explores an innovative approach to teaching and learning that links course content to exemplary classroom environments via virtual tour technology.

A virtual tour can be defined as an online environment of an existing area, allowing website users to explore the environment interactively, view video clips of defining features, and see photos of selected materials of interest at their own control and convenience (Beach, 2011). Virtual tours offer viewers authentic online environments and can be an engaging approach to teaching and learning. While virtual tours are often found in the tourism and real estate industries, allowing potential vacationers or buyers to "walk through" and view a property from

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the convenience of their home or office, research on the use of virtual tours and perceptions of the users is limited. Research in this area is necessary to further improve online environments in a variety of learning contexts. With this in mind, the use of virtual classrooms in teacher preparation courses warrants attention, particularly in light of findings from studies investigating elements of initial teacher education programs.

Research in teacher preparation programs has reported dissatisfaction among pre-service teachers with respect to some of the components of their training. For instance, new teachers have expressed a disparity between expectations of the profession and the actual realities in the classroom (Nahal, 2010). These faulty perceptions occurred in part because of the inadequacies of preparation programs in preparing new teachers for the classroom realities (Nahal, 2010). Pre-service teachers have also expressed disconnect between instructional strategies modeled by their associate teachers and a representation of their ideal teaching model (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Fazio & Volante, 2011). Greater clarity of theory and a stronger link to the practical component are also noted as areas in teacher education programs that require greater attention (Beck, Kosnik, & Rowsell, 2007).

Findings from studies, such as those described above, suggest a need for new modes of learning and accessing information about classroom environments and instructional practices. Web-based educational technologies and online learning tools, such as virtual classroom tours, have the potential to enhance initial teacher education courses by linking theoretical knowledge to classroom practices. When incorporated effectively, web-based technologies can complement and enrich traditional face-to-face instruction. Online tools and Internet technologies can be used to create and support learning environments that will enhance learning processes, and encompass activities involving interactivity and flexibility, motivation and confidence (Damoense, 2003).

Advances in technology use in teacher education courses create shared experiences, improve interactive formats, and provide multiple demonstration opportunities (Hixon & So, 2009; Smith, Smith, & Boone, 2000). Furthermore, technology integration can result in an overall increase in student participation and improved attitudes towards educational technology (Smith, et al., 2000). Studies investigating blended learning environments—integrating technology with traditional face-to-face instruction—have shown positive effects on pre-service teachers' theoretical understandings and overall participation in coursework (Keengwe & Kang, 2012; Smith, et al., 2000). Integrating virtual classroom tours in teacher preparation courses has the potential for a new and motivating approach to teaching and learning.

The purpose of this study was to explore how pre-service teachers use and perceive virtual classroom tours. Information generated from this study offers teacher educators an innovative approach to linking theory and practice in their coursework and assignments. This qualitative study had two main objectives: (1) to assess how pre-service teachers view virtual classroom tours; and (2) to explore the usefulness of virtual classroom tours in teacher preparation courses.

Context of the Study

The present study was undertaken within the context of a powerful new online professional resource. *The Balanced Literacy Diet* website (www.LitDiet.org) is a unique evidenced-informed literacy website that provides free professional learning resources such as virtual tours of exemplary classrooms (K-6), video clips of expert teachers explaining and demonstrating effective educational practices, detailed lesson plans, photos of teaching materials, and exemplars of student work (see Figure 1). The site is content rich, interactive and includes 14 virtual classroom tours that range in grades and classroom pedagogy; thus *The Balanced Literacy Diet* website offers an ideal context in which to examine how pre-service teachers use and perceive virtual classroom tours.

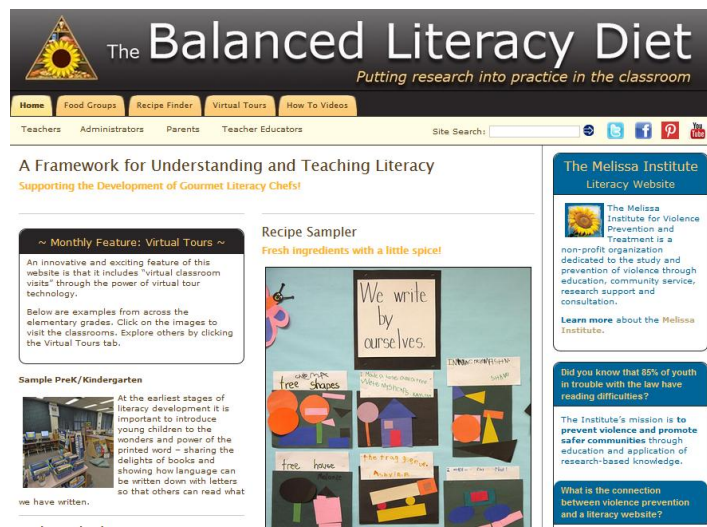


Figure 1. *The Balanced Literacy Diet* website

Methods

Research design

Qualitative methods provide researchers with in-depth information on how individuals experience a particular phenomenon (Rowan & Huston, 1997). This study utilized qualitative methods to explore how pre-service teachers use virtual classroom tours and the potential benefits of integrating virtual classroom tours into teacher preparation courses. A general inductive approach to analysis involved coding, categorizing and reducing codes into relevant themes (Thomas, 2010).

Research questions

This study addressed the following questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers view virtual classroom tours?
2. Are virtual classroom tours an effective approach to learning about classroom environments and instructional practices in teacher preparation courses?

Participants

Seven pre-service teachers volunteered to participate in this study and all participants completed informed consent forms. Participants included five female students and two male students. The pre-service teachers (N=7) were all enrolled in a two-year Master of Arts and teacher certification program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. During the program, pre-service teachers complete a minimum of four different practicum experiences in their first year and a three month internship in their second year. Extensive coursework in curriculum areas, educational theory and child study occurs throughout the two years.

Participants met with the primary researcher during the spring term and had therefore gained classroom teaching experiences during the practicum component of their program. Experience ranged from kindergarten to grade six. All of the participants indicated that they frequently use the Internet during their practicum. Participants most often sought out resources for planning and reported videos, photos, and other interactive tools as the most beneficial and engaging Internet technologies.

Data collection

Participants met individually with the primary researcher. During the one-on-one meetings, participants explored *The Balanced Literacy Diet* website (www.LitDiet.org) for 10 minutes. Participants were given the instructions to use the site as they normally would when navigating online professional resources. Each visual step made by the participants was captured using the computer software program Camtasia Studio, developed by TechSmith. Following their 10-minute exploration, participants viewed a screen-recording of their navigational experience and thought aloud about their decisions and why they made them. The think aloud procedure used in this study is a variation of the traditional think aloud method—a methodology that was developed based on the techniques of protocol analysis by Ericsson and Simon (1984). Normally in think aloud procedures, participants think aloud by sharing their thoughts while simultaneously completing a given task. The think aloud procedure used in the current study, combined screen-capture technology with a retrospective think aloud technique. The goal of this think aloud was to aid recall of original behaviours and thought processes by viewing a screen-recording of participants' navigational experiences. A semi-structured interview was conducted following participants' think aloud. Interview questions focused on the participants' general feelings towards the virtual classroom tours. The think alouds and interviews were audio recorded.

Data analysis

A general inductive approach to analysis involved repeated coding and categorizing (Thomas, 2010). Think aloud recordings and interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded for relevant themes. Analysis of the screen-recordings involved tracking the participants' use of the virtual classroom tours. For instance, the frequency of videos and photo galleries viewed, the use of the zoom and arrow functions and participants overall ability to maneuver comfortably within the virtual classrooms were recorded. Five common themes emerged as a result of the analysis: A motivational learning tool, interactive quality, informative content, extensions to teaching career, and contribution to diverse classroom environments.

Findings and Discussion

Findings from this study highlight pre-service teachers' use and perceptions of virtual classroom visits. Furthermore, findings suggest that virtual classrooms have the potential to be a motivating and valuable tool for teacher preparation course assignments and in-class discussions. The following section is a summary of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the screen-capture recordings and think aloud and interview transcripts. Direct quotes were chosen as examples to support each theme.

