Initial Teacher Education and the Inner-City Practicum: Research Report for Collaborators

September, 2020

Acknowledgements

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[1] Many Indigenous nations and peoples call the land we are on 'Turtle Island'. Settler governance structures name the land North America. See Simpson (2011) for a Nishnaabeg version of the creation story of Turtle Island.

Nation (Huck, 2003). I acknowledge and respect the land and the Indigenous knowledge holders of this land.

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Introduction

This research study is focused on matters of inequalities in inner-city educational contexts and how this might be understood and addressed within programs of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Inner-city neighbourhoods in Canada are predominantly composed of Indigenous and newcomer individuals and communities, and racialized students in these neighbourhoods continue to experience inequalities of educational outcomes (Statistic Canada, 2016; Winnipeg School Division, 2018). In response, ITE programs in Canada note the priority of diversifying the teaching force to reflect the cultures and backgrounds of students in schools (Marom, 2018), but are also cognizant of the need to prepare the current teacher candidates, who are of predominantly white Settler backgrounds in Canada (Janzen & Cranston, 2016; Marom, 2019), to engage meaningfully with diversities in multicultural educational contexts marked by inequalities (Kerr & Andreotti, 2019). Recognizing the insufficiency of relying solely on course-based approaches to address educational inequalities in this context, this study is focused on understanding ways to support teacher candidates in translating critical ideas on diversities and inequalities from their university coursework into their inner-city practicum placements.

I would highlight at the outset that the choice of terminology for the project as *inner-city* was a specific theoretical and political choice. The term inner-city is used pervasively within Canadian research literatures; Federal and local data collection categories; K-12 district initiatives across Canada; and within programs of ITE and university coursework more generally. Although, the term inner-city is also entangled in problematic deficit discourses. Khoo (2017) argues that

inner-city is a term that has complex, shared socio-cultural meanings that implicate race, and exceed its specific linguistic definition focused on place. Referencing Haslanger (2013), he emphasizes that social meanings convey stereotypical beliefs and call in schemas or narratives which we use to "focus attention, coordinate expectations, sift evidence and rationalize behavioural and emotional dispositions" (as cited in Khoo, 2017, p. 57). I believe that changing the term inner-city to something else will not change the problematic deficit attitudes that have become unfairly associated with the culturally and linguistically enriched communities in inner-city locations that defy significant economic and political marginalization. I therefore use the term inner-city to draw attention to the geo-spatial reproduction of complex, racialized poverty.

The Study

This research is a case-study of eight teacher candidates over the course of their first year of a two-year Bachelor of Education program at a university in Winnipeg, Manitoba in the 2017/2018 school year. The teacher candidates were placed in a K-6 inner-city school in Winnipeg supported by an enhanced practicum team approach. The practicum hosted at the school consisted of one-day per week throughout the year and two five-week practicum blocks. A full course schedule was provided at the university in condensed format to accommodate practicum blocks. This enhanced practicum approach drew together the teacher candidates, co-operating teachers, university instructors, and the practicum advisor in regular dialogue with each other and the researchers. This approach was framed through relational and storied engagements to support the complex learning of teacher candidates in a way that prioritized ethics and relationships (Archibald, 2008; Donald, 2012), and to enhance the connections

between the isolated contexts of the University and the practicum experiences (Ralph, Walker & Wimmer, 2007).

Methods
Preliminary Justifications and Clarifications of the Approach

The location of Winnipeg for this study is particularly appropriate, as statistical data continues to show that Winnipeg's inner-city communities are composed of significant numbers of urban Indigenous and diverse newcomer immigrant peoples, and that they continue to experience disproportionate inequitable economic opportunities and educational outcomes in comparison to non-inner city residents (Statistics Canada, 2016; Winnipeg School Division, 2018). Furthermore, Winnipeg has the highest number of Indigenous peoples in an urban setting in Canada. Winnipeg is considered by urban geographers to be one of the most dynamic cities in North America in relation to Indigenous resurgence, yet is often commonly spoken of as a fairly banal prairie city (Dorries et al., 2019)—previously labelled in McLean's as Canada's most racist city (MacDonald, 2015). While there are certainly limitations to characterizing the lived reality of a city, these more recent considerations by urban geographers point to the significance of undertaking research in prairie, urban locations—and notably Winnipeg.

A case-study approach was chosen to enable greater understanding and more detailed insights into the lived-complexity of the relational dynamics under consideration in the support of teacher candidates in translations of knowledge across university and practicum contexts. Flyvbjerg (2006) advocates that a case-study approach contributes to the systematic production of exemplars in an area of investigation through detailed observation and engagement, and

argues that such work is generalizable to broader contexts. This case-study provides enhanced

relational experiences, and then focuses into the dynamic relational processes that involve

multiple people, with differing institutional responsibilities, that are collectively supporting the

complex learning of teacher candidates. Phelan (2011) outlines an evolution in teacher

education research and articulates a contemporary phase focused on achieving greater

understanding of complexity. The questions raised in this study do not lend themselves to

answers and solutions within prescriptions for 'best practice'. Rather, this study seeks greater

understanding of complexity, uncertainty, and the significance of context, positionality, and

place in the entangled concerns that reproduce inequalities through programs of ITE.

Participants

The participants in the research are teacher candidates (TCs), the practicum advisor (PA),

university-based course instructors (CIs), and co-operating teachers (CTs) at Heartfulness

School[2]. There are eight TCs in total (6 females and 2 males), and all were enrolled in a two-year

Bachelor of Education program at the University starting in September, 2017. All TC participants

had previously completed undergraduate degrees in a range of subject areas and were assigned

to Heartfulness as part of their program, and all had their courses scheduled together in a K-8

focused program. Most of the TCs had personal experience as students in K-12 and earned

undergraduate degrees in Winnipeg. The PA assigned was also in the role as CI in a year-long

course in the foundations of education. The PA has had a long-career in teaching and leadership

in Winnipeg, but was new to this practicum site. From the University, five CIs agreed to

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[2] Heartfulness School is a pseudonym chosen by the researchers.

participate, and ultimately four were able to attend research activities. This represents about half of the credit hours of coursework in total. We engaged all of the course outlines within the data analysis. The CIs that participated all had experience teaching in contexts of racialized poverty or were from an inner-city community. From Heartfulness, eight CTs participated (7 female and 1 male), and administration at the school generously supported all research activities. There were no participants who identified as gender non-binary. Throughout this report, I am purposefully using the identity terms white, settler, Indigenous and racialized peoples to reflect the dynamics of settler-colonialism at the heart of inequalities in inner-city communities[3]. All participants involved in the research process are white people of diverse settler origins and could be considered middle-class. I am the Principal Investigator and identify as a white, cis-gendered, female settler, and the Senior Research Assistant on the project for data collection, Ms. Van Bewer[4], identifies as Indigenous and connected to local Indigenous communities. The Senior Research Assistant working with data analysis, Ms. Ferguson identifies as a white settler, researcher and elementary school teacher in Winnipeg. Ms. Vazquez identifies herself with the project as a multilingual, undergraduate exchange student from Mexico. Through surveys, the majority of TCs revealed minimal personal interaction with ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic differences from their own positionality in their social, familial and educational experiences.

