STUDENT RESPONSE TO EQUITY ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION:
PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF RESISTANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

by

Cynthia Rottmann

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how students responded to equity issues and required social foundational coursework in the context of a single teacher education program. Paying specific attention to programmatic context, student experiences and beliefs, student and faculty social location and instructor pedagogy, I generated data through semi-structured interviews with three instructors and twelve students involved in the program. I used a modified version of Giroux’s (1983) theory of resistance to frame my interpretive analysis and generated hypotheses about factors linked to student transformation and resistance. After analysing the interviews reflexively, I found that the response of student resistance differed from that detailed in much of the teacher education literature and that in addition to resistance and transformation, many students responded with complacency and a few others with a dedication to advocacy work. I concluded with some implications for teacher educators and teacher education programs.
Dedication

To those students in my math classes who do not need to register for a social foundations course in order to learn about educational inequities.
Acknowledgements

I could not have completed this thesis without the help of twelve teacher education students and four teacher educators who were willing to share their time, stories and analyses with me upon completion of their intense and exhausting program.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Guiding, Emerging, and Imposed Research Questions

Changing demographics in public schools across North America raise issues of equity and equality and suggest the need, more crucial now than ever, for initial teacher education sensitive to the changing social, political, economic and organisational context within which attempts at equity are embedded. With its focus on helping teacher candidates investigate intersections between schools, classrooms, communities and society, the social foundations component is one of the most challenging and important dimensions of the initial teacher education experience.

Reflective of the situation in other Canadian provinces, current hiring trends in Ontario schools create space for educational reform by facilitating substantial turnover in teaching and administrative staff (McIntyre, 1999), but there is no assurance that such opportunities for reform will benefit Ontario’s increasingly diverse student body. Recent policy decisions of the conservative government have run counter to equitable education reform (Dei & Karunamchery, 1999; Delhi, 1996) and as such create a political climate in need of strong equity oriented preservice teacher preparation. If the pool of applicants includes teachers without strong foundational preparation sensitive to the socio-political context of the education system, substantial educational reform is unlikely.

When educators teach as though barriers to inequity do not exist, they ensure that many students fail to pass through them. By providing a forum for guided exploration of social, political and institutional forces shaping students' practicum experiences, teacher educators can help students link their practical experiences and observations to important concepts that can serve them in future teaching. Once students begin to inform their practice with an understanding of the social and organisational contexts within which they work, they may move beyond narrow conceptions of education based exclusively on their own experience as student observers.

The ideas raised in social foundations courses appear challenging to many students who have experienced success in the current education system. Teacher education students overwhelmingly occupy white, middle class, heterosexual, monolingual, female bodies (Ladson-Billings 1995; Zeichner & Hoft, 1995) relatively privileged through traditional educational practices. Challenging this privilege may be difficult to do as the congruence...
between their personal and school experiences may limit and bound their views of the current system.

Challenges abound for teacher educators as well. In a single semester, they are required to introduce foundational issues to students who have various levels of preparation in academic disciplines related to their course material. They must, at the same time, work through the tensions between foundational and subject matter preparation and the power of students’ practicum and formative educational experiences. As they teach, their classrooms and the classrooms of their students continue to be shaped by the direct and indirect influences of taxpayers, trustees, students, parents, teachers, colleagues, administrators, politicians, governing bodies, teacher education candidates, and other community members.

Amidst these institutional, social, political and economic influences, teacher educators at Ontario’s ten faculties of education continue to prepare their students for the intellectual and emotional challenges of elementary and secondary school teaching in an increasingly diverse social context. Those educators dedicated to equity education face additional challenges of working with students who have experienced enough success in the current education system, not only to have found their way into the university classroom, but to have dedicated a year of their lives to learning more about education and in many cases to prepare themselves for future work as teachers. As student-teachers they take up and respond to the challenges inherent in equity education in a variety of ways.

This thesis explores student responses to equity education within an institutionally legitimated space for this kind of work, the social foundations classroom. Based on the findings from interviews with three “Social Foundations” instructors and twelve teacher candidates at Northmount University, I used a multiple case study approach to investigate student response to these courses in some depth. My chosen methodologies helped me form stronger hypotheses about the important individual, pedagogical and programmatic factors contributing to these responses in critical teacher education. A particular aim of this study was to explore the phenomenon of student transformation, a powerful and non-reversible change in one’s sensitivity to equity issues, as a way to interrogate the uniform assertions of

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1 From this point on I will refer to the required social foundations course offered at Northmount University as “Social Foundations.”
2 Names of all institutions, courses and individuals used in this report are pseudonyms.
the body of literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy. An additional aim was to hypothesise ways to increase the likelihood of student transformation in students who might otherwise resist equity education.

