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Exploring the Facilitation of Critical Consciousness With Preservice Teachers

By

Barbara Anne Pollard

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2017

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Exploring the Facilitation of Critical Consciousness with Preservice Teachers

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The study utilized grounded theory methods and methodology to explore how critical pedagogy, as practised by a small group of university education professors, shapes and influences the development of a critical consciousness (CC) among preservice teacher candidates. This study was prompted by the recognition that a limited number of empirical studies within the educational research literature examine the process and outcomes of socially just teaching and learning at the preservice level. The emerging grounded theory explains that facilitating CC among preservice teachers is a complex process that is mediated by pedagogical and institutional mechanisms. The institutional mechanisms of compressed time, limited opportunities for student agency, and lecture-based approaches to teaching were conveyed as having negative implications on developing a critical consciousness. However, there were “consciousness raising” learning experiences among the preservice teacher participants in this study when professors productively navigated these detrimental mechanisms by enacting legitimate forms of power and facilitating dialogical learning contexts. Navigating these mechanisms resulted in partially resisting the impact of the broader neoliberal contexts that shape day-to-day institutional practices.

DEDICATION

To my beloved children,
Addison and Gavin Pollard

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To my beloved family: Kevin, Addison, and Gavin; thank you for providing me with the continuous support and encouragement that was essential in completing this PhD journey. This endeavour would not have been possible without your love, patience, and understanding. I dedicate this milestone to you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A significant number of teacher educators in Ontario-based teacher education programs claim to utilize some form of social justice framework to guide their pedagogy (Solomon, Levine-Rasky, & Singer, 2003). However, what constitutes social justice pedagogy is often very unclear; as Kelly (2004) notes, “What educating for social justice means is not always, or even usually, self-evident” (p. 135).

Despite some confusion, there does seem to be a general consensus among scholars regarding the meaning of the term *social justice pedagogies*. Generally speaking, social justice pedagogies refer “to a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identity are produced within and among particular sets of social relations” (Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 1552). Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) describe the overarching goal of social justice pedagogy as helping students to “identify and analyze dehumanizing sociopolitical processes, reflect on their own position(s) in relation to these processes so as to consider the consequences of oppressive socialization in their lives, and think proactively about alternative action given this analysis” (p. 33). More specifically, social justice pedagogy helps students understand and take into account how significant structural factors in society—including racism, classism, sexism, and ableism—impede the fair distribution of economic, political, and social benefits and burdens. Social justice pedagogy also suggests that collective action by students and others is necessary to help overcome or at best neutralize these structural barriers.

There are various forms of social justice pedagogies. Perhaps the most widely known is critical pedagogy which, according to Chubbuck (2010), is also the most radical

teaching approach among the various socially just oriented pedagogies (Giroux, 1988a; Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 2007). Chubbuck (2010) suggests that this method of teaching is one of the most challenging because it prompts socially just teachers to examine the complex intersection and overlay of multiple systems of oppression and privilege, with the aim of actively working toward social change. For instance, Chubbuck (2010) emphasizes that educators practising critical pedagogy aim to

Recognize the need to look beyond the school context and transform any structures that perpetuate injustice at the societal level as well . . . provide curriculum and instruction that challenge all the students to envision themselves as active citizens with the power to transform unjust structures. (p. 199)

One of the key goals of critical pedagogy is to facilitate the development of skills and knowledges that are thought necessary for students to be able to *critically* assess and evaluate inequitable educational and societal structures and practices (Giroux, 1988a; McLaren, 2007). When students have developed such skill sets and understandings, it is proposed that they have acquired a *critical consciousness* (CC) necessary to begin agitating for societal transformation, and both individual and group forms of emancipation and liberation (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 2007). In other words, once students have started to become critically conscious, critical pedagogues hope that these students

will collectively organize and actively work to transform societal structures and counter practices that unjustly exploit and marginalize historically disadvantaged populations.

The key goal of critically assessing and evaluating the social contexts that influence our lives is not unique to the territory of critical pedagogy. The history of Western thinking and Western educational systems takes as antecedents many thinkers who have shaped the critical thinking terrain. For example, critical thinking is deeply

rooted in the “Euro-western paradigm for rational thought. The roots of this paradigm can be traced all the way back to the great systematic philosophers of ancient Greece: Plato, his teacher, Socrates; and his student, Aristotle” (Thayer-Bacon, 2000, p. 17). Socratic problem-posing methods were developed long before Freire’s time and were often used in educational settings to help individuals “draw out” or release an internal critical knowledge that resides deep within the individual (Davis, Sumara, Luce-Kapler, 2000). Following this line of critical thinking, “Marx, and later neo-Marxists, bring attention to the effect that social class has on people and that we cannot speak about people in general terms and ignore their social class” (Thayer-Bacon, 2000, p. 19). It is these early philosophers, among others, who have firstly knit the conception of critical thinking into the culture of education.

Building on the ideas of the aforementioned philosophers, the specific notion of CC was developed by Paulo Freire in his work to help Brazilian peasants become aware of the political and social patterns that created and maintained their oppression (Adams & Bell, 2016, p. 16). For Freire, CC meant working in solidarity with others to question, analyze, and challenge oppressive conditions (Freire, 1974). The goal of CC is to develop awareness of the social and political factors that create inequity, analyze the patterns that sustain oppression, and to take action to work democratically with others to reimagine and remake the world in the best interests of all.

The current systems of oppression and discriminatory practices will be difficult to overcome if individuals fail to consider carefully the broader neoliberal ideology and its attendant practices that have shaped and continue to shape and define the role of citizen in dehumanizing ways (Armstrong, 2010; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Sears, 2003). Giroux

(2004) emphasizes that the neoliberal concept of *hyper*-individualism has restricted the notion of citizenship to the constant pursuit of productivity and consumption within the context of hyper-competition. Moreover, shaped by the neoliberal agenda, the educational system in Ontario and elsewhere has also narrowly defined the idea of what it means to be a citizen by emphasizing policy and practices that position hyper-individualism as natural and normative (Armstrong, 2010; Giroux, 2012; McLaren, 2009; Sears, 2003). Consequently, as teachers and students internalize the dominant ideology of hyper-individualism, and its affiliated ideology of meritocracy and hyper-competition, they will likely neglect to unpack the structural inequities of race, class, and gender, among others (Castro, 2010).

In an attempt to counter the project of neoliberalism and establish a much more robust understanding of democracy and the collective good, Giroux (1992) argues that educators must provide “the conditions that will allow students (and others) to reconceptualise themselves as citizens and develop a sense of what it means to fight for important social and political issues that affect their lives, bodies, and society” (p. 31). Critical pedagogy and the facilitation of CC serves this very purpose as it makes the “political more pedagogical” by prompting “agents to enunciate, act, and reflect on themselves, their relations to others, and the wider social order” (Giroux, 2004, p. 499).

George Dei (2000), a proponent and practitioner of critical education, highlights the following theoretical underpinnings and practices: “Critical educational practices deal specifically with an understanding of, and resistance to hierarchies and systems of domination that permeate society and systematically exploit and control people” (p. 15). Dei’s emphasis on the politics of identity and difference is a frequently recurring theme

within the educational literature on critical pedagogy. Similar to Dei's perspective, the theoretically dense and often perplexing goals of critical pedagogy are clearly and frequently stated in the academic and educational research (see for example the work of Freire, 1973, 1974; Giroux, 1992, 2012; Janks, 2010; McLaren, 1989, 2015; Shor & Pari, 1999). However, research illustrating how the goals of critical pedagogy—especially the process of acquiring CC and developing a “language of critique”—are worked out and achieved in the real day-to-day preservice teacher classroom is limited (for a discussion on the lack of research in this area, see Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008, p. 433; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Solomon, Singer, Campbell, & Allen, 2011).

This doctoral research begins to address this gap by exploring the experiences of preservice teacher candidates who have been taught during their time at a Faculty of Education by one or more self-identified critical pedagogues. This study also takes into careful consideration preservice teacher candidates' experiences in other educational contexts in and outside the classroom. For instance, during the interview process the preservice teacher participants spoke about their experiences with the Professional Learning Series, Practicum Placements, and the Faculty of Education Social Justice Conference. The data revealed some key process-related themes to these experiences, and I explore these themes more closely in Chapter 4.

In order to deepen and broaden participant representation and voice, self-constructed digital reflections and digitally documented interviews were included in the data collection process. As a supplement to the written PhD dissertation, this study utilized the digital data medium to construct and feature a 12-minute educational documentary film that captures some of the study's key themes. The short educational

documentary was created in order to enhance the authenticity, accessibility, visibility, and comprehensibility of the research. The educational film includes the sorting and sifting, selecting, sequencing, and organizing of the raw data. Finally, the film needs to be understood as a supplement to the written dissertation.

The study's documentary film has the power to enrich and provide another layer within the research in that it will: (a) Provide visual and textual insights into the mediating factors affecting how critical pedagogical theory is worked out in everyday teaching practices and provide rich participant narratives communicating how it works to develop their own critical consciousness; (b) work to highlight the potential strengths, weaknesses, and contradictions, and perhaps reveal the complexity of critical pedagogy and its aim of developing CC in ways that traditional text cannot; and (c) possibly guide educational researchers to adopt new practices and approaches to research and dissemination of results. It is also important to note the educational documentary film mostly consists of insights that were communicated through formal interviews held with the researcher. Perhaps this was not how some of the participants would have preferred to share personal insights that revealed their critical consciousness. There may be better ways to document critical consciousness, and this documentary film may spark some discussions about new possibilities.

The study and its results are presented in both traditional text forms as well as through an education documentary film. Incorporating and using educational film as an aspect of qualitative research may be beneficial to a variety of educational stakeholders including teacher educators, preservice teacher candidates, faculty administrators, policy makers, and others for a number of compelling reasons. For example, once professors and

preservice teacher candidates are introduced to both written and visual research that documents student attitudes, they may be more inclined to explore and incorporate critical pedagogy practices and theory within their respective teaching and learning environments. In addition, all of the educational stakeholders mentioned may be more inclined to watch a film, especially if it is easily accessible online in clip format. Zollman and Fuller (1994) argue that educational films activate both visual and verbal channels, making them more engaging and memorable. The visual and verbal aspects of the film medium provide several paths of retrieval cues, which makes the information presented more likely to be remembered as compared to information absorbed by reading alone.

Faculty of Education administrators and policy makers may also benefit from both reading about and visually observing the results, particularly when reviewing practical avenues for designing and implementing equity-based curriculum guidelines within faculties of education. More specifically, the statements provided by students in the educational documentary film may be useful in helping instructors think more carefully and productively about how to use critical pedagogy instructional approaches across classroom and content areas within faculties of education. Preservice teacher candidates may also find the shared narratives both beneficial and interesting on two levels: They may (a) be able to relate to the experiences which may prompt them to reflect more deeply on their own critical learning experiences, and (b) consider, and potentially understand, the diverse perspectives of other preservice teacher candidates.

The following section describes the purpose of the study and the research questions, and provides a brief discussion of my own experiences with becoming critically conscious. Following this, I discuss neoliberalism in general and its impact on

Ontario's education system in order to contextualize the research. The discussion on neoliberalism is essential as it has been a powerful political, social, and economic force that has shaped our current educational landscape (Coulter, 2009; Giroux, 2004; Sears, 2003). Although neoliberalism certainly has its supporters (e.g., Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAQO], 1996; Staples, 2012), my research aims to disrupt the neoliberal influences on educational practices, part of which involves exploring the process of facilitating CC among preservice teacher candidates within the context of critical pedagogy. After discussing neoliberalism, I turn my attention to my theoretical framework and conclude this chapter with some important conceptual definitions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how critical pedagogy—as practised by a small group of university professors in a Faculty of Education committed to social justice—shapes and influences the possible development of CC in preservice teacher candidates. This study was prompted by the recognition that a limited number of empirical studies within the educational research literature examine the process and outcomes of socially just teaching and learning at the preservice level (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 433; Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Solomon et al., 2011). I argue that in understanding the educational experiences that facilitate the development of a critical consciousness, critical pedagogues and their students may be able to achieve this goal more effectively. Since “critical consciousness is the prerequisite for societal transformation, emancipation and liberation” (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 452), the importance of developing this state of thinking is difficult to overstate.

In light of the rise of neoliberalism and its contribution to the growing social and

economic inequities in Canada (Braedley & Luxton, 2010; Coulter, 2009; Fanelli & Thomas, 2011) and elsewhere, an emphasis on effective social justice teaching practices is needed. Neoliberal ideology (e.g., hyper-rugged individualism, hyper-competition, and meritocracy) and practices (e.g., privatization of public goods, deregulation of government intervention, and market-based system of operation) should be considered by students. Gaining these insights is especially important as the project of neoliberalism continues to powerfully shape educational contexts in ways that undermine efforts to help students adopt a more inclusive and robust version of citizenship (Cote & Allahar, 2007, 2011; see also Berg & Seeber, 2016). Rather, neoliberal ideology and practices work to produce a particular kind of student subjectivity, namely one that is “individualized, career driven” and hypercompetitive (Fraser & Lamble, 2015, p. 62), which has the capacity to narrow and flatten understandings of citizenship.

In an attempt to respond to neoliberal ideology and its negative impact on the lives of many Canadians, critical pedagogues illuminate the structural inequities and prompt students to critically examine how the broader powers may have shaped their life experiences and educational outcomes. Although not positioned as the ultimate teaching method, critical pedagogy may offer one of many ways to counter neoliberalism by emphasizing ideas of resistance, change, the power of collectivity, voice, and a deeper examination of fairness and social justice (Freire, 1985). To summarize, research that focuses on critical pedagogy’s aim of facilitating CC in students, which may then lead to achieving the goal of societal transformation (e.g., developing a society that operates from values of equity, fairness, and social justice), is a worthwhile and socially just endeavour.

Research Questions

The study set out to answer the following primary research question: How does critical pedagogy, as practised by a small group of teacher educators in a Faculty of Education, influence preservice teacher candidates' development of CC in a 1-year preservice program? It also sought to answer two subquestions:

1. When introduced to critical pedagogy, how do preservice teacher candidates understand the social structures (e.g., gender, race, and social class) that may have shaped their own identities and the identities of others?
2. How does critical pedagogy change, if at all, the preservice teacher candidates' view of what it means to teach for social justice?

My Positionality

My background, which influences my perspective, research, and writing, is that of a White, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual woman who is currently working through Ontario's higher education system. As such, I have experienced privileges afforded by factors such as class, race, sexuality, and physical ability; yet at the same time, being a woman and an immigrant from Poland and raised in a working-class community, I have also experienced forms of discrimination based on my gender and ethnicity and class. The interconnected and overlapping ways in which these complex factors have both helped and hindered my life were largely obscured prior to entering graduate school. It was only after entering graduate school that I began to develop a mature CC and acquire a "language of critique," which together helped me better understand how oppressive social relations work. For example, I have grown to understand the powerful ways in which White privilege (Case, 2013) can provide some

people such as myself with unearned privileges but at the same time function to oppress other groups. Anti-Black racism, for instance, still plays a significant role in negatively shaping the experiences of Black Canadians in the labour market and in schools through institutional racism, stereotyping, and streaming (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Fearon & Wald, 2011; Ontario Alliance of Black Educators, 2015; for a much earlier report on how race and racism shaped life for many individuals in Ontario, see Stephen Lewis's 1992 *Report on Race Relations in Ontario*). Of course, the residential schooling experiment is a prominent and powerful Canadian example of how systems of oppression and privilege function through the prism of Whiteness and racism to marginalize certain populations (see, for example, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; for a compelling and rich discussion on "the politics of ethnocide" as it relates to deaths and subjugation of thousands of aboriginal people in Western Canada by the White-colonial-settler project, see Daschuk, 2013).

My personal and professional interest for research and teaching for social justice originates from a personal history with both gender and class inequity. Over the course of my lifetime, I have negotiated and navigated structural oppressions of gender and class but have also witnessed certain individuals and groups harmed by these oppressive social systems. In having had the childhood experience of being a working-class, non-English speaking immigrant from Poland, and growing up in a working poor neighbourhood, yet still able to attain a teaching degree and later as a young adult, a teaching position with a local school board, I naively embraced the notion of unhindered social mobility and individualism. I thought we did indeed live in a full-fledged meritocracy. Hard work, grit, and pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps thinking, to a large measure, informed my

everyday thinking. This way of thinking rests on the belief of an open, meritocratic economic system that allows individuals to succeed if they work hard and, by extension, are deserving of their rewards. The myth of meritocracy puts forward the idea that “hard work and talent will always be rewarded by upward economic and social mobility” (Adams, Hopkins, & Shlasko, 2016, p. 218). On this view, then, individuals’ rights matter much more than groups’ rights. If individuals fail, it is simply their own fault. So, following this logic, if individuals don’t succeed, the full blame is on them. Although oppressive social systems often function to benefit many financially privileged class groups in countless ways, my consciousness has developed critically in a way that I now realize that for the majority of working class individuals and racialized populations, these internalized and accepted ideologies may be deeply problematic in living a life free of various forms of discrimination. To be sure, the amount of unearned power and privilege held by some groups and individuals (e.g., White, middle to upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied men) over others does not contribute to creating equitable social practices, nor educational systems, that provide all individuals with equal conditions or opportunities to live a life of dignity and a life that flourishes.

Throughout my graduate school journey, I have been able to reflect on some of the advantages that significantly shaped my academic life. First, I had the advantage of having two loving Polish parents who valued education and instilled that value in me. Therefore, I did have parental support and encouragement along with the opportunity to further pursue educational studies at the postsecondary level. Even though I feel blessed to have had this opportunity, I now realize how the social structure of gender along with the enactment of an appropriate gender identity (Butler, 1999) played an important part in

shaping my choices earlier in my academic life. By this, I mean that I unconsciously took on a highly gendered occupation: teaching elementary school. Studies consistently show that in general, women are more likely than men to choose teaching as a profession (O'Donnell, 1984; Reskin, 1993; see also Blount, 2000; Sargent, 2001). Growing up I simply did not see, for example, mechanical engineering, or becoming a medical doctor or a lawyer or a scientist as legitimate career options. But of course, this was true of many women of my generation or earlier generations (Harms & Clifford, 1989; Heap & Prentice, 1991; Prentice & Theobald, 1991; see also Acker, 1990). Similar to many men and women, patriarchal relations and dominant gender ideologies influenced my career choice (Johnson, 2007; Sargent, 2001). Perhaps a course grounded in feminist theory early in my schooling life would have been helpful in thinking about possible choices of occupations. But there is more than this to how prevailing ideologies shaped my life in general, and in particular my career as a teacher.

The prevailing ideologies shaped my professional life as an elementary school teacher over the years. My instructional methods and teaching philosophy, for example, were informed by dominant ideologies that promoted such values as competition, authoritarianism, and a form of hyper-individualism. Knowingly or not, I expressed my belief to students and others that we did indeed live in a full-fledged meritocracy whereby social mobility was possible and available equally to each and every one of my students if they worked hard enough. Reflecting a classist view of schooling, “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” was the advice I sometimes offered students who were struggling. This short, common, but powerful phrase simply asserts that any group or individual can rise up the social hierarchy if they try hard enough (Adams et al., 2016). Looking back over

the years I taught elementary school, I now see that I promoted these ideologies on a daily basis, explicitly and implicitly, in one form or another. It really wasn't until some years later that I recognized just how widespread and deeply problematic this particular attitude was, as it largely rationalized and justified social, political, and economic inequalities as "just" and "fair."

However, as I gradually came to understand in my very first Master of Education class, focusing solely on the idea of meritocracy, social mobility, and individualism, while being oblivious to the systemic inequities of race, class, ableism, and gender was counterproductive for myself as a teacher and for my students. I now understand that systemic barriers occur when apparently neutral institutional structures, policies, and practices exclude people or deny them equitable treatment. I also now better understand that, since students do not always start the "game of life" from the same starting line, the traditional concept of competition and working hard academically as the primary means to economic and social mobility may have different meanings and value for each student. Put another way, students in Ontario and elsewhere do not all have access to the same opportunities to succeed in school or have available to them the same number of legitimate choices that shape their life trajectory (Clanfield et al., 2014).

Some students must work much harder than others to overcome structural barriers such as race, class, and sexual identity in a way that others do not in order to gain access to various economic, political, and social opportunities such as postsecondary education (Clanfield et al., 2014; Curtis, 1992; Weis, 2008; Weis & Dolby, 2012; see also Sayer, 2005, for a discussion that highlights the ways working-class consciousness may impede postsecondary academic achievement for some students). These difficult issues should be considered carefully and understood by teachers (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006)

and brought into class discussions in thoughtful and critical ways. The message that is absorbed by some adults—including me for most of my life—is that if you work really hard, you can achieve whatever you set your mind to; only you can control your own destiny (see, for example, Carnegie, 1936/2010; Peale, 1952/2012; Rand, 1943, 1964). The close examination of this particular dominant belief within myself sparked my research interests in social inequities and eventually led me to critical pedagogy to promote social change.

My positionality, as mentioned earlier, influences my perspective, research, and writing. Let me briefly provide one final concrete example to illustrate my point. At the beginning of the study, I understood how factors such as gender and race may have shaped the interviewing process in complicated ways. Charmaz (2010), for example, notes that relative

Differences in power and status may be acted on and played out during an interview; powerful people may take charge during the interview in a way that turns the interview questions to address topics on their own terms, and control the timing, pace and length of the interview. (p. 27)

Charmaz (2010) mentions that men might view intensive interviews as “threatening because they occur within a one to one relationship, render control of interaction ambiguous, foster self-disclosure creating a heightened challenge to their masculinity claims” (p. 27). She notes that when the interviewer and participant are women, class, age, and/or race and ethnic differences may still influence how the interview proceeds (p. 28). Although, these issues did not surface in any explicit way that I was cognizant of, I still was aware at all times during the interview process of my positionality—that of a White, middle class, able-bodied, heterosexual woman who is currently working through the higher education system.

Background

Before elaborating on my theoretical perspective in the next section, I now provide some background and context to the study by highlighting the current political, cultural, and social context. In this study, I argue that critical pedagogy, and by extension its goal of facilitating CC among future teachers, has taken on new significance in light of neoliberal ideology and its attendant policies and practices. I begin this section with a brief description and definition of neoliberalism and then discuss neoliberal educational policy in Ontario.

What Is Neoliberalism?

Over the last three decades, neoliberalism has increasingly become the main form of governance in most western, industrialized countries around the world (Harvey, 2005). The basic tenets of neoliberalism are rooted in classical 18th and 19th century Liberalism as proposed by Scottish philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790), who is best known today for his 1776 work *An Inquiry Into The Nature and Causes Of The Wealth of Nations*. *The Wealth of Nations* is considered to be one of the first books written on economics, and Smith is often thought to be the first-promoter of classical liberalism, or unrestrained free-market capitalism (Chomsky, 1999, pp. 19-40). According to Smith (1776/1937), classical liberalism promotes an economic growth theory that advised policy makers and others to liberate markets from most types of government intervention. Although not often acknowledged by present day advocates of neoliberalism, Smith, in his earlier 1759 work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, did accept a limited amount of government intervention when it came to exploiting the wages paid to the poor. For instance, in terms of regulating wage scales and addressing the need to reduce poverty, Smith (1776/1937)

noted the following: “When the regulation, therefore, is in support of the workmen, it is always just and equitable; but it is sometimes otherwise, when in favor of the masters” (p. 195). Although Smith was compassionate toward the struggles of the poor (see for example, Smith, 1776/1937, pp. 110-111), his overall emphasis was placed on the notion that people should not have restrictions or limitations imposed on them by governments if they are to be free.

Smith’s ideas were adopted and developed by two influential mid-20th century scholars, Friedrich Hayek (1944) and Milton Friedman (1962). Hayek and Friedman were significant in shaping the policies and eventual practices of contemporary neoliberalism. Both thinkers built on Smith’s notion of free market expansion without government regulations by stressing that individual freedom and choice is maximized within the competitive context of fully unregulated capitalism. The cornerstone of Hayek’s and Friedman’s thinking was grounded in the notion that a fully unregulated capitalist society will increase wealth for all people, which in turn will allow all people to attain their desires and dreams. “A rising tide lifts all boats” is a well-worn way of stating this idea. Hayek, Friedman, and contemporary fellow travellers position this form of hyper-individualism as the ultimate human freedom (for a recent thoughtful critique of neoliberalism in the Canadian context see, Braedley & Luxton, 2010).

The academic literature describes neoliberalism as both a hegemonic ideology (see, for example, Apple, 2001; Connell, 2010; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Giroux, 2012) and a set of market principles that justify austere economic policies (see, for example, Chomsky, 1999; Braedley & Luxton, 2010; Sears, 2003). As explained by Dardot and Laval (2014) neoliberalism, as a hegemonic ideology, is about governing beings whose

subjectivity is compatible with the activity they are required to perform (e.g., compete in the free market and internalize the good entrepreneurial-spirited citizens who measure their value in terms of what they can produce on their own or in the workplace).

Therefore, various techniques are used to manufacture the “entrepreneurial or neoliberal subject” who will internalize the role of the economic actor guided by self-interest (Dardot & Laval, 2014, p. 119). The core of neoliberal hegemony is composed of a hyper-individualism that insists all human behaviour must be directed by individualistic, competitive, and self-centred goals (Braedley & Luxton, 2010; Chomsky, 1999; Connell, 2010; Dardot & Laval, 2014; for a discussion on selfishness as a virtue, see Rand, 1964).

It is difficult to overstate the extreme form of ideological individualism promoted by contemporary neoliberalism. Hyper-individualism prioritizes a form of free enterprise that justifies the freedom to pursue wealth and one’s desires at any cost (Braedley & Luxton, 2010; Hall, 2011). Neoliberalism stands against any form of government intervention including imposing regulations on various spheres or sectors. Consequently, economic success is positioned as a “do-it-yourself” project (Giroux, 1992; Porfilio & Carr, 2010; Sears, 2003). One can see how the neoliberal ideology of hyper-individualism coalesces with the formation of neoliberal economic policy in former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s statement delivered in a 1987 interview for *Women’s Own* magazine:

I think we’ve been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it’s the government’s job to cope with it: “I have a problem, I’ll get a grant.” “I’m homeless, the government must house me.” They’re casting their problem on society. And, you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It’s our duty to look after ourselves and then, also to look after our neighbour. (“Epitaph for the Eighties,” 1987, p. 10)

Thatcher's anti-socialist, anti-welfare state rhetoric is often cited in the academic literature that discusses neoliberalism (Giroux, 2012; Harvey, 2005; Sattler, 2012). Her prominence in the literature is attributed to the fact that she was one of the first key adopters (along with American president Ronald Reagan who served from 1981-1989), of neoliberal policies as a state leaders (Jenkins, 2007). Problematically, the neoliberal ideology of hyper-individualism, as seen in Thatcher's statement above, supports the idea that all individuals, regardless of their unjust and inequitable life circumstances, are free and have the choice to decide how they will live and how they will fend for themselves. Within this context, low status is understood as not only regrettable but deserved (de Botton, 2004, p. 67) and the idea of "choice" is simply ideological rhetoric. The emphasis on hyper-individualism both distracts our attention away from the unjust structural and systemic influences (e.g., racism, class inequity, and gender inequity) that powerfully shape our lives and significantly diminishes the collective responsibility for the welfare of our state.

Neoliberalism is also a set of economic principles that inform the current "austerity" neoliberal economic policies: Deep tax cuts for corporations, privatization, and the promotion of cutthroat hyper-competition have run alongside efforts to deregulate various sectors (Braedley & Luxton, 2010; Chomsky, 1999; Sears, 2003). In fact, the deregulating measures that were intended to free up markets, especially capital markets, "were among the earliest and most important neoliberal policies" (Connell, 2010, p. 23). Since the 1970s, national and international neoliberal driven policies either loosened or completely abolished government control and regulation of banking systems, currency exchange, and the movement of capital modes of production (Harvey, 2005). Chomsky

(1999) describes the neoliberal principles of maximizing free trade, privatization, the deregulation of various sectors including the financial sector, and the economic policy that follow, as creating a capitalist system with “the gloves off” (p. 9). In other words, “neoliberalism has created an era in which corporate forces are stronger, more aggressive, and face less organized opposition than ever before in their war against organized labour” (Chomsky, 1999, p. 12; for a detailed discussion on the impact neoliberalism has had on Canadian labour, see Camfield, 2011). The belief that the private sector can do anything better than the government has created a number of serious issues across Canada (e.g., for a discussion on neoliberalism, privatization, labour, and the contamination of fresh water in Ontario, see McCarthy & Prudham, 2004).

Neoliberal politicians and policy makers have maintained a sustained attack on organized labour and collective-bargaining rights. For example, inspired perhaps by a number of jurisdictions in the United States that have passed “Right To Work” laws (such as Texas, Virginia, Tennessee, South Dakota, South Carolina, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, and Michigan), former Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak contemplated in 2015 bringing in “Right to Work Legislation” if he was to be elected Ontario’s Premier (Keenan, 2012). Right-to-work legislation allows workers to choose whether or not they would contribute money to their collective association or union, which has the effect of rendering organized labour powerless. Moreover, the attack by neoliberals on organized labour has contributed to the growing economic inequities across western democracies by eliminating many permanent, well-paying full-time jobs with benefits and pensions (Camfield, 2011). This change, brought on by neoliberal economic policies has created a significant increase in “precarious

employment” in Ontario. The number of people in Ontario who are precariously employed has risen 50% since 1995, highlighting the way “good jobs” have been, and continue to be, eliminated from Ontario’s labour market at a fairly fast pace (PEPSO, 2013, p. 7).

Academics and social scientists (see, for example, the work of McMaster labour Professor Wayne Lewchuck, 2013) have adopted the term “precarity” to describe states of employment that do not have the security or benefits or pay enjoyed in more traditional employment relationships. To put differently, precarious work is best described as work that has low wages, lack of benefits including pension, lack of continuity, and possibly greater risk of injury and ill health (PEPSO, 2013). The “precarious employment relationships,” according to a February 2013 report produced by PEPSO—the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario research alliance, which includes McMaster University and the United Way of Toronto—titled “*It’s More Than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-Being*” are becoming “the new normal” for our workforce (p. 4).

Porfilio and Carr (2010) refer to the current neoliberal condition as “Times of the New Right.” The term *New Right* signals a radical departure from an older traditional conservatism in that it adopts a philosophy that reduces all life to the market. In this sense, neoliberalism has moved out of the economic sphere and into the cultural fabric of society as it has penetrated the way people think about themselves, the lives they Frontlines, and the choices they make (Braedley & Luxton, 2010). For example, the climate of political austerity has spurred turbo-charged government and public attacks on welfare, labour, and public services across Ontario (Basu, 2012). As the welfare state

declines and shrinks under the weight and force of neoliberal policies, working-class and working poor people have less access to resources that they once relied on to sustain themselves and their families (Coulter, 2009). Do citizens stand with the neoliberal belief that a free market will allocate goods and services to those who deserve them and keep them away from those who do not?

Critical pedagogues such as Giroux (2012) stress that the space for protests and struggles on behalf of anti-neoliberal proponents and minority groups may be increasingly limited, as the majority of individuals have accepted a neoliberal ideology. Consequently, people are likely to begin to believe much more now than in the past that failing to reach one's economic goals or to become completely self-sufficient is solely due to their own shortcomings (Connell, 2010; Hall, 2011; Porfilio & Carr, 2010; Sears, 2003).

Capitalist ideologues have constructed a competitive world where social relations revolve around the market model (Dardot & Laval, 2014). Within this competitive and individualistic market model context, wage-earning individuals compete with each other (rather than critically examining government deregulation and other neoliberal tactics) as they take on the role of an independent enterprise. In other words, economic success is the sole responsibility of the individual regardless of context and circumstance (Dardot & Laval, 2014). As critical pedagogues such as Giroux (2012) and McLaren (2007) emphasize, neoliberal ideology has legitimated neoliberal public policy, set the stage for national and global economic relations, and transformed society by reshaping individuals' subjectivity in a way that undermines any robust understanding of citizenship (Connell, 2010; Dardot & Laval, 2014). Neoliberal ideologies and practices have also become commonplace in educational contexts. It is this area that I discuss next.

Neoliberalism in Ontario

Over the last 25 years or so, Ontario's political and cultural landscape has been undergoing a capitalist restructuring guided by national and international neoliberal ideology, policy, and practices (Carpenter, Weber, & Schuguerensky, 2012; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2013). For example, from 1995 to 2003, the Mike Harris provincial Conservative government aggressively incorporated neoliberal principles and policies through increased privatization, asset sales, public-private contracts, cutbacks, user fees, tax cuts, deregulation and outsourcing (Basu, 2004; Coulter, 2009). The Conservative reform package was sold to the public using the slogan: A Common Sense Revolution (Sears, 2003). Overall, the Common Sense Revolution emphasized individual economic responsibility over redistributive policies, further tax reductions and subsequently, reduced government programs, deregulation, privatization, and entrepreneurship (Sears, 2003). Coulter (2009) argues that the provincial Conservative government's approach was justified to the public and implemented by using so-called commonsense rhetoric that stressed individual responsibility, hard work, "prudent" cost savings, market efficiency, and the need to make "tough choices" (p. 194). Here, we can see how neoliberal ideology, principles, and practices came together in the move toward capitalist restructuring.

Although the most aggressive in its advancing of a neoliberal agenda, the Conservatives have not been the only mainstream political party to do so. More recently, the Ontario Liberals endorsed neoliberal principles by further commodifying public services through increasing public-private partnerships funding arrangements (Coulter, 2009). This form of constricted public spending and expanded privatization gave

corporate powers greater control of previously run public sectors. While the Liberal government has often claimed its approach to governance differs from the hard neoliberal agenda pursued by the Conservatives, they both abide by neoliberal rules. For example, the Liberals have continued to privilege capitalist interests over the collective good, and continue to ensure corporate power has an undue influence in shaping public policy (Sattler, 2012). In fact, in 2013, Ontario's former premier Dalton McGuinty brought "austerity" measures (e.g., significantly reduced funding for public programs and lowered public sector employment) to Ontario that reflected an aggressive neoliberal ideology (Benzie, 2013, p. 1). In short, neoliberal principles have become the basis upon which most political parties proceed to make policy decisions. Likewise, neoliberal principles are also the basis from which educational policy and reform is constructed and implemented. I will now discuss the issue of neoliberal educational restructuring within the local context.

Neoliberalism in Ontario's Education System

Although stretching back at least to 1993 with the establishment of Ontario's Royal Commission on Learning (RCL), efforts to restructure education along neoliberal lines were most clearly signaled in 1995 when John Snobelen, then Cabinet Minister for Mike Harris's Progressive Conservative government (1995-2003), commented to senior bureaucrats about the need to create a "crisis" in education (Sattler, 2012, p. 2). Fuelled by a number of well-publicized reports that blamed schools for Canada's economic decline and their "obvious" failure to prepare students for the new knowledge-based economy, Snobelen sought to manufacture a crisis in education in order to spur large-scale neoliberal reform (Krueger, 1995; Morgan, 2006). The crisis in education that

Snobelen wanted to establish in the public imagination was based on the ideological construction that the public education system in Ontario was failing and inefficient. By establishing the idea that schools were failing in their task to educate Ontario's children and incapable of running efficiently, the "crisis in education" rhetoric provided the justification for the implementation of neoliberal educational reforms (Morgan, 2006).

Following the broader corporate trend of restructuring along "lean production lines" in order to increase "efficiency" and profitability (Sears, 2003), then Premier Mike Harris introduced a number of major educational bills. These included: *The Fewer School Boards Act* (Bill 104), in order to reduce the number of school boards from 129 to 72; *An Act to Create the Ontario College of Teachers* (Bill 31), to establish a self-regulating body for teachers; *The Education Quality Improvement Act* (Bill 160), to rework key aspects of education in Ontario; and *The Equity in Education Tax Credit Act* (Bill 45), which enabled parents to receive a tax credit if they sent their children to private schools (Reshef & Rastin, 2003). These are direct examples of how the Harris government pushed to centralize control over education and deskill and regulate the work of teachers and marginalize their unions, all of which aligned with capitalist restructuring and neoliberal strategies (Scherrer, 2005).

Margaret Thatcher's *Education Reform Act* of 1988 in the United Kingdom inspired Harris's Common Sense Revolution, which promoted a "back to the basics" ideology based on the idea that students need to get back to the basics, or the three Rs: Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic (Sattler, 2012). For neoliberals, liberal arts subjects such as drama, music, visual arts, and some of the social sciences such as geography have largely been considered to be "frill" subjects and therefore not worthy of support (Apple,

2003, 2004; Sears, 2003). A ‘frill’ subject is one that is assumed to take away time that may be better devoted to increasing skills in core, testable subjects such as math and language and science. This led to developing a mandated curriculum that prioritized math and science curriculums. This reform occurred as these specific knowledges were thought to create an assumed “culture of innovation” (Sears, 2003, p. 100).

The Harris reform movement also included implementing standardized testing and teacher accountability measures. Beginning in the late 1990s, the annual province-wide standardized testing administered by EQAO was initially conducted on Grade 3, 6, 9, and 10 students. McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) describe the standardized testing movement as a violent attack on students and stress that violence, defined as an “injury of distortion, infringement, or profanation” (p. 204) is enacted as the government distorts the actual value and meaning of test scores, infringes on precious class time and curriculum of study, and profanes the use of class time with rote learning and drilling for the test. These types of corporate educational strategies prioritize profit and efficiency over in-depth critical learning. McLaren and Kincheloe claim that schools and school districts are operating as “mini-corporations” with a “one-size-fits-all” model of curriculum and testing which is mandated by neoliberal bureaucrats who are removed from the learner’s environment and who aim to turn education into a marketable commodity (2007, p. 211).

The Ontario educational context also aligns with the corporate educational practices described by McLaren and Kincheloe (2007; see also Sattler, 2012; Sears, 2003). For instance, drawing on research within the Ontario context, Volante (2004) emphasizes that:

Faced with increasing pressure from politicians, school district personnel, administrators, and the public, some teachers have begun to employ test preparation practices that are clearly not in the best interest of children. These activities may include relentless drilling on test content, eliminating important curricular content not covered by the test, and providing interminably long practice sessions that incorporate actual items from these high-stakes standardized tests. (p. 692)

In addition, Burger and Krueger (2003) found that teaching to the test has a counterproductive effect on students. To elaborate, completing test-related worksheets, skill and drill activities, practice tests, and repetition of rote practices overemphasize basic-skills while de-emphasizing or altogether neglecting critical thinking and high-order thinking skills. Moreover, some Canadian research studies have also found that although some students' test scores do increase when they are taught to the test, their overall level of education and style of learning does not improve (Taylor & Tubianosa, 2001). Kohn (2000) claims that research has repeatedly shown that the amount of poverty in school communities, regardless of the teaching approach utilized in the classroom, accounts for the great majority of difference in tests scores from one area to the next. Critical opponents of standardized testing also emphasize that test scores should not be equated with the quality of teaching that occurs within schools, but rather, the interpretation of test scores should focus on socioeconomic status and the available resources within schools (Apple, 2001; Giroux, 2008; Kohn, 2000; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007).

Moreover, the decentering of the Arts and cultural studies curriculum, while simultaneously mandating a "back-to-the-basics" curriculum, which was, and remains, enforced by province-wide standardized testing and teacher accountability measures, supports the enactment of governmental lean production regimes (Sears, 2003). The decentering and the marginalization of the Arts in Ontario schools not only comes at the

expense of student learning in general, but also fails to prepare them to live a much more rich and engaging life (Li, 2016). Much like other industrialized nations around the world, Ontario's educational policy changes have ingrained the principles of so-called efficiency, cost savings, and prioritized profit over and above the development of critical thinking and meeting diverse student needs, and all of these directives align with capitalist restructuring (Apple, 2001; Mitchell, 2003; Sattler, 2012).

Not all educational stakeholders agree with the views of the aforementioned academics. Supporters of the current reforms position lean regime educational reforms as an essential and inevitable move in order to remain competitive with other global industrialized nations. Educational consultant and former Alberta Minister of Education Jim Dueck claims that standardized testing and accountability measures justifiably put pressure on teachers to do their jobs and do them well; he argues that "teaching to the test" is exactly what he would like to see more of (as cited in Staples, 2012). In addition, EQAO supporters and organizations such as the Fraser Institute claim that test scores and accountability measures ensure that teachers, schools, boards, and parents are doing everything in their means to improve academic outcomes from year to year (EQAO, 1996). Members of the Fraser Institute argue that strengths and weaknesses can be assessed, remediated, and tracked to help increase academic achievement. Overall, the arguments that favour standardized testing and accountability measures include the formal opportunity to compare educational outcomes on many levels (individual students, schools, districts, regions, provinces, and countries), assess the strengths and weaknesses of the educational systems, and evaluate which schools, districts, and regions are meeting goals (EQAO, 1996).

It is important to note that in 1995, the *For The Love of Learning: Report of the Royal Commission on Learning* document suggested that schools and teachers become more accountable to parents, as parents were beginning to question what their children were learning and how they were being assessed. These recommendations then prompted the formation of EQAO in 1996 and at that point, standardized testing emerged as a prevalent feature of educational systems across Canada (Volante, 2007). However, the RCL cautioned that system-wide testing should be intermittent, fair, and objective (RCL, 1995). The RCL also was very sceptical of any potential widespread, extensive, and expensive universal testing (RCL, 1995). From this angle, some form of testing does seem to be appropriate and beneficial; however, the critical question becomes to what extent should testing and accountability be prioritized and at what cost?

For decades, public schools have been promoted by some educators and other critics as the potential and ideal place for establishing intellectual and social development for all students, especially for those who are disadvantaged (Carpenter et al., 2012; Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992; McLaren, 1994). The first few paragraphs of Ontario's 1990 *Education Act* emphasize that education systems should provide both "the foundation of a prosperous, caring and civil society" as well as "students with the opportunity to realize their potential and to develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, caring citizens who contribute to their society" (Government of Ontario, 2016, section 01(1)-(2)). Furthermore, the *Education Act* highlights the priority of "enhancing student achievement and well-being, closing gaps in student achievement and maintaining confidence in the province's publicly funded system" (Government of Ontario, 2016, section 01(3)). In the view of these public school promoters, marginalized students who

have access to schools are positioned as having the opportunity to transcend their original oppressive circumstances.

