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IN SITU HYBRID SPACES AS GENERATIVE SITES FOR TEACHER PREPARATION
DES LIEUX HYBRIDES IN SITU COMME ESPACES CONTRIBUANT À LA FORMATION DES MAITRES

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Article abstract

In this study, a university professor and school district literacy coordinator co-designed and co-taught a literacy methods course where teacher candidates participated in dynamic learning in classrooms, exploring how theory can meet practice when students' funds of knowledge are valued through responsive teaching. Case study methodology was taken up to understand and enhance this in situ teacher education approach. Four themes were derived through qualitative analysis: 1) theory / practice connections in situ; 2) diverse learners and the need for responsivity in teaching; 3) in situ learning through collaboration; and 4) benefits and tensions at the school and program level. Findings suggest that school / university in situ teacher education partnerships can provide rich contextual and situational learning that disrupt normative conceptions of teaching, learning and literacy.

IN SITU HYBRID SPACES AS GENERATIVE SITES FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

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ABSTRACT. In this study, a university professor and school district literacy coordinator co-designed and co-taught a literacy methods course where teacher candidates participated in dynamic learning in classrooms, exploring how theory can meet practice when students' funds of knowledge are valued through responsive teaching. Case study methodology was taken up to understand and enhance this in situ teacher education approach. Four themes were derived through qualitative analysis: 1) theory / practice connections in situ; 2) diverse learners and the need for responsivity in teaching; 3) in situ learning through collaboration; and 4) benefits and tensions at the school and program level. Findings suggest that school / university in situ teacher education partnerships can provide rich contextual and situational learning that disrupt normative conceptions of teaching, learning and literacy.

DES LIEUX HYBRIDES IN SITU COMME ESPACES CONTRIBUANT À LA FORMATION DES MAITRES

RÉSUMÉ. Dans le cadre de ce projet de recherche, un professeur d'université et un coordonnateur en littératie au conseil scolaire ont élaboré et enseigné en collaboration un cours en méthodologie d'enseignement de la lecture. Au sein de ce cours, les futurs enseignants ont exploré par un processus d'apprentissage dynamique en classe de quelle manière la théorie s'allie à la pratique lorsque le bagage de connaissances des élèves est sollicité par un enseignement adapté. La méthodologie de l'étude de cas a été utilisée pour comprendre et mettre en valeur cette approche in situ de formation des enseignants. Quatre thèmes ont émergé de l'analyse qualitative : 1) les liens entre la théorie et la pratique *in situ* 2) la diversité des apprenants et le besoin d'adaptabilité en enseignement, 3) l'apprentissage *in situ* par la collaboration et 4) les bénéfices et les tensions au niveau de l'école et du programme. Les conclusions de la recherche démontrent que les partenariats *in situ* école / université pour former de futurs enseignants peuvent permettre de riches apprentissages en contextes et situations authentiques qui chamboulent les conceptions traditionnelles de l'enseignement, de l'apprentissage et de la littératie.

In this research report, we, a university professor and an early learning and literacy school district coordinator, share a case study documenting how we collaborated to create in situ learning that transformed the relationship between our institutions through situated reciprocal learning. By "in situ," we mean instructors and teacher candidates are not only physically located in a local elementary school for coursework, but also engage with teachers and learners in classrooms to co-construct understandings of practice and curriculum drawing from practitioner and academic knowledge, theory, and experience. This case study also illustrates how collaboration between researchers and practitioners can lead to renewal of university-school district relationships, recast how teacher candidates are prepared, and support curriculum and school renewal.

SENSITIZING LENSES

This study, and our literacy methods course, is situated within social theories that recognize children and their funds of knowledge as cultural and educational resources to teachers, peers, and schools (Ball, 2009; Nieto & McDonough, 2011). Funds of knowledge as a theoretical construct focuses attention on the resources that diverse families possess and pass on to their children, and counters what the institution of school often privileges (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Through a sociocultural lens, school and classroom cultures are brought to life through complex processes that involve social relationships between the learner and members of a particular socio-cultural context (Ball, 2009; Gee, 1996). Moll (2014) extended this work to include professional learning partnerships or groups. We similarly view teachers as in a process of becoming — mutually constituted through lived experiences with one another, their students, and communities in the context of their schools. Sociocultural activities help us to internalize the social world we experience as well as shape particular dispositions, interests, and motivations (Vygotsky, 1978). From this lens, learning is a cultural and relational process; we learn through the mediation of others whether it be through direct social interactions, cultural artifacts, or the appropriation of language in both formal or informal settings (Schnellert, Kozak, & Moore, 2015; Wells, 2007).

IN SITU TEACHER EDUCATION

A growing body of research suggests that teacher candidates' knowledge-of-practice can be constructed collectively within local and broader communities to better understand theory, apply concepts, and construct teaching (Risko et al., 2008; Zeichner, 2010). Through lived collaborative experiences, teacher candidates' thinking is mediated (Ball, 2009) as "teacher knowledge is not separate from the knower, but is constructed within intellectual, social, and cultural contexts of teaching both in schools and in the university" (Hopper, Sanford, & Fu, 2016, p. 1020).