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[3] This identity terminology is engaged to provide an indication of differential participation within systemic inequalities and privilege in a settler-colonial framework. I recognize that this practice can also be inherently limiting, and can over-simplify the complex subjectivities of the participants and the researchers.
[4] Ms. Van Bewer had originally planned to be the Sr. Research Assistant for the entire project, but after data collection needed to focus on her PhD candidacy.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The research design is guided by the concept of *ethical relationality* as developed by Dwayne Donald (2012a, 2012b, 2016). In Donald's view, informed by Cree and Blackfoot teachings: "Ethical relationality is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other" (Donald, 2012a, p. 103). In his work, Donald emphasizes the ethical imperative of relationality that requires "attentiveness to the responsibilities that come with a declaration of being in relation" (Donald, 2012b, p. 535). I view this approach as generative to the objectives of the study that seek to bridge divided realities between practicum and university, and within a city that has ideological and physical divides between low income/affluent communities, and between settler/Indigenous lived realities in this place. To work towards enacting ethical relationality and the complexities involved in divided realities, I worked with the principles of Indigenous Storywork methodology in the design and analysis as developed by Jo-ann Archibald (2008). To frame the complexities of power, positionality, forms of authority, and difference, I drew on my previous work with Vanessa Andreotti (Kerr & Andreotti, 2019). I acknowledge the added complexities of non-Indigenous scholars working with Indigenous methodologies in terms of appropriation and potential for misunderstandings. Dr. Archibald and Dr. Donald both theorize their approaches with a focus on ethics and the wisdom of Indigenous knowledges, and they invite both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to learn through their work. I also have been mentored in different ways by both of these scholars over a period of many years. In this project, I have connected with both Dr. Archibald and Dr. Donald to share the findings of this study and

requested their guidance on the written analysis of my engagement with their methodologies in the design of the research, and the collaborative analysis with Ms. Ferguson. They have both supported my understanding of these approaches through providing feedback which will be reflected in a specific journal article on the methodology of this study that I am writing with the support of Ms. Ferguson.

The teacher candidates completed a pre- and post-survey instrument that I developed from a survey design by Vanessa Andreotti (Kerr & Andreotti, 2019) that is complexly layered and related to matters of identity and positionality (See Appendix A for the survey instruments). The research started with the pre-survey, and was followed by a workshop facilitated as part of regular coursework by me and supported by Ms. Van Bewer. The workshop provided meta-language to enable self-reflexive analysis of experiences in border crossing in educational contexts. Border crossing is framed as working with and through moments of personal awareness of feeling apart, and wherein we construct someone or something else as being *other* in ways that create or reinforce power inequalities (Giroux, 1991; Gorski, 2008). The workshop drew on previous work in Kerr & Andreotti (2018; 2019) and extended into the specifics of inner-city educational contexts.

The workshop took place in the Fall of 2017 and was followed by three talking circles at Heartfulness School over the course of the school year. In the circles, the practicum team shared personal experience stories that were prompted by my own stories of educational practice in an inner-city school within the following themes: anticipating economic inequalities

(Fall); in-process mentorship and community (Winter); and post-practicum reflections on racialized inequalities in practice (Spring). The choice of talking circles, as opposed to more common focus group sessions, was based on the richness of Dr. Archibald's methodological work through story that aligns with the priorities of ethics and relationships in the study. The format of the talking circles was based on what I have been taught through my experiences as a former student and teaching assistant for Dr. Archibald, and then further developed with collaborator Dr. Amy Parent in our co-teaching in courses in Indigenous Education and research work (Kerr & Parent, 2015, 2018). The circles did not include sacred knowledge or ceremony, or activities that would be expected to be led by an Indigenous Elder. The protocols for the talking circles acknowledged territory, noted my mentorship and where I had learned this way of engaging in sharing stories, and ensured that each person had an opportunity to speak and share stories uninterrupted. The opportunity to speak was accomplished through passing a rock around the circle. This rock had personal significance for me, and was cared for by participants in between circles. Each circle was initiated with a reminder of the protocols of the talking circle as well as ethics in research practices, and then I shared a personal experience story related to the theme of the circle. I shared my own stories of practice in the inner-city which were intended to draw out the politics of diverse inequalities, and the tensions embedded with identity and place (abridged versions are attached as Appendix B). The participants were invited to share their own stories and responses to the story as the rock was passed by participants around the circle, with an option to pass without needing to provide a reason. Advance notice of themes was provided before each of the subsequent circles. Each circle was audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. The year concluded with the post-surveys for TCs.

The pre- and post-surveys were analyzed through a theoretical framework I developed with Dr. Andreotti in a previous research project. The surveys have 3 basic sections. The first section engages teacher candidates with questions regarding scenarios that elicit their self-awareness and stated commitments with regard to complexity, uncertainty and diversities. The second section is composed of open-ended questions geared to their contextual work as educators, meant to *reveal* their educational approaches in contexts of inequalities rather than requesting stated commitments. The third section is focused on demographic information in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, as well as experience with different cultural and ethnic communities in different contexts and stages of life.

Analysis

Analysis of Talking Circles

The talking circle sessions were recorded and then analyzed through Indigenous Storywork principles (Archibald, 2008) and Gadamerian hermeneutic analysis to acknowledge the impositions of fore-structures in interpretation that are brought by me and Ms. Ferguson in a settler-colonial context (Gadamer, 2004; Kerr, 2012, 2019a). Participants were not recorded by pseudonyms, but instead participants remained anonymous and recorded by their particular role in the project. This approach is not meant to analyze any one person or to individualize patterns, but to consider how particular roles influence participation, insights, and shared experiences.

I further developed the analysis through engaging in walking discussions in significant places with Ms. Ferguson. The decision to engage a walking analysis was inspired by my growing understanding that places are alive with relationships, have awareness, and can be a teacher. I developed this approach through ongoing mentorship from Dr. Michael Marker as well as his educational scholarship focused on land (Marker, 2006; 2018), and from discussions years ago with Dr. Brooke Madden on her data collection approach in her PhD research (see Madden, 2016). Walks were planned one month apart during the Spring of 2019. Prior to each walk, Ms. Ferguson and I took time to read and re-read the transcripts and make notes of significance. We recorded our fore-structures (potential projections and expectations) influenced by our backgrounds as inner-city educators and identities as white settlers who engage in ongoing learning from Indigenous mentors and Indigenous scholarship, and who explore issues of white normativity. We met and walked and discussed ideas orally in significant places, again drawing on the synergy of ideas as experienced in place. Analysis of Circle 1—walking around the neighbourhood of Heartfulness School; Analysis of Circle 2— walking through the University campus; and Analysis of Circle 3—walking through The Forks at the confluence of the Red River and the Assiniboine River on Indigenous Peoples' Day 2019.

Both Ms. Ferguson and I were concerned about impositions as white settlers who had experienced significant shifts in understanding of privilege, oppression and positionality through learning through Indigenous mentors in personal and formal settings. We were considering our propensity to engage in settler moves to innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012), in placing the issues of colonialism as something we may have surmounted. We were also very

aware as former classroom teachers of the ways that teachers' work and knowledge become deprofessionalized, and teachers are unfairly held to account for both the problems of the school system and society (Ranson, 2010; Walker, 2013). We discussed this aspect in depth and worked to maintain ethical and respectful relations to participants. We considered personal limitations as unsettled settlers in this work (Regan, 2010, see also Ferguson, 2017), as well as the immersion of the education system and society in mostly invisibilized settler-colonial logics, white normativity, and denial of privilege (Donald, 2012a; Mill, 2007).