However, as critical pedagogues (such as Apple, 2001; Giroux, 2012; Porfilio & Carr, 2010) and other researchers (such as Basu, 2004; Carpenter et al., 2012; Sattler, 2012) point out, the actual lived experiences of disadvantaged students in public schooling are far from emancipatory (see also Clanfield, 2014). The current ideologies and practices of education systems suppress opportunities that would foster the diverse skills and abilities of students by implementing narrowly focused standard curriculums and enforcing the internalization of this knowledge base by standard testing regimes (Carpenter et al., 2012). Educational policy founded on neoliberal principles prepares students for a world of inequality as they are categorized along a hierarchical system of grading and streaming (Curtis et al., 1992; Giroux, 2012).

Ontario's educational reforms have not lived up to their promise of job creation and equity across the school boards within Ontario (Basu, 2012). In light of the lack of job creation and equity within schools, examining and exploring issues of social inequity and its relationship to academic achievement is especially relevant to students and teachers living and working in working class communities such as Hamilton and Windsor, Ontario. Impacted by the ongoing process of deindustrialization and situated in a region with consistently high rates of unemployment, my home city of Windsor, for example, has been found to have the highest concentration of low-income individuals and families across all of Canada. In September 2013, Canada's *National Household Survey* released information to show that 40% of Windsorites are considered to be low income (Statistics Canada, 2011). Low-income individuals and families were classified as living

just below the poverty line with an income of around \$17,000 per year. Not surprisingly, over 40% of these low income Windsorites are visible minorities and immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2011), drawing attention to the intersection of race and class.

How will local educators respond to both the diverse learning needs of these students and the neoliberal context that has shaped their thinking, decision-making and pedagogical practices? Although certainly no panacea, socially just teaching practices, like critical pedagogy, may be a progressive path to not only deepening student engagement, but also in acknowledging and countering the neoliberal ideology that creates significant inequities. Critical pedagogy and its potential capacity to help develop CC in students may in fact have the ability to spark some form of societal transformation that would bring about a more socially just world (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1992; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Morrell, 2013; Porfilio & Carr, 2010).

Theoretical Frameworks

My doctoral research draws on critical theory (Apple, 2001; Giroux, 1992; Gramsci & Marzani, 1957; Marx, 1894/1985) for data analysis and theory building. From an ontological point of view, critical theory views human nature as operating in a world that is based on the struggle over and for power (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2012; Marx, 1894/1985; McLaren, 1994). The struggle over and for power leads to and can be seen in the social interactions that reveal the privileges and oppressions associated with an individual's or group's race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and physical ability. Critical theory is understood to be in a sense "critical" in that it not only functions to explain the current problems of the social world, but must also help "liberate" and "emancipate" human beings from social

structures that oppress them, providing some practical guidance. In this, critical theory is a particular kind of social theory aimed primarily at critiquing and changing society as a whole, in the way that brings forward a much more equitable and just world.

Critical theory directs research that examines how various systems of oppression within particular social structures utilize power and power relations to control and limit expressions of freedom (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 106). Researchers such as Darder (1991), who work within critical theoretical modes of inquiry promote the idea that the production of certain knowledges and their relation to power can change existing oppressive structures and minimize, or possibly remove, oppression through various forms of empowerment (see also Dei, 2000; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2012; McLaren, 1994). Within the critical theoretical paradigm, knowledge is also seen as socially constructed and therefore it is viewed as occurring in the individual knower (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Critical theory is useful in helping people in general and students in particular to uncover how systems of oppression such as class domination, racism, ableism, sexism, or heterosexism (Apple, 2001; Darder, 1991; Dei, 2000; Giroux, 1985; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007) intersect in complicated ways. In fact, Apple (2001) and Giroux (1988b) were among the first critical theorists who criticized the class-based neomarxist analysis of education within critical research communities. As Giroux (1988b) notes,

Studies have failed to come to grips with the notion of patriarchy as a mode of domination that cuts across various social sites as well as a mode of domination that mediates between men and women within and between different social-class formations. The point here, of course, is that domination is not singularly informed or exhausted by the logic of class oppression; nor does domination take a form that affects men and women in similar ways. Women, though in different degrees, experience dual forms of domination in both the home and workplace. How the dynamics of these get interconnected, reproduced and mediated in schools represents an important area of continuing research. (p. 104)

Giroux (1988) highlights the idea that an evolved neomarxist education analysis incorporates the concept of intersectionality that emphasizes the complex interaction of social class, race, and gender positioning. By adopting this approach, students may realize that not all people are oppressed in the same way, just as not all people are privileged in the same way. Weis (1983) has also argued that in order to understand societal relations or power, progressive neomarxist researchers should view class, race, and gender as parallel and overlapping forces that shape the dynamics of social life:

Ideological form is not reducible to class. Processes of gender, age, and race enter directly into the ideological moment. It is actually out of the articulation with, clash among, or contradictions among and within, say, class, race, and sex that ideologies are lived in one's day-to-day. (p. 24)

To further elaborate, drawing on the “parallel position” of McCarthy and Apple (1988, p. 121), although both draw a patriarchal dividend from simply being men, a young able-bodied, White middle-class man has greater access to various forms of privilege including Whiteness, ableism, patriarchy, and social class than does an older, differently abled Indigenous man. By identifying and analyzing how systems of oppression overlap and intersect, people can begin to explore how dominant ideologies oppress some individuals, while at the same time provide benefits and privileges to other groups. One way in which critical theory can be employed in educative ways is through the implementation and use of critical pedagogy in schools.

Although I will discuss it in more depth later in Chapter 2, critical pedagogy is a particular philosophy of education that is fundamentally informed by critical theory. Similar to critical theory, critical pedagogy views society as structured through relations of power and is particularly interested in questions of domination and subordination of particular populations. Drawing from the work of critical theorists, Paulo Freire is largely

considered to be the originator of critical pedagogy. Three of Freire's works—*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974), and his later book *Pedagogy of the Heart* (1997)—are considered foundational texts within the critical pedagogy movement. Key to the work of Freire, and those who would develop his thoughts much later, including Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Ira Shor, and Peter McLaren, is the necessity to help students develop a critical consciousness. For Freire, CC is understood to be an individual capacity to perceive and understand social, political, and economic oppressions. Once perception and understanding has been developed and the individual has experienced what Freire (1973) calls a “critical spirit,” students can work toward securing a more equitable and just world (p. 6).

Freirean-based pedagogies involve a close examination of society's hidden economies of power and privilege and how these forms of power and privilege shape and inform the lives and identities of students. All language, according to Freire, works to reproduce dominant forms of power relationships, yet at the same time brings with it opportunities and resources for critique. The critique provides opportunities for dismantling the oppressive power structures of the social order, and also for articulating a more transformative vision of the future. Freire argues educators and students need to understand the historical context, social practices, and cultural ideologies that give discourses shape and meaning. These forms of consideration and the development of CC is part of the ongoing reconstruction and reconstitution of various structural arrangements for the existing social order.

As previously mentioned, one of the main goals of critical pedagogy is the development of CC among students. I will now discuss the concept of CC in more depth.

Critical Consciousness

The term *critical consciousness* (CC) was introduced by Freire (1973) and is broadly defined as “The ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society” (p. 29). Freire (1973) emphasizes that it would be advantageous for oppressed people and groups to deeply understand the oppressive structures and societal practices that unjustly shape their lives (p. 12). More to the point, Freire urges that the oppressed must come to see themselves as oppressed. Freire proposes that educational institutions are the ideal space to facilitate students’ CC. Freire (1973) elaborates as follows:

The education our situation demands would enable men to discuss courageously the problems of their context -and to intervene in that context; it would warn men of the dangers of the time and offer them the confidence and the strength to confront those dangers instead of surrendering their sense of self through submission to the decisions of others. By predisposing men to reevaluate constantly, to analyze “findings,” to adopt scientific methods and processes, and to perceive themselves in dialectical relationship with their social reality, that education could help men to assume an increasingly critical attitude toward the world and so to transform it. (p. 13)

Freire’s vision, as described above, is firmly reflected in the overarching framework that connects self-identified critical pedagogues. The overall assertion made by critical pedagogues is that if schools were to successfully engage in critical pedagogy, the process of developing CC would be started. Once a CC is in the process of developing, the oppressive realities experienced by oppressed people and groups could be transformed into more socially just and democratic realities (Apple, 1988; Beck, 2005; Darder, 1991; Freire, 1973; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Muspratt, Luke, & Freebody, 1997; Porfilio & Carr, 2010).

In order to maintain a reasonable scope and depth in this study, I have operationalized the idea of CC by drawing on Chubbuck’s (2010) framework for studying

and understanding how preservice teacher candidates engage in socially just teaching pedagogy. This framework highlights two predominant preservice teacher candidates' views: structural orientations and individual orientations. Chubbuck has shown that socially just teaching practices are differentially implicated when preservice teacher candidates draw on either of these lenses, or a combination of both. I argue that Freire's (1973) concept of CC aligns with Chubbuck's concept of a structural orientation. Both Freire (1973) and Chubbuck emphasize that, ideally, teachers should be able to deeply understand the systemic and structural forces that may, and often do, significantly influence life trajectories. When exploring the main research question, I utilized Chubbuck's general framework as a starting point to classify various levels of critical consciousness.

Conclusion

Although they have very real material consequences on the lives of historically marginalized populations, systemic structures and oppressive systems of power are conceptual and abstract sociological concepts that are often difficult to grasp. Nonetheless, becoming critically aware of systemic and structural inequity and understanding how dominant ideologies contribute to reproducing social inequity is a pivotal point in the learning curve that coincides with critical consciousness. Developing a structural lens is part and parcel of gaining a deep level of criticality. In order to begin to operationalize the concept of critical consciousness, this study draw on Chubbuck's (2010) research on preservice teacher candidates and their perceptions of socially just teaching practices. Chubbuck (2010) provides a framework for recognizing individual oriented versus structural oriented teaching within the realm of teaching for social justice of which will be explained in Chapter 2 more thoroughly.

Overall, my research explores how critical pedagogy, as practised by critical pedagogy education teachers situated in the Faculty of Education, influences preservice teacher candidates' conceptions of socially just teaching practices. This study makes the assumption that preservice teacher candidates' conceptualizations of socially just teaching and attitudes toward it are linked to their level of critical consciousness. As a product of the finished dissertation, I have also created a short documentary featuring some of the key themes that emerged from the data. However, throughout the data collection process, the data were strictly treated as data. In other words, the data, while being constructed and submitted, were meant to capture the participants' critical learning experiences and not treated as a documentary-making task. This main focus at hand, documenting critical learning experiences, was emphasized to the participants in the study. However, the participants were fully informed and aware that their digital data reflections may be incorporated into a short 12-minute documentary film that features the main themes found in the research. The participants also had the option to conduct traditional interviews.

In this study, I argue that digital reflection methods capture and represent the studied phenomena in different and perhaps more complex ways when compared to traditional word-based methods, for some of the participants (Wagner, 2006). Firstly, the self-made digital reflections constructed by participants offered the researcher ideas and experiences that cannot be restated or translated into linguistic terms (Schwartz, 2009). When sharing the co-constructed theoretical results of this study, it was necessary to include the digital footage that represented key emergent themes. This line of reasoning positions the voice, visual representation, and experiences of the participants as both front and centre and provides a richer context for analysis and re-analysis.

In addition, when responding to explicit, although open-ended research questions (e.g., What does CC mean to you?), digitally self-made reflections enabled the participants to create narratives that convey what they wanted to communicate, the manner in which they wanted to communicate, and to also choose when and where to document these narratives (Holliday, 2007; Wagner, 2006). Traditional interviews and focus groups do not extend this opportunity. Also, the digital reflections could have been edited before submitting and this may have offered the participants a greater degree of control and reflection time as compared to other methods (Holliday, 2007; Prosser, 2007). In keeping in line with the aims of critical pedagogy and its theme of educational emancipation, I have designed this study to minimize the hierarchical power relationships that generally exist between the researcher and the participants. The self-made digital reflections are also justified in the context of this study as they enabled the participants to directly co-construct the emerging research themes, attempted to give participants autonomy in terms of when, where, and how they responded to the research questions, and may have provided participants with an opportunity to deeply self-reflect on their own learning processes, world views, and identities (Holliday, 2007).

These are some of the justifications for utilizing self-made digital reflections within the context of studying preservice teacher candidates' level of CC when immersed in critical pedagogy focused classrooms. There were also some problematic issues when using self-made digital data and the Ethics section of this proposal covers the following key issues: Clearing University Ethical Review Boards and addressing anonymity and confidentiality in the context of disseminating participant self-made digital data reflections (Prosser, 2007).

I now turn to discussing some of the major concepts used in this study. This section will better set the parameters for the meaning associated with the terms used within the context of critical theory, although, the description of each concept is not meant to be all-inclusive, absolute, nor universally definitive.

Some Key Concepts

Critical Consciousness

Briefly, CC is a complex educational process of learning and focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world that in turn allows for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions (Freire, 1974; McLaren, 2009). As Leonard and McLaren (2002) emphasize,

Freire refers to this group's thought as critical transitivity to suggest the dynamism between critical thought and critical action. Here, the individual sees herself or himself making the changes needed. A critically transitive thinker feels empowered to think and to act on the conditions around her or him, and relates those conditions to the larger contexts of power in society. (p. 31)

CC exists when individuals think "holistically and critically about their conditions" leading to "the highest development of thought and action" (Leonard & McLaren, 2002, p. 31).

Colour-Blindness

Within the context of anti-racism theory and practice, acknowledging and addressing the problematic and seemingly ubiquitous act of colour-blindness is of major significance (Castro, 2010). Colour-blindness is a form of racist ideology that functions to allow individuals to claim not to "see" race or ethnicity. Individuals who adopt a colour-blind approach claim to disregard race, culture, and ethnicity. They often resort to individual discourse (e.g., rigidly viewing people as individuals who are responsible for their own failures and successes), which "invalidates the structural racism experienced by an individual of color" (DiAngelo, 2010. p. 12). Generally, "society, especially dominant

white society, engage in colorblindness when they deny, resist or argue against the idea that being a member of a racialized social group often results in systemic disadvantages, prejudice and discrimination” (DiAngelo, 2010, p. 6). A colour-blind approach protects and reproduces the privilege and power held by Whites, as the racism embedded in economic, political, social, and cultural structures which “perpetuates an unequal distribution of privileges, resources, and power from people of color to whites, is denied.” The “consistent and predictable patterns related to life outcomes, based on the racial group society assigns to people, show that white people continue to hold a significant advantage while people of color are relegated to the bottom” (DiAngelo, 2010, p. 6). Colour-blindness does not acknowledge these facts. “To be clear, race is not about difference, but rather it is about the meaning that society assigns to that difference that is discriminatory, unjust and leads to inequality of condition and opportunity” (DiAngelo, 2010, p. 13).

Oppression

Barker (2003) defines oppression as

The social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that they may be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited and deprived of privileges by the individual or group which has more power. (p. 273)

According to Mullaly (2007), social oppression occurs when one social group exploits another for its own benefit. This exploitation may be unconscious or intentional. Mullaly (2007) emphasizes that social oppression should be considered “as a type of second-class citizenship that is assigned to people, not on the basis of lack of merit or failure, but because of their membership in a particular group or category of people” (p. 285). Within

the context of social justice, Mullaly (2010) emphasizes that overcoming oppression must be a priority when working towards social equality. Both considering oppression and working towards the aims of social equality are two key complex, ongoing, and fluid themes within the broader social justice paradigm. The process of acknowledging oppression seems especially critical as Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) point out that oppressive states, formed via many societal historical and contemporary mechanisms (e.g., privileged groups continue to hold power in most institutional organizations), are often internalized and rationalized by both the oppressor and the oppressed. Consequently, dominant and oppressed groups often accept their positions as normative and their domination by the privileged group is often invisible, especially to the dominant group (Freire, 1973).

Emancipation

Emancipation for the purpose of this study means, the full humanization of the individual, or in other words, the “quest for human completion” (Freire, 1970, p. 47). This form of liberation occurs when the individual or group is able to come to a “state of self-realization” (Freire 1970, p. 137), which can facilitate the “capacity for free conscious activity” (Freire, 1970, p. 127). Individuals can be emancipated to some degree if they are successfully engaged with emancipatory knowledge (Habermas, 1984). Emancipatory knowledge helps us to understand how social relationships are distorted and manipulated by relations of power and privilege. In other words, Freire (1970) and Habermas (1984), and even earlier scholars such as Marx (1894/1985), highlighted the idea that disadvantaged individuals and communities would benefit, and would likely live freer lives (move towards emancipation), if they had acquired a critical understanding of

the structural forces that shape and influence their lives in counterproductive ways. Marx (1894/1985) and Freire (1970) focused their efforts on class oppression and privilege, whereas Habermas (1984) spoke broadly about how social, political and cultural ideology shape ways of being and knowing. Freire's (1985) later work evolved to include understanding the oppression experienced by various non-dominant minority groups such as racial minorities and women.

Dominant Ideology

Drawing from the critical theory tradition, this study understands the term *dominant ideology* to mean the method by which the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the ruling class are adopted by the majority of people in a particular society as a form of social control. Dominant ideologies are the ideologies produced and promoted by those in power and inevitably structure a population's perceptions of what comes to be understood and be accepted as normative, or, the societal status quo (MacLaren, 2009). From a critical viewpoint, dominant ideologies are also understood to be tools that serve to legitimate and justify social and economic inequality as an important social process in the reproduction of stratification.

Transformation

Transformation, in the context of critical pedagogy, requires a shift in the collective consciousness of a society so that reality is refined by consensus (Freire, 1973). This may occur by external stimulus and sometimes intentionally. Societal transformations occur when the newly held values and attitudes are sustained over time and new societal norms are created and internalized (Freire, 1973).

Power

Foucault (1977) offers a valuable understanding of power as he presents us with theoretical views that illuminate how power on an everyday, moment-by-moment basis is *exercised* (not possessed) through a variety of institutions, including the government. The truth regimes imposed by government and other elite and powerful stakeholders, influence and shape the social practices of day-to-day discourse. Furthermore, Foucault (1977) discusses how power is exercised through a form of self-regulation that he calls the political technology of the body. To briefly elaborate, the body is viewed, as being directly involved in the political field and consequently, it cannot escape the power relations therein. Within these power relations, “bodies are invested in, marked, trained, tortured, forced to carry out tasks, perform ceremonies, and emit signs” (Foucault, 1977, p. 25). It is important to note that power, in Foucault’s view, is exercised on the body and is discontinuous, fluid, dynamic, and in constant tension.

Social Justice

Drawing from an equity framework, social justice is both a practice and an ideology that emphasizes that all individuals and groups should have equal access to the opportunities and goods that are needed to realize their potential and Frontlines fulfilling lives (Chubbuck, 2010). Social justice initiatives respond to unjust circumstances in which the previously mentioned essential human rights are limited or denied with no recourse to rule, law, or commonly held societal values (Chubbuck, 2010). This access may be limited by an individual or group due to a characteristic such as race, class, gender, disability and/or sexual orientation (Chubbuck, 2010).

In order to better contextualize the contested concept of social justice for this

particular PhD dissertation research, I appeal to the work of Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012), as these scholars elaborate on the principles of critical social justice pedagogy. Within this social justice paradigm, emphasis is placed on the importance of continually cultivating a critical self-awareness of one's social position within the broader societal hierarchy of power and privilege. The four main principles of critical social justice pedagogy are as follows: (a) Recognize how relations of unequal social power are constantly being negotiated at both the micro (individual) and macro (structural) levels, (b) understand our own positions within these relations of unequal power, (c) think critically about knowledge, and (d) act on the above in service of a more just society (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 145). Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) argue that teachers and teacher educators alike would be more inclined to work toward achieving social justice if they were able to reflect more deeply on the roles they may play in reproducing the status quo of inequitable social relations.

Teaching for Social Justice

In its attempt to address issues of equity, socially just teaching practices include curriculum, pedagogies, teacher dispositions, and interactional styles that contribute to improving the learning conditions, opportunities, and learning outcomes for all students, including students who belong to groups that are typically underserved in the current educational context (Ladson-Billings, 1994). As emphasized by Chubbuck (2010), more controversial forms of social justice teaching include explicit attempts, by the teacher and sometimes by both the teacher and the students, to transform educational practices, policies, and curriculum that diminish student-learning opportunities. First, teachers and their students attempt to understand the structural inequities of schools and work to change these (McLaren, 1989). The most controversial form of teaching for social justice

emphasizes the need to expose and critically understand the broader societal structures that reproduce inequities on a societal level and then work toward transforming these larger structures (Chubbuck, 2010; Giroux, 2012). This form of social justice teaching overlaps with critical pedagogy as students are explicitly taught they have the power to challenge and help transform the larger societal structures that perpetuate inequity (Chubbuck, 2010; Giroux, 1992).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review considers research on critical pedagogy found in journal articles, books, and professional publications. In this review of the literature, I first identify and provide a description of critical pedagogy. This description includes an overview of the relationship between critical pedagogy and its capacity to develop CC in students. Second, I provide an analysis of the available research that focuses on exploring the process and outcomes of pedagogies that draw on social justice frameworks, within the context of preservice teacher education.

What Is Critical Pedagogy?

Critical pedagogy is best described as an educational approach where specific social, political, and economic struggles are given the space to surface. These struggles are usually specific to the context, students and available resources (Darder, 1991; Dei, 2000; Freire, 1973; Giroux, 2012; Janks, 2010; Porfilio & Carr, 2010). This teaching approach illuminates the ways in which knowledge, power, and experience are produced under specific historical conditions of learning (McLaren, 1994). By adopting a critical pedagogy approach students learn how “power mediates academic success, and how challenge and interrogation can interrupt the control of dominant society over education” (Egbo, 2009, p. 112). As Egbo (2009) puts it, “critical pedagogues advance the cause of social justice with the ultimate goal of exposing oppressive social structures, and empowering the marginalized in society” (p. 112). Kincheloe (2005) describes it this way:

Critical pedagogy is dedicated to resisting the harmful effects of dominant power. Advocates of critical pedagogy work to expose and contest oppressive forms of power as expressed in Socio economic class elitism, Eurocentric ways of viewing the world, Patriarchal oppression and Imperialism. . . . In

this context, white people must learn to listen to nonwhites and indigenous peoples criticism and end the cultural norms they have established and imposed on people in a lower socioeconomic class and non-European peoples. (p. 34)

Furthermore, this form of teaching and learning “emphasizes how dominant ideologies, modes of expression and directions of desire construct multiple and contradictory versions of self and how these multiple selves relate to the larger society” (McLaren, 2009, pp. 65-66). Giroux (2012) emphasizes that this kind of CC would result in the construction of critical agents that would make up the formative culture necessary for a democratic society. In order to work towards these goals, Giroux (2012) states that schools must be seen as sites of struggle where critical educators can open up possibilities of resistance while also connecting teaching to self and social change. This type of teaching approach stands in stark contrast to the transmission model of teaching that constructs a culture of conformity and the passive absorption of knowledge (Freire, 1973).

Critical pedagogy is founded on the premise that men and women are essentially un-free and born into a world that is filled with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege (Darder, 1991; Dei, 2000; Freire, 1973; Janks, 2010; McLaren, 2009).

However, these conditions are fluid as the social actor both creates and is created by the social universe of which he/she is part. Therefore, “critical pedagogy highlights the dialectical; problems such as racism and classism, among other existing social inequities, form an interactive context between the individual and society” (McLaren, 2009, p. 62).

Dialectical theoretical frameworks attempt to tease out the histories and relations of accepted meanings and appearances by examining the whole of society inward to the part (individual/group). This often provides the ability to understand both sides of a social contradiction. The dialectical nature of critical theory, which is foundational to critical

pedagogy, enables the educational researcher and/or educator to see the educational classroom not simply as a site for instruction, socialization, or even indoctrination, but also as the potential space to facilitate student empowerment, self-transformation, and societal transformation (McLaren, 1994). Likewise, the critical educator acknowledges and understands that there are many sides to a problem and that frequently these multiple sides are linked to specific class, race, and gender positions (Giroux & McLaren, 1994).

Drawing on the work of Habermas (1984), critical pedagogues such as Egbo (2009) emphasize that schools and their “various practices are inherently politically contested spaces where oppositional discourses are silenced” (pp. 112-113). In this context, critical pedagogues encourage students and others to think more closely about “commonsense” understandings that inform prevailing discourses in education. This includes challenging the contemporary emphasis that prioritizes technical knowledge, which can be measured and quantified (McLaren, 2009). This form of technical knowledge is based on an assumed “objective” type of scientific logic and empirical analytical methods. Technical knowledge is evaluated by measuring instruments such as IQ tests, reading tests, and standardized school testing and is often assumed to be “neutral.” This form of knowledge and evaluation enables educators and administrators to categorize and control students in a way that hides power dynamics and power relations. Consequently, students are socialized into the status quo of inequity, power, and privilege.

Critical pedagogues, however, are more interested in what Habermas (1984) refers to as emancipatory knowledge. Emancipatory knowledge overlaps with a type of practical knowledge that has the goal of enlightening individuals by describing and

analyzing social situations from a historical and development perspective. Ultimately, this kind of knowledge helps students to understand how relations of power and privilege manipulate social relationships and places them into a position where they can begin to take action. Thereafter, the hope is that students will grow into active political citizens who have the knowledge and skills to overcome oppressive conditions. Facilitating educational contexts that center emancipatory knowledge is one of the main methods used by critical pedagogues in order to achieve one of their primary goals, which is not only improving schooling outcomes for all students, but offering up possibilities for social transformation.

The Historical Roots of Critical Pedagogy

When viewing the world through a critical theoretical lens, knowledge, meaning, power, status, and material resources give rise to a struggle undertaken between unequal groups (Morgan, 1997). In other words, there is an explicit belief that there are dominant groups in society that are privileged within the context of struggle because they have maintained control and, to a certain measure, consent over the presiding cultural ideologies, customs, and institutional practices (Gramsci, 1971).

Some researchers (e.g., Giroux, 2012; Habermas, 1984; Held, 1980; McLaren, 2009; Porfilio & Carr, 2010) assert that the founder of critical theory was Karl Marx. According to Held (1980), the one thematic concept that Karl Marx frequently highlighted in his work, which is relevant to contemporary critical pedagogical practices and theory, was the following:

Marx emphasized that the objects of human perception are themselves the products of the self-generative and self-formative activity of the species. What we understand by nature or human species changes over time as both are actively

transformed. The process of knowing cannot be separated from historical being.
(p. 198)

Marx promoted the idea that history shapes the extent to which any individual acts to pursue their rational ends (Marx, 1894/1985). In other words, reality impinges on and constrains people, although this process is generally unquestioned and positioned as a taken-for-granted circumstance. Marx also points out that this circumstance can be altered (Held, 1980). He proposed that people can come to understand how society operates, realize that it has been constructed and produced by individuals, and that it is indeed open to the potential of transformation. The word and concept *transformation* is a staple within critical pedagogy and has been carried over from the work of Marx (Mayo, 1995). Marx urged that what is true of the existing social order does not need to be true of the one that follows (Held, 1980). Even more important, Marx argued that for a more just consciousness to exist, not only must consciousness grasp reality, but reality must be changed so that it no longer (through the reproduction of ideology) systematically distorts consciousness (Held, 1980).

Leonardo (2004), notes that critical theory was further developed in the 1920s and 1930s by the members of Frankfurt School. Although there were many revolving members, the key Frankfurt School players were Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jurgen Habermas (Leonardo, 2004). These theorists sought to develop a critical perspective in the discussion of all social practices. Critical theorists from the Frankfurt School retained some of the ideas of orthodox Marxism but also added conventional new approaches to social science. These critical theorists were both critical of capitalism and Soviet socialism and their writings pointed to the possibility of an alternative path for society to develop. Although there were some major philosophical

differences between each of these members, their views were unified in that they all placed history at the centre of their approach to philosophy and society (Leonardo, 2004). However, the issues they debated went beyond a focus on the past and embraced future possibilities. The goals of the Frankfurt School overlap with the contemporary transformational goals of critical pedagogy. For example, in the words of Held (1980):

Following Marx, these scholars were preoccupied, especially in their early work, with the forces which moved (and might be guided to move) society towards rational institutions—institutions which would ensure a true, free and just life. But they were aware of the many obstacles to radical change and sought to analyze and expose these. They were thus concerned both with interpretation and transformation. (p. 44)

Although Karl Marx and the Frankfurt School serve as the foundational theoretical pillars for critical pedagogy, it was through the work of Paulo Freire (1970/, 1973) that critical pedagogy came to education. Freire developed a revolutionary pedagogy that shared reading and writing with illiterate peasants. Freire's problem-solving approach was used during conversations to develop students' analytical power by using language as an aid to thinking (Freire, 1970/2000). Grounded in the aim of mutual respect, Freire (1970) was very careful to approach the students as equals and encouraged them to see for themselves the inequities by which they were surrounded. He wanted his students to reflect on these insights, debate them, and create further insights. In this dialectical manner, Freire's (1970) pedagogy had the potential to raise and develop his students' critical consciousness, which, in his view, was the first phase of transformational social change.

Mayo (1995) argues that Freire's pedagogical ideas and theories starkly contrast educational processes that are characterized by prescriptive systems and dominant ideologies. Freire (1985) thought that a prescriptive educational experience, which utilizes a banking approach to education, consolidates entrenched power relations and

therefore perpetuates existing oppressive social forms. It is important to note that although an entrenched and extensive banking style of education is oppressive, there may be some subject areas (e.g., Chemistry, Physics, and Math), and perhaps specific lessons within all subjects, that require teachers to “deposit knowledge into the minds of students, whose sole task is to file, organize, and store the information” (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009, p. 783). As such, the “teacher-as-expert” approach may be appropriate in some educational contexts (e.g., clinical sciences), however, subject “areas oriented towards addressing human and societal interests” require a “critical reflective awareness that incorporates the student’s values, worldview, and experiences” (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009, p. 783). To elaborate on this last point, Lankshear and McLaren (1993), while reflecting on Freire’s work, emphasize that critical literacy, which is a subset of critical pedagogy, is distinguished from functional and cultural literacy (e.g., a set standard of acquiring basic reading skills and writing skills in order to be able to function adequately in society) in that the former emancipate the oppressed by engaging them in a critical learning experience where they not only read the word, but also the world. Congruently, within a critical pedagogy learning context, students empower themselves to unveil and decode the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, and social practices in order to reveal their selective interests (McLaren, 1994).

Freire (1985) expands on Marxist theories as he emphasizes that “domination and oppression cannot be reduced to class domination” (p. 107). Although the notion of difference is a common theoretical thread throughout Freire’s work (with the obvious exception of gender in his early work), he does not support the idea that there is a universal form of oppression. Rather, Freire emphasizes that different social contexts

encompass different forms of suffering which are attributable to various kinds of domination (Freire, 1985). As a result, Freire (1985) stresses that we must acknowledge that there are many “equity seeking groups that each have their own diverse struggles and forms of collective resistance” (p. 107). Freire further developed Marxist ideas into a broader realm of struggle; he emphasized that society contains diverse and multiple social relations which each contain contradictions that provide the opportunity for social groups to struggle and organize themselves (Mayo, 1995).

However, Freire (1970) has pointed out that domination is more than the simple imposition of power by one social group over the other. The process of domination is historically contingent, continually socially constructed, and based on contemporary ideological and material practices that are always completely unsatisfactory and therefore contested within unequal relations of power. Freire promotes the idea that history making is never foreclosed and even though oppressed groups are limited by the specific constraints in which they find themselves, it is these limitations and constraints that set the stage for resistance, challenge, and change (Freire, 1985).

Freire’s (1970) work is often echoed in contemporary critical pedagogy, especially his emphasis on the idea that knowledge is a social construction deeply rooted in a nexus of power relations. For Freire (1985), and for critical pedagogy proponents such as Shor (1993), Giroux (1992), and Lankshear and McLaren (1993), schools and the education provided therein provide the ideal platform for creating change in the service of creating a new kind of society. Freire (1985), along with critical pedagogues such as Janks (2010) and Porfilio and Carr (2010) emphasize that educational systems constitute a terrain where power and politics are considered fundamental and are used to bring to

light the diverse struggles for a particular future and way of life. Critical pedagogy is meant to set the stage for critique and possibility.

In conclusion, contemporary critical pedagogues such as Giroux (2012), Porfilio and Carr (2010), and Janks (2010) emphasize the need to examine and bring forth issues of social injustice and inequalities. These critical pedagogues assert that unequal power relationships are legitimized and unquestioned and it is the powerful groups that generally decide what truths are to be privileged (Beck, 2005). As a result, government institutions such as schools support dominating ideologies and further perpetuate the status quo (Beck, 2005; see also Gramsci, 1971). More specifically, within schools, only certain forms of knowledge that usually serve in maintaining the status quo are legitimized, excluding groups that are unable to contribute to the process of the authentication of that knowledge. Beck (2005) suggests that contemporary critical pedagogy applies the tenets of critical social theory to the educational paradigm and then examines how schools reproduce inequality and justice.

In contemporary times, the constant tension within educational reforms seems to stem from the battles between liberals and conservatives, and more recently between the liberals and the far-right (McLaren, 1994). The centrist position, although an important one, has not played a dominant role in contemporary politics. Ideological opposition, rather than compromise, has become the norm. The critical issues and proposed revolutionary strategies of the left have never had the same power to change educational policy and reforms as the right (Apple, 2001). When the idea of a more socialist society is suggested or debated as being a potential alternative to capitalism, the right reacts with fierce opposition (Apple, 2001). As Porfilio and Carr (2010) have emphasized, given that

local and global corporate media conglomerates largely support right to far-right values, and are very eager to preserve the status quo of hyper-capitalism and strengthen the neoliberal agenda, citizens have been severely limited in considering alternatives to a neoliberal led state. This is precisely why critical pedagogy is so desirable among some scholars and educators in contemporary times. Critical pedagogy, and its critique of power, has the potential to foster the necessary skills of problem posing and deep critiquing, and thereafter enable students and teachers to gain and develop a form of “critical consciousness” necessary to counter the inequitable practices that may impact them. As Porfilio and Carr (2010) emphasize throughout their work, the institutional and ideological global crisis fueled by neoliberalism has created a space and time for popular movements to evolve. Critical pedagogy may be one of these movements. It can provide an effective teaching and learning approach for forming a collective critique of the economic project led by neoliberalism and has the potential to provide alternatives that will change and ultimately replace it with more just and equitable practices.

Preservice Teacher Candidates and Critical Consciousness

According to Scorza, Mirra, and Morrell (2013), critical pedagogy and its goal of facilitating CC has steadily gained the attention of some educators across North America over the last decade. Both K-12 educators and teacher educators have a significant amount of academic literature to draw on when it comes to the theoretical foundations and goals of critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and Joe Kincheloe have published numerous books and academic articles that conceptually describe and justify the need for critical pedagogy. These scholars have been pivotal in founding the academic critical pedagogy community and have been cited extensively in

the research. However, the generous provision of literature surrounding critical pedagogy has been mostly conceptual in nature. In other words, several scholars emphasize that there are very few empirical research studies that explore and report on the impact of critical pedagogy in practice (Cochran-Smith, 1995; see also Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 211; Scorza et al., 2013; Solomon et al., 2011; Zeichner, 1999). As described by Lowenstein (2009),

There has been a promising trend of teacher educators examining their own practices while teaching multicultural courses. However, systematic studies of teacher candidates' perceptions of their learning about issues of diversity continue to remain largely absent, and there is little dialogue centered on conceptions of White teacher candidates as learners in multicultural teacher education. (p. 164)

Consequently, it was difficult to draw on empirical studies and research based results that offer insight into how critical pedagogy is practised and how it impacts the students' development of a critical consciousness. Locating empirical studies that explore the process of critical pedagogy, and the development of CC among preservice teacher candidates within the Ontario context, then, became a daunting task. As a result, this part of the literature review features an exploration of empirical studies that explore preservice teacher candidates' views on cultural diversity and socially just oriented pedagogies. Overall, the intention is to illustrate how some preservice teacher candidates have responded to the various socially just oriented pedagogies as practised by their respective Faculty of Education professors.

I begin with Castro's (2010) meta-synthesis of peer-reviewed journals on preservice teacher candidates' views of cultural diversity and culturally responsive pedagogies from 1985 to 2007. He draws from 55 research articles mostly located within the American context but he also includes some Canadian and Australian studies. Castro has found that the majority of research that explores the process and outcome of

culturally responsive teaching pedagogies address the gaps and deficits in preservice teachers candidates' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences (2010, p. 198). White privilege and White ethnocentricity appeared as a common and persistent theme among these studies. The results across studies indicated that White-Anglo teachers failed to recognize the pervasiveness of inequity, held deficit views of minority students and had lowered expectations of them, and took a colour-blind approach to teaching culturally diverse students—despite efforts made by socially just oriented teacher educators.

The findings within Castro's (2010) study, as well as most of the studies discussed, represent mostly White, middle class, Anglo-American preservice teacher candidates. This is not surprising as "the majority of teachers within the United States are White, monolingual women and middle class" (Castro, 2010, p. 36; Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 103; Sleeter, 2001, p. 95). Similarly, White, middle-class women also make up the majority of teachers within the Canadian educational context and are situated in classrooms where "difference intersects in multiple ways" (Tilley & Taylor, 2013, p. 406). According to McCall (2005) "intersectionality" was first introduced by the feminist researcher Crenshaw (1989) and

comes into play as a proposal for a framework to deal with the complexity of multiple structures (such as gender, race, sexuality, class, age and disability, among others), on the understanding that these categories do not act independently but rather intersect and create specific oppressions. (Rodó-de-Zárate & Jorba, 2005, p.189)

One of Castros's (2010) key findings, which has also been found in a large-scale longitudinal study within the Canadian context (Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005), reports that, despite being immersed in pedagogies that were meant to increase preservice teacher candidates' sensitivity to issues of diversity and equity, this dominant group continued to lack complexity in understanding White privilege, cultural diversity,

systems of inequity, and the socially just goals of teaching in diverse contexts and inequity.

Solomon et al. (2005) found that preservice teacher candidates frequently adopt a colour-blind approach when working with children, claiming that they do not see race, just children (see also Dlamini, 2002). It is important here to point out that preservice educators are not overtly racist in the commonly understood meaning of the word, but often act in ways that continue social reproduction. In addition, preservice teacher candidates did not acknowledge or attempt to more deeply understand systemic racial discrimination and the invisible White power and privilege that sustain it. Solomon et al. (2005) document that, generally, preservice teacher candidates deny, resist, or do not make much effort at understanding how racism is embedded in schools and society and how this acts to privilege some groups and marginalizing others. This form of resistance was described as a “discourse of denial” that is embedded in “ideological incongruence; liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy; and negating White capital” (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 153). When having open class discussions about White privilege and prompted to deeply and critically examine the issue, many preservice teacher candidates became visibly angry and anxious. This fact seems to be true of university students in general. For instance, teaching on the topic of White privilege has been found to have “a negative impact on the careers of university professors when students evaluate teaching efforts and abilities” (Horowitz & Soeung, 2009, p. 574). Teaching anti-racism at the postsecondary level has been termed by some researchers as “the kiss of death” (Nast, 1999, p. 105). Seemingly regardless of the context, the equity related issues of White privilege and racism “are regarded as realities and sites of contention that would

best be addressed by ignoring it” (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 161). Overall, these researchers found that the emotional discomfort and colour-blind approach of White teachers prevented many of them to engage in meaningful anti-racism theory and educational practice.

These findings are relevant to this study as they suggest the need to further explore the process that preservice teacher candidates and teacher educators engage in when striving to achieve complex thinking (developing a structural and critical lens). Critical pedagogy, in theory, develops complex thinking that overlaps with, or contributes to, acquiring a level of CC (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2012). My intent as a researcher was to empirically explore this process as it unfolds in one Faculty of Education.

Brown (2004) provides some interesting insight into the process by identifying attitudes exhibited by three groups of preservice teacher candidates when immersed in a required multicultural course. Teacher education students were found to enter multicultural foundational courses in various stages of resistance (e.g., open-minded but still sceptical to hostile). From this point of entry and onward, preservice teacher candidates either progressed or regressed in their views on diversity and exited the course with unique worldviews and beliefs (Brown, 2004). The students with limited cross-cultural experiences were found to be either uninterested or, alternatively, inquisitive about other cultures. By contrast, students who had negative experiences and possessed negative beliefs about other cultures entered the multicultural course in a contentious or distressed emotional state. Brown described the *desired* exit level to be one where students accepted, valued, and respected diversity. It was suggested that this disposition would then Frontlines to a long-term maturing process in which relative multicultural

value judgments are continuously re-evaluated and modified. Some students were reported to reach the desired exit level while others remained locked in at their entry point. Although the study did not explicitly describe the teaching practices utilized, it did illuminate the teacher strategies that contributed to reaching the desired exit level:

“Opportunities to explore personal histories and value systems; develop an understanding, respect and value for other cultures; an expansion of their reference groups to include others not considered beforehand” (Brown, 2004, p. 328). The learning experiences that preservice teacher candidates had were linked to the socially just teaching practice utilized by their professors.

These findings highlight the dialogical nature of teaching that is promoted within the critical theoretical literature (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2012; McLaren, 1994). Moreover, the learning and teaching that occurs within preservice courses is highly dependent on how the critical pedagogy professor structures their teaching practice. The incommensurable nature of the studies reviewed and discussed is likely linked to varied teaching approaches, which are frequently not documented in the research. For example, Huerta, Horton, and Scott (2001) documented preservice teacher candidates’ views after taking several classes that were based on the foundational principles of critical pedagogy and found that most preservice teacher candidates felt lost in the abstract language being used during lecture-style lessons. The feeling of being lost was largely attributed to both the unsuccessful attempts in lecturing about the principles and goals of critical pedagogy and a lack of modeling critical pedagogy in action. However, the specifics of what the teacher educator did do while teaching was not described.