The questions that provided the initial focus and guidance for this investigation were:

1) What does student transformation to equity-based teacher education look like?

2) What are the factors contributing to student transformation?

3) How can understanding about student transformation be applied to increase its likelihood across students?

After conducting a number of interviews without encountering the phenomenon of student transformation, I realised that my interest in explaining the mechanics of transformation was ethnocentric at best. Transformation around equity issues is a luxury of the privileged. My questions ignored the experiences of those who began their teacher education with an understanding of educational inequities. Six questions that emerged during the course of my research allowed me to analyse a greater diversity of student response than did my initial framing questions:

1. (How)³ does instructor pedagogy influence student response to equity education?

2. (How) does relative marginalisation or dominance along a dimension of privilege influence student response to equity education?

3. (How) does student experience interact with social positioning to influence student response to these issues?

4. (How) does a belief in agency within the structure of the education system influence student response to equity education?

5. (How) do students' entering beliefs or experientially grounded theories about the current state of education influence their responses to equity education?

6. (How) do programmatic and institutionally external factors work to support and constrain equity education?

³ Brackets indicate my hypotheses about potential factors related to student response, but since a yes/no answer is incomplete, I aim to describe relationships between each relevant factor and student response in the case where some relationship exists.
While my initial framing questions guided my research proposal, literature review, selection strategy, interview questions and data construction, these six questions emerged from and simultaneously guided my analysis and my writing. I say they emerged; however, the fact that they so closely resemble my conceptual framework leads me to believe that I was an integral facilitator in their emergence. While I made every attempt to be a good listener, it was impossible for me to discover "the" factors independent of my beliefs. For example, my second hypothesis about the relationship between social location and student response to equity education was a salient one for me as I was analysing the transcripts. My education and experiences at that time convinced me that our social locations play a primary role in our interactions with others. I was far more sensitised to this factor than to others and as such was more likely to "discover" it in my data.

I built the structure of my report in response to these six emergent questions. After a literature review and conceptual framework in chapter one, a description of my methodological choices in chapter two, and a brief introduction to the instructors and students who participated in my project in chapter three, I address the above factors in chapters four and five. Since my research design emphasises the role of pedagogy, I dedicate chapter four entirely to issues of instructor pedagogy and class dynamics and attempt a post hoc analysis of questions two through six in chapter five. I conclude in chapter six with a description of three categories of student response as informed by my analysis of interviews with three instructors, one teaching assistant, and twelve students who negotiated the complexities of teacher education. I also include some implications for teacher educators and teacher education programs in the form of general suggestions and recommendations. In chapter seven I outline the significance and limitations of my research project.
**Literature Review**

At a time when rates of entry into the teaching profession are sharply increasing, and current graduates of Ontario’s faculties of education are the largest single source of new teachers in the province (McIntyre, 1999), it behoves us to take seriously the preparation of new teachers. After discussing historic traditions of teacher preparation and outlining current structural and conceptual orientations, I will use a lens of social justice to examine and locate my own research questions within a large body of scholarship on teacher education.

Feiman-Nemser (1990) reviewed three historic traditions that have influenced approaches to teacher education in the United States, each linked to a different institution. Liberal arts colleges dating back to the nineteenth century prepared graduates to teach in secondary schools. While some have understood this preparation as subject specific, Feiman-Nemser reveals it as general education focussing on humane values, critical thinking, historical perspectives, and broad knowledge, all of which were thought to be central to good teaching. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, institutions referred to as normal schools introduced the concept of specialised training for teachers and championed the idea of teaching as a noble calling. Students preparing to be elementary teachers were offered explicit pedagogical training and supervised practice. By the turn of the 20th century, in response to a sudden growth of secondary schools and a movement to professionalise teaching, teacher education moved to the modern university where the historic distinction between the normal school and the liberal arts tradition increased (Feiman-Nemser, 1990).

