Critical Education

Critical Education

The Allure of Professionalism
Teacher Candidate Subjectivity and Resistance in Neoliberal Times

Adam Kaszuba

Volume 16, numéro 1, 2025

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1116743ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.14288/ce.v16i1.186955

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

Institute for Critical Education Studies / UBC

ISSN

1920-4175 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Kaszuba, A. (2025). The Allure of Professionalism: Teacher Candidate Subjectivity and Resistance in Neoliberal Times. *Critical Education*, *16*(1), 104–125. https://doi.org/10.14288/ce.v16i1.186955

Résumé de l'article

Multiple discourses circulate in society which construct a vision of what professionalism looks like for teachers. When these discourses are put into practice in initial teacher education programs, teacher candidates feel compelled to integrate them without critically examining their underlying assumptions. Based on a Foucauldian framework, this study explores how teacher candidates in an Ontario Faculty of Education interacted with the language of dominant discourses as they constructed a collective identity and practice while participating in voluntary, emergent learning communities. Three discourses of professionalism emerged in the practices of the candidates: the discourse of passion, of mental health and well-being, and of safety. Through notions such as best practices and 'truth acts', I discuss how the discourses shape the candidates' subjectivity, and in doing so, limit possibilities for resistance.

Critical Education

Volume 16 Number 1 February 1, 2025 ISSN 1920-4175

The Allure of Professionalism
Teacher Candidate Subjectivity and Resistance in Neoliberal Times

Adam Kaszuba
University of Ottawa

Kaszuba, A. (2025). The allure of professionalism: Teacher candidate subjectivity and resistance in neoliberal times.. *Critical Education, 16*(1), 104-124.
https://doi.org/10.14288/ce.v16i1.186955

Abstract

Multiple discourses circulate in society which construct a vision of what professionalism looks like for teachers. When these discourses are put into practice in initial teacher education programs, teacher candidates feel compelled to integrate them without critically examining their underlying assumptions. Based on a Foucauldian framework, this study explores how teacher candidates in an Ontario Faculty of Education interacted with the language of dominant discourses as they constructed a collective identity and practice while participating in voluntary, emergent learning communities. Three discourses of professionalism emerged in the practices of the candidates: the discourse of passion, of mental health and well-being, and of safety. Through notions such as best practices and 'truth acts', I discuss how the discourses shape the candidates' subjectivity, and in doing so, limit possibilities for resistance.

With the rise of globalization, Canada has joined other countries in viewing education as a way to improve their economic competitiveness, and thus view teachers as pivotal to meeting these goals (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018). In an effort to improve teacher quality, government attention has been directed at policies used to control the outcomes of initial teacher education (ITE) programs (Young & Boyd, 2010). Especially following the pandemic, policies have been created to reinforce normative discourses about the role of the teacher (Phelan & Morris, 2021). These discourses not only work to govern educational systems, but they also work to produce the teacher subject (Holloway & Brass, 2018).

Based on the premise of improving the professionalism of graduating candidates, policies built around corporate and management ideologies, such as accountability, have been integrated into ITE programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). These policies circulate language which narrowly define the roles, relationships, and practices that candidates can adopt to construct how they think about their work (Ball, 2003). As these notions are unlikely to be questioned through traditional delivery approaches, which commonly feature in ITE programs, there is a risk that candidates are socialized into these managerial discourses and hierarchical relationships (Reid & O'Donaghue, 2004; Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018). While some studies have shown how such neoliberal discourses shape teachers' subjectivity (Hall & McGinity, 2015; Holloway & Brass, 2018), few, if any, have demonstrated in detail how this process unfolds for teacher candidates during their ITE program.

This study reports on data from an 8-month project conducted with teacher candidates in an Ontario ITE program. Candidates participated in learning communities (LC), where they engaged in self-led learning around a theme of their choice. Drawing on different forms of data, including video recordings, interviews, and observations, this study aimed to investigate how dominant discourses circulate in an ITE program and how candidates interact with them across learning contexts. While traditional learning structures diminish the role of teacher training to the acquisition of knowledge and techniques, this study examined how LCs offer spaces for candidates to resist dominant discourses through critical and collaborative discussions (Grimmett, 2021). This paper begins with a review of neoliberalism and the impacts of neoliberal reform on ITE. I then review common discourses of teacher professionalism in the Ontario context. Lastly, I describe how LCs can work to make space for candidates to resist against imposed subjectivities. The findings show mechanics that shape the subjectivity of the candidates, as well as the gradations of resistance that candidates developed against the discourses as they constructed their professional identity in the LC. Although the LC model can allow for candidates' subjectivity-making process to become apparent, findings suggest that it does not automatically lead to resistant practices.

Literature Review

Over the past 30 years, educational systems have been impacted by neoliberalism as a dominant ideology and practice of government (Sahlberg, 2015). With the rise of the knowledge economy, governments have prioritized economic growth and efficiency as a way to compete with other countries on the global stage (Connell, 2013). Although neoliberalism takes on unique characteristics in different countries (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018), it is often associated with a way of governing based on the belief that education is an investment because it increases the productivity of individuals, and is key to economic output (Tan, 2014). Thus, governing bodies implement reforms to open up public assets like education to the logic of the market (Hall, 2011). Neoliberal reforms work through what Foucault calls governmentality, which is a form of control that emphasizes "governing from a distance by encouraging free conduct" (Joseph, 2013, p. 42).

As part of these reforms, policymakers deploy different policy technologies to reorganize the public sector around the values, culture, and ethical systems of the private sector (Ball, 2003). In particular, these policy technologies function by encouraging individuals to be free to take responsibility for their own life choices while simultaneously shaping the conditions in which this freedom can by exercised (Johnson, 2013). Educational actors are governed to make choices consistent with competitive rules of conduct, such as monitoring their productivity, efficiency, and output.

Recent research explores how policymakers use discourses as a policy technology to compel teachers to adopt different ways of thinking about their professionalism (Morales Perlaza & Tardif, 2016; Morris et al., 2023). Drawing from Foucault, Moore and Clarke (2016) defined discourse as a "technology that not only delimits meanings but also attempts to construct realities and shape identities" (p. 672). They argued that policies disseminate discourses around professionalism which pre-define the ways in which teachers can think about their roles, relationships, and practices in educational systems. These policies reinforce the idea that professionalism is a non-negotiable yet essential characteristic of the good or effective teacher, Moreover, these policies offer standardized forms of professionalism as ways for teachers to assert their subjectivity (Ball, 2003; Moore & Clarke, 2016). As teachers act and learn in neoliberal systems, they 'take up' the logic of these discourses and their role in increasing the economic output of the state. While teachers might not agree with the forms of professionalism being offered, their desire to act and be seen as a professional coerces them to buy in to the neoliberal ways of thinking and being, and they may even become "themselves the bearers and disseminators of discourse" (Moore & Clarke, 2016, p. 672).