Apple (2000) also highlighted concerns with the overall ways that critical

pedagogy is delivered: “The discourse of critical pedagogy has become too theoretical, abstract, esoteric, and out of touch with the conflicts and struggle that teachers, students, and activists act on” (p. 247). Although specific descriptions of teacher educator practices were not described by Apple (2000), he nonetheless warned that teacher educators who use critical pedagogy may unintentionally exclude students from adopting the critical pedagogical teaching approach due to the criticism stated above.

Therefore, a critical question is, how does one know whether or not, and to what degree, the critically minded professors mentioned in the above studies, practised *effective* socially just pedagogy? Were these teacher educators aware of the problem of abstract language and the potential of students being “out of touch” with critical pedagogical theories and goals? Content (subject matter) and teaching methodology (the ways in which the subject is delivered) coalesce to construct a learning environment which will, in one way or another, affect the learning experiences of preservice teacher candidates. This study explored and connected the key critical pedagogical teaching approaches that shaped the developing CC of preservice teacher participants.

While the overall historical patterns, shown in the meta-analysis by Castro (2010) suggest that preservice teacher candidates lacked the ability to frame diversity and equity in complex ways, recent studies have nuanced this theme. For example, the degree of preservice teacher candidates’ tolerance, acceptance, and prejudice toward diverse cultures and socially just pedagogies has shifted according to some of the studies reviewed (Castro, 2010). For example, Castro (2010) reports that the studies conducted between 2000 to 2007 indicated that millennial preservice teacher candidates showed a greater acceptance toward socially just oriented pedagogies and cultural diversity, and an

increased willingness to advocate for marginalized groups (p. 203). Other researchers (Porfilio & Carr, 2010) also claim that the interconnectivity of the Internet, globalization, and increased exposure to demographic diversity has historically located millennial preservice teacher candidates in a time era that is more accepting and open-minded to issues of diversity and equity as compared to previous generations. However, these research results must be viewed cautiously. Although there has been some recent evidence of preservice teacher candidates having the ability to view diversity and inequity through a critical lens and to begin questioning dominant ideologies and the existing order of society, “a critical consciousness surrounding issues of privilege and inequity was lacking among most of the reviewed studies” (Castro, 2010, p. 206).

Gay and Kirkland (2003) argue that although the task is challenging, facilitating the development of CC among preservice teacher candidates should be a priority of teacher educators. These researchers provide some insight into the potential barriers that may prohibit preservice students from developing the complex thinking needed for critical consciousness. When prompted to critically reflect on issues of racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity, many of the preservice teacher candidates resisted by engaging in silence, diversion, guilt and appealing to liberal ideologies of individualism and meritocracy. These resistance strategies were documented to be successfully countered by explicitly explaining the learning expectation of criticalness, by modeling, by providing opportunities to develop CC through critical dialogue, and by transferring critical knowledge into possible K-12 teaching practices.

In regards to the significant role of teacher educators being orally explicit about the critical learning expectations, Gay and Kirkland (2003) emphasize:

In our classes students are informed from the very beginning that they are expected to “think deeply and analytically,” and to “check themselves” about the topics they are studying; to carefully examine their feelings about what they experience; and to work diligently at translating the knowledge they are learning into instructional possibilities for use with the students they will teach. They are expected to think about both the personal and professional ramifications of their newly acquired knowledge—how it impacts them as human beings and as classroom teachers. We convey to students our beliefs that the person who performs the role of teacher, and understanding the cultural contexts in which they teach, are as crucial to instructional effectiveness with diverse students as the mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical techniques. (p. 185)

Therefore, a common thread that connects much of the varied empirical research focused on socially just pedagogies at the preservice level is the common belief that preservice students’ accountability involves becoming more self-conscious, critically conscious, and more analytical of both teaching approaches and the values and beliefs motivating these actions (Chubbuck, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Liston & Zeichner, 1996; Sailes, 2013; Villegas, 2007).

Gay and Kirland (2003), Chubbuck (2010), as well as Castro (2010) provide evidence that supports what many of the critical pedagogues (Giroux, 2012; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007) frequently emphasize: the lack of CC among preservice teacher candidates was attributed to deeply entrenched ideologies of individualism and meritocracy. To state it differently, strong beliefs in individualism and meritocracy are associated with a lack of critical consciousness. In turn, Castro suggests that the lack of critical consciousness, and belief in individualism and meritocracy, paved the way for preservice teacher candidates to stereotype minority groups, engage in deficit thinking, and contributed to an inability to describe multiple forms of oppression and privilege within the educational institution, themselves, and others. For instance, the majority of White Anglo preservice teacher candidates had less complex views of oppression (especially male White teachers) and tended to blame minority groups and their

communities for underachieving in school (Castro, 2010; Chubbuck, 2010; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Furthermore, the structural and institutional barriers that negatively affect marginalized groups were rarely acknowledged by these groups of mainstream teachers (Castro, 2010; Chubbuck, 2010; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Sleeter, 2011). The more rare, complex views of oppression and a CC illuminating inequitable structures was reported by mostly African American female preservice teacher candidates within the studies reviewed by Castro (2010). In researching preservice students' experiences with socially just pedagogies, Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) have also documented that teacher candidates who are a visible minority and/or from working-class backgrounds better understood issues of diversity and inequity and showed a stronger commitment to social justice than did their White, mainstream counterparts. Since K-12 teachers are mostly White-Anglo women, "the core issue is whether preservice teacher candidates have the CC necessary to decipher the cultural logic that reinforce the systems of inequity that exist in our public schools" (Castro, 2010, p. 207). More to the point, "only when preservice teachers confront beliefs in individualism and meritocracy can they envision real social change" (Castro, 2010, p. 207).

In the year 2000 and beyond, researchers started to be more interested in the key background experiences and dispositional factors that influenced preservice students' views and interactions with culturally diverse others (Castro, 2010). The key factors to accepting, understanding, and practising socially just pedagogies were found to be associated with living in culturally diverse neighborhoods and having cross-cultural relationships (Castro, 2010, p. 205). Delpit (1995) and Ladson-Billings (2001), who are both strong proponents of culturally sensitive pedagogy, have found that preservice

teacher candidates' beliefs, attitudes, and biases about cultural diversity are linked to their own teaching practices and decision-making processes. Ladson-Billings (2001) emphasizes that in order for all students to succeed, their respective teachers must be able to foster environments in which students are encouraged to value and grow in their understanding and respect for their own culture—this is especially critical as the majority of teachers represent dominant mainstream beliefs and values and have little or no genuine experiences with cultures other than their own (p. 78). Delpit (1995) found that that White, Anglo middle-class teachers often not only impose dominant ways of knowing but also impose dominant ways of being by refuting the specialized linguistic knowledge that minority students possess. Therefore, the majority of White, Anglo middle-class teachers, within the aforementioned studies, often approached diverse students in counterproductive ways. Recent research by Villegas (2007) and Gay (2010) also support the premise that preservice teacher candidates hold problematic cultural beliefs and attitudes (e.g., appeal to individualism and meritocracy) that have a profound influence on their teaching practices. It is understood by critical educators, that teachers holding these problematic cultural beliefs may negatively implicate the students they teach.

The overall picture, however, is not completely bleak. On the positive side of things, the consistent practice of critical teacher reflection was shown, in a few studies, to foster greater sociocultural awareness among some preservice teacher candidates. For example, Conway, Browning, and Purdum-Cassidy's (2007) longitudinal 4-year study of 218 preservice teacher candidates found that those who possess traits of open-mindedness and reflective thoughtfulness were most likely to engage in the process of cognitive

restructuring and new learning. These preservice teacher candidates were documented to be able to more fully appreciate and understand issues of diversity and equity and frequently made positive and productive changes to their existing problematic views of cultural diversity.

Similarly, Sailes (2013) found that one group of 26 preservice teacher candidates who were enrolled in a multicultural course that addressed the attitudes and beliefs about diversity did in fact productively shift their views of diversity. The guided teaching practice that contributed to this positive shift was the continuous act of self-reflexive writing—the preservice teacher candidates were instructed to write reflective papers throughout their course work and their field experiences. Sailes analyzed the reflective papers and found that many of the preservice teacher candidates became more open minded and less bias in their views on diversity and socially just teaching practices as their multicultural course progressed. Sailes (2013) used the preservice teacher candidates' written reflective papers as data for analysis; one preservice student wrote:

I know that at first I was scared to go into an urban school. I thought that the children would not respond to me and see me as a threat. Once in these schools, I was thrilled to realize that we shared many similarities, differences, likes, dislikes, hobbies! My previous fears and assumptions were put to rest after I understood that urban schools were in the need of the same committed, enthusiastic, and passionate teachers that every school needs. (p. 41)

Recent studies also documented the *general* teaching methodology utilized by critical teacher educators and also focused on the impact of socially just oriented pedagogies (Castro, 2010). Interestingly, these studies show that the teaching methods utilized by teacher educators may have a greater effect on preservice students' views of diversity and equity than the content of the course (Brown, 2004). For example, preservice teacher candidates appreciated and learned from the following teaching

practices employed by their respective socially just oriented teacher educators: Creating a safe and risk-free environment to openly speak about issues, learning to listen to others, attempting to understand different perspectives, and acknowledging multiple realities, mutual respect, and being willing to unlearn (Brown, 2004). From the outset, these studies sound promising as preservice teacher candidates seem willing, when provided with safe and open learning environments and explicit dialogue expectations, to learn about diversity and how to practise socially just pedagogies.

However, it is important to highlight that creating a risk-free environment to speak openly about issues does not guarantee a smooth and linear transition into a form of critical consciousness. Gorski (2009) points out that the “critical crossroads of learning” occur in states of cognitive dissonance where “new information collides with old prejudices” (p. 2). Furthermore, Gorski emphasizes that social justice educators should create educational atmospheres in which students cognitively wrestle with discomforting information, no matter how confusing or painful it may be; thereafter, working through the cognitive dissonance with students becomes of utmost importance. Reflecting on the two views of safe and uncomfortable learning environments, it is possible that some, if not many, social justice educators have created safe and risk-free environments that superficially pique interest in social justice issues but do not facilitate the cognitive dissonance necessary to create critical consciousness. As Sleeter (2011) points out, millennial preservice teacher candidates likely still lack the CC necessary to understand and discuss structural inequities and challenge the dominant ideologies that give credence to these structural arrangements.

Conclusion

In summary, teacher education programs are challenged with adequately preparing preservice students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work successfully with the wide range of diverse students (Apple, 2001; Chubbuck, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Especially challenging is preparing teacher candidates to productively and thoughtfully engage students from diverse and marginalized backgrounds. For example, in Ontario and elsewhere, poor and working-class students—in particular those who are racialized—have been traditionally viewed through a deficit lens and in need of fixing (for a recent scholarly discussion on the resilience of deficit thinking in Canada and the United States, see Dudley-Marling, 2015; see also Clanfield et al., 2014; Katz, 1993). Other studies examining preservice teacher candidates' experiences reveal that those who are a visible minority and/or from working-class backgrounds have a better understanding of inequities in society and a stronger commitment to social justice than do their White, mainstream counterparts (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Generally, the culturally diverse preservice teacher candidates who experienced inequitable life experiences were found to possess a more compassionate and thoughtful teaching disposition and learning approach with students who are perceived as marginalized (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Within the context of teacher education, critical pedagogy seems to be a useful approach in facilitating the development of CC within preservice students who do not already possess this sociocultural lens for better understanding their students. However, as much of the literature attests to, facilitating CC with preservice teacher candidates is a challenging task that is often not met with success (Egbo, 2012). Nonetheless, the

importance of understanding the systemic inequities in society in order to better accommodate all students cannot be overstated. As Darling-Hammond (2000) emphasizes, “Developing the ability to see beyond one’s perspective, to put oneself in the shoes of the learner and to understand the meaning of that experience in terms of learning, is perhaps the most important role of universities in the preparation of teachers” (p. 170). My goal for this dissertation research was to develop an understanding that begins with the core principles of critical pedagogy but uses the emerging empirical data to develop a more nuanced and specific understanding of critical pedagogy as it applies to one Faculty of Education. Part of my theory building appealed to Chubbuck’s (2010) work which highlights the general mental filters that preservice educators and teacher candidates utilize when working within socially just teaching paradigms. I discuss Chubbuck’s work in more detail in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature and adopts a constructivist approach to grounded theory, drawing primarily from the work of constructivist grounded theorist Kathy Charmaz (2008, 2010). Constructivist grounded theory, as a qualitative research methodology, is an appropriate approach to use when researching the facilitation of CC because

The analytic power of grounded theory offers qualitative researchers distinct advantages in pursuing social justice inquiry.... These methods contain tools for analyzing and situating processes. Therefore, the logic of grounded theory Frontlines to (1) defining relevant processes, (2) demonstrating their contexts, (3) specifying the conditions under which these processes occur.... This logic can help social justice researchers attend to the construction of inequities and how people act toward them. Therefore, grounded theory logic can Frontlines researchers to make explicit interpretations of what is happening in the empirical world and to offer an analysis that depicts how and why it happens. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 361)

Charmaz's work is an interpretation of grounded theory that builds, but diverges in various ways from the seminal work on grounded theory produced by American sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967; see also, Glaser, 1978, 1992; Strauss, 1987).¹ What sets Charmaz (2000, 2006, 2008) apart from the earlier, classical work of grounded theorists such as Glaser and Strauss is her constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008, p. 389; see also, Charmaz, 2000, 2005). In fact, Charmaz is considered to be the "first researcher to describe her work explicitly as constructivist grounded theory" (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 717). Indeed, as I go on to elaborate, one of the other key reasons why Charmaz's (2006, 2008) version of

¹ It is interesting to note that, as a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Kathy Charmaz was a student of Barney Glaser. In addition, Anselm Strauss was her dissertation chair. See Charmaz, 2006, p. xii.

grounded theory has been selected for this study is that philosophically it is located within the constructivist paradigm. Constructivist grounded theory contrasts with the grounded theory approaches of Glaser and Strauss and of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), which take a more “positivist,” “objectivist” understanding of the world.

The problem with earlier positivist approaches to grounded theory, according to Charmaz (2008), is that they did not attend to how the researcher affected the research process, produced the data, and represented the data; nor did they take into careful consideration how they positioned their analyses (p. 399). To elaborate, a constructivist grounded theorist understands that a complex “interrelationship” exists between the researcher and the participant (Mills, Chapman, Bonner, & Francis, 2006), and acknowledges how the researcher is an active “passionate participant” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 166).

Moreover, the early epistemological stance taken by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was grounded in positivist roots that adopted the notion of researcher objectivity and claimed their emergent theoretical knowledge was *discovered* in the data and was separated from the social scientists doing the observing. For Glaser and Strauss, objectivity was a central premise in their research paradigm. Objectivist versions of grounded theory assume a single reality that is discovered by a passive, neutral researcher who bracketed her/his values and bias. Assumptions of objectivity and neutrality make data selection, collection, and representation unproblematic. For earlier “objectivist” grounded theorists, they become, in other words, “givens,” rather than constructions that occur during the research process and influence its outcome (Charmaz, 2008, p. 398).

A constructivist approach to grounded theory diverges from the foundational and

early work of Glaser and Strauss in a variety of ways, including making the following key assumptions: Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed. Ontologically speaking, following Charmaz (2010), I understand meaning in the social world to be socially constructed, which accepts the notion that there are multiple realities as opposed to a single “truth” (Charmaz, 2008, 2010). In this sense, it is my belief that the data gathered in the study do not reflect “reality” in part because so-called true knowledge does not exist independently to be “discovered” by researchers (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); rather it is socially constructed. To put it differently, Charmaz’s (2008, 2010) research approach assumes an “observer-relative” constructivist understanding of the data which, as Guba and Lincoln (1989) note, denies “the claim that there is an objective reality” (p. 43). This constructivist approach differs from a so-called brute facts perspective adopted by earlier grounded theorists, which rested in part on the assumption there exists intrinsic knowledge that exists independent of the observer.

The grounded theory proposed by Charmaz (2010) consists of a systematic yet flexible guideline for collecting and analyzing data in order to create theory that is grounded in the data collected. The guidelines are viewed as general principles and heuristic devices rather than precise formula-like instructions. Overall, constructivist grounded theorists attempt to learn what occurs in the phenomena they explore by focusing initially on what the participants are thinking, feeling, and doing within the context being studied (Charmaz, 2010, p. 3). For this study, I explore the critical learning experiences of teacher educators situated in the context of a social justice oriented Faculty of Education, and probe to understand how course-related learning experiences affected the preservice teacher participants’ level of critical consciousness.

Furthermore, grounded theorists examine participants' reported actions and statements and try to make analytical sense of them. This approach is founded on symbolic interactionism, which is a theoretical perspective that assumes society, reality, and the self are constructed through interaction and therefore rely on language and communication (see for example, Mead & Morris, 1934, pp. 141-145). This view emphasizes that interaction is dynamic and interpretive and explores how people create, enact, and change their meanings and actions. In addition, symbolic interaction assumes that people frequently think about their actions rather than simply respond to stimuli. However, symbolic interactionist perspectives also acknowledge the influential effect of structures, while simultaneously realizing that agency is also possible (Charmaz, 2006; Giddens, 1984; Mead & Morris, 1934).

In the following section, I outline and clarify the methods and practices that I used in the study, beginning with initial coding.

Grounded Theory Methods

Initial Coding

Initial codes “are provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 48). They are provisional because a researcher is obligated to remain open to other analytic possibilities and develop theoretical codes that best fit the data. Moreover, codes are also provisional in the sense that the researcher may revise or reword them to improve the fit between the data and the theoretical renderings. Part of the fit, between the data and the theoretical code attributed to it, is the degree to which it captures and condenses meanings and actions (Charmaz, 2010, p. 48). For Charmaz (2010), the *initial* coding of data begins the process of “generating the bones” (p. 45) of the analysis with a

view to producing something akin to an analytical skeleton. Therefore, while in the process of collecting Phase One data, and upon completing Phase One data collection, I began to separate, sort, and synthesize the datum through *initial* qualitative coding. Charmaz (2010) notes that “coding means that we attach labels to segments of the data that depict what each segment is about” (p. 43). Coding distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data. Grounded theorists emphasize what is “happening in the scene when they code the data” and attempt to code actions rather than topics (Charmaz, 2010, p. 3). Since there were 37 preservice teacher participants, the initial coding stage included examining short phrases and line by line coding rather than single word coding. For instance, some initial codes that stood out for me while line by line coding student participant phase one data were: Built-up talent/skill; sense of self-efficacy; self-identified as outspoken; drawn to social justice; deeper criticality; action-oriented; teacher as saviour; desire to give back; athletic background; professional parents; family/parental instilled values; exposed to cultural diversity; mature/more life and work experiences; loving parents; and lived privileged life.

During the coding process I understood that careful and close attention to initial coding would help further my attempt to understand participant accounts, sentiments, stories, and silences. Line by line coding also helped me gain insights about what Frontliness to pursue. For example, through the initial coding process, I became intrigued by some of the participants desire to “give back” by pursuing a teaching career. This identification led me back to earlier respondents to see whether or not the desire to give back was also explicitly stated and how this was tied into teaching for social justice. Of course, during the process of initial coding I remained open to exploring whatever

theoretical possibilities I could discern from the data (Charmaz, 2010, p. 47).

However, during the initial coding stage, one *in vivo code*, which Charmaz (2010) defines as “those general terms everyone knows that flag condensed but significant meanings” (p. 55), was documented: the action oriented decision in *giving back*. As stipulated by Charmaz (2010), *in vivo codes* are important to study and understand as they reflect assumptions, actions, and imperatives that frame actions (p. 57). This was the case, with the *in vivo code giving back* as this concept partially contributed the subsequent analysis as it seemed to be a common thread for the six student participants that were categorized as having a level of CC that had the potential to contribute to institutional change. These categorical constructions led to other, more in depth categories, and are discussed more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4.

Focused Coding

Focused coding is typically the second major phase in coding (Charmaz, 2010, p. 57). Focused coding, according to Charmaz, means using the “most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 57). Therefore, focused coding required me to decide which of these early codes made the most analytical sense in terms of their capacity to categorize the data. The analysis of Phase One data enabled me to construct a few substantial focused codes of which I discuss thoroughly in the results section. Phase Two data analysis and coding provided me with even more opportunities to further refine, select, and integrate subcategories within categories. This part of the data analysis provided several potential categories of analysis, however, after revisiting the data several times, I decided which codes made the most analytic sense to categorize the data most accurately and completely. Throughout

this process, I compared data with data and then data with codes (Charmaz, 2010, p. 58).

This process was not linear, nor straightforward. However, the continuous checks and rechecks of my interpretations and categorical decisions left me feeling that the main categories established emerged from, and were solidly grounded in, the data.

Axial Coding and Theoretical Coding

The main categories for data sorting, axial coding (e.g., delineating properties of each code) and theoretical coding (e.g., conveying a coherent analytical story), can be viewed as residing within two separate, but related dimensions. The first main categorical dimension takes into account the level of CC conveyed by the preservice teacher participants. This main category was then further divided into three subcategories: micro, meso, and macro levels of critical consciousness. The second main categorical dimension takes into account the pedagogical and institutional factors that were perceived as contributing to, or hindering, the facilitation of a critical consciousness. The Pedagogical and Institutional Factors category was then further broken down into three subcategories: (a) Too Many Tasks, Too Little Time, (b) Agency Opportunities, and (c) The Lecture. This secondary main category and the relative three subcategories are introduced and described more thoroughly later in this chapter. However, Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive discussion that elaborates on the properties of each category and links the themes together into an overall narrative. Memo-writing was an integral part of creating the finalized theoretical codes presented in Chapter 4. I discuss memo-writing as a feature of the data analysis next.

Memo-Writing

Grounded theorists write preliminary analytical notes called *memos* about codes

and comparisons and any other ideas about the data that may occur. Through studying the data, comparing them, and writing memos, researchers “begin to define ideas that best fit and interpret the data as tentative analytic categories” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 3). Throughout the data analysis stages, memo-writing was used to continually refine what seemed to be occurring in the data and theorizing why certain patterns and themes existed. Memo-writing was pivotal in establishing focused and theoretical codes. Memos also provided the space and place for making comparisons between data and data, and data and codes, categories, and the relationships between them. Basically, memo-writing helped me to think about the data in ongoing reflective ways regarding relevant ideas, both pragmatic and theoretical. For instance, through the process of memo writing, I came to realize that students were frequently timeline compressed with individual and group assignments, exams, tests, quizzes, and class presentations. This compressed timeline contributed to a form of chronic anxiety that countered the deeper, more time-consuming reading and thinking that prefaces a critical consciousness.

Charmaz (2010) suggests that the researcher engage in any style or type of memo-writing that productively advances thinking. My memo-writing consisted of both clustering and free-writing as these two methods of memo-taking seemed to be the most productive. Clustering is a “shorthand prewriting technique” in which “you write your central idea, category, process; then circle it and draw spokes from it to smaller circles to show its defining properties, and their relationships and relative significance” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 86). In other words, clustering offered a structured diagram of the analytical relationships observed. Free writing, on the other hand, is a less structured form of recording analytical ideas by simply writing down what comes to mind with the intention

of increasing our “receptivity to the world” and “our flow of ideas” (Charmaz, 2010, p. 88). These early memos helped me to see what was happening in the data and they were also used to partially structure and provide guidance for future data collection. For instance, after Phase One data collection, my memo-writing highlighted the fact that six student participants were coming into the study already with a critical lens initiated by an undergraduate course. Therefore, I planned on probing what aspects of these undergraduate courses influenced the development of the student participants’ critical lens during the next set of interviews.

Phase Two data analysis consisted of advanced memo-writing, meaning that I went beyond examining what the participants were doing and saying and worked within a more abstract and theoretical realm (Charmaz, 2006, p. 81). For example, in the latter stages of data analysis, my advanced memo-writing revolved around comparing the concepts of student attention, critical and task oriented learning, professor–student relationships, the enactment of power, the problematic of defining social justice, and thereafter enacting social justice pedagogy, and illuminating the meaning attributed to agency from both an individual and minority group perspective. This theoretical coding process then aided in continually refining the dimensions and properties of categories and subcategories. Both early and advanced memo-writing enabled me to make comparisons and consequently define patterns in the empirical world that grounded my main categories.

Moreover, the grounded theory method of advanced memo writing and theoretical coding enabled me to explore, describe, and interpret substantive processes from codes (see for example, Anells, 1966, p. 382, for a description of substantive processes). Subsequently, examining and documenting the properties therein, specifying the

conditions of change, describing the consequences, and showing the relationships to other categories further defined the substantive processes.

Finally, throughout the process of coding I made a strong effort to make sure the code fit the data, rather than focusing and forcing the data to fit the code. I was mindful and attentive and put into practice Charmaz's (2006) "code for coding," which asks the constructivist grounded theorist to "remain open, stay close to the data, keep your codes simple and precise, construct short codes, preserve actions, compare data with data, and move quickly through the data" (p. 49).

Quality Data

Charmaz (2010) argues that when it comes to the strength of a grounded theory study, the quality of data matters (p. 18). For Charmaz, the quality and credibility of a study starts with the data; the quality of the data provides a researcher with "a strong foundation from which to speak" (p. 18). According to Charmaz (2010), a study based on rich, substantial, and relevant data stands out. In order to provide an analysis that is thoroughly grounded in quality data, she provides three criteria to help researchers think about the quality of their data: usefulness, suitability, and sufficiency (p. 18). My study meets and sometimes exceeds each criterion. I begin by discussing the first criteria, usefulness.

First, in terms of *usefulness*, the data collected provided a *primary resource* for the documentation of teacher candidates' critical learning experiences when being taught by a critical pedagogue. The preservice teacher participants' first-hand accounts were grounded in their perceptions and historical educational experiences and produced the core categories. Second, since the main research question centered the preservice teacher

participants' critical learning experiences, collecting data, which revealed their relevant critical thinking and social justice knowledge base was *useful*. The data collected at the beginning and the end of the school year, provided data that was *suitable* for exploring the relationship between the participants' level of CC and their critical learning experiences within the Faculty of Education. Third, the data also met the criteria of *sufficiency* as I gathered over 68 hours of rich data that elicited a complex and comprehensive process of developing CC within the parameters of strategically selected courses and the broader Faculty of Education context. Therefore, the data meets the *sufficiency* criteria in that it described "a wide range of participants views and actions" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 19) and revealed what lay beneath the surface, in order to help enable me to develop analytic categories.

In addition, the *sufficiency* of the data can also be attributed to the three data gathering approaches utilized: Intensive Interviews, Elicited Texts in the form of Self-Made Digital Recording, and Extant Texts. I begin with a brief discussion of intensive interviews. I conducted intensive interviews with seven professor participants and with 37 preservice teacher participants who were asked to respond to open-ended questions. Intensive interviewing allows "an in-depth exploration of a particular topic or experience and is a useful method for interpretive inquiry" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 25). Among other features, intensive interviews are also designed to go beneath the surface of the described experience. I did this during the interviews in a number of ways that included stopping to explore a statement or topic; requested more detail or explanation; asked about the participant's thoughts feelings and actions; kept the participant on the subject; and enabled an interviewee to come back to an earlier point. Moreover, an intensive interview

also functioned to validate the participant's humanity, perspective, or actions in that I was able to actively listen and acknowledge their learning experiences. Also, at the end of the interview, the participants were shown respect and sincere appreciation as I sincerely thanked them for contributing, offered a beverage and snack for them to take away, and presented them each with a \$20 gift certificate to Chapters. Therefore, I was also able to follow the intensive interview guidelines that stipulate that the researcher should show respect to the participant by expressing an appreciation for participating (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26).

Throughout the interviews, I understood that I was there to listen, to observe with sensitivity and respect, and to encourage all of my participants to respond in thoughtful ways. This meant that I had to cautiously self-regulate my responses and reactions to the participants' shared views and experiences. One concrete and noticeable outcome of my approach was that my participants did the vast majority of the talking, which is evident in the transcriptions. By establishing a respectful rapport with participants whereby I tried to understand their lives from their perspective, I collected background data about their schooling experiences and gathered detailed descriptions of participants' views and pedagogy, which helped me to develop analytical categories. I also spent considerable time researching and understanding the research context, which I will describe shortly.

In addition to securing 65 intensive interviews to form the foundation of my evidentiary base, I also obtained 16 *elicited texts* in the form of self-made digital reflections. Charmaz (2010) defines elicited texts as texts that participants produce in response to a researcher's request; the goal, in part, is to create another means of "generating data" (p. 35). These texts, like published autobiographies, may elicit

thoughts, feelings, and concerns of the thinking active subject and also give researchers ideas about what structures and cultural values influence the participant. My study did not rely on traditional written elicited texts; rather, I asked participants to create, produce, and submit self-made digital reflections. I discuss the self-made digital reflections at greater length in a later section of this chapter.

In addition, I have also included a few different forms of “extant texts,” also considered to be data, which are “contrasted with elicited texts in that the researcher does not affect their construction” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 37). Examples of extant texts include the seven professor participant syllabi, the Faculty of Education official promotional website, and some of the Faculty of Education documents containing statistical measures such as how many preservice teacher candidates were enrolled, the number of preservice teacher candidates fulfilling their practicum requirements in the public and Catholic school boards, and the gender breakdown. These extant forms of texts were utilized to complement the data collected during the interview process. For example, the interviews with the seven professor participants enabled me to document their perspectives of critical pedagogy theory and practice and their intended critical pedagogy approach with preservice teacher participants. The syllabi provided more concrete course descriptions, expected curriculum outcomes, the resources and texts utilized, as well as assessment methods. For the most part, the course syllabi were compatible with the information provided by each professor participant. The Faculty of Education’s website as well as the Faculty of Education documents containing enrollment numbers and other numerical ratios, were incorporated to further contextualize the research setting. The Faculty of Education website’s public claims of prioritizing social justice initiatives and equity

based teaching practices, were, in the end, cautiously interpreted, because as Charmaz (2010) warns,

Both organizational rhetoric and reports may pale in the face of observed worlds. These texts may fulfill intriguing organizational purposes, but researchers cannot assume they mirror organizational processes. Therefore, texts may provide useful statements about an organization's professed images and claimed objectives—the front stage view aimed to shape its public reputation. (p. 38)

Next, I describe the research context, the recruitment and interview structure for both preservice teacher and faculty participants, and describe the sample of faculty and preservice teacher participants.

Description of the Research Context: Faculty of Education

This study took place within one Faculty of Education located in Canada. The Faculty of Education preservice program was 1-year long in duration. There were 395 students enrolled in the program for this particular school year. One hundred and fourteen of these students opted to practice-teach within the local Catholic Board of Education and 281 students selected to do their practice-teaching within the local Public Board of Education. There were a total of 257 women and 138 men enrolled in the Faculty of Education during the 2014-2015 academic years.

During the study (e.g., the year the participants were recruited and the data was collected), there were a total of 15 full-time faculty and 12 part-time sessional instructors. The Faculty of Education offered 10 mandatory core courses, with the option of taking on two more elective courses (September 2014 to April 2015). The total courses taken added up to 10, but some students took the maximum of 13 courses (including two preservice teacher participants in this study) as they elected to take on extra credits. The Faculty of Education students alternated between spending 4 to 6 weeks attending courses at the Faculty of Education campus and then relocated to their practice-teaching schools for about 4 weeks, throughout the school year.

This Faculty of Education makes mention that the full-time faculty make up the most diverse teaching staff in all of Ontario, and have a particular commitment to social justice. However, the mechanisms or processes by which students would be engaged in committing to equity and social justice are not specified in existing policy documentation or other related materials.

Also, the emphasis on incorporating social justice into the educational context is evident in that the Faculty of Education holds an annual Social Justice Conference. There was indeed a Social Justice Conference held in the 2014-2015 school year, and Mary, a student participant in this study, was one of the main student organizers for this event.

In addition, the Faculty of Education is also home to an Urban Education Partnership. The Partnership is a collaborative community-based school and university partnership that aims to connect teacher candidates from the Faculty of Education with particular schools within communities that are disadvantaged economically and otherwise. At its heart, the partnership is centered on helping teachers learn to teach for equity, diversity, and social justice. When Faculty of Education students opt to enroll in the Urban Education program, they are also enrolled in specifically selected core curricular courses (Language Arts, Math, Science) that take up issues of equity, diversity, and social justice within the context of the curriculum. Their practice-teaching placements are completed in preselected urban schools that continue to face challenges posed by issues of social inequity such as racism and classism. These urban schools are identified as “high needs” by local school boards and are located in financially disadvantaged communities. I now move on to discussing the recruitment of professor participants.

Recruitment of Professor Participants

The recruitment of professors was initiated by delivering recruitment flyers, which were placed in all instructors' mailboxes at the Faculty of Education. The recruitment flyer explained who I was, what the research study entailed, the pre-requisites, and my contact information. By way of the letter, I invited interested faculty members to contact me via email or phone. Seven professors contacted me and expressed interest in participating in the study. Once contacted, I asked each possible professor participant to set up a brief meeting. Upon meeting with this group of instructors, I briefly explained the study and then left an informational letter and an informed consent form. After all seven professors chose to participate, I arranged to retrieve the signed consent forms at their earliest convenience.

Interview Structure for Professors

The interviews conducted with the professor participants were meant to provide a starting point for discussing the teaching and learning context in which the preservice teacher participants were located (see Appendix A for the Interview Script for Professors). The bulk of the analysis resided within the larger data set collected from the student teacher participants. The professor data presented is mostly descriptive in nature and conveys the critical teaching philosophy, teaching practices, and learning outcomes endorsed by the teacher educators. Since critical pedagogy is not a prescriptive teaching method (rather, teachers take the initiative to practise critical pedagogy in ways that are suited to the context), it was essential to understand how each professor structured their daily practices and accounted for short-term and long-term critical learning goals. The semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the professors provided an avenue to

document the educational theory appealed to as well as the teaching practices endorsed and utilized.

As Breuing (2011) has shown, self-identified critical pedagogues appeal to, and enact, a range of critical theory. Therefore when interviewing the professors who self-identified as critical pedagogues, I was especially careful to document the “specific definitions attached to critical pedagogy,” the meaning(s) attributed to social justice educators, the “theorists and specific theory” referred to, and “the central aims and purposes” intended, and the intended practices to reach these aims and purposes (Breuing, 2011, p. 8). The overall purpose of the interview was to ensure that this group of professors not only identified as critical pedagogues but also intended to practise critical pedagogy in their classrooms throughout the duration of the school year. A copy of each course syllabus was examined in order to further contextualize the construction of the intended learning environment. All of the professors interviewed explicitly claimed that they were practising critical pedagogues and discussed their intended socially just teaching practices.

In total, I conducted interviews with seven professors, including five full-time faculty (referred to here by the pseudonyms Professor G, Professor W, Professor H, Professor Q, and Professor C) and two sessional instructors (referred to as Professor S and Professor J). All interviews were carried out and transcribed from September 9, 2014 to October 30, 2014. The transcriptions were utilized to construct and convey a descriptive piece illustrating each of the professors’ background, their appeal to educational theory, and the teaching practices and strategies endorsed and previously utilized. Below I provide some background information about each professor participant

and then describe the key elements of their teaching practice as related to teaching for social justice.

Professor G

Professor G is a woman in her 40s. Her academic background is grounded in critical literature and critical theory and analysis. She had been teaching at the Faculty of Education for over 8 years when our interview took place, a profession she was clearly passionate about and viewed her role in the context of a much larger personal narrative: “I found exactly where I’m suppose to be in life. I really feel that this job is so much what I wanted . . . so that is great.” Her responses throughout the interview certainly suggested Professor G seemed to genuinely enjoy teaching at the Faculty of Education and positioned her work as guided by an important and broader purpose.

During the 2014-2015 year, Professor G taught Equity Issues, a mandatory course for all Intermediate and Senior level teacher candidates. The course included 115 students and was held once a week for 50 minutes, in a large lecture-style room, throughout the duration of the full year. Overall, for this course there were 17 scheduled classes, which amounted to 14 hours of class time.

Professor G self-identified as a critical pedagogue and one who is committed to teaching for social change: “I would say that I identify myself as somebody who teaches very much from my social justice education perspective.” In fact, her commitment to social justice education informed much of her professional academic life: “I feel that sort of informs a lot of my decisions in terms of how I teach and what I research and I see my research and my teaching crossing over a lot which is I think exactly how it should be.” Professor G repeatedly made mention of her strong commitment to teaching for social justice: “Everything that I do around teaching is always tying into social justice issues.”

Professor W

Professor W is a woman in her early 60s. Professor W identified as a critical pedagogue and appealed to the work of Henry Giroux and Michel Foucault.

Her teaching practice encompassed the idea of getting her students to examine *why* questions rather than focusing on the *what* and *how* of teaching. She goes onto to emphasize: “We talk about the what and the how and very rarely we look at the why. And I wanted this course to emphasize the why; we’re talking about critical pedagogy to be about why.” It would make sense, then, that Professor W’s Theory and Practice course was designed to examine the theories and philosophies that shed light on why the dominant educational system currently operates as it does. For example, she emphasized: “It’s not about criticizing, it’s looking at alternative ways, looking at different ways of doing things and unfortunately teaching is a profession that’s very conservative. It’s very hard to change the traditions, the cultures of classrooms in schools.” Throughout this course, Professor W highlighted the various theoretical approaches that may underlie day-to-day educational classroom practice. Her students were then required to examine how these various theories are worked out in their teaching practicums.

Professor W also highlighted the tension among the majority of her students who struggled with understanding both her method of teaching and the necessity of expanding their educational *theoretical* frameworks:

Unfortunately it is—it doesn’t go over very well with our teacher candidates, for the simple pragmatic reason is they want more of the how and what. And I understand from their perspective because. . . . After 4 weeks of classes they go into their practice-teaching and what do they hear from their—most cases they hear from the Associate, ‘Oh you didn’t learn how to do this. You didn’t learn how to do that at the Faculty [of Education]. Well, whatever you learn at the Faculty is useless, here’s where the real work happens.’ So they’re turning them into technocrats and my focus is more let’s think about these issues, let’s question.

Professor W points out the disconnect between what is taught at the Faculty of Education and what is emphasized by associates within practice-teaching contexts. Professor W's course is about exploring the various educational theories behind practice, although, according to Professor W the associate teachers within teaching placements emphasize the what and how of technical and pragmatic day-to-day teaching practice. Professor W had been teaching within educational faculties for 10 years, and she noted that a general resistance to educational theory among teacher candidates has persisted.

As stipulated by Professor W's course syllabus, some of the key learning outcomes include: (a) Define the characteristics of effective teaching practices that are required of a professional and critical thinking/reflective/ mindful educator; (b) apply understandings of the key principles of classroom engagement/management through critical analyses of scenarios and cases; (c) engage in critical analysis of the taken-for-granted assumptions of educational issues; and (d) discuss and respond to social justice/equity issues as they relate to creating a learning community. The learning outcomes listed in the syllabus, the critical theoretical content of the main text, and Professor W's emphasis on teaching her students to be critical of normative teaching practices by consistently encouraging students to critically question the educational systems and structures in place all pointed to evidence that she was invested in engaging in critical teaching practices.

Professor H

Professor H is a man in his early 50s. Professor H's disposition was very warm, and his sense of humour surfaced several times throughout our interview. His warmth and lighthearted side was also integrated into his teaching practice. Professor H

emphasizes that

Humour comes through story, there are always stories. . . . So, um, it's out of classroom stories, playground stories, staff room stories, things that happen that, um, give a message and, also, pass on my experience, but, um, it's humorous. And I want students to see the humour in everyday life, and see the humour in what happens.

Professor H looked forward to sharing all of his teaching experiences with his preservice teacher candidates as a way for students to gain some insight into day-to-day teaching realities. The humorous and personal aspect of his teaching also added weight to his stated intention of creating meaningful relationships with the preservice teacher candidates with whom he worked.

Professor H taught at the Faculty of Education for over 11 years. He has mainly taught Foundational Methodology courses but has also taught various graduate courses over the last few years. Seven student participants were recruited from Professor H's Methodology course. The class was held for 2 hours, once a week, and included 40 preservice students. The total class time amounted to 36 hours.

Professor H's academic background included a graduate degree in mechanical engineering. After graduating from this program, he successfully pursued a Bachelor of Education. He taught elementary school children for 5 years and then went on to earn his PhD in education. His life experiences along with his PhD work which focused on the effect of social inequity within educational contexts, seemed to have all contributed to his keen awareness of both his own privileges and oppressive schooling experiences:

I guess, this comes from my own experiences of being oppressed. . . . My feeling of being oppressed in schools. So, I've always thought, in my mind, if I should ever teach, or should ever get, on this other, this side of the power differential, that I'd try to make sure that I remember what it felt like. And, hopefully create, help to create, um, a system where the needs of those who are most likely to be marginalized, are taken seriously, and are addressed.

Professor H exemplifies how the personal becomes political when he mobilizes his own personal experiences of oppression into empowering the marginalized preservice teacher candidates with whom he works.

Professor H appealed to the work of McLaren, Giroux, Freire, and Foucault and identified as a critical pedagogue. He goes on to describe the aims of his critical teaching practice:

My work has to help to unoppress the oppressed, and help to bring about justice, as it, as it's, uh, the title, the, the term suggests, is to bring about justice. And, it recognizes that we live in an unjust system, society. And that there are actors, and people acted upon, and trying to find ways in which education.... I believe education can transform society.

Professor H's worldview aligns with the foundational premise of critical pedagogy which declares that some individuals and groups are more empowered at the expense of disadvantaged, and perhaps even exploited, individuals and groups (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1988). Professor H goes on to discuss the key overarching focus of his critical pedagogical practice:

So, it's a questioning approach to looking at society. And particularly looking at what we take for granted and looking at power structures. And, again, trying to bring about equitable outcomes, in terms of the power structure. So, it's, again, questioning oppression, and looking at race, gender, sexuality, age. Someone looking at, uh, all those issue that, uh, underpins racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, and so on.

Throughout our interview, it became apparent that Professor H felt strongly about helping minority and disadvantaged students address oppressive practices. Therefore, even in a highly content-focused Methodology course, Professor H intended to implement a critical teaching practice that would prompt students to reflect on issues of social inequity and the power differentials related to the marginalization and oppressive experiences of minority students.