A motivational learning tool

All of the participants perceived the virtual classroom tours as a motivational learning tool and were genuinely interested in exploring various components of the virtual environments. Participants moved about freely and viewed classroom details of the virtual tours. Participants watched at least one video clip of expert teachers explaining effective educational practices and many participants accessed photos of selected student work samples and related materials. Participants also made direct links between the virtual classroom tours, their coursework and the practicum. For instance, one participant commented on how the virtual tours could be incorporated into course assignments:

“The instructor could use virtual tours as an assignment...it would be effective, interactive, and could easily be incorporated into any assignment...it could be motivational.”

Another pre-service teacher felt that the virtual classrooms were an effective and motivational tool for her future practice:

“I thought the tour was really cool, especially if you want to figure out how you want to design your classroom.”

Interactive tools are powerful ways to engage learners and when incorporated effectively can increase teachers' motivation to learn. Teachers with stronger motivations towards learning often express more positive attitudes, have better perceptions for professional development and are more likely to transfer their learning to their teaching practices (Chien, Kao, Yeh, & Lin, 2012). Motivational and engaging learning tools, such as virtual classroom tours, have the potential to foster pre-service teachers' motivation to link coursework to the classroom and therefore apply their knowledge in a meaningful way.

Interactive quality

Many online educational resources include rich and practical information; however content-area concepts are presented in primarily static, text-based environments (Coiro & Fogleman, 2011). Online resources that are interactive and multimedia-based are more likely to increase the amount of time that a website user spends navigating a particular site (Coiro & Fogleman, 2011). In the present study, all of the participants noted how the interactive quality of the virtual classroom tours contributed to an effective and highly engaging learning experience.

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For instance, one pre-service teacher made a direct reference to the interactive quality of the virtual classrooms:

“I like that it was very interactive and very multimedia-based. It wasn’t just text.”

Another participant described her learning process of using the virtual classroom:

“I get it because I’m used to clicking and dragging and then I’m pulling the screen... you click and you move to where you want to go which is awesome. It just took me a second to figure it out and once I figured it out it was fine.”

While interactive tools tend to be more engaging than text-based information, these tools need to be accessible and easy to use. The above participant referred to the length of time and process required to navigate comfortably through the virtual classroom. In this case, the online tool was easy to use increasing the likelihood of the users returning to this tool. In a teacher preparation course, an initial tutorial or overview of the learning tool may also contribute to an increase in user time and learning outcomes.

Informative content

Participants noted how the content within the virtual classroom tours was informative. Informative content included the physical layout of the classroom environment, the photographs of student work and teacher resources as well as the videos of the teachers explaining aspects of their literacy program. Videos were accessed via dots or “hot spots” that were dispersed throughout the virtual classrooms. A short description of the video appeared when participants hovered over a hot spot. Participants could then click on the hot spot to view a video of the expert teacher explaining a component of his or her classroom and literacy-based teaching practices. Participants also viewed introductory videos of the classroom teachers explaining their teaching philosophies and felt that they had gained insights from the perspectives offered by each classroom teacher in these videos.

Participants also viewed details of the classroom and noted specific elements of the virtual tour. For instance, one participant described the effective placement of the word wall in the virtual classroom that he viewed:

“I think it’s really valuable just to have that board with all those words, especially words that might come up in the year.”

Another participant described how viewing lessons and activities within a classroom context was an informative experience:

“I went into the virtual tours...I wanted to take a look at the actual classrooms because I think it’s kind of nice that you see the activities and then it shows them actually in the classrooms.”

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Finally, participants discussed the potential contribution of the virtual classroom tours to their courses. For instance, one pre-service teacher reflected on how the virtual classroom tours could be introduced during a small course assignment or group discussion. These discussions could be guided in a way that links theoretical perspectives to the realities of teaching.

Pre-service teachers value course content that is practical and furthers the development of their own teaching philosophies. They also tend to place greater importance on course assignments that link directly to their pedagogical knowledge (Volante, 2006). Virtual classrooms appear to provide meaningful and practical information to pre-service teachers.

Extensions to teaching career

All participants believed that the virtual classroom tours would continue to be a valuable resource during their first few years of teaching, “especially at the beginning of the year as a new teacher.” One participant suggested:

“Virtual tours can be helpful for organizing and seeing different ways of setting up.”

This is especially relevant for new teachers entering the classroom for the first time—they are often overwhelmed and sometimes feel uncomfortable approaching a colleague with questions related to classroom set-up and program programming. Accessing virtual classrooms might ease the pressure that new and less experienced teachers feel when entering their first teaching job. Another participant made reference to how an experienced teacher might use the virtual classroom tours:

“A more experienced teacher might rearrange their classroom based on the virtual tours.”

Teaching resources that are introduced in teacher preparation courses can have lasting effects on a new teacher’s program planning. Furthermore, a resource’s credibility increases when it has been recommended by an expert in the field. In the present study, virtual classroom tours appear to be a resource that pre-service teachers would access during their program and their teaching career.

Contribution to diverse classroom environments

While virtual classrooms cannot replace field placements, they have the potential to enhance teacher preparation courses. The virtual classroom tours used in this study offered pre-service teacher participants 14 different virtual classroom tours ranging in grades, pedagogical philosophies and contexts. One participant noted the contribution of the virtual classrooms to her literacy course:

“Virtual classrooms could be valuable for assignments especially [when] the class doesn't have time to visit another school...they could be utilized in academic settings.”

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Another participant noted the benefits of visiting a variety of classrooms including virtual classrooms:

“I always find it interesting going into classrooms and seeing how they set up their classrooms so I think this is a really nice tool.”

Participants also acknowledged that the frequency of classroom visits during their teacher preparation program is sometimes limited. Yet, exploring exemplary classrooms is highly beneficial. For instance, one pre-service teacher noted the benefits of visiting a variety of classroom environments and that these opportunities were limited in her teacher preparation program:

“You can really explore someone else’s classroom which is something we don’t often get to do...see how they use different materials in their classroom but also how they set up their classroom, where they put their materials...It’s one thing to imagine it but in a small crowded room, how would you set it up and how do they? I like how you can scroll through the classroom and see the different areas and then watch a little video on how they’re using materials in that area.”

Significance to Education

The pre-service teachers who participated in this study perceived virtual classroom tours as a motivational, interactive and easy-to-use learning tool for in-class coursework, course assignments and continued professional learning. These findings can offer teacher educators an innovative approach to teaching that links course content to exemplary classroom environments via virtual tour technology. Specifically, pre-service teachers could explore a virtual classroom and critique various aspects of the classroom environment with respect to the teacher’s practice and pedagogical approach. Another course assignment might ask pre-service teachers to prepare a variety of enrichment activities and extend learning experiences based on a virtual classroom. Small groups could also focus on one virtual classroom, critique and evaluate the classroom environment and teaching approach, then meet with other group members to reflect upon the various points of view. Assignments could be posted online, shared in-class, or followed up by group discussions facilitated by the course instructor.

This study offers a beginning understanding of virtual classroom tours in teacher preparation courses. However, further research in this area requires attention. A larger and more diverse sample taken from initial teacher education programs across Ontario may be more representative of pre-service teachers’ perspectives. Feedback from faculty members and course instructors can also offer specific approaches for integrating virtual classrooms in coursework and assignments. Furthermore, an experimental design comparing learning outcomes of pre-service teachers who engage with virtual classrooms in their coursework and pre-service teachers who use more traditional approaches can reveal the effectiveness of virtual tours as a learning tool.

Conclusion

Pre-service teachers must be provided with “many and varied opportunities to examine authentic teaching classrooms” (Barnett, 2006, p. 724). The findings of this study suggest that virtual classroom tours can offer pre-service teachers an additional avenue to explore and gain knowledge about classroom environments, teaching strategies and instructional practices. As stated by Melnick and Meister (2008), “an important outcome of teacher preparation programs is to adequately prepare pre-service teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions requisite to make that leap from pre-service to in-service teaching” (p. 53). To attain this outcome opportunities to explore a variety of diverse classrooms and instructional approaches as well as create meaningful and memorable connections between theoretical knowledge and practice are necessary. Virtual classroom tours are an innovative and motivating approach to teaching and learning and have the potential to enhance teacher preparation courses and pre-service teachers’ overall satisfaction with their initial teacher training.