A few studies have explored how the process of subjectivisation to dominant discourses unfolds in the teaching profession. Reviewing interview data from two previous studies, Hall and McGinity (2015) analyzed how neoliberal educational policy shaped the ways that teachers in the U.K. understood their work. In particular, they noticed how teachers accepted neoliberal reforms without much resistance. Even though teachers talked about their professionalism in relation to the concepts of trust and autonomy, in reality they constructed their professional identity around compliance and deference to authority. Similarly, the study by Holloway and Brass (2018) reanalyzed interview data from American teachers that were collected a decade apart. Looking at the data from a critical lens, they demonstrated how newer teachers openly embrace the concepts of marketization, management, and performativity in their construction of a subjectivity. They found that teachers used market ethics to define their value, placed the wellbeing of the students and the school above themselves, and accepted their place in the management hierarchy.

Despite the quasi-totalizing nature of neoliberal discourses, studies have shown that there are still spaces in which teachers can develop practices of 'resistance' or 'counter-conduct' against the imposed professionalism (Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Norman, 2023). As teachers confront the implications of official policy in practice, they encounter moments of contingency that allows them to assert their own ethical judgements, attitudes, and values that subvert the governing logics (Norman, 2023). While these studies demonstrate how *practicing* teachers embrace or resist against dominant discourses as they construct their subjectivity, few have shown how this process unfolds for teacher candidates (e.g. Kaszuba et al., 2024). This study addresses the gap by examining how the discourse of professionalism is operationalized into ITE, and how candidates take it up as they establish a professional identity.

Neoliberalism, Specialized Technicians, and Ontario ITE

The impacts of neoliberal reforms have resulted in what Cochran-Smith et al. (2018) refer to as the 'era of accountability' in ITE programs. These programs, conceived as 'graduate factories,' are required to produce quality teachers by demonstrating evidence of their impact on the learning of both students and teacher candidates (Ell et al., 2019). Based on the assumption of a direct, causal relationship between teacher education and student learning, policies aim to pre-define the knowledge, skills and dispositions that candidates need to be efficient, and hold ITE programs accountable to train them accordingly (Cochran Smith et al., 2014). This instrumental and technocratic approach has reshaped the nature of teacher preparation, by reducing training to the acquisition of a set techniques related to the best practices defined by the state (Giroux, 2013). In the technocratic view, ITE programs train candidates as 'specialized technicians', who are expected to implement reform initiatives, observe official policy, and adopt pedagogical practices based on management, regulation, and control (Giroux, 2013; Grimmett, 2021).

Deriving from behavioural psychology, the specialized technician view conceptualizes teachers as actors "who gain the competencies within the scope of effective teaching, needs to be guided, controllable, and accountable, sticks to standards, and focuses on implementing more than thinking" (Sari & Yolcu, 2017, p. 14). The primary goal of the specialized technician is to promote student comprehension of content knowledge while not questioning assumptions underlying "knowledge, values, and identities that are produced with particular sets of classroom social relations" (Giroux, 2013, p. 461), the governing assumption being that all good teaching can be characterized by the same set of professional standards and practices (Connell, 2009; Campbell, 2018). The result of this conceptualization ultimately limits candidates' autonomy as it prefigures how they understand the structure of relationships that they can establish with administration, colleagues, students, and themselves (Grimmett, 2021).

Consonant with the type of teacher work implied by the term, 'technician' takes its root in the Ancient Greek word *tekhnē* which signals an approach to reasoning where one develops effective procedures for achieving a pre-determined end (Carr, 2006). However, Foucault (2014) also locates *tekhnē* as a term used to describe governmentality deriving from Christian culture:

> the expression of *Technē technēs* remains a typical, almost ritual expression by which the art of government is constantly characterized up until the seventeenth century. *Technē technēs*, supreme art, will designate political art in general, and it will designate especially the art of governing men in general, be this in the collective form of a political government, or in the individual form of spiritual direction… *Technē technēs* then is the art of directing souls (p. 51)

In this text, Foucault (2014) explored how Christianity developed the technique of governing people through processes which reorganized the relationship between truth and subjectivity. He argued that Christian governance functioned through two 'regimes of truth', which were mechanisms by which individuals reproduced historically and socially constructed truths related to the religion: the first regime, 'faith', implied an individual's unquestioning obligation to believe in a truth; the second regime, 'confession', involved an individual reflecting and searching inside their soul to find and then exteriorize, or profess, a truth from within. This second regime of truth was a necessary act in the context of Christian governance, as confession compelled individuals to reproduce certain assertions "that [do] not belong exactly to the realm of the true or false" (Foucault, 2014, p. 96). By professing truths through confession, the individual constituted

themself in relation to certain assumptions or practices consistent with Christianity's norms and values. *Technē technēs*, as a governmentality, serves as a mechanism for establishing obedience by encouraging individuals to be 'free' to profess their truth, while simultaneously creating the conditions and assumptions associated with the regime of truth in which they make this confession. Translated into modern terms, this form of governmentality compels technicians to assert their freedom and responsibility by committing truth acts which reproduce norms and values associated with the dominant discourse.

Acting under neoliberal pressures, candidates are socialized as specialized technicians as they interact with discourses of professionalism across different modalities in ITE (Evans, 2010). Program requirements compel candidates to understand value based on productivity and performance to standards and guide them towards competitive and individualist practices (Kaszuba et al., 2024). Care becomes a contractual obligation as candidates are expected to put their students' interests above their own (Servage, 2009). Moreover, the time- and goal- bounded structure of ITE programs results in a notion of professionalism based on control and predictability (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Sanford et al., 2015). Candidates have less time to engage in first-order activities, such as informal collaboration, self-motivated inquiry, and critical reflection as they try to meet the demands of the second-order activities – documentation and assignments centered around performance management (Ball, 2003; Sanford et al., 2015). Professional experiences initiate candidates into the management hierarchy where they defer their autonomy to their practicum supervisors and principals (Cherubini, 2009). Candidates working in such systems become ontologically insecure, unsure whether they are doing enough or the right thing (Ball, 2003). Having this constant anxiety with oneself, they may find solace in the regime of truth presented by the discourses of professionalism – they cannot know themselves about what it means to be professional, rather professional experiences in ITE create opportunities for them to prove, through truth acts, that they are discovering the prescribed truths of the profession (Foucault, 2014; Kaszuba et al., 2024).

In Ontario (the context of this study), it remains to be seen whether candidates are being trained as specialized technicians (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018). The impact of neoliberal reform from the 1990s pervades provincial ITE policymaking today (Pinto, 2012). In a policy context of professionalization, the Ministry of Education set up the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), effectively moving the locus of policy control away from institutions and into the hands of the profession (Morales Perlaza & Tardif, 2016). As part of their mandate, the OCT implemented a standards-based model of teacher knowledge which ITE programs needed to reflect in their programming in order to be accredited (Government of Ontario, 2013). Although the OCT may be autonomous, there is concern that this body acts as a mouthpiece for the government, circulating discourses of professionalism that are constructed around neoliberal priorities (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018). In particular, the Ontario narrative provokes teachers' desire to be considered as professionals by linking their agency to the acquisition of professional capital, and thus contains their subjectivities as they buy into reform initiatives centered on competitiveness for the global economy (Morris et al., 2023). Although Ontario ITE programs are intended to support their candidates in developing practices of critical and collaborative inquiry, funding cuts have reduced their ability to do so (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018). Current analyses on the impact of the professionalism discourse on Ontario ITE programs remains superficial (Morales Perlaza & Tardif, 2016), and this study responds to this issue by examining the internal activity of professional learning as well as how candidates interact with these discourses on a daily basis.