Professor C and Professor Q

Professor C and Professor Q co-taught the Social Issues and Equity course. The course was designed to offer learning experiences that fostered a deep awareness of the social, political, and cultural issues found within the educational context. Some of the key learning outcomes, as listed on the syllabus, were: (a) Challenge personal and systemic views when responding to different needs and perspectives in school communities; (b) collaborate with colleagues to professionally and respectfully discuss and respond to equity issues faced by school communities; and (c) justify choices made in regards to equity issues faced by school communities. The course was offered once a week for 1 hour and the total class time amounted to 16 hours. I will now move on to first describe Professor C's background and teaching philosophy and later introduce Professor Q.

Professor C is a man in his late 40s. Professor C's research focuses on issues of social justice within the context of special education. He also mentioned being interested in research endeavours that explore narrative pedagogy within the arts and has recently begun to focus on adult education. While earning his PhD in education, Professor C was a special education elementary teacher and worked for a large public school board. He has a total of 11 years of elementary school teaching experience.

Professor C self-identified as a critical pedagogue and defines the overarching principle of this role as follows:

Okay. So for me I think it would mean having an approach, um, that is purposefully considering social justice oriented learning, which is something that needs to be a part of the content of learning experiences, but also a part of the methodology that is at the core of how somebody is approaching teaching learning experiences. So, it's not just learning about a particular subject area, but its also learning through, um, equitably oriented dynamics in the classroom.

During our interview, Professor C explained that "equitable oriented dynamics in the

classroom” are constructions of learning contexts that are both “proactive” and “responsive.” Professor C went on to state that he both models proactive and responsive dispositions and creates assignments and classroom activities that also provide students with opportunities to develop proactive and responsive dispositions within themselves while nestled in the context of social justice teaching. Professor C also discussed the rationale as to why these particular aims were paramount:

But then, the other thing too is then you come back to, what is the whole purpose of the program and it’s to prepare you for something that you’re going to be doing where there’s absolutely no certainty.... You don’t know what’s going to happen when you’re teaching. So, dealing with ambiguity is something that, uh, I think is important for people to, uh, recognize that that’s an important thing that we need to work on.

The theme that resonated throughout my interview with Professor C was his emphasis on fostering an ability to equitably respond to the different needs of students and to the unanticipated social justice related circumstances, which frequently occur within schools. Based on his responses, such as the one shared above, it seemed that Professor C was invested in teaching students to be aware of the issues and thereafter formulating and carrying out an action plan that best addresses the contextual circumstance. I now move onto describing Professor Q’s background and teaching philosophy.

Professor Q is a woman in her early 30s. Professor Q earned her PhD in Education a few years ago and she has had many cross-cultural teaching experiences, which included teaching both high school students and adult learners in educational contexts overseas. In terms of her teaching philosophy, Professor Q emphasized the idea that she does not like labels:

Being a critical pedagogue means being open minded and we have become quick to label things and labels restrict you and box you in and you should not be boxed in.... Labels are confining.... You can’t always identify by a label, it is a plurality of isms of something beyond that. By open minds I mean that you have to be open

and you have to be aware of the environment that students and colleagues are sharing with you.

Furthermore, Professor Q self-identified as a critical pedagogue in that she advocates for students with equity issues and is always attempting to “recognize the power dynamics that are often invisible.” She goes on to explain that invisible social issues are often felt when we examine what is not happening in the classroom:

In classrooms, when there is a silence, not dialogue, and the people are not comfortable speaking. ... For instance, when asking someone to deconstruct their identity, people often do not speak. So, you ask yourself what are the power dynamics in the class especially if there are many minority groups? What is being said and what is not being said? What is not being said speaks volumes. Look at who is feeling comfortable and who is not. This is often about institutional structural issues. These are felt but we are not aware where the discomfort comes from.

Professor Q described her use of critical theory and various theorists as mostly a blended approach. She mentioned that she is always seeking out new and relevant research within the critical literature and research community. However, the critical researchers that have played a pivotal role in framing her views were Freire, McLaren, Giroux, Lisa Deplit, Portelli, Patrick Solomon, and Deborah Mayor. Professor Q’s own graduate work was centered on discourses on deficit thinking and its interrelationship with dominant forms of societal power and teaching discourses. Professor Q’s appeal to prominent critical theorists such as Freire and Giroux among many others, her research focus on deficit thinking, and strong desire to “advocate for human beings that have felt discomfort and have not been granted basic human rights” indicated a committed critical pedagogue who attempts to embody and enact the principles of transformation and change.

When asked to describe the key learning outcomes for the Social Issues and Equity course, Professor Q highlighted the following:

The main goal is to have students develop a critical awareness about issues that students in their classrooms may be experiencing, understand the history of schooling and know why schooling is the way it is, and I want students to challenge their thinking and my thinking.

Professor Q also went on to describe the importance of facilitating critical, and sometimes contentious, classroom dialogue. Professor Q referred to these types of intense dialogues as “courageous conversations” and positioned them as pivotal in both the “facilitation of critical pedagogy and the development of a critical consciousness.” Overall, Professor Q’s critical theoretical frameworks as well as her keen interest in developing students’ CC through facilitating “courageous conversations” seemed to position her as a suitable critical pedagogue for this study.

Professor S and Professor J

The Frontlines course was co-taught by two sessional instructors, Professor S and Professor J, a woman in her mid-20s and a man in his mid-20s, respectively. I will now first describe Professor S as she has taken the primary role in developing and teaching the Frontlines course. Next, I describe Professor J in more detail.

Professor S’s undergraduate degree was in English and Psychology. Professor S also went on to complete a Bachelor of Education degree, and most recently, graduated with a Master of Education degree focused on student resilience and a sense of belonging.

Professor S identified as a critical pedagogue and emphasized that she interweaves her view of social justice into the Frontlines course. Professor S defines social justice in the following way: “Uh, so thinking of equity over equality, so no, not everyone should be treated the same, because everyone is different, meaning they have different challenges, different strengths, different needs. And, in a classroom, students should be treated accordingly.” Professor S then goes on to explain how her view of

social justice translates into her own teaching practice:

Frontlines, it's all about having the teacher candidates get to know the students for who they are. So they're not just students, but they're, they're people, they have feelings and emotions and experiences, and they're good and they're bad, and they have challenges.

Here we see how the student cultural backpack is highlighted as key when considering academic achievement, which is also centered by critical pedagogy (Apple, 2001; Freire, 1973; Giroux, 2008; McLaren, 2009).

Aligning with views expressed by critical pedagogues who argue against traditional hierarchical professor-student relationships (Giroux, 1988a; McLaren, 2009), Professor S also emphasizes the importance of modeling and establishing respectful, accommodating, and empathetic relationships with her Frontlines students:

When I talk about accommodating, it's... social justice. Bringing social justice to the relationship between my students and I at the university, practising what I preach, so accommodating to their needs or their challenges, or what they have going on at home. And through that, hoping that they learn through our relationship how a relationship should be with a student, whether it's at a grade school level or a high school level.

The Frontlines course was developed collaboratively by Professor S and the Associate Dean of the Preservice program. Frontlines was designed to introduce preservice teacher candidates to the foundational practices for mentoring Intermediate and Senior level students (e.g., students in Grade 7 through Grade 9) designated "at-risk." In Frontlines, teacher candidates are provided with the insights and skill set to aid in preparing at-risk students to deal with the complex and changing world. Professor S describes the Frontlines course in the following way:

So, we work with the teacher candidates, um, teaching them how to work best with the youth considered in risk. In risk can mean in risk of not graduating for social, emotional, academic challenges. So, we teach them how to best motivate

these students and how to teach these students to believe in themselves because often they've been put down or made to believe they're not capable.

The key learning expectations, as stated in the syllabus and highlighted by Professor S are as follows: (a) Recognizing and being sensitive to the diverse experiences and backgrounds of students at-risk; (b) developing, using, accommodating and modifying expectations, instructional strategies and assessment practices based on the development or special needs of all students; (c) inquiring into practice through reflection, active engagement, and collaboration; (d) facilitating collaboration and cooperation among students at-risk. Professor S's stated student learning outcomes aligned with the learning expectations outlined on the syllabus.

Professor J recently started co-teaching the Frontlines course with Professor S. Professor J majored in History and minored in Geography, earned his Bachelor of Education degree soon after, and was getting ready to graduate with a Master of Education degree when the interview took place. Professor J identifies as a critical pedagogue and explains that his teaching practice is centered on developing a multi-epistemological lens among his students:

Uh, one thing with a 21st-century and highly interconnected, globalized world is that we really do need to exam the multiple perspectives that everyone in society has and from historically disadvantaged groups, whether it was based off race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliations, or even political affiliations.

Throughout our interview, Professor J repeatedly mentions the importance of providing multiple world views to students and encouraging students to continuously question normative mainstream societal ways of thinking and being: "Um, one of the things that we kind of push students out to do is to recognize that not everybody comes from the same background, not everybody prescribes to the same thinking or the same beliefs."

Professor J also goes on to mention his key learning outcomes: “Yeah, one of my key learning outcomes is just to ensure students don't just accept what is the normal. Don't just accept what society tells us is OK.” The practice of questioning societal norms aligns with the critical questioning practice emphasized by critical pedagogues such as Freire (1973) and McLaren (2009).

Professor J also emphasized that he is always critically reflecting on the messages and content communicated to his students. In doing so, it is common for him to stop and self-correct messages or ideas that may be misinterpreted or come across the wrong way:

Because I know in my own practices, in my own teaching experiences if I catch myself or something I say, even if it has the best intention, comes off wrong I stop. I stop period. I stop the class and say no, I have to address this because I feel what I said could be either one, interpreted wrong or taken wrong.

Throughout our interview, Professor J seemed to be a very conscientious instructor who has adopted a critical worldview. Professor S and Professor J seemed to be well suited in the co-teaching of the Frontlines class as they both exuded a youthful, friendly, flexible, and hopeful energy that was kindly received by the Frontlines students they taught. The Frontlines classes were held once a week over the course of the school year and included 32 hours of total class time.

Now that I have described the recruitment of professor participants, the interview structure utilized for the teacher educators, and the background as well as the theoretical roots and teaching practices used by Faculty of Education participants, I begin the discussion of student participants.

Recruitment of Preservice Teacher Participants

In order to recruit preservice teacher candidates, I arranged to visit and speak to the preservice students in each of the professor's courses. Upon visiting each of these

classes, I introduced myself, and delivered a 3-minute oral informational session describing what the study was about, and invited students to participate. After inviting the students to participate in the study, I left the informational consent forms that described the research focus and the process entailed. Ensuing these recruitment steps was the most time-efficient and pragmatic way to recruit students as they were grouped together and I could address them at the same time.

Since I was trying to recruit a wide range of participants, not just those who were interested in social justice, the informational session and consent form emphasized that this study was interested in exploring the critical learning experiences that may be happening throughout the year within that particular class. The total pool of potential participants was estimated to be around 200 students. I asked that the students who wished to participate in the study bring a copy of the signed consent form to me at the beginning of the following scheduled class time. At that point in time, I made myself available to collect the signed consent forms. In total, I received 37 signed consent forms from student participants and this group of 37 students made up the student sample from the beginning to the end of the study. Six to eight preservice teacher participants were secured for each of the five courses in the study. However, there was some overlap as a few of the preservice teacher participants were enrolled in two of the courses selected for the study. There were no dropout participants throughout the study. Upon securing 37 preservice teacher participants, I began the first phase of data collection. The first phase of data collection began in the last week of September 2014 and continued into the first week of October 2014. Once the data were collected, I proceeded to the transcription and analysis.

The data collection for student participants was organized into three main phases. I now describe each of these phases in more detail.

Phase One of Data Collection

Phase One data collection was used as an initial probe to begin to understand the core values students appealed to, the cultural backpacks students carried, the meanings attributed to social justice teaching, and their understanding of structural inequities. These initial probes enabled me to begin to partially understand the CC of each student. The student participants were asked to construct a 3-minute digitally recorded monologue. They were given explicit instructions for this specific task (see Appendix B for the Student Participant Instructions for Creating Digital Reflection). However, the participants were also offered the alternative of being interviewed by me, while simultaneously being digitally recorded. Both the self-made digitally recorded monologues and traditional interviews prompted the participants to specifically reflect on and answer the following questions:

1. Within the world of teaching, what does the phrase *diverse students* mean to you? Please explain.
2. Do you ever think about how your teaching practice will impact the minority students in your classroom? If so, please explain how.
3. Do you have any interest in teaching for social justice? If so, please explain why and how you may do this?
4. How do you feel about the following statement: *Generally speaking, women, poor children, and certain racialized groups and ethnicities have fewer chances to get a good education and get ahead in life?* Please explain and justify your feelings

and thoughts on this statement. (The components of this question are modifications from the work of Diemer, Luke, Rapa, & Catalina, 2014.)

5. Do you ever critically reflect on how your identity, race, gender, or social class (among other factors) will impact your relationship with future students? If so, how? Please explain.

The participants were given explicit and straightforward instructions so that they could specifically focus on answering these specific questions as thoughtfully and comprehensively as possible. In order to keep the scope of the data focused, the participants were encouraged to construct open and critical reflections, but were also told that the open-ended responses should be relevant and associated with the topic of critical learning experiences. The questions were explicit in nature, so that all of the varied participant responses had, more or less, originated from the same reference point of inquiry. If all the participants had been given a loose frame of questions without the explicit instructions, the tendency to veer from the intended mode of inquiry would have been much more likely to occur. Again, the idea was to provide a solid questioning structure but encourage reflective and comprehensive insight that was related to the topic of critical learning.

The participants who chose to do self-constructed digital reflections were instructed to construct and upload the 3-minute monologues within 2 to 5 days. These digitally recorded monologues were then uploaded to a pre-purchased private Vimeo website space. I purchased the Vimeo website directly and the participants were given user-friendly instructions for uploading their digital response to this password-protected space. I offered to help any of the participants who were having technical difficulties. I

also offered to make myself available to upload the digital footage from the device used by the participant if needed. Furthermore, I was the only one who had access to the digital reflections uploaded to the private Vimeo account.

The purpose of the initial self-constructed digital monologues/reflections was to provide the participants with the opportunity to reflect on perhaps sensitive issues and personal learning experiences in the privacy of their own space, on their own terms and within their own chosen time frames (Gatto, 1992). Furthermore, body language, message content, tone, and context were documented in the form of a digital time capsule that provided rich data that was revisited and re-analyzed at any point in time (Nichols, 1991). The data (self-constructed digital reflections and digitally recorded interviews) were analyzed as per the grounded theory methods for data analysis and theory building. In other words, all of the collected digital data, as well as the digitally recorded follow-up interviews, provided the evidence base from which theoretical assertions were built and continually refined using grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

In addition, as previously mentioned, the digital reflections were selectively used to create a short documentary that reflected and explored the themes that emerged from the data analysis. The participants were aware of the potential use of the digital footage collected. This information was provided in the informed consent and informational handout.

After collecting the data from all 37-student participants, I reviewed the digitally recorded film to begin the initial coding analysis and the very beginning of theory building (Charmaz, 2006). At that point, I discerned initial themes in the data so that I had some Frontliness to further explore, modify, and/or refine during Phase Two data collection. At the same time, I remained open to any new and unexpected phenomena.

The data were also transcribed and the transcriptions were reread in the early theory building stages.

Phase Two of the Data Collection (Preservice Teacher Participants)

Keeping the guidelines for intensive interviewing in mind, as suggested by Charmaz (2010), and drawing from the analysis gathered from Phase One of the data collection process, I began Phase Two data collection. First, I sent out an email to all the participants requesting that they sign up for the last set of interviews, which took place in March 2015. The filmed interviews were conducted over a two week period and were held in the film studio on the university campus (a 5-minute walk from the Faculty of Education). Paul, a third-year film student had volunteered to assist me in signing out the film studio space, university camera equipment, setting up the camera, operating the camera, and ensuring that the lighting and sound were adequate. It would have been impossible for me to ensure all of these technical digital recording elements were adequate, while at the same time focusing on interviewing the preservice teacher participants. Therefore, Paul played an important role during Phase Two data collection, and I will credit his contributions on the final film product. Four students who were not able to attend during the time slots and days posted met me at a later date for a filmed interview in the conference room in the Faculty of Education. These interviews were also filmed by Paul. At this point, I had had several months (October 2014 to March 2015) to analyze the data collected in Phase One of the data collection process. Therefore, I entered Phase Two of the data collection process with some themes that needed further refining and modifying (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, the second phase of data collection (which included digitally recorded interviews) further explored what specific experiences

contributed to the participants' CC and their views on teaching for social justice. The following interview questions led Phase Two of the data collection:

1. What are your core values, what beliefs drive you? Name three core values that define who you are.
2. As you think back to your learning experiences within the context of your critical pedagogy class with [instructor's name], what resonates most with you?
3. Describe how your knowledge/beliefs about diverse students has changed as a result of being in [instructor name's] critical pedagogy class?
4. Describe how your knowledge/beliefs about the role of teachers has changed as a result of being in [instructor name's] critical pedagogy class?
5. Describe some specific examples of your socially just teaching practice?
6. What specific readings, discussions, field experiences had the greatest impact on your social justice teaching practices?
7. What experiences BEFORE the program had the greatest impact on your knowledge, attitudes and skills related to teaching for social justice?
8. What experiences DURING the program had the greatest impact on your knowledge, attitudes and skills related to teaching for social justice?
9. What suggestions do you have for making the class stronger in its efforts to develop socially just teachers?

In addition, throughout Phase Two of the data collection, I found opportunities during the interviews to more deeply probe about: (a) the participants' plans to apply what they have learned into their own future teaching environments; (b) the challenges and contradictions that they may be thinking about as related to critical pedagogy, and (c)

what might detract from or reinforce the practices of critical pedagogy in the future classroom day-to-day and year-to-year practices.

Description of Preservice Teacher Participant Sample

The preservice teacher participant sample included 25 female students and 12 male students for a total of 37. The majority of preservice teacher participants (30 in total) were between the ages of 21 and 29 with the exception of six students who were between the ages of 31 to 37, and one student who was 59. Therefore, 30 of the preservice teacher participants were young adults and seven of the participants were more mature adults who revealed more extensive work and life experience. For example, Rick, a White, financially privileged man, was a former lawyer and university professor of law, although he had spent several years taking on various paid positions prior (he had been a taxicab driver, carpenter, and millwright). Nelly was in her third year of a PhD program in educational psychology when she decided to take a leave of absence and earn her Ontario Teaching Certificate. Furthermore, Bonnie and Riley both worked full-time for several years teaching English in Korea before they attended the Faculty of Education. Bobbie, a mature Muslim Arabic male, came to Canada with his family from Dubai and planned on teaching within the Canadian educational system, hence his presence at the Faculty of Education. In Dubai, Bobbie worked as a certified high school teacher and taught digital technology courses. Atma, a mature Pakistani man, had worked for Microsoft for several years, had earned a Master of Business Administration, and also taught undergraduate business courses in Pakistan. Anne, a married woman and mother of two young children, had worked in Fort McMurray as a lab analyst, and had collaborated with coworkers who had diverse cultural backgrounds. This group possessed

some varying skill sets, worldviews, and ideas about teaching in general which, at least partially, contributed to their understanding of social justice.

Although the group of mature student participants seemed to have more extensive and meaningful work experiences, the younger group of student participants also shared interesting and rich life experiences that partially revealed who they were as individuals. For instance, Antonia, who was 22, was an opera singer and professional dancer who gave private singing and dance lessons. Jordan was in the highest ranks of female Canadian Cadets and also taught courses within the Canadian Armed Forces. Fredrick was a 20-year-old talented musician who was raised by a high-profile lawyer and university professor in an upper echelon community of a big city. His conversational language was abounding with social justice terms, moral dilemmas, and his life was guided by Aristotelian philosophical principles. A few of these participants, such as Ayla (age 24) and Kyle (age 27), experienced some intense and deeply consequential life events that undoubtedly shaped their identities and worldviews. Ayla was raised by her mother and grew up experiencing the effects of dire poverty, while Kyle struggled with a severe learning disability and was bullied for most of his life. Sometimes, it was these deeply rooted stories that tinted the participants' core values and, in turn, their teaching philosophy. For example, when discussing his core values, Kyle exclaimed: "Don't be a dick is my core value, from my upbringing and teachers. I don't want to be the person to bully or be excluded. This happened to me and I don't want anyone repeating that in my own classroom." The participants' identity outside of the Faculty of Education seemed to visibly cross over into their teaching identity.

Eleven student participants relocated from other various towns scattered through

Southwestern Ontario (e.g., Toronto, Burlington, Chatham, Markham). One student, Anne, relocated from Calgary, Alberta to attend the Faculty of Education. Bobbie relocated from Dubai with his family a few years prior to attending the Faculty of Education, however, the move was prompted by his desire to complete his teaching degree and teach high school in Canada.

The remaining 25 preservice teacher participants were local students who either had grown up in the area or resided in the area for at least 5 years. Most of these students obtained their undergraduate degree within the same university and then went on to apply to the Faculty of Education. The sample included a range of diverse cultural upbringings, religious backgrounds, work experiences, worldviews, and schooling experiences. Many of the participants also had some commonalities. Most of the participants were from middle-class backgrounds, were White, and had Christian roots. However, regardless of cultural or religious backgrounds, most of the participants had an interest in teaching for social justice and many really wanted to “give back” to the students they would one day be teaching. In the next section, I describe the main categories for data sorting and theory building and the logic that led to their co-construction.

It is also important to note that each participant was assigned a pseudonym within the written thesis and transcriptions were coded under this name throughout the thesis. In addition, when discussing participants in terms of frequency, I utilize a system used by Rhodes, Hill, Thompson, and Elliot (1994) and a format outlined by Richie et al. (1997). The phrases “the majority of” and “most” were used to endorse themes expressed by at least 21 and more of the 37 participants. The phrase “many” was used to indicate 10 to 20. The phrase “some” showed that six to nine participants supported the theme. “A few” was used to indicate themes endorsed by five or fewer participants.

Constructing a Documentary Film

As previously mentioned, the construction of the educational film incorporated some key elements of a documentary film, and is a product of the final research meant to complement the traditional written PhD dissertation. The film visually and orally represents the grounded theory that emerged by selectively editing and utilizing the digital footage that was used as data throughout the study. The film will hopefully be used for educational purposes. The audience may include teacher educators interested in critical pedagogy, preservice teacher candidates, novice and experienced contract teachers in the public educational system, and educational administrators. When constructing the film, I followed, to the extent possible, the documentary guidelines and theoretical insights as shared by prominent documentary scholars and filmmakers such as Bill Nichols (1991) and others, and also appealed to the field of visual studies (Banks, 2007).

The discussion that follows has summarized the key guidelines offered by Nichols (1991), intertwined the work of other documentary writers, and incorporated relevant theories from visual studies. I begin by defining the term documentary and then discuss the issues that were relevant when constructing the documentary.

In defining and better understanding documentary film, I have found it helpful to examine its historical origin. Ellis and McLane (2005) suggest that “English-Language documentary could be said to have started with American Robert Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North*, shot in Canada and released in the United States in 1922” (p. 3). Much like contemporary documentary filmmakers, Flaherty wanted to feature the “Eskimos” (now referred to as Indigenous or Inuit groups) he had befriended in his travels so that he could share his experiences with others back home. Therefore, he created a new kind of movie

that possessed the foundational elements of contemporary documentary film. As Ellis and McLane point out, the root word for the term “documentary” is document, which is Latin for *docere*, which in turn means to teach (p. 3). The intention of very early documentary filmmaking was to record, or otherwise document, that which is factual and authentic, and then to use this document to inform, teach, or possibly warn an audience. The educational film created at the end of this study also fulfills these pragmatic, traditional, and foundational documentary roles.

From a denser theoretical perspective, much like critical pedagogy, the concept of a documentary is not a fixed and static idea. In other words, there is no set of completed categories, forms, or style of documentary films:

The term documentary must itself be constructed in much the same manner as the world we know and share. Documentary film practice is the site of contestation and change. Of greater importance than the ontological finality of a definition—how well it captures the “thingness” of the documentary—is the purpose to which a definition is put and the facility with which it locates and addresses important questions, those that remain unsettled from the past and those posed by the present. (Nichols, 1991, p. 12)

This theoretical underpinnings of documentary film also fits well with what this research is attempting to capture. Schooling as a reproductive ideological apparatus used to maintain the privilege, power, and wealth of dominant groups, has been, and continues to be an unsettled and for me, unsettling question. The film reveals the factors that contribute to, and disrupt, this deeply embedded reproductive function of schooling. The development of CC has the potential to significantly alter the traditional power dynamics that serve to maintain the status quo. It is important to note that enacting CC is “rarely a one-time awakening, but rather it is a process of multiple avenues of insightful moments as well as difficult times of denial and pain” (Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2004, p. 83).

Some of “these insightful moments” were captured when collecting data and are featured in the educational film.

The data collection and analysis were treated separately from the construction of the film. During this stage, I treated the digital recordings as data to be analyzed, as per Charmaz (2010). It is also important to mention that the documentary film is one of two final products of the PhD thesis dissertation research. The film supplements the written thesis dissertation by *visually* illustrating the emerging themes. The construction of the film began after all the data had been collected and analyzed and after the final write-up of the grounded theory had been completed.

Although the participants knew that their digital reflections might later be featured in a film resembling a documentary, they were instructed to thoughtfully reflect on the research questions being posed. Then, the main task for the participants was to answer the research questions as accurately as possible rather than creating a dramatic performance with the hope to be featured as the lead role in the film. The digital reflections likely resemble a special type of self-constructed digital medium that Lebow (2012), a documentary creator and theorist, discusses in her book entitled *The Cinema of Me*. When creating self-made, first-person films, Lebow interrogates the face value of individual subjectivity. Her main point, which was considered throughout the entire study, especially when analyzing and making sense of performative behaviours, is that first-person digital reflections are frequently not about the *me* being documented, but rather, more about the cultural identities and personal contextualized history that shapes a sense of the *me*. Lebow emphasizes, as many critical theorists also do, that the “I” does not exist in isolation; rather, it is always relational to the “other.” Interestingly enough, a

level of CC may be evident if the participants themselves are aware of this very fact. To elaborate, if preservice teacher candidates are able to explicitly convey the critical idea that their own identity is relational—meaning “who they are *not*” significantly shapes “who they are”—then it would be reasonable to assume that they have done some work to develop their critical lens.

Once the datum were analyzed, I proceeded to edit the film to create the film. According to Nichols (1991), the construction of documentary film entails examining three points of view: the filmmaker, the documentary film itself, and the viewer. Each one of these essential elements is discussed below, as the criteria were considered when constructing the documentary film.

First, it was important to acknowledge that the intentions of the filmmaker are paramount in documentary film construction. As noted by Waugh (1984), if documentary films are to be instrumental in the process of change, they should be crafted with and for the people who could benefit from the change. Waugh’s statement was considered throughout this study as I attempted to provide the participants with as much voice and choice for self-expression as reasonably possible, while also attempting to limit the power dynamic between the filmmaker and participants.

In terms of the viewers’ point of view, Nichols (1991) highlights documentary viewers as being the ultimate judge as to how well the documentary captures the phenomena being explored. In other words, the scenes displayed in the documentary will resonate with the viewer on one level or another; they may, at different times, agree, disagree, or remain indifferent. Waugh (1984) notes that documentary films, like all cultural forms, contain ideological positioning. To add to this point, Bruzzi (2007)

emphasizes that contemporary forms of documentary have varied influence on viewers: “Because audiences are familiar with the aesthetics used in current documentary filmmaking (and often employ the same styles in their personal home movies videos), and because audiences often ascribe validity to real-life images, documentaries can carry great weight” (p. 84). Still, because overtly political documentaries are currently ubiquitous (e.g., *An Inconvenient Truth*, 2006; *Sicko*, 2007; *Miss Representation*, 2011) and tend to both document political issues while also swaying public opinion, viewers may also be cautious, reluctant, or fear potential exploitation (McLane, 2007). I expect that viewers will connect to the various film representations in similar and different ways.

Within the paradigm of documentary film construction, filmmakers must consider three main variables over which they may only have some control: (a) the relations of power between filmmaker and the subject; (b) the forms of sponsorship or consent that may apply; and (c) who will own and distribute the film, and to what end (Nichols, 1991). In regards to the power dynamic that exists between the filmmaker and the participants, as previously mentioned, this documentary attempted to maximize the power and autonomy of the participants as much as possible. In terms of sponsorship and consent issues, I followed through with asking for fully informed consent on behalf of each participant. There was no corporate sponsorships that complicated this study. Lastly, the ownership and distribution of this film resides in the realm of an academic dissertation and it will be used to further disseminate knowledge free of charge per the protocol within this academic context.

Another area of relative importance, when it comes to issues of filmmaker control, is the idea that the documentary maker cannot control her basic subject: history

(Nichols, 1991). My film is a snapshot in time, and now part of the historical record. Representing the historical world, rather than the imaginary one, is what founds the institution of documentary filmmakers. As Benson and Snee (2008) emphasize, in order to most accurately represent the historical world, oppositional arguments should be heard if present, and arguments should be backed by accurate evidence that has been scrutinized by the filmmaker and is open to audience scrutiny upon viewing. In this context, documentary filmmakers are expected to be responsible and accountable for the claims they are making (Nichols, 1991).

It is important to note, as Bruzzi (2006) emphasizes, that the presence of a camera and the idea of a potential future audience, likely influenced the behaviours and representation of the participants in this study. I anticipated some level of “performance” as the participants may sense that the camera represents a future audience and align their digitally recorded reflections with this in mind (Banks, 2007; Bruzzi, 2006). Further nuancing this point, Williams (1993) argues documentary film reveals “only the ideologies and consciousness that construct competing truths—the fictional master narratives by which we make sense of events” (p. 3). In analyzing the digital data, I was especially sensitive to Bruzzi’s point that documentary film is a representation of various styles of performative acts, which must be further contextualized and interpreted.

The other relevant key point, mentioned by Bruzzi (2006), is that the “performative aspects of documentary have by now become commonplace” (p. 222) and are understood by viewers of reality-based television programs. Some examples of reality shows of which I am personally familiar are: *Survivor*, *The Bachelor*, *Wife Swap*, and *Big Brother*. In this light, I also anticipated that the construction of digital reflections may be

influenced by contemporary television programs and Internet sites that have increasingly featured performative styles of video diaries and informational and confessional styles of reality shows (see, for example, the work of Banks, 2007, for a further discussion on the influence of the contemporary and ubiquitous media images). For this study, this may have meant that the participants may have decided, either deliberately or unintentionally, to emulate some of the pop culture performative styles of video diaries. Although these performative aspects likely played out in the minds of participants, overall, their digitally recorded responses appeared to be honest and genuine accounts of their learning experiences.

In terms of the theoretical frameworks that guide the filmmaker's construction of a documentary, documentaries take shape around an informing logic (Nichols, 1991). This logic requires a representation or argument about the historical world. This logic operates in terms of problem solving. A paradigmatic structure for a documentary would involve the establishment of a problem, the presentation of the background of the problem, followed by an examination of its current complexity, often including more than one perspective or point of view. Then, a concluding section is presented which offers a potential solution, or a path toward a solution is introduced. This logical problem–solution framework fits with the scope of the problem and the research questions discussed in the previous section. In sum, the editing process applied in this study focused on portraying the participants' evolving or non-evolving critical consciousness. The editing processes attempted to fairly and accurately convey the factors and characteristics that contribute to the main phenomena studied (range of developing to non-developing CC states). The film cuts and editing are considered the evidence for the

argument. The final version of the educational documentary film represents some of the main themes found in the study.

Overall, the educational documentary film represents a concrete representation of people, places, situations, and events. However, its success lies in its ability to induce the viewer to derive larger lessons, broader outlooks, or more overarching concepts from the detail it provides (Waugh, Winton, & Baker, 2010). Within this paradigm, I ensured that every cut and edit was based on reasonable interpretations, which added more credibility to the argument presented. Working through the real and the performative was indeed a truly complex if not impossible task. The performative aspect of documentary film presents various limitations for this study, although, on the other hand, the performative element of documentary film as highlighted by Bruzzi (2006), did bring an interesting angle for the data analysis. For instance, Sunderland and Denny (2002) counter the problems of the performative contemporary documentary film as they ask,

When is social life without performance? . . . Performance is crucial to the maintenance of interactional flow of everyday life. . . . Culturally specified, learned, and rehearsed, performative routines (in physical and verbal actions) are part of what make life both predictable and intelligible. These routines are embedded, implicated, reflective and productive of culture that convoluted semiotic matrix in which we live. (p. 11)

Another problematic aspect of documentary film in need of consideration is, as Nichols (1991) points out, that documentary film presents the viewer with a reality that has been constructed. The knowledge produced in documentary is viewed as highly mediated as it is a medium that is reconstructed for the purposes of the filmmakers. Essentially, the documentary film can be seen as similar to the real world; however, it is not an exact replica of historical or social practices. Furthermore, documentary film is seen as making an argument about the historical world. It does so by visually representing the likeliness

of the world it stands for. In addition, it also conveys an argument about this world either explicitly or implicitly.

Distancing the researcher from the participants' documented digital response may have generated a more authentic and well thought out response; however, the analysis of the data was not a straightforward process. As emphasized by Lebow (2012), the idea of subjectivity, as represented in first-person documentary film, must be critically examined when drawing conclusions or forming interpretations. Analyzing the participants' self-constructed digital reflections entailed the complex task of interpreting how the represented *me* is influenced and shaped by broader cultural contexts. As Lebow suggests, the interplay between the individual and culture is difficult in and of itself; however, critically exploring how this tension is represented in a documentary clip may become more challenging. This was an area of data analysis that I was trying to be aware of throughout the process.

A current cultural, millennial-related phenomenon that is worth mentioning as it likely influenced the participants' construction of digital reflections is the use of the digital selfie (Blackburn, 2014). In addition to Bruzzi's (2006) perspective of documentary film as performative in nature, and Lebow's (2012) cautious interpretation of individuality and subjectivity within first-person film, the millennial selfie medium (a digital snapshot of oneself which is usually uploaded to a social media space) adds another complicated layer to data analysis. James Franco (2013), an actor, director, and writer, describes the purpose of the selfie in the following way:

As our social lives become more electronic, we become more adept at interpreting social media. A texting conversation might fall short of communicating how you are feeling, but a selfie might make everything clear in an instant. Selfies are tools of communication more than marks of vanity (but yes, they can be a little vain).

We all have different reasons for posting them, but, in the end, selfies are avatars: Mini-Me's that we send out to give others a sense of who we are. I am actually turned off when I look at an account and don't see any selfies, because I want to know who I'm dealing with. In our age of social networking, the selfie is the new way to look someone right in the eye and say, "Hello, this is me." (pp. 11-13)

Simon Blackburn (2014), an academic philosopher, does not view the selfie phenomenon in the same way as Franco (2013). In his book, *Mirror, Mirror: The Uses and Abuses of Self-Love*, Blackburn argues that the selfie practice is disturbing as it represents a level of grandiosity and extreme narcissism that strives for vain attention. The type of dangerous narcissism and egotistical self-love, reflected in selfies, has the potential to damage civil and cooperative relations as selfie creators are likely only concerned with their own narrow world, argues Blackburn. Although some form of self-love and self-respect are necessary for any individual, selfies may exemplify an extreme preoccupation with the self that may nudge individuals to ignore any other reality that is not similar to their own (Blackburn, 2014). In light of some of the varying views of contemporary selfie practices, I was especially attuned to the style of digital representation that participants engaged in. Overall, none of the constructed digital reflections and digitally documented interviews showed extreme narcissism or grandiosity, nor did the camera seem to deter the participants from critically reflecting on issues that were not directly relevant to them.

Another important point worth mentioning, which is tied to the purpose of constructing the educational documentary film within this proposed study, is the broader question of why one might choose to conduct research and construct knowledge on any topic in the first place. Research is meant to be shared with others; it is meant to be utilized, and continually refined and improved over time. In terms of successfully disseminating and mobilizing PhD knowledge, a traditional PhD thesis dissertation will

likely not have the same outcome as compared to an educational documentary film. I argue that the educational documentary film, compared to the traditional PhD formats, will more likely enter the mental disposition of its viewers and in turn, may then provoke some form of productive action. As stated by Nichols (1991),

Documentary is *a view* of the world. ... It represents the historical world, the world of power, dominance, and control, the arena of struggle, resistance, and contestation. ... Documentary asks us to agree that the world itself fits within the frame of its representations, and asks us to plan our agenda for action accordingly. (p. 115)

Documentation, as presented in documentary films, serves as evidence. However, examining evidence of what, becomes a fundamental question. The performative aspect of documentary film and the contemporary cultural fascination with confessional and informational reality shows, as depicted on both television and on the Internet, entangles this question in a rather complex web of possible interpretations (Blackburn, 2014; Bruzzi, 2006; Lebow, 2013). Like many other documentary filmmakers, I was also preoccupied with answering the question: This educational documentary film presents evidence of what? In answering this fundamental question of how accurately the film captures a representation of reality, the filmmaker must step beyond the factual and the proposed evidence and must move into the construction of meaning. Here again, the interpretations of the performative aspects of the digital reflections were of utmost importance. Then, once an interpretive argument began to take shape, the facts started to fit into a system of signification that produces a web of meaning.

As previously mentioned, documentary methodology emphasizes that documentary film does not present *the* truth but rather *a* truth—or better yet, a view or way of seeing. The argument and the representation of a case can be divided into three main categories: perspective, commentary, and argument.

Perspective is the way in which a documentary text offers a particular point of view through its depiction of the world. It leads the viewer to infer a tacit argument. The argument is implied and is sustained by rhetorical strategies of organization, such as selecting what to shoot and editing processes.

The commentary conveyed throughout any documentary, whether it is participant voices or voice over, provides the filmmaker with an explicit and direct form of argumentation. There were two things to consider when evaluating a documentary's commentary. First, it was important to realize that the "degree of knowledge" held by the commentator affects what is learned by the audience. The audience often assumes that the commentator is all-knowing, but this was not the case. Also, the "degree of subjectivity" on behalf of the participants and the filmmaker alike will influence the degree to which participants will be featured in the documentary. To explain, the impulse is to document participants who can be themselves despite the camera; priority goes to individuals who can express a strong persona that does not seem to be conjured up by the camera. Filmmakers' subjectivity enters the picture, as the tendency is to capture participants who are expressive, complex, and have depth. This leads to empathetic identification and involvement with viewers. As Nichols (1991) emphasizes, in documentary, there is a desire to capture performance stripped of training, rehearsing, and the self-regulation that usually accompany it (p. 12).

Finally, the argument made in the educational documentary film is based on a form of realism, which grounds the text in the historical world. It is considered to be a mark of authenticity since it shows that the filmmaker "was there" in the historical moment captured. Consequently, the viewer can also "go there," to the historical moments experienced by the filmmaker and the participants. Also, the realist style acts as

evidence of physical presence in the world, of the authenticity of sound and image, and of the filmmakers' limited power over the world with which he or she engages (Nichols, 1991, p. 185).

Within documentary methodology, the concept of objectivity means reporting what was said and done in the historical world. As such, the claim is that documentary realism validates the historical authenticity of what was said and witnessed, even if it does not assess it. Interpretation of the facts in realist documentary is seen as constructing an argument based on representation. This interpretation builds on facts, and the validation of these facts depends upon how the filmmaker progresses the prescribed documentary logic, as described above.

Benson and Sneer (2008) emphasize that documentary films have the potential to influence public opinion in significant ways. Grierson and Hardy (1966) defined documentary as the "creative treatment of actuality" and insisted that the documentary film was obligated to play an informative role to society. In fact, Grierson's vision for documentary film was founded on the idea that this form of medium would dramatize the political issues that had grown beyond the comprehension of citizens. The documentary film mission was ideally one that aimed to uphold the principles of democracy by leading the public through the wilderness of the political rhetoric that reproduces the status quo. This Griersonian tradition has been challenged in many ways. However, rhetoric and politics have remained at the core of documentary scholarship throughout time. This perspective has a compatible tie-in with the aims of critical pedagogy. Now that I have discussed the aspects of the documentary making methods I attempted to adhere when constructing the film, I move into discussing briefly ethical concerns.

Ethics

The study complied with the policies of the University of Windsor's Research Ethics Board, along with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (2010) *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS). Briefly, this study focused on the important aspect of maintaining a "respect for human dignity" in a way that required the research to "be conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the inherent worth of all human beings and of the respect and consideration that they are due" (TCPS, 2010, p. 8).

Following the TCPS, the guidelines of this research were grounded in the following three core principles: respect for persons, a concern for welfare, and justice. Respect for persons recognizes the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due. Respect for persons also incorporates obligations to respect the economy and to protect those with developing, impaired, or diminished economy. A concern for welfare meant that I carefully considered the welfare of each participant and the "quality of that person's experience of life in all its aspects (TCPS, 2010, p. 9). Justice refers to the obligation to treat people fairly and equitably. In the context of the study, fairness did "entail treating all with participates with equal respect and concern" (TCPS, 2010, p. 10).

According to Prosser (2010), visual researchers (i.e., researchers who treat photography and digital videos as data) working within the qualitative research paradigm must deal with additional challenges when working with traditional Research Ethics Boards (REBs). Prosser (2010) describes traditional REBs, such as those typically

located in universities across the United States, Canada, and New Zealand, as being bound by ethical regulations that appeal to limited value notions. To elaborate, the regulatory medical model of research ethics remains to be the guiding principle for many REBs and this model does not have the capacity to fully appreciate nor to understand the collaborative relationships or the empowering, caring, and compassionate approaches that qualitative researchers seek to establish with the research participants (Prosser, 2010). Accordingly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) view traditional medical based models of ethics as “out of date for the purposes of qualitative research and entirely useless for the development of culturally, racially and ethically sensitive methods” (p. 1123).