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Fostering Teaching for Relevance and Values Development: Insights from a Longitudinal Study of Teachers

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Abstract: We have been studying 42 teachers since they started their career, 20 who began in 2004 and 22 who began in 2007; although the study is ongoing, in this paper we report only up to 2011-2012. Over this period, we saw substantial change in the teachers, specifically in the extent to which they taught for relevance and values development. In varying degrees, they emphasized areas such as social and occupational skills, way of life development, digital communication, critical thinking, inclusive outlooks and behavior, and environmental awareness. A major strategy they employed was integrating learning around key themes and “big ideas,” both within and across subjects. It seemed from the study that teaching in this area was both important and feasible, and indeed compatible with substantial coverage of required content. We concluded that more emphasis should be placed on teaching for relevance and values learning in both initial teacher education and continuing PD.

Introduction

Teacher educators (ourselves included) typically encourage teacher candidates to teach for everyday relevance; in particular, to foster values such as love of learning, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, and health and fitness. But is it really *feasible* to teach for relevance and values development while also teaching the official curriculum? Surely there is too much academic content to cover. Moreover, is it *appropriate* for teachers to teach values? Isn't that the job of the home? And whose values will they teach anyway?

We believe this topic is especially important today. To a large extent, the current world-wide push toward detailed curriculum, scripted teaching methods, and standardized testing is leading *away* from relevance and values development and toward rote learning of content that is easily formulated and tested (Bainbridge & Malicky, 2004; Ravitch, 2013; Shepard, 1991, 2001). The issue of teaching for relevance and values learning in schools is a complex one without a simple solution, but we hope in this paper to work through some of the complexities, drawing on various sources but especially the views and practices of the teachers in a longitudinal study we have been conducting since 2004.

Issues and Research Literature

In the past, school learning hasn't always been very relevant or “real-life” oriented. According to Dewey (1916), this is a natural tendency in schooling: “There is the standing danger that the material of formal instruction will be merely the subject matter of the schools, isolated from the subject matter of life-experience” (p. 12). As a result, what students learn remains largely “static, cold-storage” knowledge, minimally understood and used (p. 186). Similarly, Freire (1958/62) from the mid-20th century onward argued against the widespread

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“banking” approach to education, whereby students have extensive subject knowledge “deposited” in their minds but learn little about how to deal with key societal and personal issues. And this isn’t just a problem of public education. Jane Austen in *Mansfield Park* wrote passionately about young people whose private schooling gave them knowledge of ancient Roman emperors, the river systems of Europe, and the plots of classical plays but little understanding of human nature or how to live. All these concerns are in line with Noddings’ (2005) declaration that “the standard liberal arts curriculum” is not only inappropriate for academically weak students, it’s “not the best education for anyone” (p. 43).

It is important not to exaggerate this point: modern schooling despite its faults has been a major force for good, and without it vast numbers of people would be worse off intellectually, culturally, and economically. Nevertheless, there’s much room for improvement. While more attention is doubtless given to relevance in schools today than in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the considered view of Martin (1992), Meier (1995), and Noddings’ (2003, 2005, 2006, 2013) is that we still have a long way to go; and, as mentioned earlier, many of the gains are now in danger of being lost (Meier 2000, 2002; Noddings, 2007, 2013; Ravitch, 2010, 2013). In many countries today, a large number of politicians and education officials favour a return to more traditional content and modes of teaching and assessment.

As noted, however, the issues aren’t straightforward. To begin, not everything students learn can be relevant immediately or even in the long-run. Some things are in the curriculum because of tradition or popular demand, and while we may lobby against them they have to be taught in the meantime – although teachers often have more choice than they realize (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Sleeter, 2005). Also, some topics (e.g., in mathematics and science) have little relevance when they are learned but have to be mastered as a basis for future learning or just to get access to courses, programs, and jobs. Even Dewey (1938) conceded that, while education should never be *merely* preparation, learning for future use has a place.

Political, societal, and institutional realities, then, necessitate some kind of trade-off between simply teaching content and teaching for relevance and growth in values. However, with time and experience many teachers find they can often *do both*. Provided they see teaching for relevance and values learning as an important goal, they can *combine* it with covering much of the content required politically and bureaucratically (Grant & Gradwell, 2010; Parker et al., 2013; VanSledright, 2011). In many cases students receiving a more meaningful and relevant education may do even better on standardized tests than those taught in the traditional manner. What is needed, then, is for more teachers (and teacher educators) to realize that:

- learning to do both in more areas is a central goal of teachers’ ongoing development
- learning to do both will take time (so teachers shouldn’t be too hard on themselves)
- until they learn to do both, teachers should as far as possible give *priority* to relevance and values learning where this conflicts with mere coverage.

So far in the discussion we have lumped together teaching for relevance and values development and teaching for understanding. However, it’s crucial to note that these aren’t always linked. While relevance and growth in values usually involve understanding, the converse is not always the case. This takes us back to Meier and Noddings, who stress that students may

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have deep understanding of several traditional subjects but lack, for example, appreciation of the arts (Meier, 1995) or the importance of caring in life (Noddings, 2005). Although better than rote learning, teaching for understanding in a few subject areas can end up having much the same effect because no time is left to study matters more important for everyday life. This was pointed out long ago by Goodlad (1966), who described the pitfalls of the then popular approach of teaching, “the structure of the disciplines,” in depth without regard for relevance or student interest.

Context and Methodology

As mentioned earlier, we drew on several sources for this paper but the main stimulus to our thinking was a longitudinal study of 42 teachers (mainly elementary and middle-school but 4 lower-high-school), of whom 20 began teaching in 2004 and 22 in 2007. One participant from the second cohort left teaching recently because she could not get a permanent position, but she continued in the study until 2011-12, the final year reported here. (Originally we had 22 participants in the first cohort and 23 in the second, but 2 from the first and 1 from the second have since left the study without giving a reason, though they are still teaching.)

Of the participants, 8 are visible minorities and 5 males, roughly the proportions in these categories among new teachers from elementary to lower high school in the various school districts represented. In terms of initial preparation, 22 were from 1-year post-baccalaureate teacher education programs, 18 from 2-year post-baccalaureate programs, and 2 from 5-year concurrent programs. They were from 4 schools of education in 2 countries; and within the largest of the schools of education, from 5 rather distinctive sub-programs. The sample consisted of all those 2004 and 2007 graduates of the various programs who had a teaching position and accepted a general invitation to take part in the study. Throughout the study, the great majority taught in relatively low socio-economic status urban schools with racially and ethnically diverse student populations.

When we began the study in 2004 our main concern was with *pre-service* teacher education, and this is reflected in our earlier works *Priorities in Teacher Education* (2009) and *Teaching in a Nutshell* (2011). But as the teachers moved to later career stages, we became interested also in how their vision or approach developed over time as a result of their classroom experience and other learning opportunities.

In the first 3 years we interviewed and observed the cohort 1 participants twice a year; subsequently we interviewed and observed all the teachers (now two cohorts) once a year, usually toward the end of the year. Each interview was about 60-90 minutes in length and was recorded and transcribed. Over the years the interview questions were modified to explore new areas and adapt to the changing career stage. Each year the same questions were asked of all participants, but probe questions were also asked and additional comment was encouraged.

Apart from a few specific rating questions, our research approach was largely qualitative, as defined by Merriam (2009), Punch (2009), and Savin-Baden and Major (2013). For example, we studied in some depth a sample of just 42 teachers; our interview and observation sessions were largely open-ended; and the themes emerged as the study progressed. In analyzing the

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interview transcripts, we began by reading them several times to identify themes or "codes" related to the central issues of the study. We then developed a table of themes matched to participants and, going through the materials again, recorded where reference was made to each topic. As we wrote up our findings, we kept going back to the materials for "constant comparison" with the themes, continuing to add, delete, and modify themes.