Discourse(s) of Professionalism

A discourse of professionalism with neoliberal roots is not monolithic – as it circulates, it diversifies into new contexts and develops new mechanisms of diffusion (Hall, 2011). Research has shown that discourses of professionalism in Ontario are circulated in three ways: through the mass media, national policies, and professional standards, and each vehicle characterizes this professionalism uniquely (Parker, 2017; Phelan & Morris, 2021). These discourses must be recontextualized into the policy of ITE programs, and then recontextualized again into the local practices of ITE actors (Moore & Clarke, 2016). In other words, these discourses undergo modifications as they are operationalized in the ITE program, where they manifest as new ways of interacting or new ways of being (i.e. identities; Fairclough, 2013). It is through the operationalization of the discourse that candidates are subjectivised into the dominant discourse (Brant-Birioukov, 2020; Moore & Clarke, 2016). I explore three dominant discourses of professionalism below.

First, as part of teacher education's era of accountability, one of the tools used to promote reform from a neoliberal lens was through the dominant narrative about the 'crisis' of education and the failure of teachers and teacher education (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). Particularly in Ontario, the creating and selling of the crisis narrative was distributed and reinforced as a "brand" through mass media (Parker, 2017). This narrative was particularly effective because it built on the consensus that 'teachers matter', i.e. that teachers play the most important role in students' achievement (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018). If this idea is held to be true, then the logic suggests that a professional is one who recognizes that their actions alone have the most significant impact on student learning, and a lack of student learning or classroom management can be attributed to failures of the teacher. This logic places teachers at the heart of the "risk/safety discourse" (Phelan & Morris, 2021), where they are considered both the cause of and cure for education's ills. ITE practices reinforce the idea that the accomplished professional is an individual, but neglect to identify how performance must be attributed to collective efforts of all actors involved in schooling (Connell, 2009).

Second, high teacher attrition rates have been attributed to heavy personal and professional workloads with which Ontario teachers are increasingly burdened (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). Despite the intensification of neoliberalism in post-secondary contexts and the concomitant increase in self-reported mental health challenges (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018; Best Practices in Canadian Higher Education, 2019), teacher self-care is not often featured as a core component of professional standards (Mansfield et al., 2016). The fact that teachers are overworked is taken up as part of a normative discourse in policy discussions. In their analysis of the Association Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) position paper on post-pandemic recovery, Phelan and Morris (2021) noted how the paper frames the teacher (candidate) as self-sacrificing:

> Teachers' "concerns" about workload are figured as individual factors enmeshed in what it means to be a teacher, neatly resolving any need for workload concerns to be recognized and taken up as a systemic problem (or as injustice). Self-sacrifice and a willingness to overwork are here lauded as "capabilities"—what teachers can do—that "government and post-secondary institutions" must then account for and harness in order to ensure that teachers continue "leading the educational response" (p. 49)

According to this narrative, being a professional means understanding that self-care is associated with individual factors and actions (i.e. eating healthy, getting enough sleep), rather than supporting candidates in understanding how contextual factors, like workload, can impede their successes at achieving well-being (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019).

Third, standards deploy rhetoric to inscribe the discourse of professionalism within other discourses, such as choice, responsibility, honesty, and collectivity (Moore & Clarke, 2016). In Ontario, the standards define the teacher in relation to the 'learning community' (LC), where they have an obligation to improve themselves through ongoing learning, engage in collaboration, and adhere to the pre-defined ethical standards. When ITE programs promote the idea that professional capital can only be acquired in this way, candidates participate in LCs as a way to perform their professionalism, without actually demonstrating the qualities of care, respect, trust, and reciprocity (Kaszuba et al., 2024). Although the LC can serve neoliberal priorities, other conceptualizations offer spaces for candidates to develop practices of resistance (Grimmett, 2021). Below, I explore these contrasting views of LCs and describe how they inform the methodological framework of this study.

Learning Communities and Practices of Resistance

LCs have been widely adopted as an organizational structure in ITE to socialize teacher candidates into the practices of the profession (Le Cornu, 2016). However, not all LCs are the same. In their review of the literature, Vangrieken et al. (2017) distinguish between 'formal' and 'formative' LCs. In the former, often delivered as professional learning workshops, the teacher is treated as a technician by a learning structure based on "pre-set goals directed towards achieving the targets set by the educational standards by the time the [community] stops its activity" (p. 52). In contrast, 'formative' LCs might be described as an emergent phenomenon where actors spontaneously interact and develop relationships through mutual engagement in activities which involve "collaborative inquiry" (DeLuca et al., 2015) over an extended period of time. These formative communities support practices of resistance, as they "take the form of an alternative (to neoliberalist policy dictates) figured world that proposes and authorizes a discourse of professionalism and pedagogy framed around teacher-initiated inquiry and ongoing collegial deliberations" (Grimmett, 2021, p. 154). With support, formative LCs open spaces which allow candidates to author an identity based on their own distinctive ethical framework, to make explicit the discourses informing these identities, and to develop collaborative practices that align with that identity (Johnson & Golombek, 2020).

Candidates enact practices of resistance when they recognize the contingency of professional learning and put their ethical framework into practice (Ball, 2016; Fenwick, 2012). Candidates may question assumptions underlying the dominant narratives (Giroux, 2013). Candidates may engage in disidentification, a process of "managing and negotiating but not assimilating nor rejecting dominant ideology" (Phelan & Morris, 2021, p. 53). They may also be empowered to take risks which require themselves to step outside of their sense of self within the hierarchical relations of the ITE program (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). In a formative LC, candidates may seek out collaborative and critical relationships with colleagues, and collectively reflect on how their practices may have unintended outcomes, such that they are unjust, unproductive, or unsustainable, using these reflections as a means for next steps of action (Kemmis et al., 2014). This conceptualization of the formative LC, and the possibility it offers for resistance, informs the methodology of this study. By analyzing the candidates' practices, this study investigates the

gradations of adoption and rejection of the neoliberal discourses by teacher candidates in the professionalization process, and the place of the formative LC within that resistance. In particular, this study responds to the following research question: To what extent do candidates develop practices of resistance against discourses of professionalism in a formative LC?

Methodology

Context

In the province of Ontario, the standards of professionalism require that ITE programs help develop teacher candidates in the following two areas: "members promote and participate in the creation of collaborative, safe and supportive learning communities"; and "members refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection" (Ontario College of Teachers [OCT], n.d.). Building on these standards, the Faculty of education at which this study took place develops the conceptual framework of the ITE program around 'communities of inquiry.' The accreditation document (OCT, 2020) suggests that candidates participate in several polymorphous LCs – during courses, practicum, or outside the institution – wherein participation allows candidates to develop their skills of collaborative inquiry and professional collaboration.