In situ methods courses hold potential for teacher candidates to combine theory and practice by learning in collaboration with practicing teachers and faculty (Hathaway & Risko, 2013; Korthagen, Loughran, & Russell, 2006). Dillon and O'Connor (2010) called for teacher education methods courses where observation and application of theories and methods are experientially lived with children and their teachers. These in situ learning opportunities act to both blur and extend the traditional boundary of practica being separate from coursework to create what Zeichner (2010) refered to as hybrid spaces in teacher education, where academic and practitioner knowledge co-exist within K-12 classrooms and "come together in new less hierarchical ways in the service of teacher learning [and] represents a paradigm shift in the epistemology of teacher education programs" (p. 89). The concept of hybrid space comes from hybridity theory recognizing that individuals draw on multiple discourses to make sense of the world (Bhabba, 1990). In situ methods courses can potentially disrupt binaries such as practitioner and academic knowledge and theory and practice, and instead, integrate what are often seen as competing discourses in innovative ways — "an either/or perspective is transformed into a both/also point of view" (Zeichner, 2010, p. 92). Therefore, sites of hybridity bring practitioner and academic knowledge together in less hierarchical ways to create new learning opportunities for teacher candidates.

One of the intentions of teacher education programs is to create the dissonance needed to allow teacher candidates to grow and develop beyond their initial understandings of teaching, often based on their previous experiences as students (Dillon & O'Connor, 2010; Hathaway & Risko, 2013; Lortie, 1975). The in-school experiences reported and discussed in this research became sites of hybridity designed to help teacher candidates build background knowledge, disrupt preconceived notions of teaching and learning, and enable them to reconstruct knowledge of and for practice (Calabrese Barton & Tan, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Dillon and O'Connor (2010) suggest that additional practical experiences provide teacher candidates with targeted experiences that serve to refine specific areas of practice. For example, at McGill University, Dillon's drama methods course included classroom-based assignments that provided them with experiences of planning, implementing, and critically reflecting upon their lived teaching experiences with children in schools. Cherian (2007) argued that teacher candidates benefit most from multiple relational experiences in schools within their education program. In situ methods courses can further promote coherence and congruency between theory and practices when groups of preservice teachers work collaboratively to make sense of their communal experiences before being released into situations where they are on their own. Lemisko and Ward (2010) described how their teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan created opportunities for learning to occur "insitually" by locating their introductory education course in schools. Hopper

et al. (2016) described aspects of in situ learning opportunities in the TRUVIC (Transformative University of Victoria) Bachelor of Education program. Teacher candidates experienced weekly full day school visits "to create interconnected horizontal and vertical weaving of the theoretical with the practical" (p. 1026). Guided observations led to increased participation with individuals and groups of students, as well as interactions with multiple school-based professionals with an eventual task of creating an interdisciplinary unit plan. Dillon and O'Connor (2010) wrote that in situ methods courses should be

> (1) early, extensive, interspersed, varied, and eventually student-driven, (2) always linked with structures that foster students' sense-making from those field experiences, utilizing an inquiry approach, such as self-reflective and socio-constructivist pedagogies, and (3) developed in a close, equal, and more multidimensional partnership with participating local schools. (p. 117)

The teacher education course in this study sought to offer theoretically rich learning that marshalled social theory related to literacy learning, positioning teacher candidates as teacher-inquirers in schools with cultural, cognitive, and socio-economic diversity.

SCHOOL CHANGE

Education change literature is ubiquitous in the 21st century (e.g., Shirley, 2016). With school districts looking to all manner of resources for support to innovate, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) called for teacher education programs that engage in partnerships with schools and districts, working to transform schooling and teaching in tandem. Reform efforts can be controversial, especially when they focus on accountability and standardization (Ambrosio, 2013; Apple, 2000), thus universities can play a role in creating in situ hybrid generative spaces that invite theory-informed and diversity-positive praxis-oriented discourse (Noddings, 2013; Schnellert & Kozak, 2019). When authentic partnerships between schools and universities are collaboratively co-created, they can build a common mission, sense of purpose, and shared locus of activity (Schnellert, Fisher, & Sanford, 2018; Walsh & Backe, 2013). Upon reviewing teacher education reforms, Russell, McPherson, and Martin (2001) identified university-school district collaboration, along with coherence, as keys to teacher education renewal in Canada.

CONTEXT / DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

The lead author of the paper was new to the Faculty of Education and approached the paper's second author, the school district's early learning and literacy coordinator, about community-based collaboration opportunities. He was made aware of a longstanding tension between the local school district and university related to teacher candidates' literacy instructional knowledge. After meeting with school district and university leaders, a portable classroom

at a culturally diverse school became the Central Okanagan School District and University of British Columbia Field Studies Learning Center, offering a hybrid space for collaborative inquiry between pre- and in-service educators. The authors met with interested school staff over lunch in June (amid "work to rule" job action). While only a single teacher invited them into their classroom for the Fall, no one challenged the idea and instead reserved judgement. Over the summer, two new teachers arrived at the school, both of whom immediately invited the instructors into their classrooms.

The instructors and teacher candidates spent three hours together at the Field Studies Learning Centre each week during the first 12-week semester of the Bachelor of Education program. Teacher candidates were divided into two cohorts — morning and afternoon. A typical class structure involved:

- Reviewing and discussing the intentions of the day and related reading (45 minutes);
- Teacher candidates observing one of the two instructors and/or teachers in classrooms modelling literacy pedagogy, actively joining in lessons, activities and/or co-teaching micro-lessons to small groups of students (45 minutes);
- Debriefing and comparing their observations and experiences, making connections with the reading / theory, and setting the context for the next week (60 minutes); and,
- In between classes teacher candidates prepared lessons and materials for the next class and read foundational texts to inform upcoming topics.