Although our study is ongoing, for purposes of this paper we used data only up to 2011-12, the teachers' eighth year (cohort 1) and fifth year (cohort 2) respectively. When we cite a teacher from cohort 2 we mention this in parentheses so it's clear at what stage in the study their comment was made (e.g., a year 5 statement by a cohort 2 teacher was made in the final year of the study reported here). In all cases pseudonyms are used in referring to the teachers.

Findings: Teaching for Relevance and Values Development by the Teachers in Our Study

Over the years, the participants in our research varied in the extent to which they mentioned teaching for relevance and values learning in the interviews; however, the great majority emphasized them strongly (while not necessarily using those terms), as we will illustrate in the sections that follow. In the first section, below, we present broad observations by the teachers about teaching for relevance and growth in values; in subsequent sections we note their comments regarding particular ways to achieve relevance and values learning and the areas in which to pursue them.

Because the sample is modest, these data don't prove that all or even most teachers at this career stage hold the views or follow the practices described. However, they suggest that many do; and they indicate how, over the years, many teachers are able to find feasible ways to teach for relevance and values development, despite system constraints and public pressure toward traditional content and pedagogy.

1. Broad Statements about Teaching for Relevance and Values Development

Felicity in her seventh year said: "I'm always looking for real-world applications. So if the students are doing procedural writing, it might be on learning how to play a video game. Then there's a definite purpose and audience for their writing." Carrie at the end of her second year reported that she speaks with her students about "why it's important to learn certain things. [I talk] about *why*: why do we have a student dress code, why are we studying Shakespeare." In her third year she noted that she discusses with them "why people read: reading for enjoyment, not just reading to understand specific information." In year 8 she said: "The more I can relate a topic to the world around them, the better off they are."

Many of the teachers pointed out that teaching for relevance and values development involves *making decisions* about what and how to teach, rather than just following the curriculum. Deirdre (cohort 2), though teaching in a highly controlled school and school district, commented in year 5:

[W]hat I've come to realize is that whatever curriculum is given to you in the classroom, it's up to you as a teacher to modify it and make it meaningful to your students. Of course

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you have to meet their IEP goals; but whatever their age, their grade, their classification you have to make it meaningful.

Marisa in her seventh year said: “[Y]ou have to judge what’s important and weed out what’s not.” Tanya in year 8 noted the need to spend different amounts of time on different topics:

I emphasize some themes and units more than others. For example, in science I find the students really enjoy the liquids unit so I spend more time on that. With the air and water-cycle units I don’t see as many big ideas, so I tend to integrate them into lessons on pollution and its impact on the environment. I can do each of those units in a week or two, whereas liquids might take six to eight weeks.

2. How to Teach for Relevance and Values Development (i): Integration In and Across Subjects

Some of the above examples show how the teachers integrated the curriculum in order to promote relevance and values learning. With time, this became increasingly common among the study participants. For example, Marisa in her seventh year noted that she now focuses more on broad issues rather than “getting bogged down in lots of specific facts that students will quickly forget.” In year 8 she gave an example of this in relation to social studies:

One of the social studies strands in grade 5 is about government. And what I do is move quickly over the “levels of government” and how a bill is passed into a law: there’s a lot of detail that’s not going to help them or motivate them. What I focus on more is the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the challenges faced by new immigrants. And I do it at the beginning of the year and link it to our own classroom rights and responsibilities.

While this example shows integration within a subject, Marisa also stressed integration across subjects. Similarly, Tanya in year 5 said: "I’ve even started integrating math into my literacy centers, because there’s so much literacy needed to communicate in math."

Integrating across subjects is partly dependent on finding teaching materials that make this feasible. Anna in year 8 reported that she was finding a new set of literacy materials useful because they addressed “two or even three subject areas at once in a way that’s engaging.” In her fifth year Jessica (cohort 2) said she had recently discovered a book called *If the World Were a Village* that enabled her to connect several subjects. The book shrinks the world population down to one hundred, so “the students can work with the figures more easily and see where the wealth disparities are.” In the context of studying the book, her class touches on equity, language, math (data management, percent, fractions, ratio), history (how did the people who have the resources get them in the first place), and science (life systems, including topics such as basic needs, access to clean water, and what happens to people who don’t have clean water).

3. How to Teach for Relevance and Values Development (ii): Using Digital Technology

Using digital technology (DT) in the classroom can promote relevance and values learning in three ways: connecting to students’ real-world interests and skills; extending those interests and skills; and increasing students’ understanding of the range of literacies in the world (often

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referred to as a “multiliteracies” perspective: New London Group, 1996). With respect to connecting to students’ existing interests and skills, Nora (cohort 2) commented in her fifth year:

My students can comprehend quite a lot in books, but when we go on the internet they pick things up so quickly. For example, we use Garden Quest a lot, and the ideas and information make much more sense to them when they are looking them up instead of flipping through books or being lectured at.

While students often enjoy and benefit from use of DT, however, they need to learn *additional* skills: they are only “digital natives” up to a point (Prensky, 2011). Carrie in her fourth year spoke of her efforts along these lines: “A big focus in literacy this year was teaching students how to use Power Point. Now they use it for making presentations, along with storyboarding and other things.”

The teachers also spoke of use of DT as a way of broadening students’ concept of and approach to literacy. Paul in year 4 talked about the need to explore various forms of literacy (including digital literacy) in the classroom.

It’s important to introduce students to different types of reading and writing, like making comic books, running a school newspaper, writing a cookbook. I touched on it a bit before but I want to insert it more into my practice. And this ties in with the use of the computers.

Tanya in her seventh year noted: “I now base my whole academic program on the new theories of literacy and the multiple ways of understanding literacy: not only writing and reading but oral language and media texts.”

4. How to Teach for Relevance and Values Development (iii): Fostering Critical Thinking

Many of the participants in our study felt teaching students to be critical was essential to helping them see the world as it really is and acquire key life values and skills. In year 8 of the study we asked the teachers to what extent – since graduating – they had found the concept of being “critical” useful in their teaching. They varied in the significance they attached to the term: interestingly, some didn’t recall being introduced to it in pre-service (though they probably were). The responses for cohort 1 were as follows:

Table 1

*Teachers' notions of the term "critical" (cohort 1)**

N = 18 (as 2 were unavailable for interview)		%
Not familiar with the term as applied to teaching	5	28
Linked to "Critical Thinking" and/or "Critical Literacy"	11	61
Students' skills of questioning and reflection	9	50
Teachers challenging their own teaching	4	22

* More than one code per teacher sometimes used, so total more than N

While interpretation of their responses was needed, many clearly saw the value of fostering critical thinking in terms of understanding the real world and having a satisfying and

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enjoyable way of life. For example, Miranda (cohort 2) in her fifth year remarked: “When I think of the term ‘critical’ I think about being more open-ended, allowing kids to come up with different answers.” Maria in her eighth year said:

In literacy, we talk about fostering “critical thinking”: seeing how important critical thinking skills are in life and teaching them to the kids. I don’t remember it ever being really explained to us in pre-service, but to me critical thinking is the ability to infer, and to look at things from a different perspective and be able to back it up. It’s being able to look at things differently, see what’s really happening, and why it’s happening.

5. Teaching Life Skills (i): Social and Occupational Skills

A major aspect of teaching for relevance and growth in values is helping students develop life skills. We have just discussed digital technology and critical thinking, which are important life skill areas. Two other areas of life skill development mentioned by the teachers in our study were the social and occupational. With respect to social skills, Tanya in year 7 observed: “Learning how to live your life is part of the unofficial curriculum that we do all day. How do you work with people? How do you tell someone they’ve hurt your feelings?” In her eighth year Karen spoke of using role-play to help students learn how to make eye contact, smile, say things nicely, say they’re sorry, and “develop empathy for other people.” In year 8 Nancy noted:

At the beginning of the year I establish “collaborative norms” in the classroom. For example, peer evaluations must be positive, even if it’s just proofreading someone’s writing: they must mention one positive thing, and one thing they could improve on. And we discuss how to be more positive. And I think that’s actually a good lesson in life: we all need to be more positive.