In light of the above, and as anticipated, the ethics application for this PhD dissertation had to explicitly and comprehensively cover the major ethical issues of anonymity, confidentiality, safeguarding information, legal copyright issues, and dissemination of visual data. In terms of anonymity, I argued that visual methods, such as digital reflections and the digital documentary, revealed important information and constructed knowledge in ways that word-based methods alone could not (Lincoln & Denzin, 2010). In addition, I also argue that the intentional attempts to conceal a participant’s identity, in the context of qualitative visual research, without careful reasoning and due cause, removes the very purpose of the overall aims of collecting visual data; namely, fulfilling the participants’ moral rights of having their reflections heard and seen (Prosser, 2010).

In terms of confidentiality, participants were provided with detailed informed consents and were orally briefed about the study. Within the informed consent form and during the oral brief, the potential pool of participants were made aware that their digital

responses would likely be used to construct an educational documentary film, and therefore, anonymity and confidentiality could not be guaranteed. The debrief provided before each digitally recorded interview/digital reflection also reminded participants that due to the nature of the study, confidentiality could not be guaranteed. In fact, it was emphasized that the point of the study was to share the participants' emerging views on the specified phenomena at hand. Legal copyright issues and dissemination of the visual data for financial gain were not relevant issues as the final educational documentary film is intended to be used for educational purposes only and will not be sold for a profit of any kind. The copyright belongs to me, the principal researcher, as this digital documentary was also used to supplement the argument in the PhD dissertation. In terms of visual dissemination, the participants were made fully aware of how the data were used and understood that all digitally recorded footage was intended to be used for future educational purposes. All the participants had the right to opt out of the study. Again, all of these items were mentioned in the informed consent and shared orally throughout each class recruitment visit.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter shares detailed findings from the research. The purpose of the current study was to develop a grounded theory that helps explain how critical pedagogy, as practised by a small group of teacher educators, influences the preservice teacher candidates' development of a critical consciousness. Drawing from the work of Kathy Charmaz (2010), the constructivist grounded theory methodology was used in the study to analyze interview data from 37 preservice teacher participants and seven professors in one Ontario Faculty of Education. As was previously mentioned, the method of constructivist grounded theory was used for data analysis, which culminates in the construction of a theory that is grounded in the data provided by the participants in the study. The study explored the pathways to a productive CC as experienced by students situated in a Faculty of Education that states it is committed to issues of social justice, and taught by self-identified critical pedagogues. The facilitation of CC was shaped and influenced by a variety of complicated variables, both at the classroom level and at the institutional level.

In this chapter, in discussing each theme, direct quotations from participants are included to provide texture and richness and assist in illustrating the emergent theory. As discussed earlier in the methods chapter, each participant was given a pseudonym and quotes are coded under this name. As was mentioned earlier, this study uses a system first utilized by Rhodes, Hill, Thompson, and Elliot (1994) as some results are discussed using particular terms to indicate the frequency of endorsement. The phrases “the majority of” and “most” were used to endorse themes expressed by at least 21 and more of the 37

participants. The phrase “many” was used to indicate 10 to 20. The phrases “some” showed that six to nine supported the theme, while “a few” was used to indicate themes endorsed by five or fewer participants.

The first section of this chapter provides an exploration of the key themes emerging out of the analysis of Phase One data collection. Phase One data collection was conducted in the beginning of the school year, during the fall of 2014. Phase Two data collection was conducted toward the end of the school year, during the spring of 2015. These findings support the overall notion that the development of CC among preservice students while situated in a Faculty of Education, and taught in some classes by critical professors is subject to various structural and institutional barriers and challenges. In this chapter, I move into discussing the pedagogical and educational structural forces that worked to constrain the facilitation of a sophisticated form of critical consciousness, and also discuss some pedagogical approaches that worked to disrupt problematic normative practices found in some educational classrooms.

The next section of this chapter provides a close examination of the three constructs that make up the emergent theory. The section begins with an explanation of the construct labeled “Teaching for Social Justice.” This construct examines the participants’ views on a variety of social justice issues with a view to establishing an initial broad-based baseline for their level of criticality.

Teaching for Social Justice

Throughout Phase One interviews participants were prompted to speak about their attitudes toward teaching for social justice, their understanding of diversity, the current state of gender relations, and teaching diverse students. Also, they were asked to talk a

little about whether or not their identity, including their multiple and overlapping social locations, would play a role in shaping their pedagogy. In some ways, these questions revealed the preservice teacher participants' perceptions of what it might mean to be a good social justice educator.

At this point, it should be made clear that “there has never been a consensus about how one becomes a teacher” as “opinions differ over the constitution of good pedagogy and how the student teacher might demonstrate competence in the classroom” (Savell & Walshaw, 2001, p. 115). This study does not suggest a specific, prescribed pedagogical path to becoming a good teacher or even a critically conscious teacher. However, I do suggest that adopting a critical pedagogy approach to teaching and learning, and facilitating CC includes developing a sociocultural lens that critically considers, but is not limited to, the structures of capitalism, patriarchy, and racism. The learning processes that contribute to developing this sociocultural lens are foundational to critical pedagogy. Part of developing one's own sociocultural lens involves considering and assessing how capitalism, patriarchy, and racism have been intertwined with one's identity and how this intertwinement implicates our relations with ourselves, our students, and the day-to-day social practices in the world around us. As Britzman (2005) argues, beliefs and knowledge are tied to one's identity and these evolving, and sometimes changing beliefs and knowledges, guide the preservice teacher candidates' intentions and actions when engaged in teaching practices.

Although the meanings associated with social justice that preservice teacher participants shared and discussed during the interviews were associated with their identity as a teacher, they were far from fixed. Rather, working from the dialectical

tradition of thought, identity was differentially performed in different contexts. This is not surprising as “knowledge of oneself is to be understood in relation to the evolving relationships between people and the setting which activities are conducted” (Savell & Walshaw, p. 516). At the same time, teacher identity needs to be understood in the context of this study as shaped by a complex system of values and beliefs that are related to the teaching practices one intends to enact.

The Phase One data collection of the study provided significant insight into participants’ varying levels of critical consciousness. Each of the questions was designed to provide a window into participants’ baseline critical consciousness. In Phase One interviews, I typically asked each participant very early on in the interview if they were interested in teaching for social justice, with an understanding that this would likely provide an entry point for talking about issues that would reveal in one way or another participants’ critical consciousness.

In the course of analyzing the initial interviews with the 37 preservice teacher participants, many expressed genuine interest in teaching for social justice. Deanna, like the majority of participants exclaimed, “I absolutely have a strong interest in teaching social justice.” Deanna was most passionate about gender and mental health issues. Caleb who was involved with a particular education program that brings preservice teacher candidates overseas in order to engage with economically disadvantaged regions, responded to the question of whether teaching for social justice was important to him, by saying, “of course.” For Caleb, teaching for social justice in part meant working toward establishing a much more inclusive “global community” where everyone is included regardless of race, religion, or gender. He mentioned specifically the significance of

“educating women” across the globe as a method to solve economic and political problems, but did not speak to the way structural issues shaped by gender ideology and other broader structural forces have deep negative implications for women in general, nonwhite women in particular. Not surprisingly given the educational rhetoric of the day, Caleb also stressed that he deeply believed “everyone has a right to learn.”

Veman, who self-identifies as Muslim, also shares a genuine interest in teaching for social justice, stating that he has “an interest in that.” His interest in social justice was linked to future pedagogical practices in that he suggested the aims and goals of social justice could be integrated into any subject area. He also took time to point out its importance to the Canadian context. Here is Veman:

Teaching about any subject you can teach about social justice. Um, it could be, you know, laced inside the lesson, especially our schools in Canada, they’re so multicultural, so I think it’s something important to include.

However, it became clear that there were differences between and among the participants when it came to their understanding of what it meant to teach for social justice, revealing their varying levels of a critical consciousness. For example, in my initial interview with Scott, he did indeed recognize the need to teach in a more culturally sensitive way, but he still held on to the notion of “us” and “them” when thinking about marginalized groups.

We need to take into account the various cultures as Canada continues to become more and more diverse and, like I said, diversity touching on, you know, various backgrounds as well. So we need to be very conscience of that when we like try to approach people pedagogically. Um, also, um, in terms of, uh, race, just from experiences, on the, on the west end of [City] here, we do have a lot of minorities. Um, uh, I think, um, that, you know, they, their culture should be respected and we should try to maybe cultivate a certain approach that is, uh, like accommodates them.

Despite Scott’s genuine interest in teaching for social justice, he still appears to draw from a surface-oriented multicultural framework that lacks complexity. When Scott talks

about “minorities,” “their culture,” and seeks “accommodation,” he reveals a way of thinking that privileges White middle-class identities, that does little to challenge the broader social inequities that “Other” particular populations experience. He does not, at least at this point in his preservice year, think about teaching for social justice as the “conscious and reflexive blend of content and process intended to enhance equity across multiple social identity groups that are based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation and ability” (Dover, 2009, p. 507), along with promoting critical perspectives and encouraging social action.

Davis, who grew up in a “multicultural city” and whose parents were both teachers “definitely” had an “interest in teaching for social justice.” Like Will, whom we will meet in a moment, Davis had some awareness of the unearned privileges that come from being a white man, an identity that Davis recognizes sits atop “the social hierarchy.” He understands how these forms of privilege have helped men secure economic and social benefits. Here is Davis:

You see kinda of that the statistics of like who’s more likely to go to university, who is kind of making all the money, who’s more likely to have the CEO, the CFO kind of job. And it’s usually white male (s) from like an upper-class family, or, upper-middle-class families.

Davis recognizes how some of his own unearned privilege allowed him to follow a fairly “easy” path to post secondary education:

I didn’t have a lot of obstacles that other kids did, maybe from single-parent households of lower income, maybe they didn’t speak the English language when they first got here, but those are all obstacles that I, never had to face. So I think my path is very easy.

In a somewhat similar way, Will, who describes himself as “White, middle class boy,” from “a very White middle class town” in Ontario, where there are “not many visual,

physical minorities,” tells of his interest in teaching for social justice. In our interview Will acknowledges his own social location and seems to recognize some of the unearned privileges he may bring into the classroom. This is important as teaching for social justice requires, not only that teachers have high expectations of the students, but also knowledge about how their social location related biases may impact the academic achievement of their students (Aronson, 2004). Yet, despite his initial awareness of his social location, Will frames his future pedagogical practice using an equality approach rather than an equity framework:

I know my positionality and I recognize that I am from a background that, uh, that many of these kids won't, um, won't have a lot in common with. So I really do my best to treat everyone equally while acknowledging our differences because it is not necessarily a bad thing that we are different.

Speaking about the need to treat everyone equally, Will moves toward adopting a pedagogical approach which gestures away from teaching for social justice in a more sophisticated way. However, Will's awareness of his own social location, regardless of how surface it might be, points to his capacity to begin to think about social structures. As Will demonstrates, he is limited in his ability to coordinate hierarchically social patterns into a beginning understanding of the structures and systems that tie them together; to understand them as products of a particular social organization of power and knowledge.

Reflecting a surface level of criticality, Bobbie, Atma, and Jordan also expressed an interest in teaching for social justice, but similar to Will, these participants thought about social justice in terms of equality rather than equity. Bobbie, for instance, saw the social justice approach to teaching as, “treating everyone equally.” Atma, who was born and grew up in Pakistan and also has an MBA, and who also had some experience

teaching at various levels, understood teaching for social justice to be an approach where students in the classroom “are treated equally; given an equal opportunity and not be discriminated against with regard to race, race, colour or gender, sexual orientation.” For Jordan, social justice meant “equality among students.” Certainly with the best intentions in mind, Jordan believed “every student deserves to be heard and feel accepted, appreciated and safe in school.” She went on to talk about how this understanding of social justice will shape her future classroom practices: “including students, um, all students in every aspect of the classroom and using a variety of examples and situations for lessons to which more students may relate.” Jordan’s approach to teaching for social justice which also speaks to her level of critical consciousness, flows more out of an equality rather than an equity framework. This is reflected in her view that historically marginalized populations such as women and working poor children no longer face the barriers they had in the past. Perhaps not aware of the research that demonstrates how structures such as class and gender powerfully shapes lives including those of students in Ontario today (Clandfield, 2014; Curtis, 2010; Livingstone, & Smaller, 2014), and never really considering how her own social location in terms of “social class” or “gender” might impact her students, it is not surprising that Jordan felt that “everyone in Canada has an equal opportunity to achieve and attain a good education.”

Jacob, who spent his early years growing up in Lebanon, also adopted an equality approach to social justice. Jacob explains, “To me, like, each student is the same.” His belief in the importance of treating each student equally and understanding student lives in ways that erase important differences, may come out of his belief that structural inequalities such as race and racism do not exist. For instance, when he was asked in one

of the follow-up questions in our initial interview—“Do you think Black men compared to White men have the same life opportunities?”—he responded with an unequivocal “yes.” The failure to understand how structural, institutional and individual racism shapes non-White identities differently than White identities reflects a level of criticality that does not disrupt the status quo.

In addition, when asked about gender, he felt that “[male teachers] are more of an authority figure” in “the classroom.” This is why, he argued, students “gravitate toward males.” Rather than troubling his own notions of gender and gender relations, and thinking through critically how this structures male teacher identity in a way that provides male teachers with the “patriarchal dividend” of authority (Connell, 2010), he saw the male-authority link as natural. Showing at least at this point in time a very limited critical consciousness, when he was asked how he would implement the social justice framework in the classroom he noted that he wanted “to expand the horizon” of his students. He did not want his students graduating from his classroom coming out, “like a zombie,” although it was unclear exactly what was meant by this comment other than to say it seem like just a broad generality that most teachers would agree with. He also drew from his experiences, where he “got to see the lower-class,” of which he seemed to pity. In this, he seems to have adopted a cultural deficit model (Delpit, 1995) of working class and working for environments, where he expressed dismay that it is common in these communities that “kids getting beaten, you know, having to call Children’s Aid.”

Of course, an equality approach to social justice issues, such as that taken initially by Bobbie, Atma, Jordan, and Jacob, argues that ending forms of discrimination requires

treating everyone the same. This view does not consider class, race, gender, and cultural and ethnic identities, and the very unequal positions, social locations, from which some start because of past and ongoing forms of discrimination. It appears at this point in time, Jordan, Atma, and Jacob do not fully understand that treating everyone the “same” does very little to address or make up for the inequitable access and distribution of social, political and economic resources.

Still, others who expressed an interest in teaching for social justice struggled to express a meaningful definition of social justice. Antonia, for example, mentioned in the initial interview that she definitely has “an interest in teaching for social justice.” Yet, when asked how she would define social justice she had some difficulty, eventually suggesting that it meant teachers should be fair in their practices and pedagogy. Here is Antonia explaining: “I would define social justice as being as fair as possible with your student, fairness across-the-board, so not giving anybody particular special treatment.” Belle, who was a mature student and had a background in the healthcare sector, also suggested in our initial interview that teaching for social justice should really just be about “fairness.” In fact for Belle, she felt that the term social justice has been over used with the consequence of her coming to dislike the term altogether: “That’s why I don’t like social justice, and that’s all you hear anymore.”

Like Antonia, Becky also expressed a strong interest in teaching for social justice: “Yes, I definitely think I would like to teach for social justice.” For Becky, she saw her definition of social justice as really being about inclusivity. And, while this meant trying to be respectful and inclusive of all students, it also meant that she felt uncomfortable challenging those populations imbued with power and privilege. Becky worried that if

critical questions were raised about a social group's access to forms of privilege and power it might be alienating for them in the classroom. For Becky, this was not being "inclusive." Becky remarks:

I think it is important to encourage social justice in an inclusive way instead of saying, you know, pointing out inequality with women as opposed to privileges of males. Because, that often alienates those males within your classroom.

Missing from Becky's initial thinking is that hand-in-hand with the aims and goals of critical pedagogy is the need to scrutinize and challenge power and privilege, even if that leaves some groups feeling uncomfortable and potentially conceptually unhinged. When Becky remarks that she does not want to "point fingers" at men's privilege, she leaves power and privilege intact. While Becky's interest in teaching for social justice is noteworthy and clearly genuine, her concern over alienating men in the classroom if issues of gender inequality are raised demonstrates a problematic deference to this privileged group. It is important to remember what Orelus (2011) has suggested, that critical educators need "the courage and audacity to confront and resist oppressive conditions that leads to human suffering and the dehumanization of others" (p. 4). Nonetheless, this particular pedagogical choice reveals a fairly low level of criticality at least in relation to gender that would do little in advancing the broader aims and goals of social justice.

Still others, such as Donna, while expressing an interest in teaching for social justice, at least initially, saw it through a multicultural lens that did not go beyond 'food and festivities.' Her level of criticality rested largely on the surface where she "would try to include and educate my students on different cultures, and some other holidays that they would celebrate, such as Hanukkah and Ramadan." As the literature on critical

pedagogy shows, the inclusion of an occasional holiday or a well-known historical figure does little to challenge structural inequalities, while at the same time leaves the White, Christian core untouched and unexamined in the curriculum. Little if any mention is made of social class as a particular category and its relationship to a deeper understanding of diversity. If left underdeveloped, this approach cannot begin to create the understanding necessary for a multicultural society, nor can it produce the kind of education needed to successfully educate a diverse population.

Still, a few other preservice students were somewhat ambivalent about their desire to teach for social justice. When asked, for example, whether or not she would be interested in teaching for social justice, Harley, who identifies as a visible minority, noted “that’s not something I would feel comfortable discussing, especially in a younger grade.” Harley’s reluctance not only had to do with what she felt as an age-readiness issue, but also with being a new teacher. Harley explains:

[Students] might get the wrong idea from what I’m trying to say especially saying something like, “well, these groups are minorities,” or “these groups are at less of an advantage,” or “these groups are at more of an advantage.” That is not something I would feel comfortable discussing especially as a new teacher.

As mentioned, Harley’s ambivalence about teaching for social justice originates from a variety of sources, including being a new teacher. At least at the beginning point in the program, she views teaching for social justice as a risk, something better left for more experienced teachers who have more job security, and perhaps better left to classes that occupy the upper grades.

Revealing a less than developed form of critical consciousness, Abe’s ambivalence simply comes from the fact that he did not really know what the term social

justice meant. Here is Abe:

My information and my knowledge of all social justice is not that broad, and, and I cannot say I would like to, because, uh, in order to teach anything you have to have an idea of what you're teaching, and you have to have an interest in that teaching.

Abe's initial ambivalence around teaching for social justice doesn't necessarily mean he does not have a willingness to teach toward this end, but does signal a CC that has yet to come into existence.

Teaching for social justice interested Analisa. In our initial interview, Analisa connected teaching for social justice with her work as a volunteer for the Freedom Children Organization. In a general way, then, her understanding for teaching for social justice had a much more global scope than some other preservice teacher participants. Yet, despite having developed a general sense of global inequities, when it came to structural issues in the classroom such as race and racism she revealed a surface level of criticality. For example, when asked about how race and racism shapes student experiences in Ontario classrooms, Analisa thought it is better to take a colour-blind approach, where "race really doesn't matter." Of course, as Bell, Funk, Joshi, and Valdivia (2016) point out, many educators espouse colour blindness to "assert that they are not racist, as in the phrase 'I don't see colour, I just see people'" (p. 170). By adopting an approach where race isn't "seen," Analisa overlooks the cumulative and enduring ways in which race unequally shapes life chances and opportunities for children from different groups, which reinforces and sustains an unequal status quo. Some have argued (e.g., Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000) that by leaving structural inequalities in place, colour blindness has become the "new racism," at the same time positions race as a taboo topic that cannot be openly discussed and subsequently, makes it much more

difficult to address the racial issues that persist in schools. Certainly, beginning and experienced teachers need the analytical tools found in a productive CC to help them understand, and by extension help their students understand, how colour-blind ideology actually reproduces racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Analisa's approach to race and racism is not unique among preservice teacher candidates. The research literature on teacher education students shows that White preservice teacher candidates frequently use the discourses of colour-blindness along with meritocracy and individualism to defend their views and avoid acknowledging White privilege (Florio-Ruane, 2001). Educational researchers have found that it is difficult for "white preservice teachers to recognize the racism inherent in institutions such as schools when they had enjoyed invisible privileges and not been invited to question institutional racism themselves" (Flynn, Lensmire, & Lewis, 2009, p. 86; see also LeCompte & McCray, 2002). As other scholars have pointed out, White teachers typically are unable to "see" themselves as "raced" or as having a culture (LeCompte & McCray, 2002). Speaking directly about teacher educators, researchers have pointed out that it is often difficult "for white people to talk about race and whiteness" (Flynn, Lensmire, & Lewis, 2009, p. 86). Subsequently, they may struggle with the notion that their Whiteness affords them privilege and power and threatens suppression for the students of colour. Unfortunately, socialized into the normalization of Whiteness, White teachers often resist the idea of White as a race or see the relevance of race to teaching or to their own life (Flynn et al., 2009, p. 87).

A few students in the initial interview process expressed fairly sophisticated understanding of what teaching for social justice meant. For instance, Samantha,

expressed the fact that she was “passionate about social justice,” and that to her teaching students to think much more closely about how multiple systems of privilege intersect with systems of oppression was important, something most participants were not able to articulate. She made mention when it comes to teaching that even “from a young age you really have to introduce the concept of privilege.” Samantha went on to make mention that even a fairly complicated concept such as “intersectionality” would be important to “incorporate” into her teaching. All the different “isms like a ableism, classism, racism and homophobia,” she added, were important to explore in order to make students aware of the fact that “the system is set up to benefit some people, and disadvantage others.”

What is interesting about Samantha’s developing level of criticality is that it comes out of her race-based experiences living in a city in Southwestern Ontario. While she did mention that she loves her “hometown,” she also acknowledged that it was “really bad for racism, especially with First Nations people.” According to Samantha, people in her hometown held “a lot of racism against First Nations people.” And, based on her views of social justice, she became something of a target, noting that “because they know I’m into social justice, will try and justify it to me, and so it gets very frustrating.” Samantha, in fact, goes into more detail discussing how race and racism works in her community: “White people,” she points out, adopt a colour-blind approach when it comes to issues of race and racism. “White people have a tendency to be like, um, I don’t see your colour.” Samantha goes on to mention, while adopting what she feels to be the voice and perspective of a White person, that “I’m uncomfortable acknowledging your colour and your experiences, so I’m going to say that we’re just the same.”

In conclusion, Phase One interviews showed that although most student

participants expressed a genuine interest in teaching for social justice, they had low levels of criticality. More often than not, the preservice teacher participants at this point discussed one of the main areas of critical analysis, such as classism, racism, gender inequity, diversity, and White privilege. Some of the student participants, however, such as Samantha, did seem to enter into the program with a more developed critical lens and a more complex and nuanced view of social justice issues.

The following section of the results draws on the analysis of Phase Two interviews that were conducted toward the end of the 1-year program, with all 37 preservice teacher participants. This set of interviews revealed the preservice teacher participants' level of criticality, along with their perceptions of their critical learning experiences after their time at the Faculty of Education. In the final section of this chapter, I organize, categorize, and discuss the types of CC shown by preservice teacher participants after their time in the Faculty of Education. But now, I turn to detailing and sharing with the reader how the roads to a CC were mediated in complex and contradictory ways.

Pedagogical and Institutional Practices Mediated the Facilitation of Critical Consciousness

The experiences of preservice teacher participants as they journeyed through the 1-year program generated subcategories falling under the main category of "Pedagogical and Institutional Practices that Mediated the Facilitation of Critical Consciousness." These three subcategories are: (a) Too Many Tasks, Too Little Time; (b) Agency Opportunities; and (c) The Lecture. Now, I discuss each subcategory in more detail.

Too Many Tasks, Too Little Time

As this study unfolded, it became apparent that there were a number of institutional variables that *competed* for student attention and time in a way that limited students' capacity to develop a deeper and livelier critical consciousness. For example, during the Phase Two round of interviews, it became clear that the preservice teacher participants were overwhelmed with an overload of simple tasks and assignments that required little processing or deep thought. Davis, for instance, thought there was a clear emphasis, when it came to assignments, on quantity over quality. Here is Davis explaining:

Have quality over quantity of reflections. We have too many reflections and maybe we could focus on one reflection after each placement with listed criteria for length. Lots of small group assignments and lots of reflections are due through the year but if students are doing so many, they are doing it to just get it done. If the reflections were quality over quantity, the students would learn more.

Speaking about the number of assignments between and among courses, Davis provides a linkage between how a focus on quantity over quality undermined student learning. How can students learn, or think deeply about subject matter or their experiences, if they are occupied and preoccupied with cranking out one assignment after another, he seemed to be asking. It is also important to keep in mind that this understanding of time in educational contexts restricts the development of healthy social and intellectual relationships among students and professors. As Giroux (1988b), points out, an emphasis on quantity over quality is “reminiscent of life in factories with its production schedules and hierarchal work relationships” (p. 40). For Giroux, the problem is that this functions as a “brake” upon engagement and participation in the context of democratic processes (p. 40).

From Bobbie's perspective, as well, too much time was spent not only in working on small groups assignments, which requires a considerable amount of labour on the students' behalf in terms of organization and logistics, but also in turning out assignments. Here is Bobbie:

I cannot tell you how many times I was in a class, and I left thinking that I took nothing away from that class. Again, quantity over quality, just brushing the surface. I don't retain the stuff. I just jot it down and hand in. I would retain better from comprehensive assignments that are quality.

Like Davis, Bobbie also viewed his time in the Faculty of Education as overwhelmingly structured in a way that reflected an emphasis on quantity over quality, much to his disappointment. Revealing some of his frustrations, when asked about his time in the Faculty of Education and the courses that he took, Bobbie, for example, described it this way: "projects, overload, 11 classes in the first 2 weeks of March and we must hand in six projects, and then when back, a 30-page project." Bobbie goes on to describe the assessment pattern he has experienced: "Quiz, test, project."

Or consider Jacob's experiences. Jacob comments on how complex social justice initiatives were the last thing on his mind as he was barely able to keep up with what he viewed as low level learning tasks assigned in some classes: "Now that we are so busy, eat, sleep, repeat. So, at the end of the day no one is going to reflect and say where did I incorporate social justice?" Developing a deeper level of criticality is much like what Albert Einstein is thought to have said about creativity: creativity is "the residue of time wasted." The space and quiet that "idleness" provides a student is an important condition for standing back from the world of teaching and seeing it in its complexity. Most classroom teachers, as Evans-Winters (2009) notes, simply have not been "afforded the opportunity for time to analyze how social conditions, historical patterns, and personal

biases impact the educational system and schooling process” (p. 143). As a result, Evans-Winters (2009) concludes,

Most preservice teachers, function in a way that they simply do not understand the significance of how systems of oppression and systems of privilege function in our world, in our schools, in our classrooms to benefit some people while disadvantaging others. (p. 143)

Many students drew clear connections between how being busy had deep implications for their learning experiences, but also for their relationships with faculty members and administrators. Samantha highlights some of the implications of a structure that emphasizes quantity: “This program has given me lots of anxiety, so I am probably a little more anxious than when I started.” But why did Samantha’s anxiety increase during her year? Here is Samantha explaining:

There are so many things due and a lot of the times you feel like they [professors and administrators] just don't care about you. Like when you raise issues, they are irrelevant a lot of the times [from a faculty perspective]. You go there [to meet with university administrators] and you feel like you are bothering them. This is a huge issue for me. And it feels like I am just a customer and they have hundreds of other customers so why would they do this just for me?

Samantha’s experience draws our attention to a number of barriers students face in developing a productive CC in a Faculty of Education context that functions in the shadow of neoliberalism.

First, when Samantha talks about feeling like a “customer,” she is speaking directly about the influence of neoliberal ideology and free-market logic on postsecondary education (Canaan, 2013; Fraser & Lamble, 2015). The rise of the conceptualization of students as customers has been occurring in postsecondary education for some time now in Ontario and elsewhere and is consistent with free-market logic as a relationship between students and their institutions become almost solely defined in

economic terms (Cote & Allahar, 2007, 2011). When universities increasingly become thought of as “service providers” and establish relationships with students that are defined by economics, students themselves become less and less likely to establish deep and meaningful relationships that are educative, as Samantha seems to be suggesting. This is Professor W’s point when describing the culture at the Faculty of Education: “Unfortunately it has become a very client centered environment where it’s about pleasing the student.”

Second, an emerging consensus exists in the critical sociological literature when it comes to schools and schooling, that certain conditions are necessary to students’ deep engagement with learning. These conditions include high standards for academic learning, meaningful and engaging pedagogy and curriculum, and personalized learning environments and caring teachers (Klem & Connell, 2004, p. 262). In fact, Teven and McCroskey (1997) found that students who come to believe their teacher is caring experience deeper levels of engagement. If it is true that healthy, caring, and positive relationships with teachers enhance social, cognitive, and language development in young children (Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 1997), it is not unreasonable to suggest significant academic and social benefits are afforded to students of all ages, through the same kinds of relationships.

A few students, however, drew comparisons between their experiences in certain undergraduate programs and their experiences during their year at the Faculty of Education. What is most noteworthy about their comparison is the way in which relationships between professors and students were, in some cases, different. For instance, Anne was pleasantly surprised to experience the different kinds of relationships

established by different professors within this Faculty of Education:

My background is biology, so it was nice to see different [Faculty of Education] professors going out of their way to form different relationships with students at the Faculty of Education. Some were like my Biology Profs, but a few others were really friendly and interested in how we were progressing and feeling about the program.

As Anne put it, compared to her undergraduate biology professors, who engaged in lecture-based forms of teaching and who made little if any attempt to get to know students, it was nice to see some professors taking to the time to get to know her and her colleagues. To put it slightly differently, Anne stated that some of the professor–student relationships at the Faculty of Education were more open and friendly as compared to the relationships formed with her Biology undergraduate professors. Overall, some students were aware of the differential student-professor relationships and had positive accounts of the professors who attempted to build some form of interpersonal relationships with them.

Third, many participants shared stories about how the experience of being “busy” with tasks and assignments undermined their opportunity to think more deeply about important subjects. Of course, the experience of students pushed to keep busy perhaps should not come as a surprise. With the rise of neoliberalism, busyness has become an unquestioned cultural and moral virtue, while so-called idleness has become a vice, in and out of education. As scholars have argued (Coulter, 2009; Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Harvey, 2005), promoting the idea that busyness is a virtue in a neoliberal world serves as kind of a reassurance, a hedge against idleness, laziness, sloth, and dependency. Individuals who are kept busy at work are not lazy, not slothful, and certainly have no time to become dependent on the government or think about policies and procedures in a critical way. Within a neoliberal world the values of

productivity and efficiency have *time* as the common factor. Productivity is about getting a number of tasks done in a set unit of time, while efficiency is getting tasks done quickly. The condensed structure of the program produced several time-constraining and sustained distractions that likely took time away from the ability to deeply process any of the assigned critical knowledges. For example, multiple assignments were often due at the same time and the prerogative became to finish and submit these assignments on time.

A few students expressed considerable reservations regarding the amount of duplicated assignments. Simply put, they were submitting very similar assignments for different courses. For example, here is Donna first revealing her disappointment in her experiences at the Faculty of Education, including those courses that were informed by critical pedagogy: “I thought [the Faculty of Education] would be more engaging, but it’s just listening; [coming to class] becomes a chore.” Next, Donna makes specific mention of a class taught by a self-identified critical pedagogue, and how learning in her view was undermined by a lecture-based class that also emphasized repetition in assignments:

The last 2 weeks people [students] were talking through her class as [the professor] keeps talking and no one hears [the professor]. Everyone is SO done, and it’s dragging on, the same assignments over and over, and the same assignment in every class.

Along with a teacher-centered, lecture-based approach to pedagogy where students sat passively listening, repetition of assignments did little to create the conditions that would help foster a mature CC in students.

The traditional banking model of education described above has long been criticized from those who adopt a Freiran critical pedagogy. Freire was deeply sceptical of the pedagogical approach that views students largely as empty containers into which the teacher makes deposits of predetermined knowledge. Freire argued that such a

pedagogical approach promotes a form of thinking that makes students vulnerable to indoctrination. Drawing a relationship between the banking model of education and the development of a critical consciousness, Freire (1973) notes that

The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop a critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is into the fragmented view of reality deposited in them. (p. 54)

In any event, the subtext of Donna's comment is the question, how does one foster a teaching and learning environment where preservice teacher candidates become critical reflective practitioners? This is indeed the key question of this study, to which Elizabeth Ellsworth's 1989 work, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?: Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy," provides some answers. In her work on becoming a critical and reflective practitioner, Ellsworth (who is a White, middle class female professor) makes special mention that the hope of critical pedagogy, and by extension developing CC in students, is found in dialogue. Dialogue and a willingness to entertain various and at times conflicting perspectives on any number of important issues are key to the work of teachers working for social justice. It goes without saying that dialogue is absent not only in lecture-based classrooms, where "speaking" is a one-way street, but also in the experience of writing assignments that are repetitive.

For a few students the quantity of assignments became an equity issue in itself. For example, here is Nelly connecting how the number of assignments as structured in the Faculty of Education program negatively impacts mature students who have children: "You have tons to do all the time. I ended up having 66 assignments; the program is not set up for people who have children." In fact, Nelly goes on to mention that she was very

close to dropping out of school, given the sheer quantity of assignments due. Her comment is significant as it reveals how gender discrimination may function insidiously within the structure of the program to disadvantage preservice teacher candidates who are mothers. Yet, although some of the preservice teacher participants such as Nelly and Brianna felt “discouraged because of the overload,” there was hope. Brianna talked about how one professor who self-identifies as a critical pedagogue “breathed back life into us” when they felt “discouraged.” According to this preservice teacher participant, the professor was able to do this because of their passion for teaching and through their charismatic disposition.

Some preservice teacher participants also talked about the way in which some instructors focused much more on the technocratic side of teaching. This came at the expense of engaging and more meaningful conversations and practices that help students better understand the rich complexities of what it means to teach, and to teach well. For instance, here is Donna talking about what she felt was missing from classroom practices and pedagogy:

I feel like the focus in our courses is in lesson planning but there is so much more to teaching than lesson planning. Show us different ways to teach, even show us an IEP [Individual Education Plan] and practical ways to teach different students.

Donna highlights one key barrier in developing a more mature CC in students. If teacher educators were more concerned with lesson plans and perhaps providing a toolbox of classroom management strategies than discussing social justice and how to challenge existing policies and curriculum, it would be difficult for many to think that critiquing texts or the educational system is what a good teacher does. This of course would be a

possible and unfortunate outcome whereby teacher education students would view the development of critical perspectives in themselves and others as largely unnecessary.

Without purposeful repetition some assignments became meaningless to the preservice teacher participants. Many participants also mentioned that the repetition of similar pedagogical approaches, such as continuous group work, often limited their levels of engagement, and by extension did not create the learning conditions for the development of a critical consciousness. For example, Anne talked about a course that was grounded in critical pedagogy and noted that “group work was not good.” She goes on to mention that maybe students “shouldn’t collaborate on some projects, in particular within large classes.” From this perspective, it is reasonable to assume that perhaps collaborative group projects were sometimes over utilized and led to negative, rather than productive, learning outcomes.

In summary, a counterproductive type of busyness acted as mechanism to constrain student opportunities to think more deeply and critically, about the relationship between academic success, social class, race, and gender. Also, while consistently rushing to complete and submit low level technical assignments, student participants did not seem to have the physical space nor mental energy to critically reflect on the purposes of education within the context of a self-proclaimed democratic society. Green (1976) emphasizes that within the field of teacher education, “There must be efforts made to reflect critically on the numerous modes of masking what is happening in our society” (p. 10). The research results suggest that educational contexts in which students are struggling to complete and submit low level technical assignments, are indeed “modes of masking” the broader societal issues of inequity. Of course, developing an awareness of

the inequities related to class, race, and gender forms a foundational platform for evolving a more mature critical consciousness.

What is also noteworthy at this point, is that the aforementioned participants were very forward in their critique of the relevant pedagogical and institutional barriers constraining the facilitation of critical consciousness. During our interviews, most preservice teacher participants were positioned to engage in a form of dialogical agency and productively utilized this space to speak to both their negative and positive learning experiences. Such agency opportunities do not seem to occur frequently within the context of the course based learning experiences. I now turn to discussing the idea of “agency opportunities” in the following section.

Agency Opportunities

The development of CC seemed to be linked to the varying *agency* opportunities that the preservice teacher participants were engaged in. An agency opportunity is best understood as a “dialogical educational” context (Shor, 1993) that has the power to help develop a critical consciousness. Shor (1993) emphasizes that within dialogical learning contexts, “students are doing education and making it, not having education done to them or made for them” (p. 33). In alignment with this idea, this portion of the results section applies Bourdieu’s (1971) views on schooling and links the concepts of structure, pedagogical action, and *agency* by examining the relationships between the Faculty of Education culture, the production of knowledge, and the critical learning experiences shared by preservice teacher participants.

One institutional example of an agency opportunity experienced by the preservice teacher participants, which also represented a dialogical learning space, was the student-

led Social Justice Forum. The Forum took place in the fall of 2014. Mary was one of the organizers of the Social Justice Forum and in her organizing, she constructed a paper survey of topics that the students were interested in and preceded to coordinate speakers that spoke to the student selected social justice topics. Mary talks about the student led Social Justice Forum as being one of the most significant critical learning experiences:

At the beginning of the semester we had teachers that believed our PLS [Professional Learning Series] was not useful. So what we did, those of us on the Teacher Society, is surveyed students to see what they wanted to learn about. The [Faculty of Education] should be incorporating these types of social justice workshops. ... There is so much knowledge and information that I believe that the Faculty should have one course surrounding just social justice. [The teacher candidates] wanted to learn about social justice so we did that. I believe the Faculty should have a course that surrounds itself on social justice primarily.

The Professional Learning Series, which are professional development workshops organized by administrators and provided each Friday to students over the course of the school year, did not resonate as much as the Social Justice Forum. What is significant to note here is that the Social Justice Forum was almost entirely student directed and organized, and consequently, encompassed a significant amount of student ownership and autonomy.

Some preservice teacher participants mentioned that the student-led Social Justice Forum was highly informative and that the speakers within these workshops captured their attention and created a deeper level of criticality. For example, when discussing her most significant critical learning experiences at the Faculty of Education, Deanna describes the Social Justice Forum experience in the following way:

I am focused on the Social Justice Forum, those have been really beneficial. I would say that these [Social Justice Forum] should be mandatory. We should sit and attend all of the workshops. Overall, we should bring in people from our community who are working on the issues that are very

important. Even feeling that [the Social Justice Forum] is important—it has to be there—it is part of life and learning. You will learn things about yourself too. If all of us sat in we would get something out of it.

Deanna's commitment and interest in the Social Justice Forum reflects, to a certain degree, a level of criticality, along with matching up with some of the goals of critical pedagogy, which include an awareness and understanding of oppression within one's own community. And this goal runs alongside a commitment to developing the attitudes, knowledge, skills, resources, and coalitions needed to create the lasting change that Deanna seems to be gesturing toward.

One's enthusiasm, interest, and involvement with the Social Justice Forum did not necessarily lead to a deepening of one's level of criticality. When reflecting on her most critical learning experiences at the Faculty of Education, for instance, Jessica emphasizes the following: "The Social Justice Forum day stands out the most. Wearing a Carpon under your clothing, wearing a hijab in sports, peanut allergies. These discussions were very meaningful." Although Jessica's experience reflects some level of critical consciousness raising, her views still align with a multicultural approach to addressing issues of social justice, and this particular educational experience had limited ability to challenge the symbolic power (e.g., legitimizing and reproducing egalitarian social relations) that is inherent in the Faculty of Education (Althusser, 1969; Apple, 2001; Bourdieu, 1987; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988a; Gramsci, 1971). In other words, the "world making power" of the educational institution which functions to "legitimize a vision of the social world and its divisions" (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 13) was only slightly disrupted. The disruption created a *small opening* for preservice teacher participants to engage in agency, which was linked with an increase in "consciousness raising" outcomes that partially worked

toward the facilitation of critical consciousness. I now move on to discuss the classroom pedagogical factors that mediated opportunities for developing a critical lens.

Agency opportunities characterized particular classes. Specifically, most preservice teacher participants who enrolled in the Frontlines course conveyed to me that they were engaged in “dialogical learning” contexts (Shor, 1993). As mentioned in Chapter 3, Frontlines is a service-learning course offered to preservice students in the Junior-Intermediate and Intermediate-Senior programs. The course is run in partnership with the two local school boards. According to its promotional material, the aims and goals of Frontlines are to gain an understanding of youth in the 21st century who are identified as being at-risk, examine alternative forms of education, understand there are forms resilience and restorative practices, link with community agencies and experts to provide the student success model for learning communities, and deal with current team issues to learn to teach from a personal and social perspective.

Many participants referenced the pedagogical approach utilized by Professor S and Professor J, who taught the Frontlines course, as providing key critical learning experiences. For example, when describing which experiences had the greatest impact on developing her awareness and understanding of key social issues, that certainly would contribute to developing critical consciousness, Jadyn highlighted the following:

I would say definitely the Frontlines course, during our actual class times. We had multiple guest speakers from multiple groups, all kinds of guest speakers, people from all kinds of perspectives. When you get the story from the real person, it is real; it is not just reading the text or reading a story. We had someone live in poverty and had been a single parent and understood what the reality of the situation; you get the real story. It is also hard. But it validates people when they get to share their views on things. They validate why things happen and how they happen, and how you can change these things from happening. Had tons of guest speakers, superintendents, poverty,

LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Alliance], eating disorders, career sessions for high school kids not university bound.

From a critical pedagogical approach, what better place to begin to understand the power to teach for social justice than with life stories. Personal narratives are powerful tools that can be used for unearthing how overlapping systems of oppression and privilege have real material consequences in the lives of everyday people with a view to developing a critical consciousness. In this particular example, Jadyll illustrates how the personal and lived narratives shared by these guest speakers, disrupted the dominant technocratic rationale subsumed in the transmission mode of education, as “private” personal histories and struggles crossed over into the public educational teaching and learning practice. In this context, we see how the transmission mode of education, and technocratic emphasis, has been disrupted as the education practice becomes a “humanizing practice” (Freire, 1985) that at least, temporarily and partially, works toward “building a new social order” (McLaren, 1994).