An email was sent out to the entire staff each week announcing the focus of the next class and potential in situ activities. By the end of the first year, all teachers had invited the instructors into their classrooms, leading to a first-come, first-served approach to weekly in situ activities. The teachers began asking for copies of instructional materials and related resources and the instructors responded by placing readings in their mailboxes. Once classroom teachers had observed one of the instructors lead an interactive literacy experience in their classrooms, they then often volunteered to host teacher candidates based on their comfort with upcoming topics and literacy practices. The research questions, within the emergent design of the study, focused on: *What happened when we redesigned and taught our language and literacy course in a local elementary school? What did teacher candidates identify as key learning, benefits and tensions? What was the impact on the school and its teachers?*

METHODOLOGY

Case study methodology (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013) was taken up to help us better understand as well as enhance an in situ teacher education approach. Case study methodology is a good fit for studies that are bounded by geography, explore particular approaches, and have participants whose experiences are contextual and situational. Case study was used to examine our course redesign and the understandings and practices teacher candidates developed when we centrally focused on literacy as socially situated and co-constructed (Schnellert & Kozak, 2019).

Once approval was acquired through university and school board ethics processes, teacher candidates were asked, by e-mail, for consent to use their class materials and were also invited to participate in interviews. Teacher candidates were contacted and interviewed after they had completed the program. Recognizing the power relationship between university instructors and teacher candidates, emphasis was placed on seeking feedback to continue to evolve our course design. The interviews were structured based on a series of open-ended questions, and were digitally recorded and transcribed, including a question about tensions teacher candidates experienced in our in situ literacy method courses (i.e., What tensions did you experience within the [in situ literacy] course? Why? Were you able to resolve these? How?). Ethics approval was also obtained to gain access to teacher feedback. Teachers at the school completed an anonymous survey at the end of the first year to garner feedback about their experiences with the in situ school district / university collaboration.

Semi-structured interviews lasting between 20-40 minutes were conducted with participating teacher candidates by the authors and transcribed by a research assistant. This enabled us to learn how aspects of the literacy course had informed their practice and thinking during the course and beyond. All 52 teacher candidates were invited to participate in the study after the conclusion of their two-year program. Of those invited, more than 20 consented to be interviewed. Fourteen sat for interviews, due largely to the fact that teacher candidates had completed their program and moved away. Interviews were conducted approximately three months after the conclusion of the program. Participants were two men and 12 women all between the ages of 22 and 28.

To begin our data analysis, we analyzed four interviews (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). We selected these initial four for their ability to provide a cross-section of perspectives based on gender, geographic diversity (in terms of their practicum), and experiences within the program. We each coded the data for possible themes and brought these to a research meeting. Analysis was a collaborative and iterative process as we negotiated emerging themes and interpretations (Miles et al., 2014). We used the themes and subthemes we agreed upon as our *a priori* framework to guide the coding of 10 more interviews for a total of 14. We also drew on artifacts from the same teacher

candidates to confirm themes, collapsing and creating new codes. To complement these analyses, we also looked at our research journals (observations, interpretations of activities in our classes and in relationship to the partnership between the school, school district, and university) and anonymous surveys completed by teachers. Eight of 12 classroom teachers responded to the survey as well as the school principal who wished to be identified by her role in this research. The superintendent of the school district and Dean of the Faculty of Education were invited to contribute their perspectives by email. Across all data sources, we sought to understand if and how our theoretical lenses and modes of inquiry supported teacher candidates in their movement towards reflexive consciousness.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, we describe what we uncovered about in situ learning when language and literacy courses are taught in schools. We discuss four themes arrived at through iterative analysis of the interviews. Pseudonyms are used throughout this paper.

Theory / practice connections in situ

Across the 14 teacher candidate interviews, a robust theme that emerged through data analysis was how the in situ literacy methods course facilitated teacher candidates' theory / practice connections and applications. Teacher candidates found that their learning was embedded in context as they made meaning through first-hand experiences.

When asked in her interview what aspects of the courses helped Terra to develop new understandings about teaching, learning and education, she replied,

> I think the most impactful part of it was actually being here at [school]. It wasn't disconnected from the classroom. I still remember the face of the little girl who just whipped through her reading assessment. So just the fact that it wasn't disconnected, we learned about it and then 20 minutes later we're doing it. It was incredible. I don't think I would have remembered how to do a reading assessment had I just talked about it in class.

Becca explained,

> The practice piece. The application of it. You're reading something and then you get to try it, you get to practice it. And that's what really makes it real. I can read something but it doesn't become innate until I've tried it and experienced it on my own. Being able to go out into the classroom made our readings and all of those things real.

The teacher candidates were able to draw on these experience to maintain a space for diversity-positive and responsive methods despite contradictory and/or dismissive feedback from others. For example, Jackie explained,

> You read it in a book, and you show some teachers who might not necessarily be at this school and try to talk to them about that, and they [reply], "that won't work." But seeing it here, you're like, "No, there is a way that can have a place in the classroom."

All 14 teacher candidates offered examples that illustrated their meaning-making in context through first-hand experience. Kendra elaborated,

> Being able to go into classrooms and watch you or [author] or one of the teachers at [school] actually demonstrate a literacy lesson was so beneficial. I don't think I realized the impact of it when I was watching it. It wasn't until the next day or weeks later when I was like, "oh, I've already seen that, I know what it's supposed to look like," or "I know how it can look." It added to my background knowledge.