Kirk (1986) identifies three theoretical discourses framing formalised teacher education, each of which developed in response to perceived inadequacies in the preceding one. These are traditionalism (teaching as craft), rationalism (teaching as technique), and radicalism (teaching as social action). According to Kirk, traditionalists accumulate knowledge by trial and error within the current education system, rationalists by scientific inquiry and radicals by reflecting critically on educational, social, economic, political and cultural contexts of teaching. When we think about applying these ideas to teacher education, it is important to understand that despite an evolutionary development of the

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4 There is a large body of literature on teacher education. I have chosen to focus on the parts of this literature I believe to be most relevant to equity education. I justify my use of this particular lens in the body of my literature review.
discourses, all three continue to exist today, sometimes simultaneously within an individual\(^5\). Feiman-Nemser (1990) accounts for this theoretical diversity by highlighting five concurrent and overlapping conceptual orientations; academic, practical, technological, personal and social/critical. She suggests that a plurality of orientations exist, not as a set of equally valid alternatives from which to choose, but rather as a set of lenses through which we may understand the complexities of teaching. Similar to the ways in which an optical lens allows one to see clearly items that were once blurred, a conceptual lens allows one to see clearly certain concepts by limiting the blur of confounding information. Since teacher educators are not a uniform group but rather carry different conceptual lenses and thus hold varied expectations for schooling, it follows that conceptual diversity will exist at the programmatic level both between and within programs.

Teacher education programs are not only conceptually, but also structurally diverse. Thiessen (1999) understands these differences in relation to time, curriculum content and degree. In four, five or six years of post secondary education, students take liberal arts and professional studies components concurrently in some programs and consecutively in others. Within the professional studies component, students again divide their time between educational foundations, curriculum and instruction, and a field-based practicum with curriculum organised in a differentiated or integrated manner, balanced in favour of a liberal or professional orientation. Upon completion of these requirements, students may be granted a Bachelor or Master of education.

Taken together, such structural and conceptual orientations to teacher education make great variation between programs visible, yet despite this variation, an assumption exists in much of the literature that such programs are virtually the same or that structural and conceptual differences do not matter. This stereotype of a common teacher education program is reinforced by surveys of pre-service preparation (AACTE, 1987; Joyce, Yarger & Howey, 1977; as cited in Feiman-Nemser, 1990) and large-scale evaluation research (Fullan et al, 1990; NCTA, 1996; OCT, 1999). More rare are in-depth studies, such as those conducted by Dunleavy (1996) and MacKinnon (1987) that take into account rather than

\(^5\)It is important to make a distinction between theoretical frameworks and external behaviours linked to traditionalism, rationalism, and radicalism. For example, my evolving theoretical framework may be closely aligned with radicalism but an observer walking by my class at a given moment who sees me speaking to my students from the front of the room may classify my pedagogy as “traditional.”
attempt to control for diversity. MacKinnon (1987) asks what aspects of the university classroom and practicum experience take on significant meaning for teacher candidates (p.4), while Dunleavy (1996) sets out to “understand how teacher educators and teacher candidates involved in the ‘everyday’ dynamics of learning to teach, define and evaluate effectiveness in teacher education” (p.ii). Both investigators contribute to the literature through carefully conducted qualitative studies in Canadian faculties of education, but neither one embeds her/his findings within a conceptual orientation relating to what he/she understands to be the purpose of schooling. To ask guiding questions through a particular conceptual lens is not to deny a plurality of worldviews, but rather to focus an investigation by making visible what dominant ideological frameworks might otherwise obscure.

In her conceptualisation of “teaching for social justice” Cochran-Smith (1999) has combined the influential concepts from culturally relevant, critical, anti-racist, feminist, multicultural, and social reconstructionist pedagogy. She suggests that while it may be problematic to link these efforts, “each of these terms is used to describe a kind of pedagogy that is intended to help students understand and prepare to take action against the social and institutional inequities that are embedded in our society” (p.117-118). Underlying her position is the assumption that teaching and teacher education, are fundamentally political activities, and that it is not possible to teach in a way that is not value laden. I agree with Dei (1998) who cautions against the rhetoric of “social justice for all” as an “all-too familiar attempt to camouflage the severity of educational issues facing black and other minoritized groups in our school system” (p. 207), and as such, suggest a distinction between “social justice for all” and what I understand to be Cochran-Smith’s position of social justice as a multi-centric approach to challenging systemic oppression. In the former case feminist, critical, anti-racist, queer, anti-colonial and other anti-oppression pedagogies are blurred into one effort, whereas in the latter, these pedagogies remain intact while those who adopt them struggle from their different positions within asymmetrical relations of power⁶ to challenge systemic oppression.