Through our collaborative analysis of the transcripts, three themes emerged that speak to the complications and barriers of teacher candidates' translations of critical ideas from course work on systemic inequalities and diversities into the lived-experience of an inner-city practicum. In this next section, these themes are outlined and engaged with the voices of the participants noted through their roles in the project. The selections were chosen as representative of ideas and themes that were engaged repeatedly.

Emergent Theme 1 – Excess of Responsibility and the Emotional Toll of Inner-city Teaching in Mentorship

In their role as mentors, the cooperating teachers (CTs) conveyed a sense of strong bonds and relationships with their young students.

> *… because that's where those meaningful relationships come from, is those great, deep conversations that you have with the kids and that's honestly the best part of the job, is getting close to them and learning from them.*

The CTs as mentors constructed teaching of children in the inner-city as an experience marked by overwhelming responsibility. It is evident that the responsibility involved in caring for and educating young children living in extremely difficult circumstances takes an emotional toll.

> *I said "Yeah, and where were you yesterday?" and he said "Oh yeah, I went to the shelter … The rats were chewing through my bed." And it was just – he wasn't sad, he wasn't pitying himself, it wasn't like anything … you just have to learn how to react in the moment and not just stare at him dumbfounded.*

> *… I've always struggled with this year is not bringing home the sort of sorrow I feel for some of my students. When they come to me and tell me the stories of their home life and how awful it is … I have really struggled when I know that something terrible is happening at home and they're not getting saved …*

> *I was potentially going to take a leave…it was exhausting and mentally draining.*

The CTs spoke of the unexpected departures of students and the difficulty of dealing with their own sense of loss.

> *Like every day, a student could be gone and then the next day you get three more and you just have to go with the flow every single day.*

> *… we work so hard to like connect with our kids and try and fill those needs and then sometimes just out of the blue they're gone; they've moved, they've transferred, sometimes we know where, sometimes we don't …*

The following quotes by the teacher candidates (TCs) reflect the ways they are being mentored within this context. The TCs reveal their awareness of the complexity in making judgements within the process of becoming a teacher. The emotional lives of children living in poverty is a central aspect of learning for TCs as they observe CTs prioritizing the emotional needs of

students over the academic concerns which they assumed would be the key focus in their practicum. The quotes also reveal that the University coursework is not being viewed as being as significant as the practicum in their learning to become teachers.

> *… I don't think these CT's realise how much we see and how much it helps just to be able to see that and witness it.*

> *I feel that a lot of what we're learning in the university context is politically correct, some of it is maybe being idealistic but at the same time, we need that stuff…but when I get into the practicum setting, it's like okay, here's the real world now and that's why I really appreciate all of you classroom teachers and the fact that you're so honest with us.*

> *I have learned so much, I definitely realize now that you're not going to get through all the curriculum but those basic needs come first especially in the inner-city.*

The course instructors (CIs) supported the narratives of the emotionally-laden experience of teaching in the inner-city and used language that characterizes the experience as *surviving* on more than one occasion. These comments characterize the CIs engagement and mentorship related to high-poverty contexts:

> *… we're just constantly being asked to carry the plate a little bit, make it a little bit bigger, a little bit bigger. And we don't have like rich billionaires who are donating money to buy new schools and everything, like other industries. So we're loving, caring people who just – we do what we can.*

> *I'm facing like I have to go back [to teaching in a high-poverty context] and there's preparation to survive you know, you – and to keep your standards high for it's my 20th year next year and you do go in times where you're just getting through the day.*

Importantly, the course outlines for all courses did not take up these emotional aspects directly, nor was the inner-city mentioned as a specific consideration outside of the course with the PA as CI, and within the experience of the talking circles. It should be noted that the course instructors were almost exclusively non-faculty members, and as contract academic staff may not have been aware that the TCs were placed in inner-city practicum sites. This may relate to why the TCs saw less value in university coursework in helping them navigate their practicum in an inner-city context. We would note this exclusion as an institutional barrier. The exception would be the Practicum Advisor (PA), who was also a CI, and deeply involved in making connections in the school. His course outline considered the wholistic experience of children and involved the significance of making relationships and knowing the children well *in* and *beyond* the school as members of communities, and he discussed these ideas in the talking circles. The TCs singled his mentorship out as very helpful. The CIs that participated in the sharing circles provided mentorship regarding the emotional experience of teaching in high poverty contexts through that venue.

Emergent Theme 2 – Strained/Absent Relationships with Parents and Community

The significance of engaging with parents and communities was a theme present in the stories that led the circles. In the CT's engagement with this aspect, the majority notably constructed the relationship with parents as strained and separate, and as a challenge that needed to be managed. Only one of the CTs mentioned their efforts to connect and build relationships with parents and learn from them as an important priority. Overall, the parents and community were seen as a significant source of problems for students, and not generative to their

educational goals. These perspectives regarding parents positioned the teacher in an integral role as assuming a parental role not being fulfilled. While the CTs are passionately committed to meeting the needs of students, the disconnection from parents and local community is a salient insight gathered from this study.

> *… you don't even think about what's going on sometimes in a kid's home life, because they're so good or coached at hiding it, so you just go on with your day.*

> *So, I think this unfairness is also rooted in family and stability, my presumption is that those kids are not surrounded by trustworthy people, adults. I'm shocked, because there are so many parents in jail or they don't get enough food, sleep … but those kids, I don't know who supports them otherwise than the school and the social workers, the teacher.*

Their stories revealed that many of the CTs do not see the potential of parents and community as partners. Social workers, Child and Family Services (CFS), and the school are seen as the locus of positive support in meeting students' needs.

> *One thing that I didn't do in my first year was call parents out … These conversations usually aren't fun, I actually really don't like being kind of harsh to parents, but it's not a good conversation and so very dodgy about these things because for some, well a lot of the parents don't trust me because I'm a teacher and they don't want me to call any you know, CFS or anything like that.*

The CTs also note that they remain supported in their work through connecting with each other in the school community, and reinforce themselves together in this difficult work:

> *… when you have that group of teachers here who you can trust you know, who are going through exactly what you're going through, you mentor each other and you're a better teacher because of it …*

> *... so there's getting familiar with the curriculum, is important, getting creative is important, but even more important is the ability to be collegial and professional and to work together because that's the only way you survive.*

The course instructors (CIs) that participated in the circles had similar notions of disconnection from parents as educational partners, and noted similar anticipation that supports should come from government services.

> *… but you really need to keep the depth and the quality of education there for these kids and not just because it's hard, don't just give into it and yes you will call social services 50 times and they won't call back …*

> *… in some of the places that I've seen as a parent or as a teacher leader kind of thing, there's so many people out there in our community that don't go that extra mile, don't take that extra step and it gets exhausting after a while …*

In the review of course outlines, we found limited thematic content focused on the educational role of community and parents, which is interesting as an omission. The theme was taken up directly in the course on foundations of education taught by the PA, and parents and community are mentioned briefly in one other outline. Within the talking circles, the CIs aligned more closely with the CTs, sharing views that reflected a lack of community connection. The comments revealed a focus on keeping academic standards high, most likely in response to many of the ideas in the circles about the secondary role of academics to social-emotional concerns of children living in difficult circumstances.