This quote illustrates how teacher candidates were making retrospective connections with their in situ literacy experiences. Risko et al. (2008) supported the need for this kind of learning in teacher education programs:

> Learning to teach is much more complex than providing propositional knowledge. Learning to teach is a process that includes forward and backward movements, disequilibrium and vis-versa, a process that requires careful support to help prospective teachers apply what they have learned within new contexts. (p. 342)

A key element of the course design was the deconstruction of new concepts and theory, which created the conditions for teacher candidates to extend and transform their experiences in our field school. Teachers in the school would often debrief with the teacher candidates over recess and/or lunch, sending teacher candidates back to the field studies portable classroom with questions, insights and illustrative examples.

The opportunity for us as teacher educators to show vulnerability as we reflected in and on practice, made visible the ongoing project of negotiating contextual tensions in relation to theory. Twelve of 14 teacher candidates talked about how watching us in classrooms with children helped bring "theory to life" (Amber). Mina noted,

> I'm closer with you and [author] than I am with any other instructor that I've had because I got to see you and [author] in action in the classroom. We saw your energy with the kids and those experiences will stay with me as well. There's not often a time where you get to see your professor interact with the kids that you're talking about.

Every teacher candidate interviewed expressed how exploring theory / practice connections in situ helped them to see and experience how teachers are constantly working towards praxis. Darling-Hammond (2006) posited that "university work has often been "too theoretical" — meaning abstract and general — in ways that leave teachers bereft of specific tools to use in the classroom…teachers need opportunities to practice with these tools systematically" (p. 308). Our in situ design provided the teacher candidates with lived

opportunities to both question and transform their preconceived notions of what teaching and learning have the potential to be.

While all teacher candidates reported this positive aspect of the in situ language and literacy methods course, there were also tensions. Eight of these same teacher candidates reported feeling overwhelmed by the material (i.e., "I was very overwhelmed and sometimes I just wanted to cry because you're so new." Andrea said, "There was so much to cover and every lesson I felt like, 'oh, my, all the things we still need to learn.'" Five teacher candidates expressed that they felt anxious and/or intimidated, like Larissa: "I think a lot of it kind of went over my head.... At first I was very nervous and I felt there was a lot of information coming in at once." Examining our research journals, we saw many instances of our own struggle to address the same goals of a course that migrated from being campus- and lecture-based to being an in situ methods course. Because teacher candidates spent much of their time co-planning, co-teaching, and co-debriefing, teacher candidates had to negotiate significant amounts of foundational material as preparation for each class. With two passionate instructors (one from the university and one from the school district) creating this experience together for the first time, teacher candidates were bound to experience (over)enthusiastic reading and preparation demands.

Diverse learners and the need for responsivity in teaching

Our most commonly referenced theme showed connections between teacher candidates' beliefs, knowledge, and practice related to student diversity. A significant tension for teacher candidates was encountering diverse children in the field study school and how this diversity challenged their conceptions of teaching. Kasha explained, "I didn't really have an idea of differentiation or anything, because the school I went to [focused on] spelling tests and everybody had the same worksheets, and if we did novel studies everybody read the same book."

Teaching this course in schools, embedded in inclusive classrooms with diverse learners, invited teacher candidates to take up pedagogical stances that were student-centred, differentiated, and socio-cultural. Kendra noted that

> the class was more challenging than expected. But what I did solidify was that you take kids from where they are and work with them from there. You can't expect them all to be at the exact same level. So, in a way, the tension that I was experiencing was the best part because I really learned how to differentiate.

Similarly, Larissa stated, "I didn't really understand that there are so many different learners and aspects of education. There isn't just one set way to teach literacy." Holding this course in schools helped us to both challenge teacher candidates' prior assumptions while also supporting them to "form new ideas and new habits of thought and action" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1016). Amber reflected that

> I kind of grew up viewing the teacher as lecturing and then doing some kind of activity. Then this class really showed me all of the different [approaches] — it's not so teacher-centered. Rather, it's student-centered. It changed my thinking about education…it didn't have to be me barking up in front of the classroom. I have this confidence that I can differentiate in the classroom.

Teacher candidates illustrated how the combination of in situ literacy coursework, engaging with diverse learners, and working with inclusive pedagogical approaches resulted in lasting learning. In her interview, Mina stated that:

> This course in schools has really created that community factor of the education world for me. I think that had this course been at the university, I wouldn't have held it to such a high place in my heart, I think back to theories that we talked about in multiple other courses, and I couldn't even name a thing. When I think of responsive teaching and differentiation, I have so many vivid images and experiences to match.

This appreciation of and responsivity to diversity was a recurring theme in teacher candidates' learning. Attending to students as socio-cultural beings with diverse funds of knowledge, learning interests, and needs was a recurring theme in teacher candidates' learning. While teacher candidates completed a campus-based course about student learning differences, they reported that it was actually their in situ language and literacy course that fostered an enhanced understanding of the need for and potential in positioning their students as curriculum and instruction informants. Several described an inquiry stance towards adapting their practice to embrace and support diverse learners. For instance, Drea said,

> Because students are all so different and they all bring something different to the table — every class you get is not going to be the same. I think that shows just how adaptable you have to be as a teacher.