Or, take for example, Scott’s experience in the Frontlines course. Scott describes his experience in the Frontlines course, taught by Professor S and Professor J, in the following way:

Frontlines had a large variety of speakers come in, suicide, touched on lots of hard-hitting topics. LGBT this was another prominent one, had different people come in and really wrung true that there is lots of diversity out there. Frontlines has a variety of events. One guy that really resonated, carried the most, teacher from Walkerville came in and formed a GSA [Gay Straight Alliance], he was the first [First teacher, in this area, to do this] and had the biggest impact on me. Thought it was really special, I don't know anyone close to me to who is gay so it really resonated, they should not be marginalized or discriminated against. He [guest speaker] had a practical way to convey the values I have. I walked around GSA billboards in my schools [Practice Teaching Placements] and never paid attention to it until he came and spoke about it.

This quote by Scott highlights how Professor S and Professor J organized the Frontlines course in ways that are firmly situated in the traditions of critical pedagogy as they approached education as a form of empowerment and a tool for social change. Teaching with a political intent and with a vision for social change, the personal stories told by the guest speakers clearly helped Scott draw a connection between classrooms and the world outside in a way that he now “pays attention” to critical issues that in the past it seems he overlooked.

The personal narratives told by the guest speakers within the context of the Frontlines course, seemed to be a productive pedagogical approach as it had a powerful impact on students. Deanna, an energetic student participant who was committed to working towards gender equity, spoke about the Frontlines course and Professor S and Professor J in the following way:

[Professor S’s and Professor J’s] course was the best course in terms of gaining knowledge on issues of social justice. A lot of social justice had come from this [Professor S’s and Professor J’s] course. The instructors invited multiple guest speakers giving really informed info on different aspects of social justice. Most enriching experiences at the Faculty [of Education] was bringing these speakers in, especially when teaching in this area. The topics covered were focused on in risk youth. Speakers spoke about resources available to teachers and spoke about what to look for in students. Huge difference between theory and practice and it is very powerful to hear the experiences of experts and of individuals going through the issues or directly working in these areas.

Transforming classroom practices is centrally but not exclusively about transforming relations of power in the classroom, relations between teacher and student, and relations between and among students. This transformation in part works itself out in the tradition of critical pedagogy through discussions and dialogue where the personal narratives that emerge out of students’ own experiences, form the basis for discussion, analysis and

assignments. It was these personal narratives that seemed to penetrate the consciousness of students such as Deanna as the stories likely worked to transcend many of the taken for granted stereotypes linked to minority groups.

Jadyn further speaks to the positive impact of the pedagogical approach taken by Professor S and Professor J throughout their course:

Very overwhelming when you think about it, will carry these forward. Some of the speakers were educators. The approach [by Professor S and Professor J] really goes past the classroom. The support [from instructors], comradery [from instructors and peers], personal mentors [speakers and instructors], showed us that you must be real with students. When you empathize with students, you understand the students more. You can connect with them more, very informative and enlightening.

Here we can see how Jadyn's desire to construct caring and empathetic relationships are grounded in the idea of mutual respect between herself and her future students. By being an empathetic teacher, she can begin to understand students in holistic and complex ways. Hooks (1994) emphasizes the need for educators to consider the complex experiences of their students both inside and outside of school. This fits with the understanding within the context of critical pedagogy that education is about more than achieving academic success or becoming professionals.

The critical educational context designed by Professor S and Professor J offered Jadyn opportunities to increase her awareness around key social issues, which has helped her reshape and rethink her pedagogical practices. Freire's (1985) humanizing practice is evident here as the emphasis is on helping the students acknowledge and address the various issues and struggles they face both inside and outside of the schools context. This critical understanding nudges Jadyn not deepen her CC.

Analisa also provides some evidence to show how powerful her learning

experiences were in the context of Professor S's and Professor J's course. Similar to Jady, Analisa speaks about how the guest speakers helped her think much more closely about a variety of social justice issues faced by children in our schools:

A lot of social justice had come from the Frontlines course [Professor S's and Professor J's course]. Instructors invited multiple guest speakers giving really informed info on different aspects of social justice. Most enriching experiences at the Faculty [of Education] was bringing these experts in, especially when teaching in this area. Children's Aid speaker, youth mental health summit, I volunteered. Topics covered were focused on in At-Risk-Youth. The speakers spoke about resources available to teachers and spoke about what to look for in students. Huge difference between theory and practice and it is very powerful to hear the experiences of individuals and experts going through the issues or directly working in these areas.

Here we again see more evidence of how Professor S and Professor J engaged in a tool that aligns very closely with productive forms of pedagogy which is integrating personal stories or narratives into classroom practices. This not only personalized these particular issues, made them much more relatable to the preservice students, but made social justice issues explicit in the class, which had the power to help develop CC among the students.

For other students, the positive experiences with Professor S's and Professor J's course, and its integrating of personal narratives expressed by guest speakers, led them to argue that the Frontlines course should be mandatory. Here, for example, is Antonia:

Make Frontlines mandatory. Incorporate guest speakers that worked in Frontlines and use. The best part of Frontlines was hearing from so many people about so many issues and then hearing about all of the resources that are available that we are not aware of. We now have a touchstone when guiding students.

As shared by these preservice teacher participants, Professor S and Professor J structured a variety of learning activities that prompted a serious consideration of diverse social justice issues and perspectives. Reflecting aspects of Shor's (1993) dialogical critical pedagogy, the professors of the Frontlines course moved preservice teacher participants

beyond simply discussing the issues and into the domain of understanding how individuals and groups may interpret and experience the world. This essentially entailed the process of examining how racial, gender, and social class discrimination is socially constructed and mediated through social relations. Here we see how the political enters the pedagogical and disrupts normative structures such as the top-down power hierarchy and transmission mode of learning inherent in educational systems. However, Professor S and Professor J were not the only instructors that seemed to help students develop a more sophisticated critical consciousness. Professor G, who taught an Equity Issues class, was also cited as significantly contributing to the development of the preservice teacher participants' critical lens.

Some of the preservice students interviewed for this study who were also enrolled in the Equity Issues course taught by Professor G reported developing their critical lens as a result of the class's learning activities. For example, when asked to reflect on the course that most contributed to developing her critical lens, Jordan responded:

We have a class with Professor G. It is called Social Equity Issues and that is basically the whole topic of the course. Every week we talk about some social justice issues, racism, white supremacy, gender based discrimination. So obviously at the beginning of the school year she described the issues and topics that come and that no two students are alike and stuff like that.

Deanna, who was enrolled in both the Frontlines course and Professor G's course, mentioned that these two classes complimented each other: Professor G's class was cited as "providing a good equity focused theoretical base" and "Frontlines featured many powerful guest speakers that spoke about these various inequities from first hand experience." Deanna reflects on what she had learned by being in both of these classes:

I am so lucky and blessed to have taken what I have and absorbed what I have. The whole idea of taking a walk in another person's shoes. I am a White middle class privileged woman. I have been sheltered from issues that

I have never been through nor could I imagine. But being open and listening and be able to look at students when you are in a classroom. Teach as if everyone is the same but be sure students know and learn about the differences. Must be informed about the differences in order to create an acceptance.

The critical learning experiences stemming from the pedagogical approach taken by Professor S, Professor J, and Professor G prompted Deanna to apply her critical theoretical insights to her own personal life by reflecting on her own White, middle-class privilege, at least to some degree.

Bobbie also credits Professor G as being the most helpful in developing his views of diverse students:

Yes, it [view of diverse students] has changed a lot. For the diverse student, mostly Professor G's course. [Professor G] showed us that when it comes to diversity and working with students, we must put in our lesson plans, will have different students in your classroom. For example, ESL [English as a Second Language], home problems. Must have different instructions and activities.

Influenced by Professor G's course, Bobbie now better understands the need for planning to take into careful consideration students' needs. Moreover, Bobbie has considered the need to engage in democratic practices by sharing authority between students and teachers and making room for students to be experts in the classroom. Here is Bobbie explaining: "Students should be part of the lesson plans, should decide how they want to do assignments and how to be motivated."

Anne also attributed her evolving CC to her educational experience in Professor G's course: "Professor G was a tremendously wonderful professor that spoke about how students learn in different ways, learning to shape info so that you are inclusive of all students. Professor G was really good at this." But it wasn't just Anne who was positively impacted by Professor G's pedagogy. When asked what educational experiences within

the Faculty of Education had the greatest impact on your knowledge for developing a critical perspective, Scott responded: “Professor G’s course laid the framework for us because a lot of us were not familiar with these concepts. I am a history major and was not aware of many of these concepts.” Scott attributes his developing critical views to his educational experience in Professor G’s course:

Before the program, I thought of diversity as simply race. He is Lebanese, he is Italian, whatever. Now, diversity could be based on needs, gender, religion, sexual orientation, religion, so many variables and criteria. That social issues class [Professor G’s course] brought it to prominence. Professor G’s class is very specific and corresponds a lot to social justice which is why I can make the connection. This course explicitly talks about social justice and includes us in the conversations through dialogue and activities.

These participants reported having significant consciousness-raising experiences, and although most students may not have evidenced a depth of critical knowledge, they were at least exposed to many new social justice issues. At minimum, these two courses would have positively moved these teachers to a deeper level of critical knowledge, and consequently, they would be better positioned to potentially resist some forms of thinking and acting that reproduce the status quo. I now go on to discuss these constitutive pedagogical choices and actions made by professors.

Professor S and Professor J of the Frontlines course, and Professor G’s course, although different in content and pedagogical style, were similar in that the instructors created a classroom that explicitly and implicitly emphasized that education is not neutral. Instead they helped students understand that schools are particular sites for organizing knowledge and power. As such, it became possible to view schools as vehicles for change rather than sites for social reproduction. In both cases the critical education offered up by the instructors began in part with students exploring their concrete reality, addressing issues that affected students’ daily lives, and becoming more

engaged with the ideas they were learning about, thereby becoming more critically conscious.

More specifically, the overall aim of the pedagogical approach to each course was to help students explore the many taken-for-granted assumptions about the world that often disadvantage some students and privilege others. As discussed earlier, each of these instructors had their own way of achieving these educational outcomes. However, Professor G, Professor S, and Professor J more often than not enacted a legitimate form of power that is founded on the value of respect and the skill of facilitation (Robinson, 1995).

The students' positive portrayal of the critical learning experiences in Professor G's, Professor S's, and Professor J's courses imply that these professors disrupted the hierarchical power dynamics that exist between their formal position of authority and that of their students. In this context, Professor G, Professor S, and Professor J were likely more conscious in navigating traditional hierarchical power dynamics as they positioned themselves closer to being equal with the teacher candidate participants and encouraged them to do likewise with their own future students.

The pedagogical space constructed by Professor G, Professor S, and Professor J seemed to have created a sense of collaborative spirit, respect for voice, dialogical relations, respect for difference of both views and cultures, and a heightened sensitivity to the learning and personal needs of the potential students they may teach. These enacted pedagogical practices reflect what Robinson (1995) refers to as legitimate power, which can be contrasted with coercive forms of power. In the next section, I discuss how the enactment of coercive and legitimate forms of power seemed to implicate the critical educational learning experiences of many preservice teacher participants.

Professors, Pedagogy, and Power

Professors, pedagogy, and power is a prominent theme that emerged out of the data. This particular theme captures and speaks to the complexity of learning environments and the dynamic relations of power that shaped student experiences, and by extension their level of criticality. A key feature of this theme, for instance, is the problem of student “voice” faced by critical pedagogues. The problem critical pedagogues face is the discomfort students may feel when teachers solicit their opinions and acknowledge the relevance of the students’ previous experiences as this contrasts with traditional transmission modes of education. As highlighted by Pugch (1992), “Beginning teachers, insecure and lacking in confidence, are vulnerable; their first few years of teaching are often socialization to the status quo” (p. 142). The status quo refers to the “process that sustains conservative educational practice” (Pugch, 1992, p. 135). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, teachers as educators must struggle to help students find their own voice and develop their own identities (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 122). The students that come to the preservice program typically are not used to having their voices recognized and respected. This tendency among preservice students reflects the process of socialization in school where obedience and submission to authority are key values. Research has demonstrated time and again that the exercise of authority by teachers is a routine feature of most teacher- student interaction (Apple, 2000; Britzman, 2012; Castro, 2010; Clanfield, et. al, 2014). Classroom control and discipline seem to constitute an important part of the pedagogical conceptualizations preservice students have been socialized into throughout their schooling career. So it comes as no surprise that many of the preservice teacher participants interviewed for this study seem to be

more accustomed to traditional teaching and learning approaches where they are positioned as more passive and more compliant while the professor remains at the front of the room maintaining a traditional instructional role.

Educational research has shown that teaching and learning environments, which includes faculty-teaching methods, influences students' own developmental strategies to learning, and by extension developing CC(Cote & Allahar, 2007, 2011; Curtis et. al., 1992; Panofsky, 2003). In particular, it is found that traditional transmission pedagogical approaches, such as lectures, contribute to negative learning outcomes such as poor retention and poor conceptual understanding of the material, along with novice attitudes toward teaching and learning (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010; Sears, 2003). The transmission method of teaching and learning works to inculcate rather than educate. Teaching methods that are student centered such as active learning, discovery learning, inquiry-based learning, and problem-based learning have been shown to enable a much deeper approach to learning on the part of the students and result in more positive learning outcomes (Kivel, 2006; Kumagai & Lypson, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). However, whether it is traditional transmission pedagogical approaches or problem-based learning, institutional power plays a role.

There are two types of institutional power that have been shown to differentially influence the behaviours and attitudes of members: (a) Legitimate power, which sees students as "subjects" who are justified in having a need for autonomy, fairness, and opportunities for constructive responses, and (b) coercive power, which more often than not, views students as "objects ... whose agency is not relevant to the exercise of power" (Lawrence & Robinson, 2007, p. 383). The enactment of legitimate power, which

prioritizes a deep sense of respect for student autonomy and self-determination, aligns well with critical pedagogical practices that strive to facilitate critical insights through dialogue and encourage active agency among students (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 2008). As Kivel (2006) has noted, in order to counter traditional relations of power, authority figures and other individuals in dominant positions such as professors should respectfully be open to listening to students in helping them define their own needs and then support these groups in meeting those needs. Working in solidarity with students, rather than imposing directives onto students, educators would more closely align with critical pedagogy theory and practice. This gestures toward one of the larger goals of critical pedagogy which is the development of a critical democracy that is characterized, in part, by a revitalized public sphere where citizens engage in thoughtful and rigorous public debate (Liston & Zeichner, 1987). As Robinson (1995) and Taylor (2000) have found, the exercise of a legitimate form of power is positively received by students as the associated learning experiences are perceived as fair, just, inclusive, and considerate of individual autonomy.

Coercive power has been shown to be associated with a loss in autonomy, lack of identity, a negative perception of justice, frustration, and deviance (Robinson, 1995). Cummins (2009) notes the negative impact of coercive power relations: “Coercive relations of power refer to the exercise of power by a dominant individual, group, or country to the detriment of a subordinated individual, group or country” (p. 263). From this perspective, the subordination of students that occurs by way of enacting coercive power is associated with negative learning outcomes.

In the analysis of the emerging data, I felt compelled to explore participants’

concerns around lecture-based learning, something I had not entirely anticipated, a theme I turn to now.

The Lecture

Many participants mentioned that classes taught by some of the instructors who self-identified as critical pedagogues adopted the lecture as their primary pedagogical approach. For this particular sample of preservice teacher candidates, the lecture-based pedagogy functioned to inculcate students while also eliminating the critical dialogue necessary to facilitate a critical consciousness. For many students in this study, lecture-based courses did little if anything to facilitate and promote deep learning, and by extension develop a critical consciousness. For example, Jacob felt that in order to more effectively develop socially just teachers, the Faculty of Education should eliminate ineffective lecture based courses: “One thing for sure is to get rid of lecture style classes. In a lecture based class, you can’t have a discussion, you can’t have a conversation and have students engage.” Jacob goes on to make special mention that in a large class that adopted a lecture-based format, students not only took on a more passive role to learning but were clearly less likely to participate in class activities or take responsibility for their own learning, and far more likely to be distracted.

This preservice teacher participant went on to describe what happens to students when they are faced with a large, lecture based class, even though it was taught by a critical pedagogue: “Just look over a large lectured base course, and you will see the students on their laptops or phones surfing the net, social media, or on Facebook.” Jacob goes on:

I, and so many other people, go into these three-hour lectures and we know we are about to waste time. There is no effort for these topics to be delivered in an

attention grabbing form. I feel like there cannot be learning done in that format of a class, [we need] smaller classes, more engaging topics.

Jacob articulates themes found in the secondary literature (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010) where students who are situated in lecture-based format in large classes tend to engage in distractions. These include inappropriate use of technology such as playing around with an iPhone, or engaging in social media such as Facebook (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010). Even in a few of the courses under study, Jacob questioned whether the faculty members really seemed to care or notice the level of disengagement among students while in class. Opportunities for faculty–student interaction during the class has been known to play an important role in shaping student engagement in the likelihood of higher order, deeper learning on the part of students.

The above critique by Jacob also has serious consequences for the concept of dialogue and its relationship to the development of a critical consciousness. This concern has been articulated in the research literature on critical pedagogy (see, for example, Giroux, 1988a, p. 72; Giroux & McLaren, 1994, p. 235). Dialogue has been described as a fundamental component of critical pedagogy and the basis of the democratic education that ensures a democratic state (Giroux & McLaren, 1994, p. 235). Through dialogue, a classroom can be made into a public sphere, a particular site of citizenship in which students and teachers can engage in the process of deliberation and discussion. School and classroom practices should, in some manner, be organized around forms of learning which serve to prepare students for responsible roles as transformative intellectuals, as community members, and as critical active citizens outside of school. “A transformative intellectual utilizes the language of critique, problematizes the reproductive aspects of dominant education, and utilizes forms of pedagogy that prompt students to become

critical agents” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, p. 46). Dialogue is offered as a pedagogical strategy for constructing these learning conditions. Dialogue entails a dialogical relationship based on the premise that all members have equal opportunity to speak, all members respect other members’ rights to speak, and all members feel safe to speak.

However, feeling safe to speak should not be taken to mean setting up a static and comfortable learning environment. Critical pedagogy is about taking intellectual risks and disrupting comfortable assumptions about the world by discussing political issues that may be deeply personal. The discomfort is inherent in the process of becoming a transformational intellectual; the discomfort creates tension with intellectual “safety” and intellectual “comfort.”

Other participants echoed Jacob’s sentiment regarding lecture-based classes. Here is Mary describing her experiences with a lecture-based, teacher centered classroom, albeit taught by a self-identified critical pedagogue:

We are taught in our classes not to teach in a teacher directed way. In [class] we have a Prof that tells us not to stand in front of a class and talk for three hours yet [the professor] does this—[the professor] says do not talk in monotone voice and [they] does this.

Clarence also felt there was a contradiction between what instructors said to do, and what they actually did. Clarence, for example, highlighted that “they teach us to be critical so they should be more careful in their delivery.” Clarence also added that instructors “will say not to ask lower order questions and then we get a quiz with lower order questions.” Betty, another preservice teacher participant, remarked about one particular professor in the study: “[the Professor] doesn’t believe in tests but gives us tests.”

The research literature on critical pedagogy emphasizes that critical pedagogues should be both open and thoughtful to the ways in which their students are responding to

the teaching and learning that is occurring. Not being responsive, nor understanding how students are experiencing the teaching and learning is a significant limitation when it comes to developing a critical consciousness. Within teacher education, teacher educators committed to a stance on social justice and in particular those who engage in and practice critical pedagogy “must serve as living examples of the very kind of critically oriented pedagogical practices that they seek to have their students adopt” (Liston & Zeichner, 1987, p. 133). In this sense, the key consequence of the crucial role of modeling in teacher education programs is that social relations and pedagogical practices within programs need to reflect the emancipatory practices that teacher educators seek to establish in Ontario’s public schools.

Large-scale studies also suggest that lecture based courses have a negative impact on student-engagement. Mulryan-Kyne (2010), for instance, has found that one of the most critical problems encountered by professors and students of large classes is that students perceive themselves as alienated and feel that they are unnoticed by both the instructor and other classmates (p. 179). Furthermore, students who feel a personal disconnection from professors and each other generally take on less responsibility for their learning, are less motivated to learn, and usually attend class less often (Cooper & Robinson, 2000).

Mary also made special mention about the inherent contradiction conveyed and displayed by some professors who lectured about the importance of engaging pedagogy but did not model engaging pedagogy. Speaking directly about her experiences in one of the courses in this study, one interviewee also wondered why some instructors chose to embody obvious contradictions when it came to pedagogy and practices. As preservice

teacher participant Kendall explains,

Lots of lecture even though Profs stress not to lecture. One monotone prof, we cannot be engaged. You would think that Profs know that lecturing is boring. But in order for us to take in ideas and apply them to classroom, we need to engage.

Examining Kendall's comments on this particular professor, who self-identified as a critical pedagogue, demonstrates a number of important points, including the pervasiveness of emotions in the classroom. Words such as "boring" and phrases such as "cannot be engaged" express affect, and these types of negative affect, within this particular learning context, negatively shaped the level of enthusiasm and engagement directed at potential learning. How students felt and thought about a course, whether positive or negative, was closely connected to how they perceived they learned. In other words, if students felt that the course was helpful and their knowledge base grew as a result of the course, then there was a positive association with the course.

As conveyed by the student participants, a few of the professor participants who identified as critical pedagogues engaged in pedagogy that was largely lecture-based, and were often not able to neither hold a student's attention nor facilitate critical dialogue that may have developed a student's critical consciousness. Perhaps Bobbie put it best when he mentioned to me that "Any teacher that stands and talks is a trigger to go to sleep or do something else." If Bobbie's statement was removed from the context of discussing critical pedagogy and the necessity of critical dialogue, his statement may be misinterpreted as an exaggeration. Of course, teachers must "talk" to effectively engage in the teaching and learning process. However, this statement must be considered within the broader interview conversation of lecture-based pedagogy, and its negative impact on developing a critical consciousness.

Many students also highlighted how large class sizes were counter-productive to student learning and engagement. Caleb emphasizes this point: “Smaller classes so we can have discussions. But a big class is awful and especially a dry class like Law and Ethics.” Expressing a similar sentiment, Betty states that “large classes are not effective, we learned nothing.” In light of Caleb and Betty’s remarks, it comes as little surprise that large class-size has been shown to impact negatively on student engagement. The research shows that large-size classes also produce low levels of student active involvement in the learning process. Just the sheer number of students provides students with numerous opportunities to not participate or even show up for class. The research shows that large class size also reduces the frequency and quality of instructor interaction with and feedback to students, and produces lower levels of student motivation and reduces development of cognitive skills inside the classroom (Carbone & Greenberg, 1998; Cuseo, 2007; Iaria & Hubball, 2008; Kuh, 1991).

It is significant to note that among Ontario universities, the trend has been a steady increase in class size (Kerr, 2011, p. 2). Although there are differences between and among institutions, the overall trend drawn from various data sources including the Common University Data Ontario reports that class sizes continues to swell. For example, between 2005 and 2012, first- and second-year classes with more than 100 students increased by more than 40% (OCUFA, 2014). The findings of reduced levels of active class involvement and interaction in large-size courses has deep implications for student success as student engagement has been strongly linked with academic achievement, and most importantly for the purposes of this study, critical thinking (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). I argue that these negative outcomes likely

hindered the development of a critical consciousness, intellectual growth, and the attempts to practice critical pedagogy. Although this particular Faculty of Education is committed to teaching for social justice, and by extension helping deepen students' levels of criticality, neoliberal forces at work are not conducive with this mission.

The pathways to the development of a rich and lively CC are dialogic, and run multiple ways. While students felt lecture-based teaching was counterproductive in helping them think more carefully and critically about teaching and learning, a few professors highlighted how students themselves worked against their own best interests in developing a critical consciousness. Some professors, for instance, clearly intended to implement the principles of critical pedagogy but in practice had come to understand and view the students as generally technocratic in their thinking and learning. Such professors found that students resisted critical and theoretical knowledges. Here is Professor W explaining her overarching approach to teaching:

I wanted to question the why. To look at the why and not just the what and the how, because they [teacher candidates] have this expectation of being told what to do and how to do it, when they come into a teacher education program. Some of them still call it Teachers College and I say, No, this is not Teachers College. This is the Faculty of Education. This is now an academic institution and one of the things we do in an academic institution is we question, we ask why, we look at the philosophies, the concepts, the theories. So that has been my biggest challenge to our teacher education.

Indeed, at one time, Professor W did attempt to counter the general anti-intellectual malaise expressed by her students by incorporating a comprehensive “critical thought experiment assignment” in which students would “create a lesson where they think they are engaging their students to the pedagogy of questioning and they would write an essay on it.” However, after years of persisting, Professor W simply became frustrated at the student resistance found toward the assignment. Here is Professor W:

There was so much push back to that assignment that after 3 years I gave up. I took that assignment out because I was getting more of that learned helplessness that, oh, my Associate Teacher won't let me do it, which is really bullshit, because by the time you get to your last placement you're required to teach already, you don't have to tell the Associate Teacher I'm building my lesson around critical thinking. ... But I was getting emails after emails.

Although Professor W was clearly passionate about teaching and responsive to student feedback, she did in the end revert back to less theoretically oriented assignments.

Professor W approached this change with a deep level of self-awareness, but also with some ambiguity: "I'm afraid that I'm watering things down a bit too much sometimes so I need to be cautious. I need to be critical of myself."

Within the learning context of the Faculty of Education, there existed constraining variables that likely worked to limit the enactment of a professor's legitimate power. However, as discussed earlier, when the value of respect, and the skills of openness, and facilitation (which make up legitimate power) are put into action while teaching, one may embody, at least partially, the productive type of legitimate power that is necessary to attempt to begin to develop CC. The data illustrated numerous participant accounts of teaching practices and professor–student relationships that are associated with the legitimate type of power described.

According to some preservice teacher participant accounts, the social practices enacted by Professor G, Professor S, and Professor J captured their attention, and created an awareness of the social justice issue at hand while simultaneously empowering students to become active agents in their own learning. Respect and skillful facilitation all contributed to enacting, at least partially, legitimate power. Again, it is key to note that

this type of legitimate power was linked to the foundational platform that facilitated critical learning outcomes.

Enacting a legitimate form of power was associated with productive critical pedagogical practices that were linked with facilitating some forms of critical consciousness. Cummins (2009) has also linked legitimate forms of power with productive critical learning contexts: “Students in these empowering classroom contexts know that their voices will be heard and respected. Schooling amplifies rather than silences their power of self-expression” (p. 148). Drawing from Cummins (2009), educational contexts, which amplify students’ power of self-expression, are key in creating the platform for acknowledging and more deeply understanding diverse perspectives and thereafter developing a critical consciousness. Cummins (2009) goes on to emphasize how enacted power influences the day-to-day student-professor relationships:

Micro-interactions constitute the most immediate determinant of student academic success or failure. These micro-interactions between educators, students and communities are never neutral; in varying degrees, they either reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations of power. In the former case, they constrict the interpersonal space of classroom identity negotiation and contribute to the disempowerment of culturally diverse students and communities; in the latter case, the micro-interactions constitute a process of empowerment that enables educators, students and communities to challenge the operation of coercive power structures. (p. 264)

As Cummins (2009) describes, coercive power support the dominant and traditional constraining micro interactions between teachers and students. Alternatively put, when professors enact top-down hierarchical power relations, educational contexts in which student voices are habitually heard and respected, are compromised.

Students in the process of developing CC may face barriers that are embedded in institutional relationships and practices. Consider for example the complex relationships formed between teacher candidates and Associate Teachers. Briefly, an Associate Teacher is a licensed, practising teacher who has been chosen by the University's preservice teacher education program to supervise the practicum of a particular teacher candidate. Using a teacher as mentor model, the Associate Teacher is expected to support and supervise the teacher candidate in the practicum in the classroom. An emerging narrative from the data reflected the way a few students understood the relationship with their associate teacher as being intertwined and embedded in hierarchal relations of power: "There are definitely power dynamics at play," Nelly notes. For Nelly, relations of power structured in hierarchies powerfully shaped her practicum experiences with her associate teacher. Here is Nelly explaining:

Um, so what do you do for instance when you're a teacher candidate and your associate teacher has said something that is factually incorrect to students and the students unquestionably accept something that's been said to them. How do we navigate that if we are noticing that even within our practicum, there's a power dynamic between who's our assessor, as well as this understanding that an associate typically comes in with, "I will impart knowledge to you as a teacher candidate." And rarely is there an equitable relationship between the two or some sort of give and take of knowledge.

Through comments such as these, normative expectations are communicated whereby the associate teacher, regardless of their experience in relation to the student-teacher they are involved with, are expected to maintain power and control in their mentoring relationships. This traditional authoritarian student-teacher relationship counter the dialogical relationships inherent in critical teaching and learning. Furthermore, critical educational researchers such as Britzman (2003) point out that "When teachers are viewed as sources of knowledge, a more constructivist notion of knowledge evolves" (p.

67). Nelly was not viewed by her Associate Teacher as a source of knowledge; rather, she was viewed as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge.

When Nelly strongly disagreed with certain aspects of the associate teacher's lesson, she did not openly question her associate teacher, as she knew what the protocol was when it came to associate/teacher candidate relationships and processes:

So that's something I'm trying to navigate in my practicum. Um, but yeah, sometimes you have to bite your tongue (laughs), especially if you don't necessarily agree with sort of philosophies that are at play in the classroom because you have to be mindful that this is not your classroom.

Nelly was certainly aware of the relationship power dynamics at play, and understood quite clearly that the associate teacher was in charge. She conveyed that it was not her position to question the associate teacher and she knew there might be dire consequences if she asserted her power in that way. Nelly believed that upsetting the associate teacher or being perceived as nonconforming or difficult may have negatively impacted her teaching evaluation. Nelly was acutely aware that the student practicum evaluation carried significant weight for members of school board hiring committees. The difference between Nelly and most of the preservice teacher participants in the sample was that she was able to critically rationalize that teaching practices “must be read not as guarantees of essential truths, or recipes for action, but as representations of particular discourses that implicate the voices of teachers” (Britzman, 2003, p. 67).

So, for the most part, even though Nelly disagreed with her associate teacher on features of her lesson, along with raising questions in her own mind about other teaching strategies pursued by her associate, she did not make her views known. Rather, she “played it safe” in her placement so that she would not be penalized when formally evaluated. As where other students may conform to this power arrangement, Nelly played

her cards very strategically and was very critical of the power imbalance, yet did not feel safe enough to voice nor oppose this structural issue.

Foucault's (1977) conceptualization of power can be used to help explain Nelly's hesitation to counter her associate teacher's practices. Nelly's voice was silenced by the normative power imbalance engrained in the teacher-associate relationship. The "truth regime" (Foucault, 1977) imposed by and within the larger educational institution insists that power hierarchies are normative and crossing these boundaries often results in negative outcomes for the perpetrators. What is interesting between Nelly and the majority of student participants is that Nelly explicitly problematized the educational system and the power hierarchies that exist within them:

Schools can be an institution where we increase the inequities that are currently embedded in our social system because schools are a by-product of our social system and structure. And what I mean by that is um, if there is already an authoritarian kind of structure at play within our societies, especially with regards to not allowing people to fully participate in a democratic society that we're supposed to be living in.

Conceptually, Nelly understood schools as key sites for social reproduction. Although she was able to make sense of the relationship dynamics between herself and her associate teacher, and was also keenly aware of how structural systems shape schools in a way that produces inequalities and inequities, she was reluctant to resist or challenge power structures. Nelly's ambivalent stance to resistance illustrates that "the context of teaching is political, it is an ideological context that privileges the interests, values, and practices necessary to maintain the status quo, and ironically, the powerlessness of teachers" (Britzman, 2003, p. 33).

Like Nelly, Rick was also keenly aware of the power imbalance between the associate teacher and the teacher candidate. Rick, who is a retired lawyer, and former

university professor, was not shy or afraid of confronting authority figures; however, he did feel vulnerable while being assessed by his associate teacher. Rick explains:

You know I've stared down judges way up there in their desks, that whole court system so, you know I don't think I'm easily intimidated but I am intimidated. I mean out there having this person assess a lot of very subjective stuff. You know, you could have done this a little bit better and that a little bit better, and I might be saying no, no I don't think so. And I don't think . . . more than that, I don't think you could have done it any better actually.

During the interview, Rick mentioned that he was so frustrated with what he described as the overwhelming power differentials between preservice students and associate teachers that he approached the Associate Dean of Preservice to discuss how policy might be changed to at least partially address some of the power imbalance present. Below is a summary of his version of the discussion with the Associate Dean:

The bigger issue was that the associates are essentially wielding unfettered and un-reviewed discretion. So your actual academic curriculum is delegated off to people who are not in the Faculty [of Education]. The assessment of that work is delegated out, outside the Faculty. But there is no Faculty review of what that associate is doing, saying or assessing at all, in any way. In fact, it's a very imbalanced structure to begin with where the student is really doing everything you can to be a good guest and you know virtually shine the shoes of the person you're with. But we have to do it. It's also determinant of your job prospects after the fact, because everybody knows it exists and it can ask for it, right. And the student is expected to meekly sign off that they got it, and of course you can refuse to sign it, and never work again as long as you live kind of thing, which is the imbalanced power they have, you essentially have to be acquiescent. So my thought was, just add a second half to that form, which is the students evaluation of the associate, and that experience, right?

Rick's comment on his relationship with the associate teacher in the context of assessment and evaluation reveals quite clearly the way in which teacher candidates are made to feel vulnerable in the context of their practicum. The power of the associate teacher to influence the teacher candidate's career had made a significant impression on Rick. Although Rick was just learning to teach, he was able look beyond the "sway of

institutional biography” (Britzman, 2003, p. 239). This form of resistance included the ability to critically “take on the perspective of other, identify one’s own deep investment in relation to others, analyze instances of power and pedagogy, raising questions and working within a range of interpretive strategies” (p. 239). For Rick, the associate teacher has the power to make or break a teacher candidate’s career, before they even essentially start. The problem for Rick, is that there are very few, if any, checks and balances when it comes to ensuring a sense of fairness when it comes to associate teachers’ assessment and evaluation of preservice students’ practicums.

So what did Rick do? Rick made an appointment with the Associate Dean to discuss his concern with the power imbalance between the teacher candidate and the associate teacher. Rick suggested to the Associate Dean that the teacher candidate evaluation document should also have a confidential section for teacher candidates to fill out and submit so that they may note outstanding conflicts or inappropriate actions carried out by the associate teacher. This way, Rick thought, if several students were noting the same problems with a particular teacher associate, it could be addressed in some fashion. When Rick left the Associate Dean’s office, he was not convinced that any action would be taken. His hunch seemed to be correct, as he mentioned in the interview that he was never informed otherwise. Coercive power relations, both in placements and within Faculty of Education classrooms have the tendency to remind students that they are, in some significant ways, at the mercy of those in power. Nonetheless, Rick’s critical voice “illuminated and challenged how we understand social conditions” and he was able to produce and deliver “critiques that have the potential to construct new realities” (Britzman, 2003, p. 35).

Both Rick and Nelly's experience gesture toward the need to take into consideration the development of critical pedagogy through teacher education in terms of changes in methods of practicum supervision. In this sense, associate teacher supervisory methods could adopt approaches and practices that were more egalitarian in nature. This particular approach would place much more emphasis on developing preservice students' reflective capabilities. In addition, this approach may establish, between the associate teacher and preservice student, a much more cooperative approach to exploring and investigating teaching and learning contexts. More importantly, this form of relationship takes on less of a hierarchal approach, and adopts one that is much more horizontal and better aligns with critical pedagogy theory and practice (Gitlin, Ogowa, & Rose, 1984; Ruddick & Sigsworth, 1985).

Nonetheless, the remaining group of student participants did not push forward with concerns to authority figures such as the Associate Dean. Although they were frustrated, they largely adopted a posture of passivity. Freire (1973) would describe the frustrated, although silent student participants, as *adapting* to their oppressive educational system rather *integrating* their own being, views, and knowledge into it. Freire (1973) describes people who adapt as objects that are acted on, and are subsequently complicit in the power dynamics that are at play. However, this is not to suggest that adaptation is merely a form of ideological imposition and structural constraint. This particular position acknowledges that students in general (and preservice students in particular) not only engaged actively in reproducing the forces that oppress them, but also opened up opportunities for developing modes of resistance as well.

Nonetheless, the concept of integration is described as a productive way to

interrupt the power dynamics at play. To elaborate, when one attempts to integrate, rather than adapt to a system or process, the integration resembles a form of agency in which people actively participate in ways that Frontlines to personal and social change. Again, the tendency of most student participants to ultimately accept, or adapt to, the constraining educational structures likely results from the belief that student agency will not produce any significant change. Or worse, the student participants may have internalized the belief that student agency, such as publicly voicing one's disagreement with an associate teacher's view or pedagogy, may result in disciplinary actions.

Nelly, a former PhD student, was aware of educational power dynamics, and stated that institutional power has to be strategically negotiated. She was aware of the top-down power hierarchy matrix that existed within the Faculty of Education and within her practice-teaching placements. However, she was hesitant to show resistance, as she did not want to create negative outcomes for herself. As shared by Nelly, she did not want to be perceived as a "trouble maker" and she chose to play out the "good student" who is supposed to be quiet. A student who should listen more than speak. Although, Nelly was aware of her complicity, most student participants did not have this depth of understanding. Rather, it seemed that most of the student participants internalized the traditional educational power dynamics as normative without critically questioning them. These types of unintentional teaching and learning structures (e.g., top-down power hierarchies) are widely present but seemingly undetected by students and professors.

Samantha was also very forthcoming with her critiques on her experiences in the Faculty of Education; however, she also maintained a code of silence:

To be frank, that there will be a lot of teachers that are graduating this year that are not socially just. They have not been affected. If the message you

really want to drive home is social justice, you are going to have make some people feel uncomfortable because confronting your privilege is very uncomfortable for the first time. If you want to remain neutral, you are giving them the information but you are not helping them implement and practice it and change their views which is what essentially what you have to do. I think talking about the differences between classes, and genders, and I don't think it was talked about a lot so even talking about it would be good.

The interview provided a space for her to reveal how effective she thought our Faculty of Education was at graduating teachers who work toward social justice. She did not share this view with any other authority figure. Later in our interview, when commenting on how the program impacted her overall level of criticality, Samantha mentioned that some of the courses confirmed what she already knew, but did not add nor change her already existing level of criticality. In this, she was disappointed and shared that disappointment with me. Samantha did not bother to express her views to anyone else within the Faculty of Education context. Again, the unintentional lesson learned by most participants, is that their views and experiences are frequently undervalued and sharing their disappointment and frustrations with the learning they experience is fruitless. The institutional top-down hierarchical power relations continue to be reproduced.

Hegemonic norms wield power that induces conformity. Preservice students and associate teachers often behave in accordance with social norms without being told or forced to do so and judge harshly those who behave otherwise (Adams & Zuniga, 2007; Bourdieu, 1984). As a few preservice teacher participants pointed out, there are consequences to being perceived as non-compliant or for resisting or rejecting authoritative faculty; and often, these consequences are considered normative and have been accepted as part and parcel of the educational institutional protocols. In fact, acting against the educational structures, such as traditional top-down power hierarchies, may be

perceived as having “poor taste” or “lacking” the necessary academic etiquette. For those who benefit from the norms by virtue of going along with “business as usual,” it provides access to social advantages including the advancement of one’s career (Adams & Zuniga, 2007, p. 107).

I now want to shift gears to explore how the cultural politics of the Faculty of Education and the teaching and learning processes of the classroom and faculty life shaped students’ levels of criticality at the end of the year.

Students’ Levels of Criticality at the End of the Year

Drawing from Phase Two interviews, this section details and categorizes students’ differing levels of criticality. These interviews took place after the sample of preservice teacher participants was situated in a Faculty of Education for most of the school year. This section of the analysis, which includes axial and theoretical coding, captures where students found themselves at the end of the 1-year program and locates them in one of three varying levels of critical consciousness: micro, meso, and macro. It is important to keep in mind as I proceed to discuss the categories of critical consciousness, like the theoretical analysis itself, the meaning of the categories should not be taken as absolute or clear-cut. Rather, they should be understood as somewhat fluid, porous, contradictory, and at times overlapping. Next, I discuss each of these categories in detail.

Micro Level Critical Consciousness

After a year in the Faculty of Education program, when the program was close to completion, most of the preservice teacher participants demonstrated a micro level CC. A micro level CC is best summarized as an overall understanding of social justice positioned under a doxic conceptual umbrella (meaning an uncritical acceptance of social

justice ideas). More specifically, micro level participants demonstrated a technocratic view of relative core concepts such as social class inequity, gender inequity, racism, and diversity. In other words, micro level participants expressed a limited and surface understanding of issues of social inequity. In addition, the relevant teaching approaches were vague and often abstract, and were presented as quick fix methods. The students who displayed a micro level of criticality were limited in their ability to understand themselves as inhabiting complex intersections of multiple and overlapping social positions not reducible to race, or class, or gender, or sexual orientation and so on. The word “limited” here is crucial for meaning, as it acknowledges the complexity of consciousness and power which recognizes that all social actors, including all preservice students, have some degree “of penetration” of the social forms that both oppress and privilege them (Foucault, 1982; Giddens, 1979; Gramsci, 1971).

It is reasonable to assume that participants with a micro level type of CC will not, in the near future, contribute to transforming or resisting inequitable societal structures. As a result, they will not satisfy one of the key aims of critical pedagogy. As emphasized by Giroux (1988b), critical pedagogy and its main goal of facilitating CC “will have to subordinate technical interests” in a way that the broader social structures and their varied and multiple manifestations and ethical concerns come under close scrutiny (p. 20).