Some (Asante, 1991; Dei, 1996) have suggested that we use the term “multi-centric” to acknowledge multiple dimensions of oppression, but to substitute the words “multi-

⁶ See Giroux’s (1988) discussion of critical postmodernism for an alternate way to conceptualise this orientation.
centric” for “social justice” is to lose the emancipatory intent that links these pedagogies. Multi-centric vocabulary makes sense when the audience includes only those who prioritise emancipation as the primary purpose of schooling, but is too general when speaking to an audience who views the world through all five of Feiman-Nemser’s (1990) conceptual orientations. Despite disagreements among members, there exists a group of teacher educators who share a commitment to challenging dominant ideologies within teacher education. As such, it might be useful to focus a study on the everyday dynamics of learning in their classrooms, but to write my thesis in vocabulary that invites all teacher educators to participate in the dialogue. Before generating useful research questions, it is important to use the lens of social justice, as I have defined it, to understand some influential lines of scholarship and points of debate in teacher education.

Ten points of debate in teacher education are concisely summarised in dichotomous form by Jones (1998) in the 25th anniversary addition of Teacher Education Quarterly. In the remainder of that volume, teacher educators engage with, clarify, extend, critique, and indicate gaps in these points. I share Kubler LaBoskey’s (1998) concern that Jones’ invitation to discuss the future of teacher education in the form of oppositional categories simplifies a complex enterprise and creates false dichotomies along which artificial enemies may be made of colleagues. On the other hand, I believe that the boundaries created by these dichotomies provide excellent spaces for discussion that may bring colleagues who already differ in terms of ideology and positioning together to debate particular issues. Briefly, the points of debate are as follows:

How can we achieve high standards of quality in the preparation of large numbers of new teachers (quality/quantity)? How best can teacher education programs prepare largely white Anglo teachers to meet the needs of increasingly diverse youth (majority/minority)? What is the scope and dimension of teacher education programs (preservice/inservice)? How is teacher education affected as the balance of time spent on the university campus and the school site shift (campus/school site)? How is it possible to assemble a brief, and thus less expensive program in a way that will adequately address the intricacies of teaching (time/money)? To what extent are teachers specialists in certain areas and generalists in good education (specialisation/generalisation)? How can students make use of the theoretical backdrop of the field to function immediately in the classroom (theory/practice)? To what extent are educational professionals and the public in charge of preparing teachers (professional/public)? Why do public sector reports such as A Nation at Risk receive more attention and guide reform to a
greater extent than academic analysis of good practice (information/myth)? What happens to larger more pervasive problems as smaller more immediate problems are solved (long range/short range)? Is it more helpful for teacher educators to suggest useful pedagogical methods or to help students explore the complexities of teaching (prescription/description)? To what extent is the teacher education literature supported by evidence and not just based on belief (data/polemic) (p.9-15)?

Social justice issues enter into multiple points of debate but are central in the minority/majority dichotomy suggested by Jones. Before considering studies relating to this debate, it is important to clarify that the use of the word ‘minority’ is statistically incorrect as well as ethnocentric when used to refer to people of colour. Globally, 80% of the world’s population consists of people of colour (Three Rivers, 1991). But regardless of the statistical inaccuracy of the term, when used in conversation, it has a meaning that is understood by some. Additionally, when the term is understood to describe relative positions of power and distribution of resources rather than numbers of individuals, it becomes meaningful. A teacher in Sleeter’s (1992) anti-racist inservice training was quoted as saying “I taught in the highest minority school I’ve ever been in, it was 95% black” (p. 21). This quote was used by the teacher to indicate how her commitment to anti-racist education began, rather than as a way to demonstrate the inaccuracy of a word. Viewed in relation to other similar comments, her use of language helps us understand something about dominant discourses on social justice and oppression. Relevant to this study, if I can understand the meaning of this term according to particular students, instructors and their audiences I will be one step closer to understanding their responses to equity issues in teacher education.