Turning to occupation-related skills, Maria in her seventh year reported: “I teach students things that are going to help them in life. Like I say to them: ‘You can be the smartest person on this earth, but if you can’t get along with other people, who is going to hire you?’” Also in year 7, Serena commented:

You want your kids to end up as independent learners and problem solvers. In math, this outlook has solidified for me this past year (while serving as a math coach). We live in a different world today where, for example, people have access to calculating devices; and I’m not saying kids shouldn’t learn to add, but for the most part people spend their time attacking real-life scenarios. Very few sit and do calculations all day.

6. Teaching Life Skills (ii): Developing a Way of Life

Beyond specific types of life skills, teachers can help students develop their overall way of life and take responsibility for doing so (Chapman & West-Burnham, 2010; Noddings, 2005, 2013; White, 1991). Over the years the teachers in our study placed increasing emphasis on students becoming autonomous. This was partly a matter of taking ownership of their academic learning, but many of the teachers saw it in terms of way of life development. For example, in her fifth year Kelly (cohort 2) said she makes a point of putting the onus on her students:

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Every day I say to them: “You can choose not to do your work in class, but your behavior can’t affect anyone else.” I don’t yell at them, I just ask them to stay after school and do it. They can take out a notebook, draw, read, put their head on the desk; they just can’t disturb the 28 other kids when they’re working.... And I say to them: “As an adult it’s ultimately your responsibility, and the government or the police only get involved if you’re hurting other people.... So just make a choice and we’ll deal with it later, and I’ll help you.”

Similarly, Paul in year 7 remarked: “I want students to take responsibility for themselves and their learning, and get to know themselves: what kind of person am I, what kind of career should I have, what kind of people should I associate with?”

7. Teaching Life Skills (iii): Inclusive Outlooks and Behavior

Especially in today’s increasingly global and multicultural world, schooling must promote inclusion if it is to be relevant and conducive to sound values learning. In varying degrees, the participants in our study worked to foster inclusive outlooks and behavior in areas such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, and economic difference. Teaching in a very racially diverse setting, Deirdre (cohort 2) in her fourth year reported:

At the beginning of the year I talk with the students about our classroom rules and taking care of one another, and we do role-playing activities, songs, and chants about community, and they work with one another. When a conflict between children arises we’re on top of them; but we gradually release that, so they learn to deal with issues themselves.

Gail (cohort 2), also in her fourth year, noted: “We had a discussion about the fact that people have different skin color, and why that is, and how we’re all the same, and what’s the same about us.” In year 5, Jessica (cohort 2) said:

I always try to create an atmosphere of respect...[and emphasize] that it’s a real learning opportunity for them to sit and debate and listen to each other...and have these kinds of conversations rather than outbursts of anger or hostility. Personally, since I was a grade 6 student myself I’ve been involved in a lot race relations discussions and committees; it’s been ongoing with me.

Regarding religion and ethnicity, Jeannie in year 7 said that she has begun to integrate discussion of the immigrant experience into her social studies lessons on “pioneers”:

Pioneering is such a hard concept, and teaching how the pioneers churned butter may not help much. Whereas when we conceptualize it as coming to a new place and connect it to their family’s experiences, it’s a lot more meaningful to them.

In his sixth year, Paul spoke of his growing involvement in LGBTQ activism, and the importance of addressing issues of this kind in the school context. The following year, he also talked about the need to discuss openly issues of economic advantage and disadvantage.

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8. Teaching Life Skills (iv): Environmental Awareness

Environmental concerns were prominent among the real-world and way of life matters dealt with by the teachers, especially in social studies and science. For example, Kelly (cohort 2) reported in her fifth year:

I like the idea of teaching around themes, categories that are broad so teachers can select what is applicable to the lives of their students. I don't think we should ever resort to a standardized, day-by-day script. Like a theme I've been emphasizing a lot over the past couple of years is pollution in our lakes and water systems and how ads are used to cover up that sort of thing.

Similarly, Carrie in her seventh year spoke about how she integrates discussion of environmental issues into her middle-school science classes. "As part of a water unit in science, we looked at the news about the floods out West. And we asked things like: Why is this happening? What's the impact? To what extent are we responsible for it?"

Discussion and Conclusions

In what follows, we outline some of the general principles and practical implications we think are suggested by the ideas and practices of the teachers in our study, along with the other sources mentioned.

1. It is possible to teach for relevance and values development, while also giving students a solid "general education." Many commentators on the 2012 PISA (OECD) results maintain that recent attempts to teach for meaning and relevance have backfired. Problem-based methods, they say, have actually undermined student learning and teachers must return to more traditional content and pedagogy. But while we share the concern about inadequate learning of "the basics," we disagree with the analysis and proposed solution.

The practices of many teachers in our study and the literature on pedagogy (e.g., Grant & Gradwell, 2010; Parker et al., 2013) provide examples of students acquiring real-world knowledge and life skills while *also* learning "basic" academic content and skills. And this should not surprise us. On the one hand, teaching for relevance and values development can increase student engagement and hence their learning. And on the other, teaching content and skills is required for relevant and useful learning: such learning needs a solid knowledge base. Learning content and skill can suffer when teachers use problem based methods they don't understand and haven't mastered; but this points to shortcomings in teacher learning (both pre-service and in-service), not in problem based methods as such.

2. Teachers are already teaching for relevance and values development, but need encouragement and support to go further in this direction. Our longitudinal study suggests that over time (in the first 8 years at least) most teachers substantially increase the relevance and everyday applicability of their teaching. And again this should not come as a surprise. The great majority of teachers go into the profession because they like interacting with young people, want to help them, and "love seeing the light-bulb go on" (as they often say) when a student gets a key insight. Moreover, teachers have to "live" with their students for ten months of the year, and so

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have great incentive to make learning interesting and effective: it reduces behaviour problems and improves the classroom atmosphere. We're puzzled when critics question whether teachers really want to improve and suggest they should be forced to do so through external sanctions.

However, it is important to acknowledge the need to increase still further teaching for relevance and growth in values. As in any profession there is room for improvement, and students today are often rather bored with school and detached from their learning; and understandably so, because much of it isn't very relevant or useful to them, in the short or long term. While we were very impressed with our study participants' practice, we felt that in some areas (e.g., politics, class issues, life goals) there could have been even more exploration of real-world and way of life matters. To some extent this will come with time. However, it's also likely they are still under the influence of their own "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) as students in a "coverage" approach to learning at school and university. This approach needs to be questioned more forcefully in initial teacher preparation and continuing PD. And teachers need to be supported by the system in their already promising efforts at teaching for relevance and values development, rather than being pressured to focus mainly on curriculum coverage and raising test scores.

3. Teaching for relevance and values development is very complex, and requires in-depth treatment in ITE and continuing PD. Our study of teachers indicates that teaching for relevance and values learning is an ambitious undertaking. It involves integrating the curriculum around themes, using and teaching about digital technology, and fostering critical thinking. It requires helping students develop social skills, occupation-related skills, and skills and insights needed to fine-tune their way of life. And it necessitates substantial exploration of areas such as inclusion and equity and environmental awareness.

In initial teacher education, we do quite a good job of introducing teacher candidates to all these elements *in theory*. However, our instruction tends to be lacking in two respects: we often don't indicate (or model) how to do these things *in practice*, and we don't explain how to integrate all these elements in a *feasible* approach to teaching. In continuing PD, on the other hand, we tend to focus on just a few specific items (partly because formal PD opportunities are so limited), and our concern is largely with implementing system initiatives rather than building on teachers' emerging ideas and practices. Once again, not enough is done to help teachers develop a comprehensive, integrated, feasible teaching approach. As a result, teachers are left largely on their own in figuring out how to teach for relevance and values development. They do a remarkable job, given the pressures they're under; but more is needed.