With this framework in mind, I invited teacher candidates to participate in voluntary formative LCs outside of the ITE program's expectations. The intention of these formative communities was to "open a space in which we might begin to understand the daily experiences" of candidates during ITE, where their identities and "the power relations in which the [candidate] is imbricated come to the fore" (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 86). Although these communities offer a space for practices of resistance, their unpredictable nature does not guarantee that candidates will be able to "take an active role in their own self-definition as a 'teaching subject'" (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 86). It is through analyzing their practices that I aimed to trace how candidates encounter discourses in the program, and how they associate with them as they construct a professional identity. In addition to observations of different learning events during the program (i.e., courses, workshops), I collected data through video recordings of the LC meetings and interviews with participants. As an "insider in collaboration with other insiders" (Gibbs et al., 2017, p. 10), I facilitated these meetings and kept a researcher journal to track my ongoing reflections during the project. The names of participants and formative LCs are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Names of the formative learning communities, participants, their year of study, and concentration.*

Formative learning community	*Members/participants*	*Year of study*	*Concentration*
FWF LC – Fun with French	Priyanka	1st	Primary/junior
	Tran	1st	Primary/junior
	Sarah	1st	Primary/junior
UDL LC – Universal Design for Learning "nUDLers"	Flora	1st	Primary/junior
	Ming	2nd	Primary/junior
MHW LC – Mental Health Warriors	Eli	1st	Primary/junior
	Georgia	1st	Intermediate/senior
CM LC – Classroom Management	Cheyanne	1st	Primary/junior
	Thomas	1st	Primary/junior
	Dominique	1st	Primary/junior

*Only participants mentioned in the findings are listed.

Data Analysis

The methodology of this study is informed by the Foucauldian analysis developed by Stephen Ball (Ball & Olmedo, 2013) and contextualized into an extended case study. In this framework, an analysis focuses on "practices, with the aim of grasping the conditions which make these acceptable at any given moment" (Foucault, 1991, p. 75). I began data analysis using Kemmis et al.'s "invention for analyzing practices" (2014, p. 39). As they explain, this table is divided into elements of practice which provide "a set of topics or viewing platforms from which to consider a practice as it happens" (p. 224). This tool was useful as a heuristic because it allowed for different forms of data (i.e. interviews, LC meetings, observations) to be analyzed in same the way. I identified key episodes in the data which were characteristic of the sayings, doings, and relatings of the candidates' practice. Thereafter, I reanalyzed the data using an "approach [which] takes as a starting point specific forms of resistance" (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 86). In particular, the aim was to identify a "set of cases that represent a particular type of struggle against/with" (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 86) the discourses of professionalism.

To create contrast between the different practices that candidates encountered during the study, the analysis adopted the logic of an extended case study (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014). Whereas traditional case studies "bound the case" and study phenomenon within those boundaries (Stake 1995), extended case studies seek to study the interdependencies that occur across boundaries in a system. In the context of ITE, by studying different LCs, the goal is to trace "relationships between ideas and learning opportunities and exploring the links that are created

among the different parts of the program" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p. 75). By focusing on these relationships rather than individual elements, more emphasis is placed on the collective practice of candidates over individual practices, and how these are shaped by the learning environment (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014). Centering the extended case study around the formative LCs, I analyzed the episodes to identify key ones where candidates expressed incoherent subjectivities within the different program structures (Creswell, 2013; Jackson & Mazzei, 2013) and compared how thoughts or actions associated with these subjectivities emerged crossed boundaries. In the findings section, I "plug in" the theory to the data in an effort to create new understandings about how data and theory inform one another (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013).

Findings

As ITE actors recontextualize the discourses of professionalism through their local practices, these discourses take on new forms, shapes, and produce new identities and ways of interacting (Moore & Clarke, 2016). In this section, I organize the findings around three topics which characterize how the discourses became operationalized in ITE: passion, mental health and well-being, and safety. The episodes provide examples of how candidates encounter each discourse, and then how candidates took it up in their practice during the formative LCs.

Teachers Matter: The Discourse of Passion

Across the professional learning opportunities in the ITE program, there was one episode where the 'teachers matter' discourse was particularly salient. This episode occurred during one of the workshops that the candidates had planned as part of their goal in relation to the formative LC. Candidates had invited a teacher-professor to come and present a workshop on their practices around equity, diversity and inclusion. During this workshop, the presenter began by saying that effective teachers need to be 'passionate' and then required each participant to verbalize what their passion was for teaching. As I reflected in my research journal:

> Teacher candidates were expected to profess their passion, that they would only be successful if they have a passion for teaching… she [also] said that all teachers have superpowers. Cheyanne shared a story about how, in Cameroon, she paid for a students' tuition when the students' parents were no longer able to afford it. This action was praised…We celebrate failure of the system through examples of mutual support such as this for services which should already be available (Research journal entry – 2023.01.28)

During this workshop, candidates were confronted with the 'teachers matter' discourse, operationalized as the maxim 'teachers must have a passion' in order to be effective. The presenter interpellated candidates to make a truth act (Foucault, 2014) about their passion by sharing a story or justification to prove that they were finding this truth. There was little resistance to the individualizing and contextual nature of this discourse: when Cheyanne shared her story about how her passion informed her actions, the presenter praised this action instead of triggering a collaborative reflection about the socio-educational differences between Canada and Cameroon that lead to such an outcome (Apple, 2011). The discourse plays on the candidates' desire to be seen as a professional through their passion (Moore & Clarke, 2016). The problematic outcome of this logic is that if a candidate fails or is ineffective, then it is because they did not have *enough* passion, placing blame on their individual practices.

During one of the formative LC sessions, there was a poignant moment which illustrated the "double-edged sword" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018) of the teachers matter discourse. One of the candidates referred to the notion of passion as a way to shame and blame her colleagues' lack of competency:

> **Tran:** You need to…be engaging, a teacher who is invested in what you're doing. Je pense trop souvent [I think that often], teachers, they're just here for their money or a good vacation. And I think that takes away from the teaching.
>
> **Priyanka:** I don't know anyone who works for the government that says, "I love my job!". But I do think that if you want to impact the lives of children and make them better people in general, you need to be in it.
>
> **Tran:** It's the nature of the job. You can do your government work without being [invested].
>
> **Priyanka:** Can you really say that [government workers] make a big difference?
>
> **Tran:** Often you find the people who burn out tend to be the ones who aren't...as invested maybe, or one foot in one foot out. So you always see the negatives. This is not to say that great, amazing teachers don't burn out too, but I find…si tu commences avec une idée comme negative [if you start with a negative idea], you're already in a downwards spiral. But if you're with the marigolds, or if you try to be a marigold, you surround yourself with positive thinkers, people who encourage, people who support. Then chances are you're doing better at your job (FwF LC #3)

This episode demonstrates how candidates adopt the discourse of passion as they construct their professional identity, and how the discourse creates social cleavages through judgement, competition, and toxic positivity (Ball, 2003; Lemke, 2002). Using binaries (e.g. positive/negative thinkers), Tran blames teachers for being lazy and not choosing the profession for the right reasons, rather than reflecting on how the system can lead teachers to feel demotivated or disinvested. At this moment in the ITE program, Tran's takes up the discourse to reflect on her experiences in practicum and develop a sense of self. Tran constructs her vision of the professional as one who is invested and always positive, as these traits supposedly provide safeguards against burnout. She aggrandizes teachers' work over other professions, and this falls back on the idea that teachers are passionate, that teachers matter – as Tran clarifies, "it's the nature of the job."