In a study on middle schools students’ understandings of multiculturalism, Roman and Stanley (1997) found that students echoed two official notions of “Canadianness.” One they call an “emergent” vision of Canada as a multicultural society that celebrates difference and diversity and the other they call a “residual” version operating within a moral panic of racial or national invasion in which ethnic and racial differences are perceived as alien to Canada. Roman and Stanley also found a “pervasive Anglo-Canadian discourse constructing Canada as the non-racist antithesis of the United States” (p.213). If any number of pre-service students truly believe these Canadian myths and have personal experience to support their beliefs, it can be quite a challenge for teacher educators to prepare them to teach for cultural diversity in a way that may tear down inequities to learning. As such, it is not
surprising that teacher education scholars dedicated to this challenge (Eddy, 1969; Goodland, 1990; Grant, 1993; Haberman, 1988; 1991; O’Brian, 1969; Smith, 1969; Trent, 1990; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996), have suggested dramatic reforms to teacher education.

Giroux (1981) reports that teacher education “produces uncritical teachers who are unable to stand back from their experience and look for solutions” (p.143), while Barrow (1984) argues that teachers are ill-prepared to make a significant contribution to curriculum debate. In response to these challenges, Cochran-Smith (1991), Haberman (1991), Sleeter and McClaren (1995), and Zeichner, Melnick and Gomez (1996) have proposed new conceptions of teacher education programs dedicated to critical multicultural education. They have suggested changes to curriculum and to student and faculty selection criteria, changes in philosophical commitment of the programs, and increased field experience with disadvantaged communities. Without an overhaul of current teacher education programs, Haberman does not believe that cultural awareness can be taught to new teachers.

There are a few problems with using this kind of radical restructuring to create equity oriented programs, not least of which is that even if teacher education programs were to be abolished and replaced, the range of viewpoints held by teacher educators and the public at large would remain behind. Attitudes would not disappear with the old structure. Those who advocate for a more practical, technical, personal or academic orientation to teacher education would continue to constrain efforts for a structurally supported social or critical program. Given the cost-cutting “back to the basics” approach of provincial governments across Canada (Coulter, 1996), equity-based teacher education reform is not likely to receive political support. In response to this socio-political reality, some scholars have argued (Cockrell et. al, 1999; Goodwin, 1997; Pohan, 1996; Marshall, 1996; Shultz et al., 1996) for alternative ways to approach and understand multicultural teacher education.

In a Canadian study of teacher response to anti-racist education, Solomon & Levine-Rasky (1996) describe and attach meaning to teacher’s negative responses to anti-racist education. While the picture must be more complex than they suggest, there is a fairly large body of literature supporting the idea of student, teacher, and teacher education candidate resistance to ideas that challenge them (Acker, 1988; Eyre, 1993; Hoodfar, 1992; Lewis, 1990; Manicom, 1992; Ng, 1993; Sleeter, 1992; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 1996). Influential lines of scholarship have said in a multiplicity of ways, and to varying degrees,
that equity minded teacher education is a failure; yet there exists a growing body of literature (Cochran-Smith, 1991; 1999; Gore, 1993; Haig-Brown, 1997; Pohan & Matheson, 1999; Sleeter, 1995a; 1995b; Tatum, 1992) that suggests a more complex view of student response to equity issues.

Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) neatly conceptualise three pitfalls of experience in teacher education without laying blame on teachers or teacher educators. The "familiarity pitfall" arises from the fact that prospective teachers are not strangers to classrooms. Based on her experience as a teacher educator dedicated to multicultural education, Sleeter (1992) suggests that those who work with preservice students need to confront teachers' perspectives in a way that accounts for rather than dismisses their personal experience. Collins (1991) teaches her classes with the assumption that most people who are truly oppressed do not find their way into the university classroom. As such, she knows all students registered in her course have some experience of privilege, whether maleness, whiteness, heterosexuality, income, or age, and correspondingly are or will be subordinated by those same structures. If teacher educators can help students make their experiences strange (Greene, 1973) and remind them that while they may have many years of experience in a classroom, each of those years was spent in only one body, they may help reduce the depth of the "familiarity pitfall." In her book *Teacher as Stranger* (1973) Greene defines this concept of making our experiences "strange:"