Preservice teacher participants who displayed a micro level CC, which adopted a technocratic understanding of school, were also entangled within traditional functional views of school that rarely takes into consideration the broader social forces that “reproduce” the status quo (Giroux 1988b, p. 6). A deep and lively form of critical consciousness, on the other hand, is engaged in thinking closely about the broader social

forces and structures that implicate the schooling experiences of students and teachers (Giroux, 1988b, p. 23). The former traditional functional view of schooling focuses on execution of tasks and objective measurement of academic outcomes and could be viewed as closely aligned with the current ‘standards and accountability movement’. Whereas the latter radical critical view of schooling begins with the notion that reality and knowledge should be questioned, analyzed, and made problematic within classroom contexts that emphasize dialogical learning and open debate. The facilitation of CC inherently subsumes a radical critical view of schooling and sets out to problematize traditional functional notions and applications of schooling (Giroux, 1988b).

Within the context of the Faculty of Education, most preservice teacher participants in this sample tended to show a “doxic” acceptance of both the world at large and the broader schooling system. Briefly, Bourdieu (1971) employs the term “doxa” to describe the uncritical consciousness held by the majority of the population within any given society (p. 185). In his well-regarded 1984 work, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Bourdieu describes how “doxa” works in society through individuals to reproduce the status quo. For individual people and groups, doxa works to mask the unequal and inequitable divisions in society by establishing in them unstated, taken for granted assumptions, or simply “common sense” views of the world (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). So internalized are the assumptions, Bourdieu (1984) argues, that people simply “forget” that these assumptions were manufactured by other people (p. 471). A doxic view of the world, then, sharply contrasts with a deeper more lively form of CC and the cognitive habit of problem posing that Freire (1970) emphasizes in his own work.

So, with this understanding in mind, most of the preservice teacher participants

within this sample seemed to have internalized the dominant educational practices and ideologies associated with the transmission style of education, educational top-down power hierarchies, and, to some degree, the neoliberal emphasis on hyper-individualism. Teachers and other educators interested in education must work to better understand how the dominant culture functions at all levels of schooling to undermine and at times disconfirm the cultural, social, political experiences of what Giroux (1992) calls the “excluded majorities” (p. 7). Unlike meso level preservice teacher participants and the one macro level preservice teacher in this sample, micro level preservice teacher participants during the time of our interviews were removed from the critical intellectual ability to “problematize” and utilize a “language of critique” in a way that would help them “read the world.” Keep in mind that a Faculty of Education oriented toward social justice and inhabited by some instructors who adopt critical pedagogy as an approach ought to be producing many students who have the capacity and the analytical tools to interrogate what “appears to be normal, to challenge the status quo, and to name and change the world, rather than merely interpreting it” (Orelus, 2011, p. 3).

In any event, this study finds further evidence to support the claim made by Giroux and Aronowitz (2011) that a technocratic rationale continues to reign over the majority of preservice teacher candidates enrolled in faculties of education. The technocratic rationale evidenced in this study seemed to create a barrier to critically assessing the broader, more complex, and more important issues, such as “What is the role of the teacher and what is the purpose of education?” Preservice teacher participants with a micro level CC evidenced three reproductive mechanisms when discussing the meaning of social justice, describing social justice teaching practices, and elaborating on

issues of class, racism, and gender inequity: (a) a technocratic rationality on matters regarding issues of inequity, which was then associated with (b) a “free floating” (Giroux & Aronowitz, 2011, p. 46) and apolitical stance, that was accompanied by (c) an internalized hyper-individualism.

These three reproductive mechanisms were interweaved with the preservice teacher participants’ perceived role and function as teacher. For example, when asked the question, “What does teaching for social justice mean to you?” Bobbie answered:

Treating everyone equally. Taking into consideration diversity and differentiation of instruction and give students what they want. Some [students] are strong and some are weak. [Teachers] need to divide out time between students based on the need of the students.

As exemplified by Bobbie, there was a limited understanding of social justice, confusion between the concepts of equality and equity, and an emphasis on teaching tactics that leaned towards accommodating academically diverse students.

Mary, who has an undergraduate degree in social work, emphasized that “Social workers have a code of ethics that stress social justice.” Her description of social justice teaching practices is more descriptive than Bobbie’s response, however, her knowledge is also limited, and technocratic in nature:

Social justice is very simply taking all the different students, SES [Social Economic Status], gender differences etcetera, creating a program that accommodates all students. Use culture specific examples. I believe that students should be able to discuss issues and share from each other. For example, I think it is important for students to discuss how and why they are different and the same.

These responses suggest an unsophisticated and somewhat mechanical understanding of social justice and teaching for social justice. The technocratic rationale is evident in both Bobbie’s and Mary’s responses as the knowledge on social justice were informed by what seemed like surface versions of social justice. Mary’s knowledge was transmitted

from a social work code of ethics that stresses social justice as mandatory, and, as per Bobbie, his knowledge was transmitted to him in Dr. G's class. Tori admitted that he still does not know much about social justice theory or practice. However, Tori has demonstrated some growth as he has come to realize that he is privileged:

I would say that I did not know much at all about social justice and now I still don't know, but I am a little bit more aware. I feel like I have been in a sheltered environment and I have not been exposed, but I know I am in a dominant societal position. Did check list about dominant versus minority position. It makes me think what would it be like to be in their shoes. I now think that not everyone may be like me.

Tori attributed his growing awareness of his privileged societal position to a checklist conducted in class with Dr. G. Although he has moved positively toward becoming more critically aware of his on own positionality, his knowledge of minority groups and the educational implications appear to be limited.

Riley, similar to many micro level participants, described social justice as treating students fairly and taking an anti-discriminatory approach:

I think social justice is about fairness so everyone regardless of race gender or anything. Everyone is treated fairly. There is no discrimination based on these characteristics. At this stage of my career, I am still trying to work out how to incorporate social justice into my lessons.

Riley, like most other micro level participants at the end of the program, was not clear on how to incorporate social justice teaching theory into his practice. However, Riley does share a broad social justice philosophy he retained, in a rather technocratic manner, from a previously taken graduate sociology class:

In grad class, I had one prof that talked about the mini max principle and he talked about minimizing differences and maximizing similarities. So focus on differences but emphasize the similarities. The similarities do far outweigh the differences and that is how I approach the topic about culture and holidays.

Here we see a "food, fun, and festival" approach to teaching social justice which is

counterproductive to unmasking the inequitable structural issues, such as class and gender that work to privilege some groups while disadvantaging minority groups.

Rick, as you may remember is a former lawyer, responds in the following way when asked to define social justice within the context of education:

I don't really understand it. Maybe it is my legal bias, as my late wife would say, if you have a hammer, everything else begins to look like a nail. Then to look at it as social justice, I don't know if I look at the constituents either. Economic justice, political justice, are not social justice. How does it really apply in the context of school? If it is an economic issue, it is not an educational issue, and I come back to the point if there is a problem in social justice, than we should be getting it in an articulate fashion. I am certain that if I did not get it and I was looking out for it, I am sure that no one else got it either.

Rick's response was interesting in that he was very forward in admitting his lack of knowledge in the field of social justice despite his extensive work within the Law Faculty. He clearly was not comfortable juxtaposing political, economic, and educational issues, and was not able to conceptualize the complex terrain of social justice. Also, he conveyed a desire to know more, but emphasized that the Faculty of Education was not articulating the contemporary educational social justice issues. This statement complements the findings of Cochran-Smith (1995), who for instance notes that preservice programs implement knowledge transmission models in which "expert" professors aim to efficiently pass on the necessary technical skills and behaviours to novice teachers (p. 83). This claim may at least partially explain why Rick was not exposed to the complex terrain of social justice concepts and teaching. Being told what to do and how to do it by the expert seems like the normative educational experience.

Although some micro level participants such as Bobbie, Tori, and Betty repeatedly referenced Professor G as having the most impact on social justice

consciousness raising, the facilitation of a deep and complex understanding of the structural issues was not evidenced by micro level participants. Bourdieu (1984) emphasizes the inner academic institutional working of “symbolic delegation” where the interest of a group is refracted through the field interests of their intellectual leaders. It was not likely that Professor G intended to pass on a mechanical political consciousness to some of the students she taught, it nonetheless seemed to occur, as Bobbie uncritically absorbed a technical knowledge of equity issues which resembled a surface social justice orthodoxy. Groenke (2009) found that critically minded professors, consciously and unconsciously, cater to the normative preservice teacher candidate “expectation that they be taught how to teach” and “learning how to teach meant acquiring a set of skills that would enable them to manage their classrooms and efficiently convey curriculum content” (p. 13).

Moreover, one professor in Sleeter’s (2009) study, which focused on examining how teacher educators position and practise social justice initiatives, emphasized:

Many students are more concerned with classroom management and lesson plans than discussing social justice and how to challenge existing policies and curriculum. It is difficult for many to think that critiquing texts from the educational system is what a “good” teacher does. (p. 153)

In light of this point, it is not totally surprising that the focus for micro level preservice teacher participants was on carrying out the role of “teacher as technocrat” by way of transmitting, in superficial ways, knowledge encompassing issues of inequity. Micro level preservice teacher participants, then, were likely to reproduce transmission educational systems and top-down hierarchical power relations, which they internalized from both larger society, and the educational systems they have been immersed in. Of course, transmission styles of pedagogy and, educational contexts that are structured with

top-down power relations, are antithetical to the dialogical, and supposedly empowering, teaching and learning facilitated by critical pedagogy.

Kendall, who also showed a micro level CC described the act of teaching for social justice in the following way:

[Teachers] have to let students know, even if they are young, that they must see differences as assets. [Teachers] must accommodate different learning needs and styles, ethnicities and abilities. I want to teach people that differences will be in classroom, but we must accept and not be ignorant. [Teachers] need to do research on issues that you are unaware, can be culture, religion, ableism, or mental disability.

Kendall's response highlights her belief that it is necessary for the teacher to be the social justice 'teaching expert' and impart knowledge to the students. Like many other micro level participants, Kendall's end of program conceptualization of the role of teacher and the function of teaching was teacher centered, and she did not acknowledge the importance of student directed learning or agency, nor did she mention any strategies that countered traditional power dynamics between teachers and students.

Abe, a mature ELL (English Language Learning) student, who has carried out extensive volunteer work with homeless populations in downtown Detroit, Michigan, offers the following definition of social justice and elaborates on what teaching for social justice means to him, after spending a year at the Faculty of Education:

To me, social justice is that everyone in this society should know their rights and should know how to defend their rights. Know in a way, so that everyone can be equal without offending anyone. Of course, when you have a class, you need to look to different strategies. When you have different students, they will be at different levels and you have to discuss with students to explain that.

Despite engaging in a form of social justice that directly impacted the lives of one of our most vulnerable minority groups, the homeless, Abe still demonstrated a limited

understanding of the structural issues that contribute to social inequity. Both Kendall and Abe demonstrate an individualistic, teacher-centered desire to transmit knowledge, rather than prompt students to become inquiring, critical agents. This kind of teacher-centered approach contributes to the reproduction of the transmission mode of education.

Tompkins (2005) claims that the transmission model of education is dominant in preservice education; it is evidenced as professors provide objective goods and services, which are internalized by teachers as technical knowledge acquisition and skill development, to be further passed down to their own students. This dominant preservice teaching process also seems to parallel the learning experiences of the micro level preservice teacher participants within the sample.

Another example that showed a predominant micro level critical consciousness, which illuminates a general focus on how the teacher alone can influence learning, was the idea that social justice is about “giving students what they need.” Micro level participants spoke about the idea that student needs are assessed by the teacher only, rather than collaboratively explored by both the teacher and the student. For example, Atma assigns meaning to the concept of social justice in the following way:

Social justice means to give other people who are disadvantaged a fair chance somehow. They should not be exploited, but again there are many things in the economy where they have accumulated wealth and advantage in terms of their neighbourhoods. Schooling and social justice should be about giving students what they need and not exploiting them.

When asked to describe social justice teaching approaches, Tori responded:

One recommendation . . . I can remember someone saying don't always wait for the first person, wait for several minutes and call on everyone. When I was in high school, I had to think and would not blurt things out right away. Wish that was done for me, wait a few seconds so that you don't favour those who think off the top of their head.

Micro level participants such as Atma and Tori displayed a limited understanding of what the individual teacher can do for the students on a one-on-one or group format basis; differentiated instruction and creating classroom environments that were inclusive of minority students were frequently mentioned when assigning meaning to social justice. However, like many micro level preservice teacher candidates, these responses encompassed a technocratic rationale that appealed to a narrow understanding of social justice. These responses also conveyed a low level surface understanding of teaching for social justice, which was vague and failed to provide any direction for effective pragmatic pedagogical action. The technocratic rationale conveyed by micro level preservice teacher participants supports the conclusions made by Dall’Alba and Barnacle (2009) positioning “teacher education programs as increasingly technicist in nature” (p. 196).

Davis, who positions himself as “White and privileged” and grew up in a diverse, multicultural community, assigns the following meaning to social justice and teaching for social justice: “I think social justice is about fairness so everyone, regardless of race gender or anything, everyone is treated fairly. There is no discrimination based on these characteristics.” It may at first appear that Davis may not be clear on the difference between equality and equity, however, after asking him to clarify between the concepts of equality and equity, he responded: “Equality is when everyone is treated the same, equity is when you differentiate your teaching approach based on individual student needs.” Furthermore, Davis was also able to apply his understanding of gender inequity issues by implementing some practical classroom practices during teachable moments:

In the classroom [teaching practicum placement], I would be aware of gender inequity and of course acknowledge my own white male privilege. And girls may not want to be smart in math and sciences, sexist remarks must be acknowledged. For example, ‘throwing like a girl,’ the Dove commercial,

[girls and boys] don't see the impact sometimes when stuff like that happens. [So, I] Must make a comment when stuff like that comes up. Or 'running like a girl.' every time a comment like this comes up you need to address it as they can have a real impact on women on how they grow up in schools. And their feeling on what they are supposed to be doing.

Davis's critical knowledge seemed to be a bit deeper and perhaps more wide ranging than that of Kendall, Bobbie, and Atma, among others micro level CC participants, in particular as it relates to gender and gender relations. However, Davis was not able to speak to the systemic structural issues that contribute to white privilege or gender inequity, and when asked to elaborate on his critical knowledge (such as his interview response above), he kept referring to his acceptance and acknowledgement of his "SES and White male privilege" without mentioning unquestioned societal power differentials or problematic contributing ideologies, such as meritocracy and social mobility. For example, upon probing Davis to elaborate on his view of privilege in terms of his own social class and whiteness, he responded:

I cannot tell you an exact theory or scholar but one power point was put up [During an undergraduate introductory sociology class] and the info said that if you are from this income, this is likely to be your quality of life. As a whole, I already had the experience of knowing that I was privileged but by the time I got to university, I really saw it and now when I go into practicums and see these students, I think yeah, this is how it works.

Davis was a student participant whom I had initially categorized with a meso level CC, however, upon further analysis, he did not have the language nor depth of knowledge to speak to any one social issue. Davis's insights seemed technocratic in that I sensed he was repeating what was transmitted to him from professors, both within our Faculty of Education and during his undergraduate introductory sociology course.

Similar to Davis, Fredrick was another participant who, towards the end of the school year, was able to acknowledge his White, male, and financial privilege. To some

extent, Fredrick understood how these aspects of his identity formed a disconnect between himself and his ability to relate to minority groups:

It is weird because I feel like I don't belong in a lot of these support communities that I belong to. I am white, straight, and etcetera. Even being in LGBTQ group, I, technically speaking am, the one in power and I have absolutely no reason to say anything.

To some extent, Fredrick was able to understand how cultural factors are implicated when teaching. Here is Fredrick, talking about the barriers of teaching for social justice:

One of the biggest barriers is who you are effects how you end up teaching. If I was trans, Black, gay, I would be teaching it differently. When I teach social justice, I need to be far more sensitive and would need to dance around issues a bit.

Fredrick seems to have some understanding that his White, financially privileged, male identity would implicate his ability and comfort level of teaching about the disadvantages of minority students. Although this awareness signals an initial gesturing toward being critically reflective of one's cultural positioning, his stance at this point seemed teacher centered. Fredrick seemed to distance himself from students with diverse backgrounds. There existed a gap in his knowledge about issues of diversity. One way to begin to resolve this knowledge gap is by forming relationships with diverse students, and learning about their ways of being and knowing within a dialogical learning space. This approach was not mentioned by Fredrick, rather, he concluded that: "So based off of who you are and the context, you may not be the right teacher for where you are. They [students that come from diverse cultural backgrounds] should have one teacher that they can relate to."

Jacob, also categorized as a micro level preservice teacher participant, positions the idea of social justice in the following way:

For me, I believe in equity and equality. As opposed to everyone being equal, everyone should be treated the same way, but equity you are more helping them for their specific problem.

Ironically, as conveyed during the interview with many micro level preservice teacher participants, creating equitable and inclusive classrooms was orally constructed as a teacher directed practice rather than a collaborative one. In addition to conveying a technocratic social justice orthodoxy, many micro level students also evidenced an internalized neoliberal ideology of rugged individualism. The repetitive phrases such as “I” will create fair, equitable, and inclusive classroom, “I” will differentiate their learning based on their needs, all speak to a transmission style of pedagogy that centers the teacher as the expert who takes the active role while students are empty vessels that passively absorb the knowledge transmitted by teachers (Freire, 1985).

To some degree, it seemed this group of participants evidenced a belief in an intensified view of “rugged individualism,” a key value in neoliberalism, as they tended to discuss what they could directly do for the students (Mykhneko, 2016, p. 203). They did not mention the idea of giving up some of their authority in order to create a space in which students could empower themselves, through choice, dialogue, or any other democratic teaching strategy. Further to this point, these participants *did not* problematize authoritarian hierarchical relationships nor did they problematize or show an awareness of the banking education. In fact, these two areas of potential critical understanding and dialogue were seen as essential by Freire in moving toward developing a more productive and mature CC (Freire, 1971).

Although certainly motivated by good intentions and influenced, perhaps by the educational rhetoric of the day, another example of the neoliberal hyper-individualism

was the participants' firm consensus on the importance of accommodating individual student differences. For example, when discussing his newly acquired views on diverse students, Nathan emphasized:

Seeing the differences, it is about seeing one person, and analyzing that person. Know how to analyze everyone individually. Know that some learners will need the lesson projected in a certain way.

One could argue that the emphasis placed on accommodating individual needs bodes nicely with the idea of forming highly individualized consumers with multiple preferences for future products and services, which of course reproduces important aspects of late capitalism. Also, in consistently prioritizing individual students needs above collective needs, and seeking out and implementing differentiated teaching strategies and resources, a neoliberal rugged individualism is supported and perpetuated. This finding supports Martin's (1995) conclusions in research that examined several studies exploring teacher candidates perceptions and responses of equity based teaching initiatives and has found that "most teachers understanding of equity issues is cast within a conservative framework that emphasizes individual choice and mobility" (p. 122). Sleeter (2001) concludes that most teachers' understanding of equity issues mirrors the understanding of "their own personal experience that is rooted within a naïve individualistic framework" (p. 104).

Although addressing issues of inequity by being aware of individual differences, and attempting to accommodate each individual student is productive in meeting some academic outcomes, the complete exclusion of collective and collaborative teaching practices may produce a divide and conquer mentality. To elaborate, while focusing on addressing individual student academic needs, the pupils were not seen, nor described, as

active agents able to voice their opinion, organize collectively, and make social change via collective efforts. Instead, many micro level preservice teacher participants positioned students as having individual and unique needs that can mostly be assessed and accommodated by the individual teacher. Consequently, individual students may passively accept both this passive positioning and the idea of the importance of “individualization” and the “individualized” action plan created by the teacher. Although a micro level oriented teacher may be productive in assisting some individual pupils to excel academically, they may only minimally, if at all, tap into the capacity to begin to develop a broader and deeper form of CC among the students they teach.

Many of the issues inherent in the micro level preservice teacher participants likely stem from the belief that it must be the individual teacher that directs and creates individual progress differentially with each student. Supporting Britzman’s (2003) research and echoing her conclusions, “The popular image of teaching as an individual activity, privatized by the walls between classrooms, is an image students bring to their teaching practice” (p. 63). When this naïve individualistic mindset is overemphasized, teachers fail to see the necessity of collective and collaborative forms of agency that may Frontlines to changing structural inequities.

Also, participants with a micro level CC generally did not acknowledge nor understand the connection between the micro (individual) and macro (structural) sociological forces. For example, like Kendall and Jacob, some participants in this category acknowledged the real material and lived disparity between elementary students from different SES backgrounds and spoke about the inequitable home circumstances that give rise to further inequity at school (e.g., know that it is not fair to expect

chronically hungry students to excel academically like some of their peers). When discussing her practicum experiences, for example, Belle emphatically states:

SES [social economic status] discrepancy is huge. Just because you are from a lower SES background does not mean you are not as intelligent. Fundraising is unequal between these schools. Sometimes students come from single parent households, mom and dad are working their tushes off to put food on the table, you must give them access to Internet and resources. How can I do it, I am only one person, the child is not getting what they need at home, cannot expect someone to be creative when they are hungry and poor.

However, like Belle, many micro level participants did not comment on the structural issues that give shape, influence, and reproduce these differences. Nor did they mention the dominant, yet problematic ideology of meritocracy or social mobility as contributing to social inequity.

In addition, many micro level participants did not seem to understand in any meaningful way how they have been personally and professionally shaped by the larger cultural, political, and social forces. For instance, Nathan mentioned several times throughout our interview that critically reflecting on one's own bias was an integral part of teaching for social justice:

We all want to transcend bias, but what I found this year is that it is difficult to do that because we all have bias. I realized we all have bias and they are difficult to notice. Teachers need to be conscious and reflective of their practice in order to see the bias and try to avoid.

However, while Nathan's comments certainly reflect a growing understanding of the necessity of reflective practice, he stopped well short of explaining the sources or macro level structures, such as classism or the normative and traditional gender role ideology, that contribute to teacher bias. Like Nathan and Belle, many micro level participants did not explicitly or clearly speak to the deeper systemic issues embedded in social inequity such

as unjust taken-for-granted power differentials and concealed white privilege, or problematic societal ideology such as meritocracy and hyper-individualism. This finding was not entirely surprising. Sleeter (2009), for example, found that most preservice teacher candidates do not understand the entrenched and often deterministic “relationship between cultural beliefs and individuals, and between cultural beliefs and institutions” (p. 152). How can teacher candidates see how these larger forces have impacted their students and even their own teaching practices, if they failed to scrutinize their own lived experiences?

To summarize the key points, a micro level CC signified a technocratic rationality predominantly focused on individual self-efficacy (e.g., “I” will accommodate the diverse needs of students through differentiated instruction), and was supported by an apolitical, “free floating,” rugged individualism (e.g., “I” can create fair and inclusive classrooms). These student participants saw the power within themselves to uncritically carry out a prescribed, traditional role and function of teaching, but did not give much thought to the idea of creating educational contexts that generate power within and among the students they would be teaching.

This finding is reflected in the secondary critical sociology of education literature. For example, Aronowitz and Giroux’s (1988b) description of an “accommodating type of intellectual” can be used to further encapsulate the meaning associated with a micro level critical consciousness:

Accommodating intellectuals generally stand firm within an ideological posture and set of material practices that support the dominant society and its ruling groups. Such intellectuals are generally not aware of this process in that they do not define themselves as self-conscious agents of the status quo, even though their politics further the interests of the dominant classes. This category of intellectuals also defines themselves in terms that suggest they are

free-floating, removed from the vagaries of class conflicts and partisan politics. (p. 48)

Micro level participants, then, aligned with “accommodating” intellectual types as they seemed to “function primarily to mediate uncritically ideas and social practices that serve to reproduce the status quo” (p. 39). In other words, as Britzman (2003) argues, “conformity” to the accepted cultural norms and standards and “adherence to the dictates of social convention” privileges routinized behaviour over thoughtful and critical action (p. 46). Furthermore, conforming to the dominant technocratic rationale, micro level students evidenced what Biesta (1998) highlights as a “dogmatic criticality” (p. 476), which is mechanical, and reductionist in its form and application within the classroom setting. Evidence of teachers attempting to create educational contexts that may generate power within and among pupils (e.g., moving from the “I” to the “we” by incorporating more dialogical teaching strategies) was more prominent in the next level of CC of which we now turn our attention to.

Meso Level Critical Consciousness

Some students among the sample, including Caleb, Deanna, Jadyn, Rita, Antonia, and Samantha, were categorized as meso level CC students. These preservice teacher participants demonstrated in the interviews an ability to see through some aspects of “doxa” (Bourdieu, 1971). More specifically, these meso level preservice teacher participants were both aware and critical of various taken for granted assumptions and dominant ideologies that shape and direct educational actions. For example, towards the end of her Faculty of Education experience, Antonia demonstrates her ability to see beyond stereotypical and deficit views of diverse students who are disadvantaged in some ways:

I had one student that had a brother run away from home and she needed an extension on an assignment. We need to see the big picture and finding out what

is fair and what is not fair, and how it affects people and we need to get a sense of where people come from.

Samantha, at the end of the year, also demonstrated an ability to see beyond dominant ideology such as meritocracy and social mobility when she discussed her understanding of social justice:

I think social justice is recognizing that there is a very privileged group in society and they are not individual privileges but institutionalized. And social justice is working against that and any minority group of persons of colour, and plus, and other groups that have been disadvantaged. Working to become equal which they are not right now.

Like Antonia and Samantha, at the end of the year this group of preservice teacher participants conveyed a desire to challenge and modify some classroom practices (institutional level) that reproduce the status quo. Unlike participants who expressed a micro level of criticality, these meso level participants displayed a deeper level of criticality whereby they were able to problematize and utilize a “language of critique” to critically examine how social reproduction happens in the context of education.

What also differentiated participants located in the meso level category of CC from those who were located in the micro level was their emphasis on quality relationships and interpersonal interactions with students in their future classrooms. As anyone familiar with the secondary literature on critical pedagogy will tell you, teaching is really about respectful and equitable relationships, given its attentiveness to issues of power and power relations (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2012; McLaren, 1985; Shor & Pari, 1999). Antonia mentions, for example, that building relationships is key during the early phases of critical teaching and learning:

I am just working on relationships and getting to know the students. I am busy trying to establish relationships. I am trying to get to know them

[students] because until you get to know them, I don't think you can teach them anything.

What is important about Antonia's comment is the way it draws our attention to the relationship between understanding and knowing students as people, and acknowledging how this process productively impacts learning. Antonia is putting a significant amount of labour into establishing healthy and respectful relationships with her students.

Antonia's stance also aligns nicely with the role of the teacher as understood within the context of critical pedagogy. Here, the role of the teacher is best understood, in part, as a transformative intellectual, one where they not only learn from students, but come to appreciate their viewpoints and to take part in a dialogical process (Friere, 1970; Shor & Pari, 1993).

Antonia was not alone in being aware of the significance of building respectful relationships with students as a foundation for teaching and learning. Jadyn, for example, also talks about her experiences and intention to build respectful and 'real' relationships with students. Here is Jadyn:

[I] must be real with students, read to them from text, it does not matter to them. But when you empathize with students, you understand the students more, you can connect with them more, admitting your own flaws, how do you respect someone who says they know everything, [I will] say I am human and I don't know everything. I am not going to pretend that I am perfect either.

Based on her comments, Jadyn draws our attention to the way her level of criticality will shape and inform her featured pedagogy. Not only does she suggest a relationship that is built on vulnerability and honesty, but also on mutual respect. In this way, Jadyn understands her future pedagogy as transformative in that it attempts to equalize relations of power and undermine traditional teacher-student relationships that have been typically described as authoritarian and teacher-centric.

Caleb was another participant who, over the course of the year, began to see teacher–student relationships that are guided by mutual respect and an ethic of care as important factors in building healthy teaching and learning environments. Here is Caleb:

In the beginning, I was more teacher-centered. Now I see that everything you do is for your students. Especially play the supportive role that kids may not have. You are that bright part of their day. You have to be that person. You must understand that they may not always like you and that is OK. But more importantly you want to be respected and respectful. [A teacher] must accept that not everyone is going to like you but you have to be fair and honest. When you are in practicum, you see how teachers interact with students and you see good examples and bad examples.

Caleb is moving in the right direction, if the goal is to become a critical educator.

Teachers who adopt a critical stance must also have a critically reflective component to their understanding of what constitutes a good teacher. In this they understand the need to construct classrooms in open and mutually respectful ways, and that they as teachers must engage in deep self reflection about their position and the effects of their authority in the classroom.

Moreover, participants who had displayed a meso level of criticality seemed to understand that by building genuine relationships, they would presumably disrupt the dominant role and function associated with transmission education. Drawing on critical theorists such as Marx (1939) and Bourdieu (1971), Panofsky (2003) emphasizes that “social relations are a key mediator of students’ school learning” (p. 420). Alternatively put, teachers who take the time to ‘get to know students,’ rather than mechanically engage in transmission pedagogy are more likely to transcend the traditional perceptual and physical distancing that occurs between distinct social groups.

Rita, another student located in the meso level made the following comment when attributing meaning to the term social justice, and other meso level CC students also

echoed this perspective:

[Social Justice] is about the relationships and breaking down barriers. But marks are not stressed or focused on. This mirrors what should be happening in schools, what skills you are learning.

The emphasis on building relationships did not seem tied to differentiated instruction (as was mostly the case with micro level preservice teacher participants); rather, like Rita, meso level preservice teacher participants desired to build equitable relations that intentionally countered the traditional authoritarian teaching tendency inherent in transmission education (Barrett, Solomon, Sinder, & Portelli, 2009). Rita also prioritized “breaking down barriers” that exist between distinct social groups, and, downplays the traditional, reproductive role that marks play in social group distinctions. Like Rita, meso level CC teachers displayed a resistance to the taken for granted role of passive student inherent in many educational contexts (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1988b). For instance, Antonia comments, “Students may also come from different backgrounds and they may feel like their opinions are not valued at home, must adapt and gauge your practice so that all students can speak up and feel like their opinion is valued.” In this regard, the insights of meso level teachers, justified the idea that the “mediation of social relations—the dynamics of power, position, social location in the social interaction of learning—is of profound significance in education” (Panofsky, 2003, p. 415).

In addition, toward the end of the program, participants who displayed a meso level of criticality were aware of race, class, and gender ideologies, among others, however, compared with micro level participants, these participants were more clear on their intention to explicitly discuss these issues with future pupils. For example, here is Antonia:

My biggest goal of all of this is having a safe place to talk about these issues. There are teachers that say I am just gonna teach the curriculum. It is OK to

take the day and tackle the issues the students want to know about. So another thing is that they have a right to know.

Meso level participants placed value on critical teaching strategies that would prompt their pupils to examine topics such as race, class, and gender ideologies and explore the impact on ways of being and knowing. To further illustrate, Rita shares part of her critical teaching philosophy and highlights gender inequity as an important topic to be discussed with her future students:

A text is not just a print book and everything is not a binary, there are multiple ways to look at things. This carries forward to other courses and applies to all areas of education and life in general. It is important to know that not everything is an either or. There are many in between and these are important to consider as well as the extremes. Thinking in binaries or thinking in black and white – discussed these binary ways of thinking in Professor G's class.

Like Rita, participants with a meso level CC were aware of the taken for granted technocratic teaching practices, such as presenting concepts in binary forms, that reproduce inequities. This is a problem as far as developing CC is concerned. For Giroux (1988b), that problem is that “the technocratic rationale positions the educator as objective” and “knowledge as apolitical” (p. 176). These technocratic practices mask the nexus between power and knowledge. In sharp contrast with the technocratic teaching role and function of micro level preservice teacher participants, meso level participants seemed better able to nuance, contextualize, and then act on their subjective critical knowledge of the issues. In light, meso level students were more apt to understand that, “Learning to teach is a social process of negotiation ... teaching concerns coming to terms with one's intentions and values, as well as one's views of knowing, being and acting in a setting characterized by contradictory realities” (Britzman, 2003, p. 31).

Further, meso level participants had a more developed critical lens (which

contrasted the technocratic social justice orthodoxy evidenced among micro level CC teachers), in a way that they had a greater sensitivity to micro-aggressions. Samantha was familiar with the terms micro and macro aggressions and discussed them during our interview:

I first learned in stereotyping class in a fourth year class [undergraduate course]. For a while I had a hard time grasping the difference between micro aggressions and macro aggression. It is really like little nudges that is suppose to come of as complimenting but it is really insulting and reminds of your place in society. Macro aggressions are poignant, using the N word even for example the confederate flag, it is a blatant macro expressions, like we don't care what happened to you.

Briefly, Pierce (1974), a professor of education and psychiatry at Harvard University, coined the term micro-aggression in the 1970s to describe comments or insults that are derogatory in nature and are targeted at individuals who are members of historically marginalized groups. For example, the statement “you are a credit to your race” is an everyday example of a micro-aggression, in the same way saying to a non-White woman, “I would have never guessed that you were a scientist.” Samantha applies her critical knowledge of micro-aggressions and discusses an example of an elementary gender based micro-aggressions, related to physical athletic abilities:

For example, “you run like a girl.” It is just a term that we don't question, it can be very insulting, like what does that mean? Girls my age would like run like a girl. So there is a lot of internalized misogyny there. Or doing push-ups, like those are girl push-ups. No, those are modified push-ups.

Reflecting a developing critical consciousness, Samantha, clearly had a general understanding that some everyday comments constituted micro-aggressions that could function as a powerful tool to reproduce gender, race, or class inequity. The power of language, of everyday comments, to shape the lives of people in powerful ways was noted by critical theorist Bakhtin (1981) who wrote:

The process of becoming a human being is the process of assimilating the words of others.... Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth, but strives to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world. (p. 341)

Meso level preservice teacher participants such as Samantha did not conform to the dominant adherence of normative, yet problematic, language conventions. Rather, “they chose critical action over privileged routinized behaviour” (Britzman, 2003, p. 46).

Another phenomena that distinguished a more developed critical lens from the technocratic rationale conveyed by micro level teachers, was an understanding, to varying levels, that many forms of knowledge are not inseparable from power and relations of power. Students such as Caleb, Jady, Rita, Samantha, Antonia, and Deanna understood that the knowledge/power nexus was socially constructed and often functioned to constitute “regimes of truth” that did very little to undermine outdated, patriarchal views of gender (Foucault, 1977; for a discussion of gender relations, see Friedan, 1963; Holland, 2012; Johnson, 2007). To illustrate this point, we can look at the partial meaning Caleb attributes to the term social justice:

Social justice is about knowing that you don't know and not making assumptions. In my Gendered History course, I had a really good Professor It was always about challenging—not accepting things at face value—or even just hypothesizing. I take this into my [Teaching] practicum.

Caleb's understanding of his role as a “critical intellectual” (Giroux, 1988b, p. 470) embraces uncertainty and then paves the way for his counterhegemonic function as a teacher:

In history you don't have African Americans involved in history. I researched this and presented it and told students to challenge everything and not accept things for face value. Also it is helpful, from a social justice perspective. I [momentary pause], you, read all white authors, you have a skewed perception.

By thinking clearly and closely about Whiteness as a structural system of power, Caleb seems to have genuinely adopted a critical intellectual role and performs

counterhegemonic functions both within and outside of the formal educational context.

Here is Caleb again describing his understanding of critical pedagogy that has been shaped by his background, experiences, and education:

I learn everyday from a different perspective and I try to do that every day as well. For example, instead of teaching sonnets we did Vietnamese poems. So you either give someone validation or you share something new. This would be a core value. I attribute this view to my undergrad and travelling. I try to set up myself for these cultural exchanges.

Caleb's ability to problematize the social construction of race and its relationship to the curriculum, prompted him to engage his students with texts other than those traditionally taught in schools. In turn, both he and his students had the opportunity to enter into the broader political struggle over knowledge and resources (Freire, 1985).

Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1993) concept of symbolic violence is relevant here as it distinguishes micro level CC teachers from meso level CC teachers. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1993) describe symbolic violence as

The violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity. ... Social agents are knowing agents who, even when they are subjected to determinisms, contribute to producing the efficacy of that which determines them. (p. 272)

According to this view, symbolic violence occurs when students are complicit in accepting status quo traditional teaching practices, even if these practices knowingly work against their best interests. Caleb, like other meso level participants, refused to be under the spell of the "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993, p. 167) enacted within educational systems as he did not conform to the dominant transmission models of education nor did he exhibit a mechanical type of social justice orthodoxy.

When Jadyn describes her strategic use of multicultural texts, within her teaching placement, she emphasizes the following:

One of the big things is using examples that students can relate to. Especially images, texts should reflect different cultural backgrounds. This may seem so small, but it makes a huge difference if students can see themselves in the material.

Like Caleb, Jadyn implicitly understood that the texts, stories, and media used within classrooms are largely Eurocentric and mostly authored by White males (Friedan, 1963; Holland, 2012; Johnson, 2007). Clearly, Jadyn has adopted a student centered, culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning, whereby the students' unique cultural strengths and background are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and their sense of well-being about their place and space in the world (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; see also, Portelli, Vilbert, & Shields, 2007). Put differently, and evidenced by this quote, Jadyn is clearly invested in equity and inclusivity in a way that furthers the aims and goals of social justice.

It is also noteworthy to mention, and provides some hope to educators engaged in critical pedagogy, that Caleb and Jadyn, who are White and middle class, were able to critically examine the pervasive inherited White privilege that so typically characterizes educational contexts. Decuir-Gunby (2006) discusses how difficult it can be for Whites to acknowledge their privileged status:

Being White creates a sense of entitlement. Being White means viewing whiteness as normalcy and is commensurate with exclusive access to societal resources facilitated by other powerful Whites who already utilize this socially inherited racial privilege. (p. 89)

Despite the general difficulty Whites have acknowledging White privilege (Flynn et al., 2009), Caleb, Rita, Samantha, Antonia, Deanna, and Jadyn were able to both acknowledge the structural inequity (e.g., Eurocentric teaching resources and texts) structured by White privilege and respond by strategically including more diverse

resources and texts into their teaching practices. This of course is no small matter when it comes to student learning. In order to ensure that all students feel safe, welcomed and accepted, along with being inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning, schools and classrooms must be responsive to different and various cultures (Callins, 2006; Dei, 2006; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Equipped with a meso level CC, these participants stated that they were willing to make changes in the institutionalized and prescriptive classroom practices that reproduced the status of inequity and exclusion of minority groups. For example, Antonia went on to describe how she would attempt to counter the material and cultural inequities experienced by working class and impoverished students, within the context of the classroom:

Well setting up your classroom as equitable as possible, or creating that space where kids can achieve equity in the same way as other kids. Something like we will work together. When they enter that space the kids know that everyone is on the same level, no one is higher or better than anyone else. Creating a class pledge where the kids say we will work together, they created this pledge and my associate showed me this. They don't have to feel alone or ashamed because of what is happening at home, or because of their income levels, while they are at school, they should not feel that way.

Although Antonia may initially appear to be focused on facilitating equal opportunities within her classroom, a deeper analysis shows that she is strategically attempting to create a learning space where cultural and material class distinctions, represented in the students' family habitus, are not uncritically accepted, reinforced, and reproduced. Briefly, habitus refers to a socialization process in which supposedly objective structures are conceptually internalized and embodied (for a more detailed discussion on the concept of habitus, see Bourdieu, 1971, pp.192-195). Alternatively stated, Antonia is not blind to the differential privileges assigned to students from different class backgrounds

and is sensitive to facilitating a classroom environment that both acknowledges and attempts to address the inequity experienced by students. Inclusion for Antonia, then, means not just bringing marginalized students into the existing space, she seems much more interested in making new spaces, and better spaces for everyone (Dei, 2000). However, it is important to note that Antonia's example of an inclusive teaching practice is limited to disrupting the educational reproductive forces at the institutional level.

Participants with a meso level CC understood that productive critical pedagogies were a collaborative process led by both the teacher and the student. For example, Antonia states:

Now, I say hello to students, find out what their interest were, and incorporate what students are interested in in your lesson. Big thing, shape curricula around the students' interest, inquiry based learning.

Antonia also mentioned how productive critical pedagogies are grounded in developing and establishing inclusive, equitable and safe learning environment for all children. In fact, she mentioned that this key priority teaching practice trumps typical concerns over rushing to cover the curriculum. Antonia shares:

I am more about creating an inclusive and safe environment over and above the curriculum. Being in Frontlines and the students' success centers provided an opportunity to provide assistance to students who have needs. This helped to shape the way I behave in the classroom.

Like Antonia, meso level CC participants understood and valued student autonomy and student directed learning regardless of their cultural background. In fact, this is what may have kept this group of participants from having reached a macro level of critical consciousness. For instance, meso level CC participants were not forthcoming with prompting the idea of collective action among the students, rather, they felt it was necessary to enable each student to act on their new critical awareness in whatever ways

they individually chose. This was not stated in explicit terms by meso level participants; however, there was an implicit sense that students should ultimately decide how they would respond to any critical knowledges or social inequities.

This was a significant point as, for the most part, meso level participants were privileged, White, monolingual Christians who had largely positive school experiences. It is no great leap in logic then to suggest that, mirroring their own lives, and their own school experiences, these participants were firm believers in individual agency. Put another way, these participants implicitly believed that once the individual student becomes aware of the issues they are challenged with, or that society is challenged with, it is up to them (on an individual basis) to decide how they will individually address the issue at hand; this worked for them, so it should work for other students as well.

Meso level participants positioned students as individual agents, however, the sense of hope that is embedded in collective agency and organized action was not mentioned by any of the meso level participants. In fact, within this entire study, with the exception of Nelly, the participants did not at any time allude to the explicit act of consistently and gently prompting students to act collectively for a specific united cause. Subsequently, the possibility of organized collective action, at this point in the study, seemed largely a theory still waiting to be put into practice.

In summary, it is significant to note that the habitus (Bourdieu, 1971) reflected by meso level students was distinct from the habitus (Bourdieu, 1971) conveyed by most micro level CC students. First, meso level participants were from White, middle and upper class, privileged habitats which included progressive, professional parents who were at minimum somewhat politically oriented and were described as loving and

supporting throughout their entire lives. This habitat likely fueled the habitus of fairness, democratic ideals, and self-efficacy that was now linked to the desire to “give back.”