The absence of community members in the talking circles should be considered an oversight in the research design. The fact that I engaged with community as a focus in my stories of practice that started the circles, but did not invite community members as part of the mentorship of TCs in the circles, is also reflective of my own ingrained habits and bias from being immersed in school cultures over a long period of time. This bias carried over to my work as an educational researcher. I would also consider the exclusion of parents and community members from mentorship of teacher candidates in their ITE programs to be an institutional barrier in preparing TCs to teach in inner-city contexts.

Emergent Theme 3: TCs Experiencing Positive Shifts in Addressing Inequalities

Despite the prominent discourses of disconnection from parents and communities, and the absence of positive connections with community from most of the CIs and the enhanced practicum design, TCs in this study were able to engage more generatively with connections to homelife, but struggled with engaging this in practice. Whiteness was a key aspect of the surveys, and the workshop with TCs. While whiteness was never discussed as a source of privilege in the circles, the TCs did consider the implications of their economic privilege and were more tentative on the authoritative dominance of Euro-Western knowledge systems. One TC mentioned the workshop as influencing their attempts to engage students in affirming ways. They also reflected a thoughtful consideration about honouring students' belief systems from home, and maintaining complexity within their engagement with students.

> *… she said to me "Mr. [TC], where do people come from?" I wasn't sure how to answer this question, because I wanted to be sensitive to her belief systems and other belief systems. I know where I think they came from, but I wasn't sure what to tell her.*

> *… my dad grew up kind of in this area, like in and out of foster care and that kind of thing, and as a kid that was never a concern of mine. So I never really related to him when he would say things like that … Now I think I'm kind of putting a face to it with all these little kids in the class and just kind of seeing it. So I think talking to him, hearing everybody's stories here, that's helping a lot.*

> *I'm thinking how could I bring those [positive inner-city community] stories into the classroom, because I don't need to teach these kids that story. I don't need to teach them how to appreciate these sorts of people because these people are in their neighbourhoods, they're their neighbours, their families.*

In response to the last comment, the PA encouraged the importance of positive community engagement, and also brought this idea forward in another circle:

> *… what a wonderful opportunity to bring that book into the classroom to allow the students to begin to take a look at their own lives and give voice to their lives, similar to how this author gave voice to their life in that community.*

> *… within the school there are opportunities to develop programs either in the classroom or in the school where you can celebrate the cultures that exist.*

It may be that the combination of consistent mentorship by the PA, and his practice of having regular small group meetings as part of his educational foundations course, was a mediating factor that interrupted the disconnections from parents and community. These small group meetings were developed as a key programming piece at UWinnipeg, and clearly have had a powerful effect. Also, the critical workshop at the start of their journey may have invited the

TCs to think more about their own experiences in relation to poverty, ways to build relationships, and consider their own privileges and self-understanding.

Analysis of Surveys

The analysis of surveys compared stated commitments by teacher candidates to matters of inequalities, and contrasted these commitments through analysis of educational scenarios that considered TCs' dispositions to engage these commitments in the complex context of practice. The objective of this part of the research was to see general trends in TCs dispositions to inequalities before and after their programming, and not to individualize responses. The questions on stated and revealed commitments are identical in the pre- and post-surveys to enable comparison. Analysis of the first section of the pre-surveys revealed that the TCs generally saw conflict as an opportunity for growth, appreciated uncomfortable learning in unfamiliar contexts, and showed a willingness to engage with matters of diversities and nation-state authority in positive ways. Post-surveying indicated increased commitments in these areas. In the second part of surveys, the questions were meant to reveal the capacities of TCs to understand the nature of inequalities as systemic issues that can be addressed, rather than only individualized problems, and their dispositions to engage these understandings in educational practice with elementary-aged children. This provides an opportunity to understand the ways TCs might enact their commitments in educational practice. The TCs responses were analyzed into categories. In the graphs shared below of pre- and post-surveying, TC responses categorized as A and B indicated a lack of systemic understanding of inequalities. Category A identified explanations based on ideas of meritocracy and individualized responsibility or hard work as the reason behind the inequalities, and Category B naturalized inequalities as random

good or bad luck of an individual. TC responses categorized as C and D revealed a systemic understanding of inequalities. TC responses placed in Category C naturalized the systemic inequality as something that exists and was not changeable within society, and responses in Category D indicated an ability to engage these systemic views in the context of practice as something changeable. Categories E (deny) and F (avoid) were included to recognize responses that avoided or denied the noted inequalities in their response. Ideally, teacher education programming should work towards assisting TCs to position themselves in category D – where TCs can recognize the systemic nature of inequalities (along with individual manifestations), and as something changeable, and are able to address these inequalities as an educator.

Individualizes Inequity		Recognizes Systemic Factors		Avoidance	
↙	↘	↙	↘	↙	↘
A-Meritocracy Narrative	B-Naturalizes – Individual luck or privilege	C- Naturalizes Existence	D -Addresses in Teaching Practice	E-Reframe	F-Deny
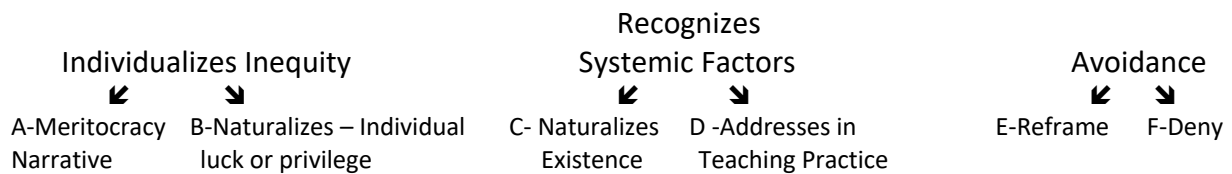
 The following graphs show the pre- and post-survey responses of TCs to forms of social inequalities. With the small number of TCs in this study, a single response has a large effect:

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

■ PRE-SURVEY   ■ POST-SURVEY

	A	B	C	D	E	F
PRE-SURVEY	12.50%	25%	25%	25%	12.50%	
POST-SURVEY		28.60%	21.40%	50%		

WHITE PRIVELEGE

PRE-SURVEY POST-SURVEY

	A	B	C	D	E	F
PRE-SURVEY	6.25%	6.25%	50%	31.25%	6.25%	
POST-SURVEY	7.10%	14.30%	28.60%	28.60%	14.30%	7.10%

ECOLOGICAL INEQUALITIES

PRE-SURVEY POST-SURVEY

	A	B	C	D	E	F
PRE-SURVEY		25%	37.50%	37.50%		
POST-SURVEY		14.30%	71.40%	14.30%		

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

PRE-SURVEY POST-SURVEY

	A	B	C	D	E	F
PRE-SURVEY	50%	6.25%	12.50%	31.25%		
POST-SURVEY	14.30%	28.60%	42.90%	14.30%		

In the pre-surveys, the TC's were fairly evenly split in their ability to recognize the systemic nature of economic inequalities, and a minority of TCs revealed an ability to address these inequalities as an educator. In the post-surveys it was clear that TCs experienced a significant shift in their understandings of economic inequalities as a systemic problem, and some of the TCs increased in their ability to engage educational ideas in an inner-city context that addressed the historic and systemic issues of inequalities. In general, there were positive shifts amongst the teacher candidates which aligned with the findings in the talking circles. Although, there was an increased tendency to ignore, deny, or avoid consideration of white privilege as an educator, and whiteness never emerged as a topic in the talking circles. TCs that showed a willingness to acknowledge and address white privilege stayed the same in pre- and post-surveys at about 30%. The scenarios focused on ecological relations and physical disability were provided to broaden conceptions of inequalities beyond economics and racialization as fundamental to equity considerations in teaching. Comparing pre-and post-surveying, TCs demonstrated a significant change in learning to appreciate the systemic nature of these inequalities, yet did not meaningfully connect this understanding to practice. In a general sense, it seems that with an enhanced approach, the TCs developed greater understanding of systemic factors that produce inequalities, but overall were limited in recognizing that systemic factors can be subject to intentional change, and were limited in ways to address this in practice.