To take a stranger's vantage point on everyday reality is to look inquiringly and wonderingly on the world in which one lives. It is like returning home from a long stay in some other place. The homecomer notices details and patterns in his environment he never saw before. He finds that he has to think about local rituals and customs to make sense of them once more. For a time he feels quite separate from the person who is wholly at home in his ingroup and takes the familiar world for granted. Such a person, writes Alfred Schutz (1964), ordinarily "accepts the ready-made standardised scheme of the cultural pattern handed down to him by ancestors, teachers, and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in all the situations which normally occur in the social world" (p.95). The homecomer may have been such a person. Now looking through new eyes, he cannot take the cultural pattern for granted. It may seem arbitrary to him or incoherent or deficient in some way. To make it meaningful again, he must interpret and reorder what he sees in the light of his changed experience. He must consciously engage in inquiry (p. 267-268).
While all teacher education candidates have had a minimum of three years temporal distance from their own secondary schooling, they may not have had the opportunity to make their education “strange.” Since many of them occupy considerably more privileged bodies in terms of race, gender, ethnicity and class than their students, they are likely to return to school with the same set of privileges they had as students. As such, they may not be sensitive to the inequitable social context of schooling. If students reflect on their practice with other similarly positioned individuals, they may then substantiate rather than question the neutrality of their own experiences.

Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann’s “two-worlds pitfall” arises from the fact that teacher education goes on in two distinct settings and that making connections between the two is less straightforward than it seems. Brosio (1998) suggests the foundations perspective as a way to view the practicum experience from a variety of approaches that taken together provide the viewer with understandings of the connections between teachers, students, schools, and society. Liston & Zeichner (1987) ask teacher educators to help prospective teachers examine how conditions of schooling inhibit and facilitate their chosen goals. In both cases, the practicum experience can bridge the “two-worlds pitfall” if it is used as a sounding board for educational theory.

The third and final pitfall outlined by Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann is the “cross-purposes pitfall” which arises from the fact that classrooms are not set up for teaching teachers. In her analysis of two approaches to “teaching against the grain,” Cochran-Smith (1991) finds that teacher education is more effective when there is a closer fit between classroom life and educational theory.

Unlike programs intended to provoke dissonance, programs based on resonance simultaneously aim to capitalise on the potency of teaching cultures to alter students’ perspectives by creating or tapping into contexts that support ongoing learning by student teachers in the company of experienced teachers who are themselves actively involved in equity reform (p.283).

While ‘collaborative resonance’ may be an optimal condition, it is challenging to find enough placements of any quality for all teacher education students to experience this during their practica. This and other realities of teacher educators’ work means that overcoming these pitfalls takes more than good intentions and requires more than dreaming up the perfect anti-oppression teacher education program. While dreaming is important in terms of long-
range planning, ideals can only become a reality if obstacles surrounding them are carefully considered.

Kirk (1986) outlines a number of constraints to changing teacher education. The first of these is "institutional sedimentation" which forms the structure of knowledge in courses, the way credit is awarded and the selection and recruitment procedures for students and staff. While these factors will not prevent change, they will certainly play a role in any restructuring that takes place. Another constraint relates to the tension between foundational and subject matter preparation. Most teacher educators who teach foundations courses do not share a conceptual base with the majority of their students, who are unlikely to become philosophers, psychologists, or sociologists as they are registered in professional courses for teachers. The history of school subjects and the extent to which individuals associate themselves with particular knowledge areas create another potential constraint to foundational knowledge, as subject matter knowledge may be reified. Also, as teachers are largely successful products of the traditional education system, they may be less likely to identify with those who have different learning styles and educational needs. Another constraint on teacher education is the nature of teaching as a lived experience. Stress and the priority of action aimed at coping with the realities of classroom life may prevent new teachers from taking time to reflect on their practice. One way to facilitate equity-oriented teacher education without ignoring these socio-political and structural constraints is to study some of the strengths within the current programs and find ways to extend their reach.

Sleeter (1995a, 1995b) and Tatum (1992) report some level of success in their equity oriented education courses. In two papers focussing on the experiences of pre-service students engaging with her critical-multicultural curriculum, Sleeter (1995a; 1995b) paints a hopeful picture of teacher education. Her students learned to "frame concrete observations of inequality in terms of institutional discrimination and uncover strategies oppressed groups use to cope with or attempt to advance from a minority position" (p.422). Since Sleeter was teaching in a program structured around multiculturalism, she was likely to receive more institutional support for her efforts than teacher educators in programs without such a focus, but this contextual facilitator should not prevent us from learning from her experiences.