This moment of tension reveals how candidates assume the idea that professionalism requires a consistently positive outlook and investment in what they do. The desire to be seen as a professional means "they may need to convince *themselves* of the possibility of helping to bring about the better world they envision, in spite of the fact that [neoliberal policy] may be working against the realization of that vision" (Moore & Clarke, 2016, p. 669). At the same time, the discourse of the passionate teacher demands that they create hierarchies of value between their professional situation and others. Passion and investment become metrics for candidates to judge colleagues and "call out those who reveal themselves to be less than 'professional'" (Morris et al.,

2023, p. 533). In this process, the teachers matter discourse is assumed by candidates in their construction of a professional identity. Although the LC created a space for candidates to make their professional identity explicit, this episode demonstrates how candidates did not resist or disidentify with the dominant narratives. They did not reflect on the wider socio-political context and how these conditions shape the nature of teachers' work and limit alternate possibilities for being. As described further in the next section, the discourse of passion masks critical discussions around the causes of teacher burnout, mental health, and well-being.

Teachers are Self-Sacrificing: The Discourse of Mental Health and Well-Being

During the program, there was a 'formal' LC (i.e., workshop) offered to candidates on how to manage their mental-health and well-being. During the one-hour session, candidates listened to a presenter talk about ways for them to address these issues through self-care. Following the workshop, there were two contrasting episodes which showed how the discourse of mental-health and workload is picked up by candidates in the construction of a professional identity. For Flora, she referenced the ideas delivered during that workshop:

> So my goal...it's actually really interesting because yesterday I went to a presentation about well-being and we were talking about how we have so many hats to wear as a teacher, how do we put ourselves first even though we want to keep working, we want to keep doing more, there's always something extra we can do to help our students. But at what point do we need to say, I need to stop, so we can give ourselves the time to rest, and give our best the next day. For me, it kind of looks like healthy eating, healthy sleep (Flora – Interview #1)

As seen in this episode, Flora uses the language of self-sacrifice to describe how self-care techniques can increase her productivity as a teacher. Flora embraces the language of the dominant discourse by constructing her notion of professionalism around the norm of the teacher who is willing to overwork. She commits a truth act (Foucault, 2014) by confessing that teachers "want to keep doing more". She then inserts herself into the discourse by constructing personal goals for herself centered around this truth. In contrast, one of the candidates, Eli, struggles with mental health concerns already, and recognized the problematic way in which the workshops framed self-care:

> [The facilitator] did a presentation [on] self-care, but it really wasn't that great for me because he just listed…what you can do for your mental health as a teacher. And it was kind of just the stuff that I already do. Like I do yoga, I have a diffuser, I have meditation. And I basically just left that workshop and I was wondering, what is the school going to do for us if we have a mental breakdown? So if I need a break as an elementary school teacher, are they going to recognize that we all have mental health problems, burnout, all that stuff? Or are they just going to say have a gratitude journal and go to yoga (Eli – Interview #1)

In this episode, Eli is beginning to disidentify with the dominant discourse as she questions how the notions of self-care presented in the workshop prefigures the way teachers can think about mental health. The workshop shifts the responsibility for social risks such as mental health "into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of 'self-care'" (Lemke, 2002, p. 59). In other words, mental health challenges and feeling overworked is part of one's professionalism (Phelan & Morris, 2021) and can be neatly resolved by resorting to

these individual self-care techniques. In this sense, teacher candidates are technicians who implement self-care 'best practices' to ensure that they can maintain their productivity and value to the state. Moreover, mental health and self-care is packaged into content which is delivered during one-off workshops such as these, rather than treated as an ongoing issue. As Eli attested, the content provided during the workshop did not help candidates reflect on the school's or school board's role in supporting teachers' mental health, nor the wider social context which leads teachers to face mental health challenges in the first place.

In contrast to the workshop, there were a few notable discussions around mental health during the formative community meetings. Eli had initiated an LC around mental health and candidates discussed the purpose of why such a community was important. Candidates mentioned the importance of treating mental health as an ongoing issue which demands relationship building, reflection, and sharing between colleagues.

> But I think it's important for us to maybe just have an open space to talk about practicum experiences, especially when we're in the heart of it. And also asking how are you guys feeling? What kind of strategies are you using to kind of combat the stress of the job? Now that we've actually got a little bit of exposure, have a conversation about coping (Georgia – MHW LC #2)

After these discussions, candidates felt empowered to move to action, as they planned a movie night to watch Inside Out (Docter, 2015) and use it as a springboard to reflect on the implications for their own mental health. In this sense, the formative community allowed for candidates to begin resisting against the way that the dominant discourse frames mental health concerns. Having this autonomy was a contributing factor to some candidates' well-being: "the [LC] is something that is for my well-being…it's important to think of taking time for yourself, but at the same time the [LC] has that secondary function of being a supportive community that I can turn to if I'm not having a great day" (Thomas – Interview #2). As seen in these responses, the move from reflection to action demonstrates how this type of LC might enable candidates to develop practices of resistance. The formative community created spaces for them to feel safe as they problematized the dominant discourse, reflected on their ethical framework, and activated alternate forms of professionalism through their practices.

Teachers Maintain Control: The Discourse of Safety

In another 'formal' LC, candidates attended a workshop presentation focused on their responsibilities concerning classroom safety. During the presentation, they learned about the ongoing concerns regarding increasing levels of violence in Ontario classrooms since the pandemic (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2023). Thomas summarized how the candidates' role in safety was presented to him:

> There was a lot of talking about documentation, talking about forms, talking about what your responsibilities as a teacher are with safety and having a safety mindset and it seems like a lot of really important information, but how you actually see that in practice is harder to figure out (Thomas - CM LC #4)

As seen in this episode, Thomas evokes the long-standing issue of the theory-practice divide in teacher education (Korthagen et al., 2001). The way that the candidates learn about safety reinforces their role as technicians as they come to understand safety issues through "the separation

of conception from execution [and] the standardization of school knowledge" (Giroux, 2013, p. 461). As a truth act (Foucault, 2014), candidates feel compelled to confess their commitment to care for students (Servage, 2009) by acknowledging the necessity of a "safety mindset". In this framing, professionalism means knowing the best practices associated with disciplinary behaviours and the 'second-order activities' (i.e. documentation; Ball, 2003) related to safety, and having this knowledge will supposedly translate to their practicum contexts. Expanding on Thomas' concerns, another candidate mentioned that the workshop does not cover the breadth of harassment that she had experienced: "[The workshop] was very specific to aggressive violence. What about verbal aggression? If a student says that you're an [expletive]…how do you respond to that in an appropriate way?" (Ming – UDL LC #5). Candidates want to know what it means to be professional when dealing with specific situations of physical violence and harassment, but since safety is framed as standardized school knowledge, they avoid critical discussions around these topics. As Thomas observed,