Findings: A Place-Based, Storied Discussion

I am sharing the findings of this research in ways aligned with Indigenous Storywork methodology (Archibald, 2008) and narrative inquiry which works to engage the complexity and

meaning within shared stories (Nasheeda, et al, 2019). Through my analysis assisted by Ms. Ferguson, I am sharing the findings through storied metaphors and narratives of encounter with inequality and difference in a settler-colonial context. A particular story that I encountered prior to the research through Dr. Andreotti came up regularly within the walking analysis and provided a metaphor to understand the personal stories within the talking circles. We named this story *Up the River, Down the River*[5] as we engaged in walking analysis. Another metaphor that resonated in our walking analyses was the work of curriculum scholar Dwayne Donald and his development of *pedagogy of the fort*. In this report, I'm drawing on these metaphors/teachings to articulate the findings of this study within a socio-cultural, political and historical context.

<div align="center">Up the River, Down the River</div>

> *A man is walking down the river and sees a child that seems to be in peril splashing in the water. Without hesitation, the man jumps in the river and saves the child, but then sees another child in similar circumstances. The man jumps back in the river and saves the next child, but then notices more and more children. The man is committed and exhausted, he implores passers-by to help him save the children in this down the river location. As such, more people help, and the cycle continues – more children struggling in peril, more people saving them, more people exhausted. One woman walks away. Another woman who is pulling a child out from the water yells to the woman who is leaving: "Where are you going? We have to save these children!" The woman responds "I'm going up the river to find out who is throwing these children in the river".*

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[5] I encountered the Up the River, Down the River story directly and in Andreotti (2012) and this story has emerged in multiple conversations. This version is the way I constructed it, when sharing the story with Ms. Ferguson.

Inner-City Education and Practicum: Down the River in the Fort

The city of Winnipeg, at the fork of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, is located down two rivers both figuratively and geographically. This river story was a constant teacher in the data analysis and framed how Ms. Ferguson and I understood the framing of inner-city education and mentorship of becoming teachers by participants in this study in relation to the unique and dynamic context of Winnipeg. The intense commitment of the participants was felt. Through tears, stories were shared of children in whom teachers are emotionally and physically invested, who then would regularly disappear—often without a trace—from the school community. Working with children who are living in poverty and without basic necessities, and having high and unpredictable mobility in and out of the school community, clearly takes an emotional toll. Janzen & Phelan (2018) highlight the attrition and disengagement from the teaching profession due to the ethical sense of obligation to students that can be overwhelming for teachers. This was evident in this study, and heightened in this particular context. The teachers describe students who live without basic food and housing security, and through their stories shared the overwhelming obligation they feel towards students in circumstances that seem both impossible and ceaseless. The CTs engagement in inner-city education and mentorship is immersed down the river in saving children, but also is disconnected from up the river sources of understanding that might provide needed context to address these circumstances. More supports are needed for educators to generatively engage the strengths of parents and community as potential collaborators, and to explore the sources of suffering in turbulent currents of settler colonialism, dispossession of land, and processes of racialization.

In this down the river context of exhaustion and saving, the CTs enact relations between themselves and the parents/community in a way that resonates deeply with Donald's (2012a) articulation of the pedagogy of the fort. As Donald argues, there are deeply learned habits arising from the colonial experience in Canada that reinforce a notion "that Aboriginal peoples and Canadians inhabit separate realities" (Donald, 2012a, p. 91). Donald analyzes the fort as a mythic symbol that is part of the Canadian frontier imaginary that signifies the teleological dream of 'civilization', and that positions Indigenous peoples and knowledges as "*outside* accepted versions of nation and nationality" (p. 100). These narratives about Canadian nation building and civilization are deeply held in settler imaginations. Within the CTs' stories in this case study, the school manifests for the teachers as a fort within these similar logics—becoming the guarded place of civilization and safety, in the midst of a community immersed in danger. CTs call on each other, and other systems of colonial governance such as CFS, to aid in their difficult work of saving children. The emotional labour of the teachers in this study should not be discounted, but needs to be considered more deeply. Also, their stories of unpredictable student mobility emerged as a central narrative that requires further research and attention.

The framing of inner-city mentorship by CTs as being down the river through fort logics is also enacted by the CIs. From the CIs viewpoint the focus on saving children was shared without acknowledging or engaging the systemic causes of these heart-wrenching experiences. Thus, these conditions are sourced as being located down the river and enacted by the parents and local communities outside the walls of the school. The context of settler colonialism, including the pivotal and intergenerational impact of education through the Indian Residential School

System, is invisibilized within colonial fort logics. The role of other settler colonial mechanisms such as CFS in the ongoing apprehensions of Indigenous children, attempted erasure of culture and Indigenous governance, and the dispossession of Indigenous lands in fostering economic poverty, are not within view from the fort (Kerr, 2019b).

The enhanced practicum team approach as a form of relational mentorship was incomplete and complex, and similarly enacted fort logics. The talking circles themselves did seem to provide opportunity for more relational engagements between the school and university contexts, and provided a space to give voice to personal experience, but did not emerge as being as pivotal as the PA in supporting the work of translations across contexts. The disconnections between parents, community and mentorship of teacher candidates that emerged in the talking circles were also replicated through the study design. The lack of engagement with community in the mentorship of TCs in the enhanced practicum experience served to replicate the divided dynamics. While the research design and workshops drew attention to the up the river sources of concern in inner-city education, the practicum team approach invisibilized the potential role of parents/community in practicum mentorship that might help TCs address these systemic problems.

TCs Engaging Up the River Perspectives

A significant finding in the research was that the TC's stories revealed more strengths-based orientations to parents and community reflecting up the river understandings, despite the disconnections in their practicum experiences and mentorship. Through our analyses, Ms.