4. Several key players are involved in increasing teaching for relevance and values development. (i) *Initial teacher educators* have a chance to lay the foundation of a pedagogy for relevance and values learning that is effective, works for teachers, and adequately satisfies system demands. However, this means *they* have to figure out and model such a pedagogy (in dialogue with teacher candidates), and this in turn requires more coordination among instructors than is common. In particular, subject specialists must be heavily involved in this exploration. Teachers spend virtually all day teaching one or more academic subjects, and unless they learn how to pursue relevance and values teaching in that context, the broader ideals ITE tends to emphasize will largely fall by the wayside.

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(ii) *PD providers* have the advantage that teachers are already in their regular role and starting to hone a pedagogy attuned to students' needs and interests. Accordingly, they can concentrate on helping teachers fine-tune their pedagogy, learning from them, responding to their concerns, and looking for ways to nudge them further. While they obviously must attend to system mandates, they should mainly work to maximize support of teachers in their ongoing professional inquiry and development.

(iii) *The school principal* is another key agent in the mix. The teachers in our study emphasized the extent to which their principal either reinforced a coverage pedagogy or, alternatively, encouraged (or at least allowed) more innovative approaches. The principal was also crucial in the success or otherwise of efforts at teacher leadership and teacher collaboration within the school. While principals today have many pressures and dilemmas, we would encourage them – along with PD providers – to look for ways to move in the direction of supporting teachers in pursuit of a pedagogy for relevance and values learning.

Finally, (iv) *teachers themselves* should be thinking about the issues discussed in this paper. They should be proud of how much they are already doing to make learning relevant and valuable in everyday terms, as indicated by our study. However, they should plan to go even further in this direction, for their students' sake and to make their own professional experience more enriching and enjoyable.

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Conference Proceeding

Post-practicum Reflection on the Complexities of Classroom Life

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Abstract

The OISE ITE program structure allows for reflection by student teachers after each practicum. Such reflection can promote better integration between theory and practice in teaching curriculum as we recognize the need for adaptive expertise: one of the key insights into teaching and learning noted in significant research (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). As a framework for structured reflection my curriculum classes have been using Doyle's (1986) six complexities of classroom life affecting teacher decision-making: multidimensionality, simultaneity, immediacy, unpredictability, publicness, and history. By reflecting on how these complexities affected events from their first practicum placement experiences, my student teachers gained a realistic framework for making teaching and curricular decisions for both their in-faculty class work and their second practicum experiences, after which they can more easily look at the role of adaptive expertise and other teaching and learning insights. This paper briefly describes each of Doyle's complexities and contains examples of teacher candidates' reflections of how each complexity explains their experiences in the field.

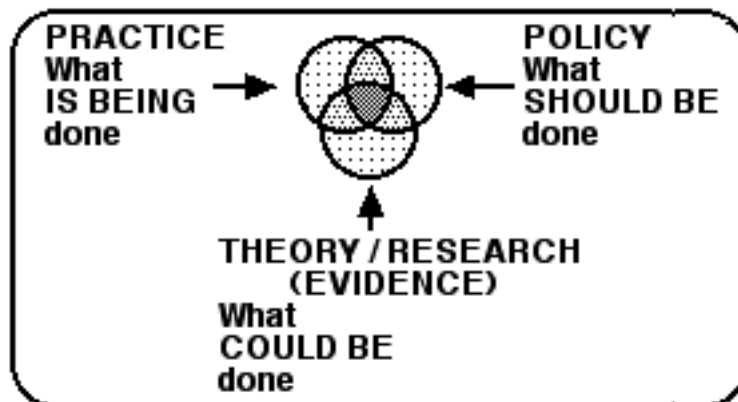
This inquiry is important because it serves to bridge the theory-practice divide that is too often a source of complaints about teacher education programs.

Classroom Realities

There are always tensions among

- what policy-makers suggest or mandate,
- how such mandates are interpreted by teachers, schools, and school districts,
- how teachers and policy-makers pay attention to or ignore the findings of research into teaching and learning

These can be represented thus (Myers, 2006).



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The model is dynamic in that these borders are always shifting with changes in practice, shifts in policy (and policy interpretation), and new evidence from research. The challenge is for better alignment among these components.

We never get full alignment. There are always tensions. Why is this so?

In *Inside the Black Box* (1998), Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam noted that although learning is driven by what happens *in* classrooms, teachers get little direct help with this task. Instead, classrooms are treated as “black boxes”. Inputs from the outside—students, teachers, textbooks, rules and requirements, parental anxieties, standards, high-stakes tests, new curriculum, etc.—are fed into the box. In the end, things like knowledgeable and competent students, better test results, and more satisfied teachers are supposed to come out. As Black and William point out, “it seems strange, even unfair, to leave the most difficult piece ... to teachers. If there are ways in which policy makers and others can give direct help and support to the everyday classroom task of achieving better learning, then surely these ways ought to be pursued vigorously” (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 139).

Recently John Hattie has stated that the goal of such support to improve teaching and student achievement is to help teachers SEE learning through the eyes of the students and students to SEE themselves as their own teachers (Hattie and Yates 2014; Hattie, 2009, 2012).

In a teacher education program we are supposed to help our teacher candidates make sense of all this when school and school districts struggle. How can we do this?

The OISE Initial Teacher education’s current structure in its consecutive program allows for reflection by student teachers after each practicum. Such reflection can promote better integration between theory and practice to teaching curriculum as we recognize the need for adaptive expertise: one of the key insights into teaching and learning noted in significant research (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). As a framework for structured reflection my curriculum classes have been using Walter Doyle’s (1986) six complexities of classroom life affecting teacher decision-making. By reflecting on how these complexities affected events from their first practicum placement experiences, my student teachers gained a realistic framework for making teaching and curricular decisions for both their in-faculty class work and their second practicum experiences, after which they can more easily look at the role of adaptive expertise and other teaching and learning insights. This paper outlines Doyle’s complexities with accounts of each of these in action by teacher candidates. It concludes by presenting an event from the author’s teaching and challenges the reader to discern the complexities at play.

Classrooms Are Complex!

While using a classroom management “lens”, Doyle offers six facets of classroom life that can shape and reshape even the best-planned lessons. The following descriptions are adapted from Doyle (*op.cit.* 304-395)*. The description of each complexity is followed by one or more accounts by teacher candidates of how the complexity played out in their practicum experiences. References to specific schools are omitted and student names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

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Multidimensionality: Many things happen in classrooms at many levels. A classroom is a crowded place in which many people with different preferences and abilities must use existing resources to accomplish a broad range of academic, social, and personal outcomes. Many events must be planned and orchestrated to meet special interests of members and changing circumstances throughout the year. Records must be kept, schedules met, supplies organized and stored, and student work collected and evaluated. In addition, a single event can have multiple consequences: waiting a few extra moments for a student to answer a question can affect that student's motivation to learn as well as the pace of the lesson and the attention of other students in the class. Choices, therefore, are never simple. One example: taking attendance while students are doing a minds-on task to begin a lesson and adjusting to latecomers.

Here is one account of multidimensionality in action by a teacher candidate during a first practicum.

I knew that teachers do much more than actually transmit knowledge.... I was amazed at the amount of time teachers spent OUTSIDE of the classroom in their various school roles. In addition to the standard ones such as cafeteria/hallway/bus duty, on-calls which may happen twice a week, multiple walks to the attendance office to drop off/pick up attendance sheets and verifications, and visits to the library/resource room, teachers spend enormous amounts of time doing the following: coaching, leading extra-curricular activities, remedial help after school, planning and preparing graduation ceremonies, talking to parents on the phone, ordering pizza and/or other refreshments for school activities, planning school trips, talking to Special Education teachers about specific students, talking to Guidance to help students, negotiating with other teachers for books and/or other resources, booking library time/computer lab/dvd/vcr, putting marks in, working on school/student council, working on special events, volunteering supervision at school dances etc. I am sure I've missed a lot of those "extras" that do not occur in the classroom. They are however, just as important a part of a teacher's day. Multidimensionality? Yes

Another account saw teachers "Juggling with Fire".