> I would probably not talk with other teacher candidates about [safety] because, one, unless something bad happens at your school, there's not really a need to or a desire to do so; and, two, everyone knows how important safety is. And because of that, everyone already has an idea of how it should be done. And those ideas are usually reinforced by the policies at the school. And because everyone is at different schools, or even different school boards, it varies. So I wouldn't necessarily want to talk about these things (Thomas – Interview #2)

In this framing, Thomas demonstrates how the ideas presented by the safety discourse prefigure his relationships with his peers. Following the premise that "good teachers observe official policy without question" (Grimmett, 2021, p. 136), he acknowledges that candidates may feel disallowed to make any statement which contradicts the permitted truth acts defined by the professional standards and policies, as such explicit statements may indicate that the candidate is not on the path to finding this truth of professionalism. In contrast, the formative community provided a setting for candidates to begin trying out new professional identities and relationships as they discussed those unsayable things:

> But in the [LC], there's no risk. There's an opportunity to talk about things that you don't necessarily talk about…I don't think there are like any real rules related to these [LCs]. So there's more freedom to explore things that you might not necessarily explore in a normal conversation with your peers (Thomas – Interview #2)

Interestingly, although Thomas uses "risk-free" language to describe the formative LCs, his description of them demonstrates possibilities for risk-taking (Biesta, 2016). In many of the formative LCs, candidates freely recalled their experiences and approaches to classroom safety, creating a mutual dialogue and collaborative thinking around their concerns. Many of the candidates described their role as they recounted these experiences:

> We have had a student who is like a safety concern. In those situations, my job is honestly just making sure that the class can continue and is running smoothly, to get the class back on track. And we have normally have the principal or EA deal with that particular child (Dominique – CM LC #4)

> We had stressful situations in the past two weeks. I had to evacuate my classroom six times because we had a violent student. Grade one…imagine, six times! But my

> AT was like, 'Oh, you're so calm and collected'. But it's because I was a manager, and I was a director. So I'm used to being put in these types of situations (Sarah – Interview #2)

As we can see in the examples, these situations were crucial moments in the construction of the candidates' sense of professionalism. Dominique describes her response to such disruptions as "getting the class back on track" – i.e., minimizing the impact of disruptions on classroom productivity. For Sarah, despite recognizing the absurd quantity of disruptions, her identity as a manager is legitimized (Servage, 2009) in how she handled the stressful situations. In both of these cases, rather than critically reflecting on what happened, the candidates must insert themselves into the discourse by acknowledging their commitment to care for students through the safety protocols and by deferring to the organizational hierarchy.

Although the formative community created a space for candidates to process traumatic events like these and reflect on the actions of all involved actors, the discourse and policy around safety limits the field of action. Candidates act as technicians when they rely on the transmission of knowledge from documents or from more experienced individuals to address these concerns. At no point during the formative community did candidates reflect on "what kind of safety is desirable and at which point the desire for safety becomes uneducational" (Biesta, 2016, p. 2), nor on the larger social context and issues which result in classroom violence becoming normalized.

Discussion & Implications

In teacher education's era of accountability, the dominance of neoliberal thinking over educational governance is increasing in many Western contexts (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Rigas & Kuchapski, 2018). Political bodies intervene into ITE by designing policies to ensure students have access to 'quality' teachers who are equipped with a laundry list of competencies and skills (Campbell, 2023). As ITE programs try to meet the list of requirements, some of the content is delivered through traditional formats like the formal LC. In this study, it was evident that the formal LC generated and validated specific discourses of professionalism and ways of knowing which influenced candidate's vision of teacher work in line with the notion of the specialized technician. Consistent with findings in other studies, many of the candidates not only integrated the language of the discourse in their construction of a professional identity, they often left underlying assumptions, official policy, and organizational relationships unquestioned (Hall & McGinity, 2015; Holloway & Brass, 2018; Kaszuba et al., 2024). The ability to implement teaching practices based on management, regulation, and control (Giroux, 2013) was most evident in the discourse of safety. Moreover, as mental health becomes a prominent topic in ITE, the specialized technician may also feel responsible to manage their well-being (Lemke, 2002) through standardized approaches so that they remain accountable to the government's investment in them.

In this study, I have endeavored to show how neoliberal discourses are operationalized in an ITE program. The episodes presented here, centered around the narratives of passion, mental health and well-being, and safety, reveal the multifaceted face of professionalism discourse and how it works to delimit meanings and pre-shape the subjectivity of candidates in line with that of the specialized technician (Moore & Clarke, 2016). Not only does this happen through promoting teacher work as the acquisition and implementation of standardized skills and best practices, this analysis shows that neoliberal interventions into ITE also compel candidates to make truth acts (Foucault, 2014). I elaborate on this idea in the next section.

Professionalization as truth acts

A technique of governance in Christian cultures involved the interpellation of truth acts, where institutional gatekeepers compelled individuals to exteriorize their truths as a way to legitimize themselves in the eyes of the institution, and in doing so, reproduce the assumptions associated with those truths. As Foucault (2014) argued, this interpellation forms the basis of subjectivity in Western societies:

> this obligation to tell the truth has never ceased to exist in Christian culture, and probably in Western societies. We are obliged to speak of ourselves in order to tell the truth of ourselves. In this obligation to speak about oneself you can see the eminent place taken by discourse. Putting oneself in discourse is in actual fact one of the major driving forces in the organization of subjectivity and truth relationships in the Christian West… There will always have to be this inflection of the subject towards its own truth through the intermediary of perpetually putting oneself into discourse (p. 311)

As secular as they may intend to be, ITE programs and actors in Western contexts are historically conditioned in part by Christian approaches to subjectivity. Thus, it is appropriate to extend the operationalization of the specialized technician so that it includes the notion of governance through truth acts. Put simply, in addition to shaping teacher candidates as specialized technicians through best practices and means-end reasoning (Carr, 2006), the subjectivization of candidates also has recourse to a technique which compels them to commit truth acts to reproduce the dominant discourses. Professional standards circumscribe the scope of professionalism, such that the 'professional' teacher is defined as one who is active and responsible; then, professional experiences in ITE create opportunities for candidates to demonstrate this responsibility through more or less explicit forms of confession, whereby candidates put on display their truths to show that they are on the recognized path to professionalism. This process was most evident during the workshop where the expert required candidates to profess and justify their passion for teaching, but where the notion of passion was contingent on specific parameters. Similarly, candidates professed their commitment to care for students (Servage, 2009) by inscribing themselves and their actions into the safety discourse and by acknowledging which statements contradict the permitted truth acts, and thus the permitted norms and values, of professionals. To be clear, these truth acts are a form of performativity, in the sense that candidates "learn to talk about [themselves] and the relationships, purposes and motivations in these new ways" (Ball, 2003, p. 218). But while performativity may be "new" to the twenty-first century educational landscape, it is certainly not new to the collective conscience of the Christian West. By situating Western ITE programs within their historical context, it is possible to view the technique of governance through truth acts as indirectly exploiting a pre-existing regime of truth already established within educational actors. Candidates – whether they are domestic or international – may arrive at the program with this socio-cognitive framework of truth which can then be reactivated as they begin to develop a notion of professionalism. In doing so, the truth acts limit resistance and ensure the candidates' compliance to neoliberal priorities.