Ferguson and I believe that the PA appeared to be influential in facilitating critical translations in his role as both CI/PA and working in and between the University and Heartfulness School. His explicit valuing of parents and community as educational partners worked to deemphasize the disconnections from parents and community, and provided a pivotal place of translation of critical educational ideas into commitments in practice. Furthermore, the set-up of regular small meetings with this group within the PA's course had a strong impact and built trusting relationships. My partnering with the PA in parts of his course likely reinforced key critical themes focusing on up the river causes. Heartfulness School itself has amazing connections to community that were largely enacted by school administration, and the TCs were encouraged to attend to these connections by the PA. Although the opportunities for TCs to make these connections were limited by the more immediate demands of the classroom. The implications of this finding are that translations by TCs of critical ideas from university experience would be enhanced if CTs were more directly engaged with up the river ideas, and school administration could provide more opportunity to make connections between community and CTs. It is also noted that the University coursework throughout that year, outside of this engagement with the PA, seemed to hold little value for the TCs in influencing practice in their complex practicum setting. This study also suggests that PAs for inner-city practicum sites are pivotal and their capacities in engaging TCs with ways to translate non-deficit, critically-based course work needs to be acknowledged and mentored by the University. While the PA encouraged community connections, there was limited opportunity to carry this out in the placement. This also suggests that part of the reason that TCs struggle to enact systemic understandings in practice is likely due to the limited opportunities in making community-based connections in their

practicum, in their university coursework, and through the enhanced practicum design that is being studied here.

The early experience of the workshop and surveying with TCs also likely destabilized deficit discourses taking hold, but the impact of the talking circles was more complex. The workshops highlighted systemic causes of oppression related to settler colonialism and Eurocentricity—clearly providing an up the river view to the dramatic situations they later encountered down the river. Starting TCs with this critical view, and having that supported by the PA, likely provided the biggest impact in the study through providing a critical lens on narratives of community deficit and disconnection they would encounter. This study also suggests that the talking circles may have provided much needed collegial support. The emphasis on the surveying, workshop, role of the PA, and professional learning meetings provided systemic appreciation and positive orientations to influence critical translations of ideas into practice, but the lack of community connection for mentorship influencing practice limited that aspect of translation. As a reminder, the talking circles were themed as follows: anticipating economic inequalities (Fall); in-process mentorship and community (Winter); and post-practicum reflections on racialized inequalities in practice (Spring). My personal experience stories reflected my own challenges as an inner-city educator in relation to my positionality and notions of deficit and disconnection that I was holding, and were meant to prompt stories that pulled-out these complexities. For the most part, the responsive stories shared by the CTs and Cis in the talking circles extended rather than challenged deficit discourses within the school concerning parents and communities, and thus could be seen as working counter to the

purposes of translation of critical ideas. At the same time, the opportunities for connection and relation of the talking circles seemed to create a supportive atmosphere amongst the team where the TCs felt supported to engage in their critical understandings. Although, this would suggest that more should be done within the school community, and through all facets of practicum mentorship, to address meaningful connections to parents and community and challenge deficit discourses.

This study was working from an assumption that coursework would be a key source of up the river considerations for TCs, but this was not really the case. Critical issues were not found to be prominent within the coursework, nor was there a specific focus on the inner-city as a complex context beyond the PA's course in that first year of the program. The decision to position the inner-city practicum in year 1, with limited course work on systemic inequalities, is another institutional barrier in the work of translations. In this sense, there are limited ideas available for the TCs to actually translate. Our findings suggest that ITE Programs should sincerely consider the degree to which critical perspectives on systemic inequalities (contrasted with individualized inequalities), and non-Eurocentric perspectives, occupy within their overall programming, and the alignment with practicum. While a course on inner-city education would be helpful, an engagement across coursework that acknowledges the complex and unequal educational contexts that exist, should be overtly considered. Institutional barriers are clearly related to lack of critical coursework and disconnections from inner-city parents/communities as mentors within both the ITE program and practicum placement.

Major Findings and Recommendations

1) **Addressing Socio-Cultural Inequalities Across University Coursework**: Explicit attention should be given throughout university coursework to meeting the needs of children in differing contexts—emphasizing the particular needs in learning contexts that are under undue socio-economic pressures and processes of racialization—as well as the emotional toll of teaching in these contexts, and the significance of white privilege. An overt consideration of settler-colonialism as the source of problems for inner-city contexts is greatly needed. ITE programs need to consider the degree of sessional instructors in the overall program experience, and how they might be supported in making connections to these larger program goals. Coursework that attends to accommodating difference of opportunity and outcome for students through individualized processes serves to ignore the historic and socio-cultural factors that construct difference, oppression and privilege—thus invisibilizing up the river causes. To provide TCs with perspectives to interpret and address systemic inequalities in practicum, these ideas need to be engaged in coursework before and during the inner-city practicum timing, and have limited benefit when only scheduled after.

2) **Community as Mentors of TCs**: ITE programs should emphasize the strength, resilience and resurgence of inner-city community members (especially parents), and inner-city organizations, and position them as mentors for TCs. A recent study notes the intense and positive effect in professional learning through centring members of communities as teachers within university programming (Asadian, 2019). While this study is focused on inner-city communities, this same consideration could be made in other community connections as well. There should be attention by ITE Programs to partner with community members as teachers within university programming to break down pre-conceived notions of deficit, and connect with the expertise that could inform promising and generative practices. A weakness of this study was that the research design did not include community members in the enhanced practicum team approach. Attention to dismantling the fort walls should be a priority and would start by acknowledging and engaging the expertise of community and parents by educational researchers and within ITE programming.

3) **The Significant Role of the Practicum Advisor:** ITE programs should pay particular attention to recruiting practicum advisors to mentor TCs in inner-city schools that understand the supportive need to translate up the river ideas into the engaged experience of practicum, and explicitly value parent and community connections. Ongoing mentorship of PAs in this regard would be valuable.

4) **Enhanced Practicum Supports**: Practicum supports should be structured to draw together inner-city community organizations/ITE programs/inner-city CTs hosting practicum. This planning would ideally be a feature of ITE programming and position inner-city community members as mentors for TCs. Sessional instructors need greater context and awareness of the larger programming for TCs, and the inner-city practicum demands. Greater supports should be provided to CTs within inner-city schools generally, but more specifically when they are hosting a practicum. Enabling greater and reciprocal connections between CTs and community/parents requires support and time, which is generally not possible when immersed in down the river contexts for teaching practice. This work might be facilitated through a specific cohort approach focused on inner-city education within an ITE program, as a research opportunity to provide research support to system wide-change. Advisory to teacher education programs by inner-city teachers and community members would enhance programming and translations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research clearly recommends an overt consideration and articulation across coursework in programs of ITE of the systemic causes of inequalities that manifest in inner-city schools, the need to engage inner-city parents/communities in the preparation of teachers to work in inner-city schools; and the key role of the practicum advisor in making translations across university and school practicum contexts. The continual negative 'academic outcomes'

for Indigenous and racialized students in inner-city schools reflect the inequalities of the society in which the schools exist, and serves to perpetuate social inequalities. While K-12 schools and teacher education programs cannot 'fix' society, these educational systems occupy a unique position in interrupting problematic and naturalized cycles of oppression through their institutions. Schools, school systems, and ITE programs, configured in relations of inequalities and white settler normativity, become positioned to reconstitute inequalities when ignoring the settler colonial structures and hierarchies in which they exist. Our educational systems remain down the river in the fort when we ignore settler colonialism and put ourselves in the endless position of trying to save students without acknowledging and addressing the sources of the problems. The particular context of urban settler-colonial encounter, that is being robustly studied in urban geography and Indigenous Studies, should inform educational work in inner-city contexts. I hope this study contributes to the growing literature and possibility of interruption in the inequitable cycles that endure in our local inner-city educational context of Winnipeg, inner-city contexts throughout North America, and beyond. This report serves as the basis for educational journal articles and conference presentations to share these ideas, and will be hosted on UWinnipeg's institutional repository. I am sharing this report with all participants, collaborators, and researchers which includes the Director of Student Teaching and Faculty of Education Deans' Office at UWinnipeg, as well as the Winnipeg School Division research office. I will also be sharing this report with teacher education programs in Canada, and the Association of Canadian Deans of Education. I also hope that this work contributes to renewing and rethinking educational structures to disrupt the problematic hierarchies of

knowledge, ethnicity, and experiences that support the reproduction of inequalities in and through education.