Casper summarized:

> My biggest takeaway from this course, aside from literacy and language and learning, was that each student is on their own journey. And your teaching needs to be tailored specifically to their developmental level, and their place along the continuum. So it's imperative that teachers don't use "one size fits all" for their students and recognize that each student needs different things to experience success.

However, we also observed teacher candidates struggles to understand the complexity of realizing inclusive practice. The vast majority of the teacher candidates in the program came from middle class families and attended schools with little acknowledgement of diversities. Our field school had the most diverse student population in the school district; as a result of offering this course *in situ*, we were confronted with teacher candidates' biases regarding diversity in relation to their role as professionals. For example, two teacher candidates were overheard by a teacher in the field study school staffroom speaking

disparagingly about what they had observed in one of the classrooms. They used the readings to critique this teacher's classroom design and practice. This experience required us to meet with three teachers in the school to repair our relationship and explicitly engage with the teacher candidates around notions of inclusion, plurality, and professionalism.

In situ learning through collaboration

A third theme that emerged from 13 of 14 interviews was that community and collaboration amongst themselves, within our classes and within the school community where we were based, spurred teacher candidates' learning. Assignments and tasks in the course were built around collaboration and group work. This provided opportunities to co-construct learning and practices but was also a source of tension for many teacher candidates.

Teacher candidates came into the program from individualistic post-secondary courses and degrees where competition and ranking were prevalent. Becca said:

> I was hesitant about the amount of group work and hands on [learning]. It was very different from how my education had been before and I was nervous about that. I'm a very opinionated person and I have my opinions set out, but it is amazing how much you can grow by really being challenged by working with others.

Teacher candidates came to realize what collaboration offered to their learning. Andrea surmised:

> Just the idea that there was a lot of collaboration and group work completely changed my practice. As teachers we're supposed to learn through more lenses. And how can you do that if you're just by yourself? I mean your colleagues add another dimension.

Lave and Wenger (1991), whose activity theory is widely drawn on to describe the experiences of teacher candidates, suggest that workplace learning should be conceived of as a process of social participation within communities of practice. Korthagen et al. (2006) suggest that learning to construct and analyze practice experiences with peers in a teacher education program lays a foundation for peer learning as an ongoing part of professional and career development.

Through this in situ experience, teacher candidates realized that teaching goes beyond the classroom — to collaboration and community at the school level. Terra stated that

> It was such a nice community sort of feeling being able to work with different teachers in the school. It really did drive home that community is so much more than teaching in the classroom.

Teacher candidates learned about the interdependent and relational aspects of a teacher's role. Mina extended Terra's point:

> I thoroughly enjoyed being part of the school because we didn't get much of that child interaction in any other part of the program. We felt like we had a home base here, that these kids were our kids. Seeing how the staff work as a team here makes me think that the role of a teacher goes beyond the walls of the classroom.

As the literacy course progressed, teacher candidates transitioned from participants in classroom activities to planning and co-teaching lessons with small groups of children. These experiences had them collaboratively engage in cycles of planning, teaching, and reflecting. In their research, Miller-Rigelman and Ruben (2012) found that teacher preparation programs built around collaboration in schools positioned teacher candidates as collaborative colleagues. When interviewed, 13 of 14 teacher candidates referenced these experiences as significantly contributing to their learning. As Amber indicated:

> There aren't many classes where you get to learn about something, apply it to the classroom, or see it happen in the classroom, and then come back and debrief about it. In other classes we talk about what it might look like and how it might work. Being a part of it and then debriefing about it took it to an even higher level.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that field-based learning, observation, apprenticeship, guided practice, knowledge application, and inquiry offer teacher candidates opportunities to test theories, use knowledge, see and try out practices advocated by the research and theory. Opportunities to investigate problems and reflectively analyze situations that arise in field experiences are critical in advancing teacher candidates' developing knowledge and skills. As Mina stated, "we talked about something, figured it out for ourselves, and then went and did it in the classrooms, came back and talked about it again. It really solidified these theories." Jackie elaborated further:

> The chances that we have to do mini-lessons in the classrooms are so helpful. It's great to hear all these things, but to take them out and do activities…and seeing the work that goes into that, and then taking it into the classroom allows for exploring professional practice and identity.

Kendra concurred and added, "to be able to teach your own lesson, that was such a cool experience…you transformed your own thinking by the end."

Korthagen et al. (2006) suggest that learning to construct and analyze practice experiences with peers in a teacher education program lays foundational understandings about the importance of peer learning as an ongoing part of professional and career development. The analysis of data related to this theme demonstrated how teacher candidates' engagement in collaborative cycles of planning, teaching, and reflecting supported them to construct conceptions of teaching and learning, co-regulate the development of their practice, and built comfort in responsive teaching. Participants described how in situ collaborative cycles helped them move beyond learning about or observing practice to developing an ability to enact, adapt, and critique core elements of instruction empowering them to self- and co-regulate their practice and learning.

However, collaboration between teacher candidates was challenging, intensified by deadlines to produce learning experiences for children in classrooms:

> when we co-teach, if one person isn't kind of buying into the path the other two have, it kind of creates a disjointed lesson...so even through there were times of tension where we weren't sure what we were doing, we were going to do it anyway. We always got the chance to come back and talk about it, debrief and reflect. (Mina)

Trevor explained:

> Some people were very nervous about trying their new ideas out in front of a class and some others would be very excited about trying. Putting these people in the same group and trying to say, "okay we can do this guys" there's always the tensions within group work and different personalities.