Co-evolving discourses of professionalism and possibilities for resistance

This study shows that by analyzing the discourses of professionalism in the plural, we may begin to understand how they function to limit resistance. Each of the different narratives –

passion, mental health, safety – predefines a particular structure of relationships which a candidate is expected to establish with superiors, colleagues, students, and themself when addressing issues related to that topic. In this sense, each narrative presents a set of pre-defined social relations, and each set of social relations functions as its own system, with a spatial and temporal reach beyond ITE, rather than as a 'part' of the ITE program (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014; Walby, 2021). As the discourses of professionalism presented by mass media, policies, and standards interact in ITE, they may coevolve to produce new neoliberal subjectivities and barriers to resistance. It is at the intersection of these multiple overlapping systems that candidates construct their identity as professionals. Even if candidates are able to begin developing a practice of resistance against the narrative of mental health and well-being, for example, they still must contend with how they position their professional identity, and what it means to resist, relative to the circulating notions of passion and safety. They may feel inclined to invest their energy in questioning a set of relations required by one of the discourse systems, yet remain uncritical to the set of relations offered by the others. In this way, the "individual energies and potential for resistance are absorbed" (Morris et al., 2023, p. 533) as candidates are compelled to develop their professional capital in line with the multiple discourse systems.

If we hope to support candidates in the development of a practice of resistance, it is important to ask what a professional identity may look like for candidates who disidentify with the dominant discourses. Would questioning the unintended outcomes of a blind passion, self-care techniques, or some safety protocol risk candidates "exposing [them]selves to censure or ridicule or marginalization?" (Ball, 2016, p. 1141). What happens when the candidates' practices of resistance or truth acts conflict with the ITE programs' performance and graduation expectations? As Connell (2009) questioned, "would a student teacher who concluded that the current system…actively interferes with learning…meet the professional standard?" (p. 219). Further studies might continue to explore how the formative community model may support candidates through the disidentification process.

It is important to note that many of the discourses of professionalism were encountered during workshops. In the context of this study, the program expected candidates to attend these 'formal' LCs, based on the premise that they are a means for them to develop and demonstrate their responsibility to ongoing learning. Dressed in such a discourse, these workshops "take on something of the function of a Trojan horse that includes within its terms of acceptance an agreement…to the implementation of certain externally imposed curricula" (Moore & Clarke, 2016, p. 674) – in this case, in line with Ontario's educational standards. These instantiations of inquiry are a common professional learning approach that risks limiting new teachers' adoption of a critical inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). In contrast, the formative LCs opened spaces for candidates to begin developing a practice of resistance by sharing experiences, discussing concerns, and expressing opinions that they may not have felt at liberty to do at other moments with their colleagues. In the case of mental health, candidates revealed a remarkable capacity to resist against the normative discourse by asserting their ethical framework through action and planning a learning event for their colleagues (Ball, 2016). However, self-led learning was not always to their benefit: as seen in the discourse of passion, the workshop that the candidates planned resulted in them inviting a guest speaker who reinforced a neoliberal technique of the self with regard to professionalism. Although these formative LCs functioned as a counter-balance to other professional experiences, further support to develop candidates' critical inquiry is still necessary for them to reflect on deeply entrenched myths about the teacher's role which continue to permeate teacher education programs (Grimmett, 2021). Rather than promoting the

idea that all LCs are equal and beneficial, it may be prudent to guide candidates in the evaluation of LCs, so that they can apply their critical inquiry skills to their professional learning experiences.

Funding Statement

This article draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

References

Ainsworth, S., & Oldfield, J. (2019). Quantifying teacher resilience: Context matters. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *82*, 117–128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.03.012

Anderson, A. L., & Marshall, C. (2009). *Activist educators: breaking past limits*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203892589

Apple, M. W. (2011). Global crises, social justice, and teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(2), 222–234. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487110385428

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, *18*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065

Ball, S. J. (2016). Subjectivity as a site of struggle: refusing neoliberalism? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *37*(8), 1129–1146. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2015.1044072

Ball, S. J., & Olmedo, A. (2013). Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(1), 85–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.740678

Best Practices in Canadian Higher Education. (2019). *An Environmental Scan of Canadian Campus Mental Health Strategies*. Toronto, ON: Author. https://bp-net.ca/program/an-environmental-scan-of-canadian-campus-mental-health-strategies/

Brant-Birioukov, K., Ng-A-Fook, N., Kane, R. (2020). Reconceptualization teacher education in Ontario: Civic particularity, ethical engagement, and reconciliation (chp. 2). In R. Kane, Ng-A-Fook, N., W.F. Pinar, A.M. Phelan (eds.) *Reconceptualizing teacher education: A Canadian contribution to a global challenge* (pp. 39–66). University of Ottawa Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxcr8wz

Biesta, G. J. J. (2016). *The Beautiful Risk of Education*. Routledge. https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/10.4324/9781315635866

Campbell, C. (2018). Developing teacher leadership and collaborative professionalism to flip the system: Reflections from Canada. In D.M. Netolicky, J. Andrews & C Paterson (Eds.), *Flip the System Australia: What Matters in Education* (pp. 74–84). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429429620

Cherubini, L. (2009). Teacher candidates' perceptions of school organization: Fundamental inconsistencies between expectations and experiences. *McGill Journal of Education*, *44*(2), 213–228. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.7202/039033ar

Cochran-Smith, M., Carney, M. C., Keefe, E. S., Burton, S., Wen-Chia Chang, Fernandez, M. B., Miller, A. F., Sanchez, J. G. & Baker, M. (2018). *Reclaiming accountability in teacher education*. Teachers College Press.

Cochran-Smith, M., Ell, F., Grudnoff, L., Haigh, M., Hill, M., & Ludlow, L. (2016). Initial teacher education: What does it take to put equity at the center? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *57*, 67–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.03.006

Cochran-Smith, M., Ell, F., Ludlow, L., Grudnoff, L., & Aitken, G. (2014). The challenge and promise of complexity theory for teacher education research. *Teachers College Record*, *116*(4), 1–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811411600407

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. L. (2009). Teacher research as stance. In S. E. Noffke & B. Somekh (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Educational Action Research* (pp. 39–49). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857021021.n2

Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: Towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education*, *50*(3), 213–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508480902998421

Connell, R. (2013). The neoliberal cascade and education: An essay on the market agenda and its consequences. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(2), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.776990

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design* (3rd ed.). Sage.

DeLuca, C., Shulha, J., Luhanga, U., Shulha, L. M., Christou, T. M., & Klinger, D. A. (2015). Collaborative inquiry as a professional learning structure for educators: a scoping review. *Professional Development in Education*, *41*(4), 640–670. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.933120

Docter, P. (Director) (2015). *Inside Out* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (2023). *ETFO member survey shows violence pervasive in schools.* Retrieved from https://www.etfo.ca/news-publications/media-releases/etfo-member-survey-shows-violence-pervasive-in-schools

Ell, F., Simpson, A., Mayer, D., McLean Davies, L., Clinton, J., & Dawson, G. (2019). Conceptualising the impact of initial teacher education. *Australian Educational Researcher*, *46*(1), 177–200. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-018-0294-7

Evans, L. (2010). Professionals or technicians? Teacher preparation programs and occupational understandings. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *16*(2), 183–205. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600903478458

Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies*, *7*(2), 177–197. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2013.798239

Fenwick, T. (2012). Complexity science and professional learning for collaboration: A critical reconsideration of possibilities and limitations. *Journal of Education and Work*, *25*(1), 141–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2012.644911

Foucault, M. (1991). Question of method. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (pp. 73–86). The University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (2014). *On the government of the living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979-1980.* Picador.