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APPENDIX A – PRE AND POST-SURVEYS FOR TCS

PRE-SURVEY
Crossing Borders in Initial Teacher Education: Mapping Dispositions of Student Teachers in "Inner-City" Education

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jeannie Kerr, Faculty of Education

Part A: Multiple Choice Questions

During your lunch break after a class, you overhear four people discussing the scenarios below. Please identify the degree to which you would agree or disagree with each statement. The options are Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD). Please note the short form on the line provided:

Scenario 1: How do you prepare for new or unfamiliar experiences?

I try to understand as much as I can in advance in order to feel more informed _____

I try not to over-plan in order to be open to new experiences   _____

I prepare as much as possible so that nothing surprises me   _____

In order to avoid unfamiliar experiences, I try to keep things predictable.   _____

Scenario 2: How do you approach conflicting perspectives?

I try to figure out who is right   _____

I try to figure out what the gap in communication is   _____

I try to help people arrive at consensus   _____

I see conflict as an opportunity for growth   _____

Options: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree(D); Strongly Disagree (SD)

Scenario 3: How do you behave when you find yourself in a new place?

I avoid unfamiliar situations as much as I can   _____

I don't change my behaviour because others should accept me as I am _____

I try to adapt, as much as possible, to what others expect of me   _____

I appreciate the uncomfortable learning that occurs in those situations _____

Scenario 4: How do you feel about immigration?

Immigration should be tightly controlled   _____

Immigrants should fit into the culture of the country they are in   _____

Immigration enables us to learn from different cultures   _____

Immigration opens us up to our own contradictions   _____

Scenario 5: How do you explain economic inequality?

Inequality is inevitable because some people work harder than others   _____

People with more resources do not do enough to help those in need   _____

The economic system benefits people with more resources, and it needs reform_____

The economic system is inherently unfair, and we need a new one   _____

Scenario 6: How can the world's problems be solved?

By minding our own business   _____

By trusting our experts to apply existing knowledge in their fields   _____

By promoting a greater understanding of each other's perspectives   _____

By imagining completely new directions: problems cannot be solved using the
same thinking that created the problems in the first place   _____

Scenario 7: What is the biggest challenge to sustainability?

There is no challenge. How we are living now is perfectly sustainable   _____

We do not invest enough in renewable energy sources   _____

We cannot agree on a common definition of sustainability   _____

Our current thinking prevents us from seeing the planet as a living entity   _____

Scenario 8: What is our **PRIMARY** role as prospective educators?
Choose one of the following by putting an X on the line:
          _____ To deliver the content prescribed in the curriculum

      _____ To facilitate student learning to achieve curriculum objectives

      _____ To assist students to understand the world through and also beyond the curriculum

      _____ To engage students with possibilities and limitations of understanding

Part B – Short Answer Responses

In a teaching placement, imagine you are asked each of the following questions by children that are 9 years old. Each child's background is related to their question. You do not have time to respond at length. What would be your immediate response? You need to provide a short response (maximum of 3-4 sentences) to each of the following questions:

Scenario 1 – Question from a child who has recently arrived in Canada: Why is it that some people have so much and others have so little?

Scenario 2 – Question from a visible minority child born in Canada: Why is it that more teachers and bosses are white?

Scenario 3 – Question from an Aboriginal child: My Grandma says the salmon are the spirit of our ancestors. Is that true?

Scenario 4 – Question from a child of high socio-economic background: If people keep cutting down forests and polluting the water we will not be able to survive. Why are adults still doing that?

Scenario 5 – Question from a child who uses sign language for communication: Why don't we study sign language in our school?

For each scenario in section B, has the background of the child influenced your responses? Mark an X beside one option and provide a short explanation:

_____ No   _____ Somewhat   _____Yes

Explain:

Part C: Practicum Anticipation

To what extent do you think each of the following items will influence the context of your practicum?

Choices for each: no influence (N); limited (L); moderate (M); strong influence (S)

_____ Conflicting worldviews   _____ Historical injustices

_____ Language diversity   _____ Socio-economic inequalities

_____ Race   _____ Gender

_____ Mental health   _____ Aboriginality

_____ Physical access   _____ Religion

_____ Sexuality   Other (please specify) _____

Part D: Identification and Demographics

Name: _____

Your academic major and minor: _____

_____

Your first language: _____

Year you were born: _____

Gender identity: _____

Mark an X beside any educational experiences you have had in Winnipeg

_____ K-4 _____ 5-8 _____ 9-12 _____ College/Trades   _____ University

Which statements reflect your family context in this country (mark all that apply) Yes or No

I am living in this country permanently   _____

I am living in this country temporarily   _____

I was mostly raised in another country   _____

I was born in this country   _____

Both of my parents were born in this country   _____

Only one of my parents was born in this country   _____

All of my grandparents were born in this country   _____

In your university context do you identify yourself as (mark all that apply) Yes or No

An ethnic minority   _____

A religious minority   _____

A language minority   _____

A minority in terms of socio-economic status   _____

A minority in terms of physical ability   _____

A minority in terms of sexual identity   _____

Another minority   _____

What have been your interactions with people of **different cultural backgrounds**, at different times in your life? Only choose one and then mark the closest match with an X:

_____ Neighbourhood where I grew up

_____ My k-12 school experiences

_____ My close friends growing up

_____ My friends at university

_____ My acquaintances at university

_____ My online friends

_____ My close relationships as an adult

_____ Throughout my entire life and range of relationships

What have been your interactions with people of **different socio-economic backgrounds** at different times in your life? Only choose one and then mark the closest match with an X.

_____ Neighbourhood where I grew up

_____ My k-12 school experiences

_____ My close friends growing up

_____ My friends at university

_____ My acquaintances at university

_____ My online friends

_____ My close relationships as an adult

_____ Throughout my entire life and range of relationships

Any comments on this survey are greatly appreciated. We also appreciate your time in sharing your information, ideas and perspectives.

Post-Survey
Crossing Borders in Initial Teacher Education: Mapping Dispositions of Student Teachers in "Inner-City" Education

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jeannie Kerr, Faculty of Education

Name of Participant: _____

Part A: Multiple Choice Questions

During your lunch break after a class, you overhear four people discussing the scenarios below. Please identify the degree to which you would agree or disagree with each statement. The options are Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD). Please note the short form on the line provided:

Scenario 1: How do you prepare for new or unfamiliar experiences:

I try to understand as much as I can in advance in order to feel more informed   _____

I try not to over-plan in order to be open to new experiences   _____

I prepare as much as possible so that nothing surprises me   _____

In order to avoid unfamiliar experiences, I try to keep things predictable.   _____

Scenario 2: How do you approach conflicting perspectives?

I try to figure out who is right   _____

I try to figure out what the gap in communication is   _____

I try to help people arrive at consensus   _____

I see conflict as an opportunity for growth   _____

Scenario 3: How do you behave when you find yourself in a new place?