The teacher candidates developed greater competence related to collaboration due to these challenges. While uncomfortable for some, all expressed a positive disposition toward seeing teaching as a collaborative endeavor.

Benefits and tensions at the school and program level

At the end of the course, we invited the teachers and school administrator to provide feedback to help us evolve the design of the course moving forward. Eight of 12 teachers responded as well as the school's principal.

When teachers described the impact of the partnership experience for their students, they focused on two key components. In their anonymous surveys, one teacher noted that "students were excited to have guests / different faces work with the students as big buddies." One teacher noted that a benefit of the course held in the school was "personal attention for students in small group activities [and] one-on-one." Over the course of the semester, the inservice teachers began to view the teacher candidates as capable of responding to, planning for, and teaching beyond what was already experienced by students in their classrooms. While this emerged slowly the first year, by the second iteration, teachers were engaging with them differently, more as colleagues. This included giving teacher candidates small groups of students to work with from their second visit and inviting them to engage with students as curricular informants, with each visit inspiring plans for future interactions and mini-lessons.

In our survey, we asked inservice teachers "what was your most significant take-away from the [university literacy] experience at [field study school]?" All eight teachers were positive in their replies. For instance, one responded: "reinforcement / reassurance of my beliefs and practice." Many referred to how they saw a connection between what they believed and what teacher candidates were learning. Some saw this as the influence of the literacy coordinator in the co-teaching relationship. In particular, they recognized the literacy approaches introduced in the course as those featured in professional development in

the school district. One respondent suggested that she was "taking away new teaching strategies." Another noted, "It has motivated me as a teacher to continue developing my language arts program. Lit[erature] circles, here I come."

In the first year, inservice teachers were reluctant to offer much critique. We were also new in the school, one of us a researcher from the university and the other a district coordinator who had moved into the portable classroom, not just for this course, but as her office space. Teachers' feedback and comments were descriptive, helpful, honest, and almost uniformly positive. As we mentioned earlier in this paper, we began with one volunteer teacher in June. This grew to three teachers as we began implementation that first September, and then to all teachers in the school over the course of our first year. Consulting our research journals, we noted "teachers' overcoming apprehension of being observed by others." We did worry that the teacher candidates' critique in the staffroom may have jeopardized our shared initiative. One teacher came to us to share her concern, wanting to make sure that the issue was kept confidential as she valued the benefits experienced by students and staff. This instance illustrates the time and commitment required to establish trust and create a relational space where ongoing feedback was sought and valued.

A survey highlight was teachers' responses to the question, "If given the opportunity to be involved in a similar UBC – Central Okanagan School District partnership, would you participate again?" All eight inservice teachers said that they would participate again. Three offered additional comments. One added, "it was giving back and receiving." Another replied, "I would jump at the chance! As a teacher it is easy to become stale and in partnership with [university] it is very motivating to continue my own learning as a teacher." The third wrote, "I would take full advantage of it. The students gain so much as do the teachers (that would be me) in the partnership with UBC." These teachers highlighted the reciprocal benefits of the initiative.

Over the course of the year, our roles as instructors evolved from modelling literacy practices to co-teaching with inservice teachers to pedagogical narration. Some teachers still wanted us to model practices and made specific requests to demonstrate certain approaches in reference to the course schedule. In particular, they sought demonstrations of pedagogical approaches that decenter normative practices such as reading and writing workshop, introducing centres / stations, and creating Reggio Emilia-inspired environments.

In hindsight, we realize that our presence in the school was uncomfortable for some, provoking various responses. Although all teachers in their survey responses were positive, in passing, one of the teachers asked us, "What is so special about what you are doing?" Yet, the next year she shared that she was eager to learn about approaches that she had previously shied away from, such as literature circles, wordwork, and inquiry. Another teacher later shared that in the first year, she would spend hours preparing her classroom

to host a lesson, reading professional literature, and carefully observing every demonstration lesson she hosted. As she became confident taking risks, she became a key informant in our course as a guest presenter illustrating how she designed multimodal inquiry-based units.

Finally, we also noted structural challenges including interruption in classroom routines (one teacher turned us away when we were 5 minutes late). The principal noted "it took several weeks for students to get used to several adults in their classroom at once." She also observed, "it has been at least three years since we had teachers focused on their teaching skills. Even when they were doing that in the past, it was nothing like it has been this year." While the principal was delighted with this shift, her quote also illustrates why teachers may have been reluctant to first participate and offer critical feedback. Tensions in schools can be generated by such initiatives, revealing power dynamics. As we moved from outsider to insider (Greene, 2014) researchers, over time we became accepted members of what was now becoming more of a hybrid space disrupting historical hierarchical relationships such as the university / school district dichotomy (Zeichner, 2010).

A final aspect of this theme relates to successes and tension-filled field experiences beyond the field school. Four of the 14 teachers highlighted experiences where their practicum teachers welcomed them as innovators. Tabitha said, "my sponsor teacher was very open to what I wanted to do." She described how she introduced literacy work stations in kindergarten, building on her teacher's play centers. Within her creation and implementation of the literacy stations, she was able to differentiate materials to support students' language and literacy development. Similarly, Andrea illustrated how she was given the opportunity and encouragement to innovate and introduce literature circles into her practicum classroom:

> I knew that normally we do novel studies in my practicum classroom and so lit circles was one thing that my mentor teacher said, "You know what? Go ahead!" I said, "you know what we are talking about it in class right now." I came back I was like, "maybe I shouldn't, maybe it's too much. Do you think it's too much?", and she said, "No, you are going to do them. I think that they'll be really good for the students."