It is true; teachers need to be good jugglers. No, we are not working for the circus but we are constantly thrown different items, problems, questions, requests, and other tangible/non-tangible items that we need to be able to handle in the midst of our lessons.

Simultaneity: The many things that happen in a classroom may happen at the same time. While helping an individual student during seatwork, a teacher monitors the rest of the class, acknowledges other requests for assistance, handles interruptions, and keeps track of time. During a discussion, a teacher must listen to student answers, watch other students for signs of comprehension or confusion, formulate the next question, and scan the class to make sure all students are paying attention. At the same time, the teacher must monitor the pace of the discussion, the sequence of selecting students to answer, the relevance and quality of answers, and the logical development of content. When the class is divided into small groups, the number of simultaneous events increases, and the teacher must monitor and regulate several different activities at once. Here is an account of simultaneity in action.

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During my practicum ... I found it difficult, especially during the ENG2D1 (applied) class, to monitor the entire class instead of focusing on a small group or individual. This happened to me often and usually occurred when I am trying to help a single student with their essay or a question. I then immediately lose track of the other students and they will often begin to talk to one another. I accommodated for this problem by making sure I was leaning in a way that still allowed me to have a fairly expansive vantage point despite being in close proximity to the student I am helping. This way, I can easily call out disruptive students which signaled to the others that I was still paying attention.

Similarly, I found myself picking a student over others when answering my questions, because I hoped to encourage him to participate and feel involved in class. I would mistakenly choose him above the others because he told me personally that he struggled to speak in class because of his stutter. As a result, he often caught my attention in class, which caused me to give inadequate attention towards the rest of the class. In order to avoid doing this, I began positioning myself in different parts of the classroom during my lectures and walking in between rows to make sure that everyone felt I was being attentive to all of them equally.

Immediacy: In addition to the many levels of action in a class happening simultaneously, the pace is very rapid. Elementary teachers may make more than 1000 exchanges with individual students in a single day and secondary teachers interact with as many as 150-225 individual students in a single day. Skillful teachers learn to “work the room” (Koncoski-Bates and Vermette, 2004) since order in classrooms depends in part upon maintaining momentum and a flow of classroom events. In most instances, therefore, teachers have little leisure time to reflect before acting.

*I saw occurrences of all six complexities everyday in this class and often all at the same time. However, I felt immediacy and how fast I acted to certain things made me realize how important teachers are in facilitating education and breaking ignorance. I often found myself asking why students would say such ignorant things but I came to a realization that they may not know otherwise. During one particular incident, I handed out a worksheet and reflection sheet based on the classroom’s discussions of WW2 and Hitler from the novel *The Book Thief*. The handout was based on discrimination and genocides. This class would constantly be talking and many things were happening all at once when I had a student say “Miss, I do not need to do this because I am light skin.” Most students heard this comment and the class fell in silence. I had to immediately act because though this student might have been joking, I had to assume that he did not know that his comment was racist, even though he was of mixed race. I also had to act immediately because most of the class was of colour and very multicultural and they might have taken offence to that and a fight might have broken out. I decided to stop the class and discuss skin colour, racism and the idea that lighter skin colour does not equate success nor the right for exclusion of work. Assuming that students are not joking and acting fast when hearing racist comments is a very important thing to do for classroom management but also enables teachers to infuse equity into their teaching.*

Unpredictability: Classroom events can take unexpected turns. Distractions and interruptions are frequent. In addition; events are jointly produced with students even in teacher-directed, full-frontal lectures since student reaction and response help make such classes successful. Thus it is

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often difficult to anticipate how an activity will go on a particular day with a particular group of students.

Over the years I have done this exercise, unpredictability was the complexity most frequently referred to in post practicum reflections after the first experiences in classrooms in the teacher role**. Here are some examples.

Throughout my practicum ... I found the complexity of unpredictability came up a lot in my classrooms. I was teaching an ENG2D and an ENG3U class and though I would lesson plan and attempt to predict what my classes would look like, there would often be that element of surprise that comes from student responses or reactions. For example, in my ENG3U class I was teaching Macbeth. I decided to have an intro lesson to introduce the play before students got into reading it. I asked students discussion questions related to the theme of the play and had them move around the room in response to them. I thought this would be a short activity with only 10 questions on my sheet, but it quickly turned into half of the class time. It was actually great though. Instead of the students just responding with a agree or disagree to the questions I asked, they had lots of opinions and things to say which made for a lively discussion. I had other things planned for the Macbeth intro, but I realized this engaged discussion was a much better way to have the students really explore the themes of the play, and they might remember them more because of the amount of time we spent on this portion of the introduction. In this way, I found unpredictability to lend both some stress because things did not go "according to plan" but also excitement because the students showed me which part of my lesson they were really engaged in and I could just run with it. Similar things happened throughout my practicum, where some parts would go better or worse and the student reactions and responses would help me guide the classroom in the moment of teaching.

As Teacher Candidates, we attend classes at OISE that promise us that if we come prepared to our classrooms with carefully planned lessons and all the necessary supplies, we will stand in front of our students looking and acting like seasoned professionals. However, my experiences during practicum taught me quickly that no matter how prepared I was for class each day, some days nothing in my lesson plan would work, and this was due to many unpredictable outside factors that really taught me to roll with the punches. For instance, attendance was a huge issue for both of my classes. My grade 12 Writer's Craft class in particular featured a range of four to ten students each day, many of whom arrived only once a week and so had missed all of the previous information I had taught some of the other students. Since this unpredictable attendance was a daily occurrence - a predictable unpredictability, perhaps - many of my carefully planned lessons fell flat because I never knew what kinds of activities to implement each day, and sometimes the same activity would work well on one day but terribly the next. For example, one day the class might have a fabulous discussion about a poem we read, but the next day, when I planned a similar type of discussion for a short story, all of the "chatty" students were away and the students who were present had been away all week, and no discussion took place because I was too busy trying to catch up these students, who were the "quiet" types who were unable to participate in discussion anyway. Through practicum, I learned that having a back-up plan - or two, or three - really helps in instances where certain things, such as student attendance, are somewhat out of the teacher's control.

Post-practicum Reflection on the Complexities of Classroom Life

The facet of classroom life that affected my classrooms and field experience the most was likely unpredictability. I taught three visual arts classes, grade 9 visual art, grade 11 applied design, and grade 12 university art. I found it very difficult to gauge how long each art assignment I designed would take students not only to complete, but also to understand. For my grade 9's I designed a unit on colour theory with a culminating project that I thought was of considerable difficulty. Much to my amazement, almost every student in the class immediately understood the culminating assignment and did it in half the time I had allotted for it. On the flip side, what I thought was a fairly simple design project (that I had originally allotted three days for) easily took the grade 11 students a week--after several times having it explained. I learned that as a beginner teacher, you have to allow a level of flexibility to your lessons in order to accommodate for your students' varied and unpredictable needs.

Yet what was more, I found the very nature of my practicum school was unpredictable, as I'm sure it is in most secondary schools. Although staff members at the school may have been aware of the constant changes in daily procedure, as a student teacher, I wasn't made aware of most (if any), which made everyday unpredictable for me. On one day I was about to deliver what was likely my best art history lesson to my grade 12's, only to find that less than half the class was present. The school had organized several university presentations in the same period of the same day. Similarly, periods would be cut short or extended to almost two hours without my knowledge. As a teacher, this taught me to be quicker on my feet than I had been, and taught me that as a teacher, you need a great deal of flexibility and capability in adapting to previously-unknown changes that greatly effect your classroom environment

Following this account the teacher candidate concluded

*Burnt overhead projector bulb + fire alarm + shortened schedule + broken down photocopier + common cold + darn geography trip + latecomers + coffee-spilt lesson plan + "I'm bored, Ms./Sir" + non-functioning DVD controller + no working whiteboard markers + report cards =
A whole lot of patience, imagination, and a coat hanger smile.
For everything else there's Mastercard.*

History

Refers to the fact that classes meet for five days a week for several months and thus accumulate a common set of experiences, routines, and norms which provide a foundation for conducting activities. Early meetings—that first week or even first class—can shape events for the rest of the term or year and routines and norms are established for behaviour. A class is also affected by seasonal variations, periodic absences, the addition of new members, and the broad cycle of the year. Thus, planning for a single event must take into account the broader context of the class's history.