Tatum (1992) acknowledges social positioning of her students as she discusses student response to her course on the psychology of racism. She suggests that white students
and students of colour respond to her lessons differently and has found racial identity
development theories to be useful frameworks to help her students understand their
responses. While student responses are more complex than any stage theory permits,
Tatum’s use of these theories in her class allows her students to observe their own
transformations as they learn about racism. She suggests that while movement through all
stages of racial identity development will not necessarily occur for each student within the
course of the semester, it is common to witness beginning transformations in classes with
race-related content. Sleeter’s and Tatum’s experiences demonstrate the possibility of
student transformation in response to equity education but they are limited in that they
represent the experiences of individual teacher educators, and as such may be minimised by
those like Fernandez-Balboa (1993), who read the cases as individual efforts of a few
transformative intellectuals.

Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell and Middleton (1999) combined their efforts by
conducting an action research study of student beliefs in their four similarly structured
multicultural foundations classes. They categorised their students according to personal
beliefs and experience with diversity and found a relationship between these two variables.
Those students with more experience in multicultural settings were most likely to see
education as a means to achieve social equity. To determine whether students’ beliefs
transformed throughout the year, they categorised student beliefs through journals and initial
papers at the beginning of the term and then categorised them again after the final paper.
Those students who changed categories were seen to have ‘transformed’. Cockrell et al.
concluded that their course had not influenced students to move toward a transformative
position. While their research supports the finding that their course had a “weak” effect on
the group of students as a whole, it is possible that a subset of students were able to work
with equity issues in a way that was qualitatively different over the course of the term. It is
also possible that since they shared and came to basic agreement on curriculum readings,
assignments, class structure, content and approach, their combined effort increased the
numbers of student participants without increasing the variation in pedagogical approach.
Students may have responded to their pedagogical approach as well as to ideas raised in the
course. Additionally, students may have understood their experiences differently than the
teacher educators did.
I have conceptualised my own experience in pre-service teacher education as one of transformation from scepticism to understanding of equity issues. When I initially decided to become a teacher, I did so without thinking much about the social context of education. As I began my first practicum and wrote papers reflecting on the experience, however, I began to see the kinds of discrimination based on race, gender, social class, ability, and sexual preference we had discussed in our required social foundations class. My use of the term “transformation” indicates neither a specific quantity of progress toward social justice nor a completion of my learning about equity. Rather it relates to my inability to return to a state of not seeing gender, racial and class based inequities in the education system. After coming to the painful realisation that my life was incongruous with my new set of eyes, I made several attempts to close my eyes and deny the discrimination I was seeing. With the support of one friend in the program who identified with my struggles, two friends who had begun the year understanding equity issues, and a supportive and challenging teacher educator, I began to appreciate my new understanding. I used my remaining practicum to practice teaching for social justice.

While many other possible student responses exist, I am certain that I was not the only student to be transformed by equity education. I did resist many lessons on equity, but to classify those responses as student resistance is to simplify the dynamic process of my learning. Similarly, to classify my instructor’s teaching as ineffective is inaccurate, yet “student resistance to ideas that challenge dominant ideology” and “ineffective teacher education” seem to dominate the findings in the bulk of research on teacher education for diversity. My experience and that of a few peers has not been documented in any way other than as idiosyncratic cases of transformative teaching or learning. One question that still needs to be answered is how students experience equity issues and social foundations coursework in the context of larger teacher education programs. What do they experience as relevant factors in their learning? How important are personal experiences, programmatic context, instructor pedagogy, student and instructor social positioning, and other factors in their learning? My experience illustrates one small gap in the scholarship on teacher education for social justice, and as such has little power in the field. But if we could understand in some detail a number of these learning experiences from students exposed to
different pedagogical approaches, we might be one step closer to understanding the nature of student response to critical teacher education.
Conceptual Framework

As Kirk (1986) and others have outlined, teacher education for social justice is a complex issue. Among other factors, teacher candidates' experiences in the program are shaped by time and material resources, their social positioning in Canadian society, peer culture within their classes, prior educational and life experiences, responsibilities outside of school and subject area affiliations. The collective ethos of teacher education, the reification of school subjects, the conceptual density of foundations courses and the diversity of practicum placements serve to increase the pressure on all those involved in this demanding professional program.