However, eight of the 14 teacher candidates experienced a lack of congruence between their practicum experience and some aspects of the theory and research taken up in the in situ teacher education literacy and language arts course. Terra elaborated:

> In practicum I encountered the most tension.... You're torn between wanting to actually reach the kids in a way that I have just learned is very effective and not rocking the boat too much, which I thought was tough. We were taught such innovative and exciting and really effective ways of teaching and learning that are backed up by studies and research and that was definitely a tension.

Despite these experiences, seven of the eight demonstrated resilience. In her interview, Mina shared,

> It felt kind of futile to be practicing all these new strategies just to have them squashed by old thinking. There's only so much you can do [when your mentor] says, "Well no, we've always done it this way and it works, and that's that." That was a major tension, I found. The more that we take what we've learned and implement it in the classroom, the more others will see the benefits.

Like several of her colleagues, Jackie negotiated her context and differing perspectives to integrate diversity-positive, differentiated approaches in her practicum:

> I'm learning this and want to use it, but at the same time it's hard to learn when you're with a teacher who doesn't understand where I am coming from, with what I was trying to do. So I ended up just kind of throwing that away and doing something a bit different where I tried to incorporate the ideas that I learned, while also using her ideas.

Not all teacher candidates were successful in implementing the practices they had embraced within our in situ literacy course and planned to enact. Becca recounted:

> In my lack of experience and trying to combine our two ways of doing things…she suggested that we just assign the books…and I said, "Well, I'm learning in school that we should give them choice" and we both decided that it would probably be best to assign [them] in this case because it was my first time doing it and the first time the kids are doing it and we wanted them to be successful.

Risko et al. (2008) call for teacher education programs to engage with teachers in schools to support them in their own renewal of their literacy instructional practices. While this did occur in the school and classrooms where we held our in situ methods course, teacher candidates faced significant challenges in their practicum placements. We can now see how, over time in the field study school, we built a hybrid space that welcomed multiple forms of expertise (including classroom teachers) to support explorations of theory / practice connections. However, we had little to no opportunity to work with the practicum mentor teachers throughout the university's five school district catchment areas. While most teacher candidates negotiated how to build what they were learning in our course into their practicums, they sometimes perceived their practicum mentor teachers as problematic rather than co-inquirers with relevant experiential funds of knowledge.

DISCUSSION

We return to our research questions: *What happened when we redesigned and taught our language and literacy course in a local elementary school? What did teacher candidates identify as key learning, benefits and tensions? What was the impact on the school and its teachers?* With these questions in mind, we describe how this course redesign supported teacher candidates in their learning and how this school-university partnership acted as a hybrid space for educational renewal.

Embedding methods courses in schools

Moving this course into the field catalyzed learning that had heretofore been unrealized in our methods courses on campus. Not only did we offer teacher candidates contextualized learning, but they developed agency that they drew upon later in their practica. Significantly, teacher candidates held onto theory / practice understandings and beliefs despite later experiences to the contrary. Darling-Hammond (2006) agrees that "[s]tudent teachers see and understand both theory and practice differently if they are taking course work concurrently with fieldwork" (p. 307).

In-school methods courses can provide rich, inquiry-oriented opportunities for pre-service educators to (re)consider beliefs, develop a schema for teaching and learning, and develop practice. Teacher candidates spoke about the demands of working with and attending to the needs of students and how this set high expectations for them, yet allowed them to find their "sea legs" without the high stakes of practicum evaluation. Embedded experiential learning in schools with students and teachers helped teacher candidates to make their own theory / practice connections derived first through cycles of observation and reflection, then through co-planning, co-teaching, and co-reflecting cycles (Schussler, 2006; Taylor & Sobel, 2003).

Exploring ideas in context challenged teacher candidates' prior knowledge of / experience with teaching, learning and school. Our weekly classes at the Field Studies Learning Centre supported teacher candidates to draw from their experiences to develop understandings and beliefs about children, learning, literacy development, and the role of the teacher.

Attention to diversity and inclusion

Our findings respond to Darling-Hammond's (2006) call for diversity-oriented teacher education. As the interview data illustrates, teacher candidates referred to: differentiation as a central aspect of their learning about teaching; responsive pedagogy as observation, then enactment; and how they attempted to implement these diversity-positive practices in their practica. One of the most significant benefits we discovered was that in situ learning supported teacher candidates to develop adaptive expertise (Timperley, 2012). Kendra reported:

> I think that my biggest take away is...what makes an effective teacher is constantly changing. So not only do you have to be responsive to your students, you have to be responsive to the new learning that's becoming available.

Opportunities to weave together theory and practice in schools within methods courses appears to offer significant dividends in terms of building teacher candidates' pedagogical funds of knowledge. In particular, the children in classrooms informed teacher candidates' learning, inviting them to consider and embrace student diversity (Botelho, Cohen, Leoni, Chow & Sastri, 2010).