Interestingly, these six meso level participants attributed the development of their critical lens to both their family upbringings and one or a few undergraduate courses that incorporated critical sociopolitical theories and lenses. The undergraduate course attributions also fit well with Bourdieu’s (1971) view that “it may be assumed that every individual owes to the type of schooling he has received a set of basic, deeply interiorized master patterns” (p. 192). The critical undergraduate courses had a productive impact on facilitating and perhaps evolving the meso level CC shown among this group of participants. In line, it is also important to note that since meso level CC students were significantly removed from the technocratic rationale and social justice orthodoxy conveyed by micro level students, they seemed more willing to push the boundaries and engage in progressive pedagogies that disrupted the “cultural arbitrary” (e.g., hidden curriculum) reproduced by the educational apparatus (Althusser, 1969).

The distinctive habitus of meso level preservice teacher participants countered the normative tendency to passively internalize the Faculty of Education’s habitus which functions to “process not only knowledge but persons as well” through discursive practices of “scripted mechanistic training” (Britzman, 2003, p. 43). This group of meso level critically conscious preservice teacher participants at least partially resisted taking on the prescribed role of the “proletariat teacher,” as theorized by Bowles and Gintis (1976), which functions to reproduce the hidden curriculum that legitimates the dominant hierarchical power relations within broader society. Rather, the top-down power hierarchies that unfold within the socially structured patterns of values, norms, and skills

that are entrenched in the labour force, and the daily social dynamics that occur in the classroom (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), were to some extent countered by meso level critically conscious preservice teacher participants.

I argue that meso level preservice teacher participants exhibited a form of CC that enabled them to disrupt the transmission mode of education that has historically been part and parcel of the dominant symbolic educational system (see Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991, p. 237, for a further explanation of symbolic systems which are built on the fundamental logic of inclusion and exclusion). Subsequently, this group of preservice teacher participants resisted, to some extent, reproducing what Althusser (1971) refers to as the dominant production and reproduction of “know how” students who need to

Read, write, add. ... Learn the rules of good behaviour work, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical divisions of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. (p. 172)

Rather, their ability to problematize and utilize a “language of critique” to critically examine and resist the reproduction of some aspects of the “cultural arbitrary” (Bourdieu, 1987) inherent in contemporary educational systems (e.g., the legitimized distancing between different status groups and the dominant focus on the technocratic role and function) distinguished this group of preservice teacher participants. I now move on to discuss Nelly, the only preservice teacher participant who demonstrated a macro level CC.

Macro Level Critical Consciousness

As mentioned previously, Nelly was an outlier in the study in that she was the only participant who exhibited, on a consistent basis, a macro level CC. Nelly explicitly described her role and function of being a teacher through the lens of a “transformative intellectual” as she was able to “utilize the language of critique,” “problematize the

reproductive aspects of dominant education,” and “utilize forms of pedagogy that prompt students to become critical agents” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, p. 46). She was also able to explicitly describe practices that make the pedagogical more political while simultaneously illuminating the relevance of the latter for both students and the larger society.

In contrast, while meso level participants were critically aware of some issues of inequity, were willing to disrupt some aspects of the dominant transmission mode of education at the classroom or school level, they did not make the macro (structural), meso (institutional), and micro (individual) connections that Nelly was able to draw. Furthermore, Nelly was the only participant in the study who thought students needed to be nudged to work toward the good of the collective.

Nelly’s interview was especially interesting as she was the only visible minority participant who problematized the educational system, and unlike the meso level critically conscious teachers in this study, she reported having several oppressive experiences throughout her time spent in formal schooling:

I was drawn to ideas of social justice and inclusion because of my own lived experiences. I knew that as a child of immigrant parents, there were experiences that were not afforded to me like the rest of my peers. On average, I knew I was different than my peers and really had to struggle through school to do well. I didn't have the cultural capital. My parents did the best they could with what they knew, they were not afforded the opportunity to educate themselves going through post secondary.

Furthermore, Nelly was unique in this study in that, through graduate school, she developed a deep critical knowledge base that helped her to make sense of her own oppressive educational experiences and the privileges that benefited her:

I now know I have much more privilege than my parents did and knowing that I was born here and speak English and have certain rights and within the

framework of social justice and academic reading, I was able to relate and resonate with what I read. I felt a huge sense of relief and I remember sighing – OH this is something – there was so much clarity suddenly. And I remember I had this all of a sudden sigh and insight where I suddenly better understood my life and my plight and this is why I decided to get into the program and get my teaching degree.

In addition, as realized by Nelly, it was difficult to enact the critical role and function of a teacher. She expressed that, within the context of teacher education, the external supports needed to achieve the important objective of facilitating a critical lens and prompting students to enact some form of agency, were absent:

One of the most obvious barriers is that if you do not adhere to the authoritarians around you will be reprimanded. There are accounts of these things happening. Look in the paper and these teachers have been suspended and dismissed. Speaking to teachers, they have been reprimanded by principals and said you can't teach that. There is a Professor and because of his positionality, he has tenure and job security, he can be critical of the system you are in, if you are not in a secure position to do this, it is hard to do. It is hard to be critical unless you have power to openly analyze the issues and provide remedies to address them.

Problematically, we can see how Nelly felt powerless while navigating the role of the vulnerable teacher candidate. She understood that although some professors, who had accumulated power through tenure, were able to openly critique the educational system, she did not feel that she was currently in the position to openly do so.

Nelly was also the student participant with the most distinct CC as she was able to describe and problematize systemic and structural issues of power, and critique the traditional hierarchical power relations found among and within government institutions. In addition, she was able to explicitly discuss issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Meso level participants conveyed an ability to critically discuss one, or perhaps two social justice issues, whereas Nelly's knowledge of race, class, and gender was more comprehensive and more clearly grounded in an intersectionality framework.

Also, Nelly was able to problematize “banking education” (Freire, 1985) and mentioned strategies that would serve to create more dialogical learning contexts. What distinguished meso level preservice teacher participants from Nelly was that she was able and willing (e.g., albeit cautiously) to prompt students to examine not only how they may be oppressed but also how they can take action against their oppressive circumstances in some ways. Nelly expressed how she engaged pupils’ social imagination for the purpose of envisioning how they may organize collectively to become a group of change agents and alter the entrenched inequitable structures and social practices.

Furthermore, within the context of education, Nelly understood that critical learning might be an uncomfortable process that may feel counterintuitive, and even disturbing at times,

No one would deny wanting to be a social justice educator, but many do not realize the commitment and courage it takes to be a true social justice educator. Many teachers at that point feel like this is becoming too political and get very uncomfortable with the idea of becoming political, [teachers candidates question] how do we know this isn’t turning into indoctrination. They [teacher candidates] think education should be neutral, [Teacher candidates] become uncomfortable when politics enters ... many people do not see that education is not neutral.

Taking the critical stance that education is not neutral was another intellectual layer that distinguished Nelly from all other preservice teacher participants.

Moreover, Nelly did not display the simplistic, and dominant view, that that in order for learning to occur, classrooms and schools need to provide safe, comfortable, and supportive environments:

When you are teaching for social justice it is a political response to an unequal political structure of our society. When we talk about professionalism, we say leave your life out of this, don't talk politics, don't talk religion or money. But yet these are the basic things that influence how we see the world and influence the actions we take and don't take.

Of course, pupils need to feel physically safe and comfortable, however, when this idea is taken to the extreme, facilitating CC among pupils becomes problematic. Critical pedagogical practices require a willingness to take risks and navigate through unpredictable and emotionally laden educational terrain on behalf of both the facilitating teacher and the students (Giroux, 2012).

Nelly conveyed her intention to teach students to question the political implications of what was being taught and learned, and how this learning context may have contributed to and challenged oppression. Kumashiro (2015) emphasizes that within anti-oppressive educational contexts, both the teacher and the students should be openly discussing how various views and practices, that occur in the classroom, have different implications in different situations. Determining a potential anti-oppressive course of action requires assessing these differences (Kumashiro, 2015, p. 29). This process, in and of itself, is a very challenging task that most likely entails emotional and intellectual tensions. Developing a macro level CC requires a willingness to move from a safe place of banking education and the status quo of hierarchical power dynamics to a place of resistance, tension, and perplexing intellectual struggle.

It is also important to note, as Nelly points out, that resistance and taking action, even in justified circumstances, may have serious and even dire consequences for both individuals and groups. Nelly's concern with the potential consequences for asserting her agency reflects Foucault's (1977) understanding of power and discipline. As Foucault (1977) asserts, Nelly's fear of disciplinary consequences led to the strategic enactment of a gentle form of agency. This cautious approach showed an exercised power over the body by the institution's strategic positioning of dispositions, tactics, techniques, and

functioning, which were in a perpetual battle. To further elaborate, while practice-teaching, Nelly did not agree with her associate teacher on some aspects of her associate's pedagogy and on some of the curriculum resources chosen. Since Nelly was well aware of the power dynamics and the hierarchical authority protocols embedded in associate teacher and preservice teacher candidate relationships and processes, she had to strategically negotiate her subsequent action plan. She did address one of her issues but did so in a very gentle way—she formulated her concern as a question and hoped the associate teacher would be supportive of the contradictory view presented.

Also, within the classroom setting at the Faculty of Education, there were instances where Nelly wanted to say more. She had the language and conceptual frameworks to challenge many of the points that were critically discussed during whole class dialogue. However, due to time constraints and a general sense that it was time to move on because the professor still had lots to cover, she frequently did not voice her opposing views:

Because we are a cohort program, I did feel safe to speak up because of my peers. However, there have been times where the class needs to move on and there are many things that are left unsaid and problematic. We sense that there is so much to do per class, and even a two-year program will not remedy this.

Nelly did not want to be perceived as rude and interruptive and again, she was well aware of the invisible, yet felt, hierarchical power dynamic between herself as a student and her professor.

Preservice teacher candidates in general, like Nelly, would benefit from strategically negotiating the power dynamics and traditional power hierarchies at play. This point is not emphasized within the academic literature on critical pedagogy and it may be one of the reasons that teachers feel so disconnected between the critical

pedagogical theory espoused in the critical literature and the active-theory they live out in the classroom. Again, some forms of agency and resistance have real consequences, and although as Foucault (1977) highlights, power dynamics are fluid and open to resistance and change, the desire and need to integrate one's voice and view must trump the general tendency to silently adapt to the systems firmly in place.

Nelly's agency role can also be viewed through Freire's (1973) conceptual paradigms of integration and adaption. Adaptation is a form of dehumanizing passive acquiescence to the status quo, whereas integration is a form of active participation that can eventually transform reality (Freire, 1973, p. 4). Accordingly, adapted people are described as mere objects, whereas integrated people are subjects in participative processes of personal and social transformation (Freire, 1973, p. 5). Although, as Foucault (2000) points out later in his work, integration is a complex process and the complexity can be seen when the few attempts to integrate by the preservice teacher participants are thwarted. For example, in describing her critical learning experiences within the Faculty of Education setting, Nelly emphasizes the following,

The idea is that the teacher runs the class and the students are passive. Some of the students said that they wanted to speak up in class but they didn't have the language and they may not have been comfortable. They felt as if they were shutting others down. You need to have a certain courage, must know that you are being shut down, so the prof would override what the student is saying or not giving the students air time. Either, the profs feel entitled to take the Frontlines, [or] you are so use to seeing this over and over it simply starts not to phase you anymore.

As shared by Nelly, options to resist and integrate one's voice in a preservice course may be limited, or perceived as un-accessible, depending on the pedagogical approach and pedagogical goals established, and carried out, by the respective professor. As emphasized by Swartz (2012), "Power relations can be clearly understood and still not contested where

individuals do not see viable alternatives without tremendous risk” (p. 220).

Transforming systemic inequities, discriminatory structures, and the hierarchical power dynamics within the broader educational and societal realms may be hoped for and envisioned in the social imagination, but we have yet to see how this process is actualized in the real and tangible world.

Conclusion

The overall process and critical learning outcomes of facilitating CC conveyed a somewhat complex but distinct pattern. In terms of the educational process within the Faculty of Education, many students perceived the Faculty of Education courses as lecture based which was associated with unengaging and unproductive learning. The pedagogical approach that was thematically perceived as being the most productive in developing the students’ critical lens was that of Professor S and Professor J, as well as Professor G. These three professors seemed to deliver the course content by way of enacting legitimate forms of power that are centered on mutual respect and skillful facilitation (Robinson, 1995). Mutual respect includes taking into consideration the “humanness” and unique needs of students while skillful facilitation can be described as a dialogical learning context in which student voices, views, and opportunities for agency are valued (Shor & Pari, 1999). The professors utilizing lecture-based pedagogy did not seem to encompass these aspects of legitimate power and were differentially perceived by the preservice teacher participants in this sample.

On a broader institutional level, the student-led Social Justice Conference was repeatedly cited as a productive educational space in developing the students’ critical lens. Giving up traditional institutional power and control and placing it into the hands of the students by way of setting up an opportunity to engage in a high level of student

agency, was positively received by most preservice teacher participants in the sample.

These students reported a high level of engagement and described the student-led Social Justice Conference as making a positive contribution in their awareness of various social justice issues.

On the other hand, one institutional mechanism that was thematically cited as significantly limiting the development of CC was the constant tension associated with the completion and submission of too many low level technocratic assignments. Often these assignments were due simultaneously and seemed to take time and energy away from the deeper, more time-consuming process associated with developing CC.

In terms of the critical learning outcomes, most students entered and left the Faculty of Education with a limited understanding of social justice issues and approached issues of inequity through a technocratic lens. In other words, many students identified problematic areas of inequity without deeply understanding the foundational structural attributes that give rise to these issues. These same students also posed quick fix teaching practices that were vague in nature and were not likely to disrupt the traditional power dynamics between teachers and students nor the reproductive aspects of traditional schooling. At the end of the school year, although some preservice teacher participants did seem to develop a new awareness of some social justice issues, most preservice teacher participants were categorized with micro levels of critical consciousness. This level of criticality can be described as a way of thinking that is technocratic, apolitical, and teacher centered.

Furthermore, some preservice teacher participants came into the program with an already significantly developed critical lens. These preservice teacher participants all attributed the development of their critical lens to a critically focused undergraduate

course, such as Women's Studies, or Gendered History. At the end of the school year, relative to micro level preservice teacher participants, these students demonstrated a deeper and more nuanced level of criticality. They were able to productively critique teaching practices that reproduced societal inequities and then go onto disrupting these mainstream teaching practices by offering more democratic forms of teaching and learning. When asked how the program contributed to developing their critical lens, these students invariably noted that the program deepened some of their previous views, but did not necessarily broaden the critical lens that they entered the program with.

Nelly came into the study with an already lively CC. As previously mentioned, Nelly was an outlier in the study as she was taking a leave of absence from her third year in a PhD in Education program in order to pursue a teaching degree. Not surprisingly, her graduate level educational experiences were referenced as a significant factor in developing her critical views of contemporary educational systems. In addition, Nelly's own minoritized life circumstances were cited as significant in more intimately understanding the plight of minorities both within the educational context and society at large. By the end of the program, Nelly's level of CC slightly shifted in a positive direction on a CC spectrum. The opportunity of being and living in the real world of teaching enabled her to apply, modify, rethink, and further scrutinize both the critical educational theories she endorsed and the current state of teaching and learning as experienced by her. However, to a certain degree, Nelly's views gave me pause. Even though Nelly had a marginalized identity and she engaged in developing her own CC, there really seemed to be no clear motivation to prepare to turn her dissatisfaction and knowledge into concrete social action, at least at this point in time.

In light of these results, I have realized how normative and disruptive pedagogical and institutional processes are intertwined with the preservice teacher participants' critical learning outcomes. These results bring hope to the idea that preservice teacher candidates can develop some level of CC when institutional leaders, such as administrators and professors, embrace and enact legitimate forms of power which are conducive to creating both dialogical teaching and learning contexts and opportunities for student agency.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to employ constructivist grounded theory methodology to explore how critical pedagogy, as practised by a small group of teacher educators, influenced preservice teacher participants' development of CC by the end of a 1-year preservice teacher program. The study was also attentive to the way in which students' levels of criticality were shaped and influenced by other learning contexts found in the broader culture of a Faculty of Education that stated its commitment to social justice. The results of this grounded theory study demonstrated that most of the preservice teacher participants demonstrated limited CC during both our interviews at the beginning and end of the school year. This limited level of CC was at best characterized by a technocratic and surface understanding of social justice. Although some preservice teacher participants did seem to gain a broader critical awareness of some of the existing issues associated with inequity, most preservice teacher participants demonstrated a limited understanding of the contributing systemic structural issues. In addition, most preservice teacher participants did not acknowledge the role of individual nor group agency among the students they would one day teach. Group agency is the idea of individuals with similar issues organizing to work together in solidarity to address and change the discriminatory practices that disadvantage and oppress them. Showing students examples of successful organized movements, would be one way to illustrate the power that may come about when individuals come together to support a specific common cause. This practice is not meant to indoctrinate, rather, it is meant to "raise consciousness" of the possibilities that may lead to change.

The following section of the chapter highlights some of the main outcomes of the study. First, I begin with a summary of the key pedagogical and institutional mechanisms that mediated the intended critical teaching and learning processes. Second, I summarize how they were intertwined with the technical, surface level type of criticality demonstrated by most of the preservice teacher participants toward the end of the program. Third, I conclude this chapter with a discussion on the limitations of the study and the implications for future research.

Findings from the study suggest that issues of social justice should be integrated much more deeply throughout the program. Despite publicly claiming the importance of bringing a deep awareness to issues of inequity and diversity, faculties of education, such as the one under study, have had difficulty integrating pedagogies and methods that can bring this outcome about (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012; Sleeter, 2009; Solomon, Levine-Rasky, & Singer, 2003). Lund (1998), for example, has found that “the focus on addressing issues of diversity and inequity within teacher education programs is not afforded a high priority in many Canadian universities and where multicultural education is addressed, it is often done through isolated course offerings” (p. 165). Certainly, a few of the courses explored in this study, according to the preservice teacher participants, were productive in developing an initial awareness of various issues related to race, class, and gender. However, a deeper awareness of the relevant systemic issues and an understanding of the significant role of individual and group agency were not demonstrated.

Sometimes the challenge in developing CC was the limited time available for self-reflection and critical dialogue. Goodreau and Fredua-Kwarteng (2007), for instance, conclude that:

Most programs do not provide teacher candidates opportunities to question, recognize and understand their own worldviews and beliefs about race, culture, and ethnicity, so they are able to understand their diverse students. If this examination is ignored in their professional preparation, educators may never be called upon to consider how their own backgrounds may influence their ability to truly understand the perspective and needs of their students. A transformative approach begins with preservice teachers exploring and better understanding their own social identities. (p. 2)

The lack of available time to enable students to reflect and scrutinize their own social location partially explains why the teacher participants in this study were unable to speak at depth to how overlapping and intersecting systems of privilege and oppression shape student experiences and student achievement, including their own. It is reasonable to see how most of the preservice teacher participants at the end of the 1-year program were not critical enough.

The preservice teacher participants in the study spoke directly to the problem of too many assignments, too little time. The experience of being too busy with too many assignments, as told by many preservice teacher participants, undermined their opportunity to think more deeply about important subjects. The assignments were often described by participants as largely empty of any real value. As was already mentioned, with the rise of neoliberalism, busyness has become an unquestioned cultural and moral virtue, while so-called idleness has become a vice, in and out of education. Promoting the idea that busyness is a virtue in a neoliberal world serves as kind of a reassurance, a hedge against idleness, laziness, sloth, and dependency. Individuals who are kept busy at work are not lazy, not slothful, and have no time to become dependent on the government, or to think about policies and procedures in a critical way. As mentioned earlier, within a neoliberal world, the values of productivity and efficiency have *time* as the common factor. Productivity is about getting a number of tasks done in a set unit of

time, while efficiency is getting tasks done quickly. Although this issue may change in light of the new 2-year Bachelor of Education program, the condensed structure of the 1-year program produced several time constraining and sustained distractions that likely took time away from the ability to deeply process any of the assigned critical knowledges. Along with a teacher-centered, lecture-based approach to pedagogy where students sat passively listening, repetition of assignments did little to create the conditions that would help foster a mature CC in students.

The preservice teacher participants' responses justified the growing concern in higher education around coming to understand students as "customers." Students talked eloquently about feeling increasingly like a customer in the Faculty of Education. In this, they were speaking about the influence of neoliberal ideology free-market logic on postsecondary education where the relationships between students and institutions has become primarily defined in economic terms. When universities in general, and faculties of education in particular, increasingly become thought of as "service" providers, difficult conversations that help develop CC are less likely. Within this context, it becomes challenging for both professors and students to establish deep and meaningful relationships that work to disrupt the power hierarchy between professors and students. These conditions have negative implications on practising critical pedagogy, and in turn, on the development of a critical consciousness.

When considering the development of a critical consciousness, it is also important to point out that some preservice teacher participants seemed to want to avoid analyzing their thoughts and beliefs about significant social justice issues. When talking about race and racism, for example, some preservice teacher participants took a colour-blind

approach. So, rather than dealing with the structural systemic issues of race and racism, they chose not to “see” race. A few preservice teacher participants interviewed for this study even believed that race and racism were no longer serious issues. These student participants were simply unaware that they had a racial identity and consequently were able to “deny their place in the racial hierarchy through the power of erasure” (Picower, 2009, p. 198). There is a body of academic literature that critiques White racism in classrooms and discusses how unintentional, passive, colour-blind racism enacted by teachers reproduces the status quo (Hyland, 2005; McCabe, 2011; Tarca, 2005). Although the preservice teacher participants spent 1 year in the Faculty of Education, many of them were unfamiliar with this important educational research. Understanding and considering how colour-blind racism is enacted would have provided an opportunity to help develop CC.

Findings from this study show that most of the preservice teacher participants, such as Jacob, Bobbie, and Antonia, adopted an equality framework rather than an equity framework to think about systemic issues of inequity. These preservice teacher participants did not recognize how resisting or not engaging with equity issues works to silence the significance of these issues. That is, the preservice teacher participants unknowingly undermined the importance of the questions raised and explanations provided when they engage in these difficult conversations. The preservice teacher participants in this study were unable to speak at depth to the overlapping and intersecting systems of privilege and oppression based on inequities of race, class, and gender. By adopting an equality framework instead of an equity framework, this group of preservice teacher participants had not developed the CC necessary to view their own

future students through a critical lens that thoughtfully considers how structural issues may have impacted their life experience, both in and out of school.

Other difficulties in developing CC among the preservice teacher participants came from traditional pedagogical practices. This was the problem of the lecture. As suggested throughout this study, and emphasized by Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997), “traditional lecture-and-listen methods will not stimulate the active involvement necessary to reach social justice goals” (p. 23). Within lecture-and-listen based learning contexts, students take a passive role as learner. They are not able to voice their concerns, nor exchange diverse perspectives on the issues that are meaningful and relevant to them. This is no small matter, especially if educators are committed to developing CC in students. This method, which typically promotes rote learning, does little to allow students to consider issues from multiple perspectives and angles to form their own opinions accordingly. As noted in Chapter 4, within this educational context, students in some classes were positioned as receptacles of knowledge rather than complex knowledge creators. This form of pedagogy does not truly engage students in learning. By not establishing a teaching and learning context that was grounded in dialogue, students simply tuned out.

Critical pedagogues such as Freire (1985), Shor (1993), and Giroux (1988b) have all noted that transmission modes of education lack the “humanizing” and “dialogical educational practices” inherent in developing CC and are crucial to developing a sense of individual and group agency. Paulo Freire (1973) emphasizes that a mature CC is built “through dialogue” (p. 86). One question raised by this study is related to how to encourage both at the institutional and classroom level change in pedagogical approaches in a way that teaching and learning contexts become much more dialogic in nature.

One of the first steps in developing a lively and mature CC requires an examination and analysis of one's various identities and social locations. This study found that although preservice teacher participants embodied many overlapping and intersecting social identities based on race, gender, and social class, they had little understanding or awareness of how these multiple identities came together in complex ways to shape their own lived experience. There was very little understanding among many of the preservice teacher participants of how these multiple identities powerfully shaped their worldviews. The failure to critique their own social locations will shape how they will come to understand their future students. The problem in part is that the preservice teacher candidates who will enter into relationships with their future students will likely smuggle in their own prejudices uncritically in a way that contributes to social reproduction.

Moving toward a mature CC challenges preservice teacher candidates to question how dominant ideologies have shaped their perspectives about their professional role as teacher and about their future students. A CC that is lively, robust, and mature will also challenge preservice students to examine how their teaching role itself may perpetuate power differentials in the classroom. This sort of work is required among preservice students to effectively challenge systems of oppression and bring about positive social change.

The findings from this study suggest that one effective way to develop CC among preservice teacher candidates is to create learning climates and establish expectations that are grounded in dialogue. Students consistently referred to Professor G, Professor S, and Professor J as being educators whose pedagogical approaches allowed for deeper and

richer dialogue, for deeper self-reflection in a teaching and learning environment that created the conditions where a developing CC could flourish. These professors seemed to understand that while personal and reflective dialogues are imperative to the development of CC in students, they also need to be accompanied by similar dialogues with others in the classroom. Within this context, these professors tried to establish classroom environments and learning opportunities for preservice teacher candidates to have critical conversations with each other about the social justice issues that were significant both inside and outside of the formal education setting.

The findings of the study also suggest that another effective way to develop CC among preservice teacher candidates is through storytelling. Guest speakers who told personal stories or narratives that recounted their experiences with various forms of discrimination or oppression seemed to have had a particularly powerful influence on students' development of a more lively CC. Those invested in developing CC in preservice teacher candidates need to recognize that the experiential knowledge of historically marginalized populations is legitimate, appropriate, and important to understand and analyze when teaching about oppression. Richard Delgado (1989) brings this significance to light by noting that oppressed "groups have known instinctively that stories are an essential tool to their own survival and liberation" (p. 2436). The findings of this study have the potential to encourage professors who are interested in developing CC among preservice students to continue in this tradition.

Findings from this study suggest that modeling matters. Many of the professor participants had intended to implement critical pedagogy and seemed to be genuinely interested in developing the critical lens of their students. They were also keenly

interested in developing their students' actual critical teaching practices. The problem however, as some of the preservice teacher participants pointed out, was that some professors did not necessarily model this form of pedagogy in the classroom. These professors, for example, adopted the lecture as a primary pedagogical approach. Or as Clarence noted, professors advised preservice students not to "ask lower order questions" to their future students, yet assessed preservice students with lower order questions on quizzes. Betty mentioned that one professor advised her class not too use tests as the primary form of assessment, yet tested them all the time. The preservice teacher participants in this sample were very attentive to the contradictions found in professors' teaching practices, and highlighted the need for professors to put theory into practice.

In classrooms, making explicit the necessity to teach for social justice is key to having preservice teacher candidates consider the importance of this practice. Teaching for CC in a Faculty of Education that is committed to social justice should also provide opportunities for preservice teacher candidates to see social justice as a priority. Unfortunately, many participants expressed the view that classroom-based discussions on social justice practices in the context of education did not seem to be a priority. The problem was further compounded by the fact that when the preservice teacher participants were asked to define the term social justice, many simply could not provide a definition that was clear in their mind, nor substantial. In the majority of cases, the preservice teacher participants defined social justice using the educational rhetoric of the day by loosely referring to the act of creating inclusive classrooms that are safe for all students, regardless of background. Some preservice teacher participants also mentioned that social justice was about accommodating the diverse needs of students with

differential instructions. However, the definitions and descriptions were rote in nature, appealed to an unquestioned social justice orthodoxy, and did not show a depth of critical knowledge on issues of inequity.

At the end of the study, when the preservice teacher participants were asked to explain what teaching for social justice entailed, few if any could initially answer the question in any robust and meaningful way. In fact, many of the preservice teacher participants were surprised that they could not effectively answer this question, although they eventually took educated guesses. Part of the problem perhaps was that they could not recall any class discussion, assigned reading, class activity, or lecture that informed them about what teaching for social justice was or what it looked like in the classrooms. When students did answer this question, most of their responses included neoliberal values that conveyed a sense of heightened individualism. The preservice teacher participants equated social justice with the classic liberal ideals of individual freedom and equality of opportunity in the free market (Hayek, 1994; Smith, 1796/1937). Nonetheless, it was also the case that preservice teacher participants tapped into a prominent narrative of the [White] teacher-as-saviour going classrooms to “save” students (Hyland, 2005). By understanding themselves as primarily responsible for students’ success, these preservice teacher participants understood students largely through a “deficit” lens. A deficit lens typically blames individuals for their social location, and lacks any form of analysis on the systemic nature of poverty and classism (for a critique of deficit thinking in education, see Bomer, 2008). To put it differently, some of the preservice teacher participants conveyed that their future students, in their future classrooms, could only be saved with their help.

Defining social justice, justifying why it is important, and presenting concrete examples of lessons that show teaching for social justice are important steps developing and broadening preservice teacher candidates' levels of CC. In following these steps, it may be more likely that students retain some clear and concise ideas that can be, at least initially, thought through and implemented. When it comes to understanding and practising social justice, preservice teacher candidates need clear starting points that they can continue to build on. The facilitation of CC could take on a scaffolding process which includes an early introduction to the theoretical foundational pieces of social justice, and then followed up with concrete examples of social justice oriented teaching practices and exemplar lessons.

Findings from this study suggest that developing CC is challenging to teacher education professors situated in an educational context shaped by problematic institutional forces. For example, how are professors to implement and carry out dialogical teaching and learning, in which rich and diverse views are shared and debated among students, when class sizes continue to increase? In light of increasing class size, how are professors to teach toward developing a lively CC when preservice teacher candidates continue to feel distant and alienated from other students and the professor?

In addition, when preservice teacher candidates view education as a commodity and perceive themselves as consumers of the so-called educational commodity they paid for, they may be resistant to engaging in the deeper, complex, time-consuming, and often uncomfortable learning process inherent in developing a critical consciousness. Research is increasingly documenting examples of the ways in which neoliberalism has reshaped universities (Cote & Allahar, 2007). For instance, here in Ontario, neoliberal policies

have worked to reduce government control in funding of operations, increasing responsibility for generating a larger share of the revenues onto universities themselves. This explains, in part, the increased number of international students in Ontario universities. The marketization of education has restructured the relationship between student and teacher such that the student is increasingly positioned as a customer. This unfortunately functions to position students' experiences in a transactional framework where they come to see themselves as paying for services and demanding particular outcomes. This has been mentioned as one of neoliberalism's "insidious side effects" which undermines the "work of critical educators" (Casey, Lozenski & McManimon, 2013, p. 36). Teachers committed to critical pedagogies often face institutional constraints that narrow and flatten possibilities for transformative learning (Fraser & Lamble, 2015).

At the beginning of the study, many preservice teacher participants expressed a genuine interest in teaching for social justice, and this interest seemed to hold strong until the end of the school year. As this study suggests, it is reasonable to conclude that the way in which preservice teacher candidates will practise critical pedagogy or incorporate social justice teaching is dependent on their understanding of what social justice means and what it means to teach for social justice. Students who develop a deeper level of CC through successful avenues of critical-pedagogical focused course work are more likely to contribute to the transformational aims of critical pedagogy. Evans-Winters (2009) utilizes the concept of *leaders-cloaked-as-teachers*, which complements Giroux's (1988b) idea of teacher as transformational intellectual:

Preservice teachers must undergo a transformation process before they view themselves as teachers and leaders in the classroom, school community, and

larger society ...[and] view themselves as change agents in the struggle for social justice, and who intentionally adopt the profession of teaching to assist in the liberation of marginalized individuals and groups in a democratic society. (p. 141)

Most of the preservice teacher participants within this study could not be described as leaders-cloaked-as-teachers as they did not demonstrate the personal transformation that is often entangled in developing a CC. Nelly was the only preservice teacher participant who could be described as a leader-cloaked-as-teacher, as she did seem to experience a degree of personal transformation and did position herself as a change agent ready to assist marginalized students. Most of the other preservice teacher participants offered limited and technocratic views of social inequity, and although some intended to counter traditional educational practices such as teacher-centered lessons, student agency was not a key educational outcome.

The idea of student agency has Marxist roots and can be described as both being aware of the unjust societal circumstances that negatively affect one's life, and then taking some form of action to negate, change, or productively influence the structures or practices in question. This empowering educational and social outcome is positioned to be of the utmost importance by critical pedagogues such as Freire (1975) and Giroux (2014). Since the approach to incorporating social justice teaching practices will be based on the complex ways preservice teacher candidates relate to and understand agency, issues of power, privilege, and oppression, it is questionable whether the majority of this group of preservice teacher participants will effectively incorporate social justice practices.

Finally, within this study, the practice of critical pedagogy and its primary goals of facilitating CC and prompting agency were shown to be a challenging endeavour.

Developing CC, let alone prompting agency, requires a significant amount of time and skillful facilitation to *deeply* dialogue and process complex and abstract concepts such as racism, classism, and gender inequity. Time allotted for deep class discussions was only occasionally evidenced within the Equity Issues class taught by Professor G and in the Frontlines class taught by Professor S and Professor J. During our Phase Two interviews, most preservice teacher participants conveyed the idea that there were too many technical tasks and too little time to engage in rich dialogue and in meaningful learning tasks to really deepen their own levels of criticality. There was very little room to discuss social justice theory and practice and how that look in classrooms. Faculty of Education administrators and Professors, committed to social justice and to deepening students' levels of criticality, need to more deeply understand that CC involves reflection on the complexities of multiple identities and multiple relations of power. Students need time to engage in this process.

Limitations of the Study

As a consequence of the study's design, which focused on only one Faculty of Education, in one region of Ontario, the results of the study are limited. Although the grounded theory method used for this study was exploratory in nature, and well-suited to detail and investigate the social processes within the context of one particular institution, it is not exhaustive nor definitively conclusive. It does remain the case that more research in teacher education programs, with a particular focus on those educators who identify as critical pedagogues, is needed to better understand how students' levels of criticality are enhanced. The study is also limited in that the events and interactions detailed and analyzed represent momentary reflections occurring during the limited time frames of the

interview. CC is not, as Milner (2003) suggests, a destination, but an ever-changing, ongoing process shaped by a variety of complex factors in particular social contexts.

The reliability of the data collection, data analysis, and conceptual theorizing may have been limited by participant recall bias. Recall of lived experiences depends on memory that often is imperfect, especially after a long period of time has passed (Hassan, 2005, p. 339). Since all the data was collected within a 7-month time frame, it is difficult to accurately assess the negative effect of recall bias occurring within the sample. For example, on the one hand, the participants seemed to be engaged in genuine conversations during the interviews. On the other hand, since the data was based on recall memory, it reveals partially constructed recollections of what actually took place.

Another factor that may have complicated the reliability of the data is that the participants knew in advance that their film footage might be used for a documentary. It is possible that their contribution to the study was more performative (Bruzzi, 2006; Sunderland, Rita, & Denny, 2002) and more guarded in nature as compared to traditional interviews. The performative aspect of the documentary film presented limitations such as the social desirability bias in which participants answer questions in ways that will cast them in a positive light, so that they are accepted and liked by the researcher (Dodou & Winter, 2014).

The performative element of documentary film, as highlighted by Bruzzi (2006), also brought an interesting angle for data analysis, in that the performance does represent some valuable aspects of reality. As Sunderland, Rita, and Denny (2002) point out:

When is social life without performance.... performance is crucial to the maintenance of interactional flow of everyday life.... Culturally specified, learned, and rehearsed, performative routines (in physical and verbal actions) are part of what make life both predictable and intelligible. These routines are

embedded, implicated, reflective and productive of culture, that convoluted semiotic matrices in which we live. (p. 11)

Documentary film, then, can be seen as *similar* to the real world, even though it is not an exact replica of the historical or social events that actually took place.

The filming process may have confounded some of the claims made in the study by participants in ways that I was not aware. For example, a participant may have seemed genuine and forthcoming during the filmed interview; however, that participant may have been consciously acting out an agenda of sorts and may have held back important points and experiences. In addition, I did not observe the participants on an ongoing basis, and therefore, the claims made in this study are based on the assumption that what participants conveyed during the interviews was more accurate than not. In reviewing the data, I had no reason to conclude that the participants were not providing honest accounts of their critical learning experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

As demonstrated throughout this study, critical pedagogy and its main objective of facilitating CC and agency is especially challenging considering the constraining institutional mechanisms at play. Educational institutions that are shaped by neoliberal tactics are faced with increased class sizes, faculty workload, and emphasis on values of increasing productivity, efficiency, and competition. Within this neoliberally driven context, it is important to consider if professors actually have clear choices in choosing and thereafter implementing the pedagogy they most value. Professor and student autonomy and agency are relative to the operating effects of the institutional and social mechanisms that they are embedded in.

As recalled by the preservice teacher participants, four of the seven professors in

this study did not practise critical pedagogy in a way that worked to develop students' CC. Although all of the professor participants self-identified as critical pedagogues and discussed theories and practices that would align with critical pedagogy, their actual teaching practices were not recalled nor experienced by students as such. Gee (1999) describes discourse as a "dance that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, as a performance that is recognizable" (p. 28). Discourse analysis assumes that identity is tightly interweaved with discourse, in other words, in order to be a member of a certain group:

You have to speak in the right way, you have to act and dress in the right way, as well. You also have to engage in characteristic ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, and believing. You also have to use or be able to use various sorts of symbols, tools, and objects in the "right" places and the "right" times. You can't just "talk the talk," you have to "walk the walk" as well. (p. 21)

Gee's (1999) discourse analysis involves examining the "combination of integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (p. 27). When working from Gee's concept of discourse, future researchers may benefit from positioning critical pedagogy as a "performance that is recognizable" from an external source. The key to Gee's concept of discourse analysis is recognizing certain types of personas or identities when you *observe* them over significant periods of time. Discourse analysis would enable a researcher to conclude that certain participants, who have demonstrated certain ways of being, and who do certain specific things on a regular basis have then "pulled off a Discourse" (Gee, 1999, p. 27). Discourse analysis provides opportunities for educational researchers to examine how students and professors go about engaging in critical pedagogy and how this particular pedagogical process develops

CC. In other words, how do students and professors become productive members of the figured world of critical pedagogy? Although a few of the professors seemed to have *partially* pulled off a critical pedagogy discourse, by way of enacting a legitimate form of power, there are still many pieces of the critical discourse puzzle missing.

My hope is that the study will generate more discussion, spark more interest, and result in more research about teacher education programs, pedagogy, and developing students' CC. Carrying out an observational discourse analysis of an experienced and productive critical pedagogue could inform the body of literature with a touchstone discourse by which one could at least initially gauge a starting point as to what critical pedagogy could realistically accomplish. The complexity and multidimensional aspects of facilitating CC among preservice teacher candidates within the context of neoliberal-driven faculties of education needs to be further explored by educational researchers interested in the critical educational processes and outcomes of preservice teacher programs. I sincerely hope professors, among other readers, will be able to use these findings to promote the education of CC among preservice teacher candidates and to find strategies and pedagogies to keep them engaged in the economic, social, and political world.

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APPENDIX A

Script for Initial Interviews with Faculty Participants Purpose of the Study

Previously, you were informed that the purpose of the study was to explore how critical pedagogy influences the student critical thinking. The purpose of this interview is to document your critical teaching and learning philosophy. I will be asking you a few questions that about the foundational theories that guide your teaching and the teaching practices that support these theories.

Confidentiality: You may decide that you want to withdraw from the study or do not want your data used in this research. If this is the case, please contact the researcher (Barb Pollard) with this request either in person, email rak@uwindsor.ca, or alternatively, through phone correspondence at XXX.

Guiding Interview Questions for Faculty:

- 1) Do you identify as a “critical pedagogue” and what does that mean to you?
- 2) How do you define the term “critical pedagogy”?
- 3) Which theories and theorists do you refer to for guidance?
- 4) What are the key learning outcomes of your teaching practice?
- 5) What specific teaching practices or strategies do you implement to reach the intended learning outcomes?
- 6) Can you describe your thought process when designing or redesigning your course syllabus?
- 7) What kinds of challenges are associated with your teaching approach or instructional practices?
- 8) Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is a key factor in this study or interview process?
- 9) Do you have any questions at this point?

Useful Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, its purpose or procedures, or if you have a research-related problem, please feel free to contact the researcher, Barb Pollard at rak@uwindsor.ca.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Your time and insight is much appreciated.

APPENDIX B

Research Instructions for the Study (September, 2014): Reflecting On and Documenting Key Critical Learning Experiences while Being Taught by a Critical Educator

Phase One Data Collection: Questions and Instructions for Creating Digital Reflections
Please carefully read over and think about the following questions:

- 1) Within the world of teaching, what does the phrase, diverse students, mean to you? Please explain.
- 2) Do you ever think about how your teaching practice will impact the minority students in your classroom? If so, please explain how.
- 3) Do you have any interest in teaching for social justice? If so, please explain why and how you may do this?
- 4) How do you feel about the following statement: Generally speaking, women, poor children, and certain racialized groups and ethnicities have fewer chances to get a good education and get ahead in life? Please explain and justify your feelings and thoughts on this statement. (The components of this question are modifications from the work of Diemer, Luke, Rapa & Catalina, 2014)
- 5) Do you ever critically reflect on how your identity (e.g. race, gender, social class among other factors) will impact your relationship with future students? If so, how? Please explain.

When you are ready to digitally record your response to each question, please do the following:

Turn you recording device on and ensure it is recording.

Read the statement out loud and then respond to the question via your iphone, ipad, or computer.

Please do this for each of the five questions.

When you are ready to submit your digital reflection, please up load to the following Vimeo website:

Vimeo34rfr4. Password: Faculty of Education

Please remember that once you have uploaded your digital reflection, you will not be able to revise it, so ensure that your upload is the correct version.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any help with the uploading process, or any other concerns you may be having.

Thank you for participating in this study. Your time and insight is much appreciated.

VITA AUCTORIS

Barbara Pollard was born in Poland and immigrated to this country, with her parents, when she was 2 years old. She has one younger sister named Eva whom she adores.

Barbara is married to her loving husband Kevin Pollard and they have two very active and spirited children. Her adventurous life journey as a female Canadian immigrant has encompassed many challenging endeavours and some very worthwhile feats. Barbara has recently graduated with a PhD in Philosophy of Education and remains open to all the wonderful career opportunities around the corner.