Multiply a class' history by the individual histories of each student and the sorts of backgrounds, experiences, abilities, learning styles, skills, and moods each may bring, and it adds to the unpredictability of it all.

My appreciation for the history facet of classroom life came about through one student in particular. On my observation day, this student was caught cheating on his test by my AT. The

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whole situation was an awkward one as my AT had made a big scene out of it in front everyone else. This event had noticeably shaken the student but it wasn't until later in the week that I would see the extent of it. A few days later, the class marks were passed around in class and the student in question was on the verge of failing. To make matters worst, he already seemed to be in a sombre mood that week because of the test and this was the straw that broke the camel's back. After class, I decided to approach him to offer some support and as soon as I said those words, he broke down in tears uncontrollably. It took about 20 minutes for the student that calm down and begin to express his feelings. He mentioned to us that he was very anxious about tests and that he was even more nervous about bringing his report card home to his dad. It was later revealed that this student takes care of his family every night while his parents are out working in the evenings. The moral of the story is that we should as teachers, be extra cautious of the way we approach our students while making an effort to learn about their individual histories. Each student brings his/her own history to the classroom environment whereas our awareness of this facet is essential in better accommodating the student learning experience.

There was one exceptional event that really affected me during my practicum in regards to "classroom histories". I noticed one student named "Brendan" in my grade 9 Academic English class who frequently came to class without his homework assignments finished. When I asked my associate teacher about him, he said that he had been having problems all year completing his assignments. My associate had him coming to the history office at lunch to complete the assignments to get caught up since reminding him to do his homework hadn't worked. A few weeks into the practicum, my associate came to me with news that Brendan had told him. Apparently, Brendan's parents had divorced and his father now lived a few hours away and Brendan only saw him on weekends. Although this didn't entirely explain Brendan's homework problems, it definitely explained the difficulty Brendan had on weekends when he traveled a good distance to visit and spend two quality days with his father – the only two days he had a week. My associate and I agreed that this was having a considerable impact on his ability to do homework on the weekend. We agreed that a positive thing to do was to be sure that we didn't give heavy homework assignments on the weekend and, if that was unavoidable, to understand if Brendan didn't have it on Monday. Also, it was unreasonable for us to expect him to complete his make up assignments on the weekend, on top of his other homework.

In this case, the student's family history had a direct and real impact on a student's ability to perform in the classroom and complete homework assignments. Teachers must always consider the impact that life out of school, especially family life, has on student learning in the classroom.

The next account illustrate's how a class's history can be shaped.

During my practicum, History was the most significant of the dilemmas of policy, research, and practice. My experience teaching overseas has convinced me of the importance of routine in classrooms. Students learn what to expect from the teacher and in turn, the teacher can learn much about students as individuals and their relationships with each other. The early days of teaching a class are also precedent-setting as classroom norms are established. Students learn what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and interaction with each other and the teacher. During practicum, the student teacher is parachuted into foreign territory, with little or no knowledge of local terrain and customs. Associate teachers will have their own classroom

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culture, including expectations and rules, or alternatively an absence of these things. Entering the class as a student teacher half-way through the first term is a real challenge because one must attempt to create a workable, if temporary, classroom culture that is compatible with their teaching style and personality. This is particularly challenging because the student teacher must be sensitive to local custom, remaining mindful of the Associate Teacher's regular presence in the class through the rest of the year. There is no easy solution but a student teacher must listen, watch, and wait while formulating a plan. If the student teacher wishes to achieve even a modicum of success they must implement their plan while utilizing patience and dynamism, in order to evaluate their successes and adapt as needed.

Publicness: All of the above happen in the open as classrooms are public places and that events, especially those involving the teacher, are often witnessed by a large portion of students. "Teachers act in fishbowls; each child normally can see how the others are treated." (Lortie, 1975). If a teacher either fails to notice that a student is violating a rule or actually reprimands an innocent bystander, the entire class learns important information about the management skills of the teacher. In addition, the audience for a disruption may actively encourage participants to continue or may join in once a disruption starts and thus magnify the effect of misbehavior. The following account notes how the use of technology can affect the publicness of events.

The "publicness" of my role as a teacher became readily apparent the early on in my practicum when I had to set up the audio-visual (A/V) components of my lesson. I was teaching Othello, for a Grade 11 English class, and this particular lesson was going to be very A/V-heavy. We were going to listen to an audio-recording of a particular Act of the play, and we were also going to watch part of the 1995 film version of Othello. While I had used the A/V equipment in the class before, my Associate Teacher (AT) had always set everything up. On this particular day, my AT was sick, and a supply teacher was in. Consequently, I had to set up the A/V equipment on my own, as well as locate the correct CDs and video. It was a bit of a disaster, as the CD was not where I thought it would be, the sound wouldn't sync up, and after getting the class settled, I wasted about 15 minutes of class trying to get everything organized. I had not thought of an alternative activity for the students to do, as I was so immersed in my unsuccessful attempt at tech support. My exasperation was very clear and very "public" for the students to see. Going forward, I will be much more conscious of the "publicness" of my role, and if I 'm stumped will try to be quicker at thinking on my feet to find something for the students to do. Also, I will make sure that I have all A/V questions sorted out the day before my class.

Conclusion

As plans for an extended teacher preparation program come into play I strongly suggest that it be structured so that teacher candidates have the opportunity to reflect on their practice. Reflections should clearly link theory to practice in a way that those new to the profession (as well as veterans) can recognize.

Doyle's complexities of classroom life are a concrete approach to do this as my teacher candidates have attested.

My practicum experience, though not in History, but my other teachable-English- taught me how

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the six dynamics explored in our reader can affect the teaching experience. I learnt most of all how lesson plans, like the best-made plans of mice and men, can often go awry & how the exigencies of the classroom force quick thinking and adaption.

Speaking of best-made plans, here is an event from the author's experience in a grade 11 class in a portable away of the main building. Which of the complexities explored and outlined in this paper come into play?

In the middle of a class I was introducing a topic in Greek history when "Jake" became visibly agitated. Normally a very quiet student he began to shake in his seat. Earlier in the year my vice-principal had told me that Jake had suffered from epilepsy. I was early in my school career (in the days before the internet and Google) and had no prior experience with the condition. Still I did a little inquiry into the condition—just in case.

Jake started to foam at the mouth and then fell out of his seat. I rushed to him and put my hands behind his head to cushion the shaking so that he would not injure himself banging his head on the floor. With a free hand I checked his breathing to make sure he did not swallow his tongue and block the air passage. Once I was sure that his breathing was fine, I informed the class, in as calm a voice as I could muster what was happening. I asked one student to go to the main office to get the vice principal (a former phys. ehd. teacher) to come. Jake stopped shaking and just lay on the floor, his head in my hands as I explained further the nature of epileptic seizures and that things would be fine. In a minute the vice-principal had arrived and Jake was starting to come around. We got him to his feet and he was escorted from the class. I took much of the rest of the class discussing epilepsy and even noted some famous people in history who may had this condition including Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great.

Next day Jake was back in class with no signs he had ever had a seizure. He did not have one for the rest of the time in my course.

* While Doyle's descriptions of the complexities of classroom life are syntheses of many studies (*op. cit.*) I presented the assignment in as simple yet accurate a format as possible given the stage my student teachers were in the program.

** Darling-Hammond and Bransford (*op. cit.*) have also noted that among the challenges to new teachers are the need to learn that being a teacher is different from being a student and that "thinking" like a teacher does not mean that you will "do" like a teacher when you are in the middle of a class. Thus, teachers need to develop sound habits of mind in order to handle the complexities of classroom life.

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