We found that the methods and contexts we used in our in situ hybridized course valued complexity and diversity and situated teacher candidates, from the very beginning of their program, as professionals who are invited to embrace diversity (also see Taylor & Sobel, 2003). Snow, Griffin and Burns (2005) suggest that if new educators are to develop effective literacy practice, they need to learn in contexts where they can apply what they are learning. Such contexts allow them to come to know children and families and engage with other educators to co-construct a rich, responsive living curriculum within real-life situations where the complexities of working with students, colleagues and parents are not just discussed, but experienced first-hand.

Inservice teacher learning and educational change

Our final finding in this research report attended to the benefits of and challenges for educators in the school where we located our course. Over time, as trust was built, teachers opened up their classrooms and practice as generative sites of learning for teacher candidates. It took several weeks in our first year together to build from spaces where instructors solely demonstrated literacy practices in classrooms to hybridized learning that included in-service teachers, their students, and teacher candidates co-constructing curriculum and literacy practices. Once teachers expressed interest in collaboration, a challenge was finding time for instructors and teachers to co-plan and debrief.

The language that we developed together served as a mediator to revisit practice. The dialogical nature of the socio-cultural literacy pedagogies explored in classrooms helped us to decentre our positions as experts in the school. Teachers from the host school began to share problems of practice and invite teacher candidates to develop responses using course readings and observations from other classrooms. This discursive practice helped build a shared pedagogical vocabulary that spurred inquiry and pedagogical renewal for in-service teachers as well. Gorodetsky and Barak (2008) suggest hybrid in situ spaces in school-university teacher education partnerships encourage a more egalitarian status for their participants. For example, the school's intermediate teachers and learning support teacher formed a collaborative inquiry community and invited us to participate during our second and third year in the school.

After years of tension between the university and school district related to literacy preparation, this collaboration redefined our relationship. The superintendent reported:

> Student teachers are receiving job-embedded learning, resident teachers are learning new instructional strategies, and students are the recipients of enhanced learning opportunities. This model is making a real difference for our entire community of learners.

When asked to comment on the first two years of the in situ literacy methods course implementation, the Dean of Education responded:

> [Teacher candidates] working alongside mentor teachers, academics and students...benefits all involved because they become equal partners engaged in critical inquiry, exploring innovative practices, and making judgments regarding what is appropriate for learners in a particular context.

We would be remiss not to address the initial and ongoing tensions and challenges inherent in creating a hybrid space flexible and responsive to the needs of all involved. It takes time to build relationships with educators in schools; some teachers initially felt inadequate and/or judged by the teacher candidates and university instructors. Teachers (and teacher candidates) noted that idealized conceptions of practice were easily privileged over realities and complexities. Similarly, in situ learning requires instructors to give up a great deal of content covered in a lecture format in favour of experiential learning. Another recurring hurdle that teachers and teacher candidates identified was the logistical challenge involved in bringing partners together to plan and debrief. In instances where this did occur, teachers in the host school appreciated the opportunity to access course readings as a resource to their planning with teacher candidates.

Socio-cultural approaches to education are accompanied by complexities inherent in social relationships of all kinds. The pre-existing hierarchies and social structures within and between institutions are challenging to disrupt, but this is necessary if we are to create hybrid spaces where university faculty, teacher candidates, and teachers work together, recasting all participants as inquirers with funds of knowledge valuable in developing social practices and inclusive pedagogies.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this research study provide an in-depth accounting of the benefits and challenges that emerge when teacher education courses are designed to create integrative, inclusive, and collaborative professional learning in situ. These challenges and benefits suggest that creating a hybrid space for teacher candidates and inservice teachers provides fertile ground for ongoing exploration of the complexity of teaching, new conceptions of curriculum, and opportunities to develop practice through professional collaboration. A

particular contribution of this research is how the emergent nature of the course itself engaged teacher candidates and teachers as generative, responsive, and collaborative educators. The findings articulate productive sites of tension that counter transmission-oriented pedagogy and instead embrace socio-cultural conceptions of teaching such as responsive teaching and funds of knowledge as contributing to emergent and generative curriculum, teaching, and learning (González et al., 2005).

This study also illustrates how universities and school districts can reciprocally benefit when researchers and school district leaders work together to create generative in situ sites of pedagogical exploration that are diversity-positive and decenter normative practices and structures. Yet, inherent in such initiatives and partnerships are power dynamics that need to be considered. Hybrid in situ methods course spaces can promote dialogic, reciprocal, and diversity-positive encounters, where educators in all roles can be repositioned as collaborative inquirers. Herein, learning is derived through co-construction, collaborative experience, and seeking and creating spaces for student and teacher funds of knowledge to be drawn upon as contributing resources. Our advice to school, district, and university leaders is that although the in situ school-university partnership terrain is complex, working together holds the potential for renewal on many levels.

Concerns remain about the additional workload for all involved — university professors, teachers in schools, and administrators. Research attending to the experience of these member groups within such endeavors would offer important insights into the viability, sustainability, and benefits of such models.

In this case study, a university faculty member and literacy coordinator came together seeking deeper connection between their university and school district, theory and practice, and pre-service and inservice learning. The underlying benefits of this university and school district partnership included countering university-centric approaches to teacher education, blurring the university and field dichotomy, enacting social theory within schools, and the potential of such endeavors to support praxis-oriented educational change. Rather than claiming to be uniquely innovative, we hope that the specificity, generativity, and nested synergies discovered in this case encourage other institutions to reciprocally reconstitute their relationships and programs.

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