Gibbs, P., Cartney, P., Wilkinson, K., Parkinson, J., Cunningham, S., James-Reynolds, C., Zoubir, T., Brown, V., Barter, P., Sumner, P., MacDonald, A., Dayananda, A., & Pitt, A. (2017). Literature review on the use of action research in higher education. *Educational Action Research, 25*(1), 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2015.1124046

Giroux, H. A. (2013). Neoliberalism's war against teachers in dark times. *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies*, *13*(6), 458–468. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708613503769

Grimmett, P. P. (2021). *Restoring soul, passion, and purpose in teacher education*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003057345

Hall, D., & McGinity, R. (2015). Conceptualizing teacher professional identity in neoliberal times: Resistance, compliance and reform. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *23*(88), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.2092

Holloway, J., & Brass, J. (2018). Making accountable teachers: the terrors and pleasures of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, *33*(3), 361–382. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2017.1372636

Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2013). Plugging one text into another: Thinking with theory in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *19*(4), 261–271. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800412471510

Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2020). Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, *24*(1), 116–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818777539

Joseph, J. (2013). Resilience as embedded neoliberalism: A governmentality approach. *Resilience*, *1*(1), 38–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/21693293.2013.765741

Kaszuba, A., Masson, M., Arnott, S., Grant, R., & Friesen, B. (2024). Negotiating policies and standards: An exploratory practice into discourses of accountability in Canadian Teacher Education. In M. Kohout-Diaz et M.-C. Deyrich (Eds.), *Inclusive Educational Ethics, Facing the Facts* (pp. 128-146). Brill Sense. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004705968_009

Karsenti, T., & Collin, S. (2013). Why are new teachers leaving the profession? Results of a Canada-wide survey. *Education, 3*. 141–149. https://doi.org/10.5923/j.edu.20130303.01.

Kemmis, S., Wilkinson, J., Edwards-Groves, C., Hardy, I., Grootenboer, P., & Bristol, L. (2014). *Changing Practices, Changing Education*. Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4560-47-4

Korthagen, F.A.J., Kessels, J., Koster, B., Lagerwerf, B., & Wubbels, T. (2001). *Linking Practice and Theory: The Pedagogy of Realistic Teacher Education* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410600523

Le Cornu, R. (2016). Professional experience: learning from the past to build the future. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *44*(1), 80–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2015.1102200

Lemke, T. (2002). Foucault, governmentality, and critique. *Rethinking Marxism*, *14*(3), 49–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/089356902101242288

Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., Broadley, T., & Weatherby-Fell, N. (2016). Building resilience in teacher education: An evidenced informed framework. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *54*, 77–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.11.016

Moon, B., Morash, M., & McCluskey, J. (2021). Student violence directed against teachers: victimized teachers' reports to school officials and satisfaction with school responses. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *36*(13–14), NP7264–NP7283. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519825883

Moore, A., & Clarke, M. (2016). 'Cruel optimism': teacher attachment to professionalism in an era of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, *31*(5), 666–677. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1160293

Morales Perlaza, A., & Tardif, M. (2016). Pan-Canadian perspectives on teacher education: The state of the art in comparative research. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *62*(2), 199–219. https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v62i2.56221

Morris, J., Coutre, J.-C., & Phelan, A. (2023). Riding fences: Anticipatory governance, curriculum policy, and teacher subjectivity. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue Canadienne de l'éducation*, *46*(3), 517-544. https://doi.org/10.53967/cje-rce.5833

Norman, P. (2023). Good teachers and counter conduct. *Critical Studies in Education*, *64*(4), 301–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2022.2142627

Ontario College of Teachers (2020). *Accreditation committee decision - Faculty of Education University of Ottawa*. https://www.oct.ca/public/accreditation/decisions.

Ontario College of Teachers (n.d.). *Standards of practice*. https://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/standards-of-practice

Parker, L. (2017). Creating a crisis: Selling neoliberal policy through the rebranding of education. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, *183*, 44–60. https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjeap/article/view/31168

Phelan, A. M., & Morris, J. D. (2021). Teaching and teacher education for a post-pandemic Canada: context, crisis, critique and complication. In D. Mayer (Ed.), *Teacher Education Policy and Research* (pp. 43–56). Springer. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3775-9_4

Pinto, L.E. (2012). *Curriculum reform in Ontario: "Common-sense" policy processes and democratic possibilities*. University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442661554

Reid, A., & O'Donoghue, M. (2004). Revisiting enquiry-based teacher education in neo-liberal times. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *20*(6), 559–570. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.06.002

Rigas, B., & Kuchapski, R. (2018). Educating preservice teachers in a neoliberal era: Specialized technicians or public intellectuals? *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *64*(4), 393–410. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v64i4.56361

Sahlberg, P. (2015). *Finnish Lessons 2.0 What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?* Teachers College Press.

Sanford, K. J., Hopper, T. F., & Starr, L. (2015). Transforming teacher education thinking: Complexity and relational ways of knowing. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education*, *12*(2), 26–49. https://doi.org/10.29173/cmLCt23817

Sari, M., & Yolcu, E. (2017). Views of pre-service teachers on profession: Technician or professional? *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 9*(1), 13-26. https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2017.01.002

Servage, L. (2009). Who is the "Professional" in a professional learning community? An exploration of teacher professionalism in collaborative professional development settings. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, *32*(1), 149–171. https://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/3038

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.

Tan, E. (2014). Human capital theory: A holistic criticism. *Review of Educational Research*, *84*(3), 411–445. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654314532696

Vangrieken, K., Meredith, C., Packer, T., & Kyndt, E. (2017). Teacher communities as a context for professional development: A systematic review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *61*, 47–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.10.001

Walby, S. (2021). Developing the concept of society: Institutional domains, regimes of inequalities and complex systems in a global era. *Current Sociology*, *69*(3), 315–332. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120932940

Wallner, J. (2013). Internal answerability and intergovernmental policy learning: Accountability in Canadian mandatory education. In L. A. White, P. Graefe, & J. M. Simmons (Eds.), *Overpromising and underperforming?: Understanding and evaluating new intergovernmental accountability regimes* (pp. 238–256). University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442695290

Young, J., & Boyd, K. (2010). More than servants of the state? The governance of initial teacher preparation in Canada in an era of school reform. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *56*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v56i1.55379

Author

Adam Kaszuba is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education of the University of Ottawa. His interests include policies, programs, and practices related to language teacher education, with a specific focus on professional learning, neoliberalism, communities of practice, and French second language (FSL). He has experience teaching FSL in international contexts.

Critical Education

criticaleducation.org
ISSN 1920-4175