I avoid unfamiliar situations as much as I can   _____

I don't change my behaviour because others should accept me as I am _____

I try to adapt, as much as possible, to what others expect of me   _____

I appreciate the uncomfortable learning that occurs in those situations _____

Options: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree(D); Strongly Disagree (SD)

Scenario 4: How do you feel about immigration?

Immigration should be tightly controlled   _____

Immigrants should fit into the culture of the country they are in   _____

Immigration enables us to learn from different cultures   _____

Immigration opens us up to our own contradictions   _____

Scenario 5: How do you explain economic inequality?

Inequality is inevitable because some people work harder than others   _____

People with more resources do not do enough to help those in need   _____

The economic system benefits people with more resources, and it needs reform_____

The economic system is inherently unfair, and we need a new one   _____

Scenario 6: How can the world's problems be solved?

By minding our own business   _____

By trusting our experts to apply existing knowledge in their fields   _____

By promoting a greater understanding of each other's perspectives   _____

By imagining completely new directions: problems cannot be solved using the
same thinking that created the problems in the first place   _____

Scenario 7: What is the biggest challenge to sustainability?

There is no challenge. How we are living now is perfectly sustainable   _____

We do not invest enough in renewable energy sources   _____

We cannot agree on a common definition of sustainability   _____

Our current thinking prevents us from seeing the planet as a living entity   _____

Scenario 8: What is our **PRIMARY** role as prospective educators?
Choose one of the following by putting an X on the line:

_____ To deliver the content prescribed in the curriculum

_____ To facilitate student learning to achieve curriculum objectives

_____ To assist students to understand the world through and beyond the

curriculum

_____ To engage students with possibilities and limitations of understanding

Part B – Short Answer Responses

In a teaching placement, imagine you are asked each of the following questions by children that are 9 years old. Each child's background is related to their question. You do not have time to respond at length. What would be your immediate response? You need to provide a short response (maximum of 3 sentences) to each of the following questions:

Scenario 1 – Question from a child who has recently arrived in Canada: Why is it that some people have so much and others have so little?

Scenario 2 – Question from a visible minority child born in Canada: Why is it that more teachers and bosses are white?

Scenario 3 – Question from an Aboriginal child: My Grandma says the salmon are the spirit of our ancestors. Is that true?

Scenario 4 – Question from a child of high socio-economic background: If people keep cutting down forests and polluting the water we will not be able to survive. Why are adults still doing that?

Scenario 5 – Question from a child who uses sign language for communication: Why don't we study sign language in our school?

For each scenario in section B, has the background of the child influenced your responses? Mark an X beside one option and provide a short explanation:

_____   No   _____   Somewhat   _____Yes

   Explain:

Part C: Practicum Experience

To what extent did each of the following items influence the context of your practicum?

Choices for each: no influence (N); limited (L); moderate (M); strong influence (S)

_____ Conflicting worldviews	_____ Historical injustices
_____ Language diversity	_____ Socio-economic inequalities
_____ Race	_____ Gender
_____ Mental health	_____ Aboriginality
_____ Physical access	_____ Religion
_____ Sexuality	Other (please specify) _____

Appendix B: Abridged Versions of Jeannie's Initiating Talking Circle Stories

Story – Talking Circle 1: Anticipating Educational Inequalities

I was sitting in front of my class as my students were coming in from lunch and assembling on the carpet, when one of my students asked me "Is it safe to drink the water yet?" I was just about to respond yes. There had been a highly unusual boil water advisory in Vancouver, but it had been resolved. I was just about to say "Yes – it's safe" but then I thought: I've never actually drank the water in this 100-year old building. I knew nobody was monitoring this. I'd never had to think about this access to water, because I always brought my own drinks to school. I had never thought about that difference in lack of choice that the kids had and I had, and it was a watershed moment. The kids were all staring at me, because I was still staring at him, and his question was hanging in the air, I hadn't thought about my difference in experience from my students in our shared classroom, and really who I am as a teacher in the inner city. What are my responsibilities? How am I related to this inequality? So I said "Actually, I think we all need to talk." This moment changed the way I was teaching. I began to really think about the life experience of the kids in terms of what I'm teaching. So we spent the year on water, literally a whole year and did all of the subjects in relation to that, but I think it also changed me and how I related to the community as well.

Story Talking Circle 2: In Process Mentorship in Complexity

I had been working in the inner-city as a resource teacher for a number of years, and had switched to classroom teaching. There was a lot of things that I wasn't sure about. I had a friend who was also teaching grade 7 across the city. She was a long-term classroom teacher, and had a lot more experience than I did in that classroom aspect of teaching. We became partner classes, and I looked to her as a mentor. We were having dinner one night and she said to me 'I don't like the way you talk about the kids' and I just about hit the floor because I love my students and I thought what could I possibly have done to make her think this?

I was also hurt because it was a friend. I felt very misunderstood, and she said 'maybe that didn't come out right, I just didn't know how to tell you'. She felt the way I was talking about my students was that they were always needy, and that I was always fixing everything. She thought I should think more about what the kids had to offer, than what I was doing. I argued back: 'that's my job, their job isn't to do that for me." It was a very confusing moment for me and I felt that the way it was done, the mentorship part of it actually made me feel quite distanced from her for a while. It was about six months before I really started talking to her again in mentorship. I felt lacking in trust with her, and that she wasn't understanding me and my intentions towards the kids very well. I did think about it over time, and I have been thinking about that ever since. Particularly regarding balancing the ways I support students, but I'm learning from students and their community at the same time. In inner-city work, how I really need to focus on what the gifts are and what the benefits are from parents and community, and what I can learn from that. So I don't know if I've ever resolved that mentorship piece though – I looked at her differently after that, because I think we pick our mentors and mentorship is a very delicate thing.

Story - Talking Circle 3: Post-practicum Practice Oriented
I was teaching a grade four-five combined class, and Charlene [pseudonym] had been put into foster care and ended up in a housing project right near the school where I was teaching. She came into my class in February, and I was struggling with standardized assessments. Where I was working in BC, grades four and seven classrooms do these massive tests that take about a week to do. I was a little stressed already about how I was going to support the kids through this testing.

Charlene had been through trauma, as she was not in her home community or with her family. She was a young Indigenous girl, and she wasn't sure of who we were as a classroom community. She was really bright and she wanted to do well, but I knew she had missed a lot of school, so I said: 'You don't have to take the test if you don't want to', but she said she wanted to take the tests. She wanted to show us how smart she is, because she really is. But the way the tests are framed, especially with math, you may not have covered the curriculum for some of the things that are being asked. So she opened the test and she's working at that, and I could see her tears actually hitting the page. She couldn't do it, for whatever order being in and out of foster care, different schools, I couldn't prepare her in the same way. Here's this brilliant young girl just ready to show everybody, and this whole process reaffirmed all kinds of problematic things for her. I took her out of the classroom and told her that this test is not really fair, because it doesn't cover what you were doing in your other school, and she was half believing me. So we went to the Principal and I said to her in front of Charlene, we have a problem with this test and I need you to write a letter to somebody, because the test isn't fair and I don't want her to take this unfair test. Charlene brushed it away, and we organised other things. But it really made me think long-term about standardised assessment. Who are they performing for? How are my students affected?