Student resistance, as it is understood by many educators who choose to teach "against the grain" (Simon, 1992b), is implicit in the way we conceptualise critical teacher education (Eyre, 1993; Gore, 1993; Hoodfar, 1992; Lewis, 1990; Magnusson, 1998; Manicom, 1992; Ng, 1993; Orr, 1993). As such, one way to make sense of the complexity of student response to critical teacher education is to explore how the notion of resistance interacts with student learning or transformation.

Giroux's (1983a; 1983b) theory of resistance, based on the intersection of reproduction and traditional resistance theories provides a powerful concept that may offer an emancipatory opportunity to educators who teach "against the grain" (Simon, 1992b). Giroux (1983a) states that:

The concept of resistance must have a revealing function that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and struggle in the interest of social and self-emancipation. To the degree that oppositional behaviour suppresses social contradictions while simultaneously merging with, rather than challenging the logic of ideological domination, it does not fall under the category of resistance, but under its opposite—accommodation and conformism. (p.290)

Giroux's concept of resistance makes an important distinction between various forms of oppositional behaviour, but it does not help us differentiate between students who conform by opposing critical teaching and those who conform by aligning themselves with traditional teaching. As such, it may lead us to discredit the body of literature on student resistance to critical feminist pedagogy (e.g., Eyre, 1993; Gore, 1993; Hoodfar, 1992; Lewis, 1990; Magnusson, 1998; Manicom, 1992; Ng, 1993; Orr, 1993). In this study I modify Giroux's concept of resistance to include both opposition to ideological domination at the societal
level and opposition to critical pedagogy at the classroom level and will rely on contextual cues to clarify the meaning of the term. This altered conception of resistance allows us to take seriously the experiences of instructors who are themselves working against hegemonic ideology and who have used this term to name their experiences with student opposition to their teaching.

I take seriously both a diversity of pedagogical approaches among instructors, and a diversity of responses among students. While the resistance to critical pedagogy studies clarify classroom power dynamics, they also reify a particular kind of student response, that of conservative, often male, students who oppose critical pedagogy in a confrontational manner. Pohan and Mathison (1999) challenge the stereotype of student resistance as a homogeneous category by distinguishing between defensiveness and resistance: “defensiveness is reflected in an act of defending or protecting, whereas resistance is more an act of opposing, counteracting, withstanding, or attempting to defeat” (p.16). They suggest that defensiveness and resistance come in many shapes and sizes within the classroom and that the degree of defensiveness or resistance may be “determined by a combination of psychological variables (e.g., personality, openness, self-esteem, stage in identity development) and environmental variables (e.g., a threatening or safe environment)” (p.16).

While Pohan & Mathison diversify the category of student resistance, they seem to do so from a dominant ideological perspective. When they suggest that “raising questions about racism, sexism, classism and homophobia may elicit emotional responses such as guilt, shame, anger, and/or despair” (p.19), they seem to be focussing their attention on the responses of relatively privileged students. When they say that changes to a central belief means that other beliefs must also be changed at the cost of questioning the nature of one’s existence and self-identity, I wonder about the cost of not questioning. For example, who benefits when a white, heterosexual, Canadian, female student in her early twenties questions her racism? Who pays when she does not? While Ladson-Billings (1995) and others have found specific social categories to be over-represented in teacher education students, to deliver a program based exclusively on the responses of these students is to further marginalise students who make up a minority in the teacher education classroom. At the same time, since each student will be eligible to teach elementary or secondary students upon
graduation, it is important to expose as many of them as possible to social context and equity issues in a way that will reach them.

In order to explore the ways students encounter social foundational ideas, we must pay attention to their varying levels of personal experience with systemic racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of oppression. Tatum (1992), an African American academic who teaches a course on the psychology of racism to predominantly white undergraduate students, writes about the factors that might influence or inform student response to her course. She has noticed that white students and students of colour respond differently to her lessons and while she acknowledges the limitations of stage theory, she has found racial identity theories by Cross (1971, 1978) and Helms (1990) useful as frameworks to understand these responses. Her writing encourages researchers to attend to social positioning of students as they explore issues related to critical anti-racist education and thus warrants serious attention in relation to the concept of student resistance.

Ng (1993) and Hoodfar (1992) teach us that student response to critical pedagogy is shaped not only by social positioning of the students, but also by social positioning of the instructor. Ng uses a critical incident of student resistance to her anti-racist, feminist pedagogy while drawing attention to the ways in which sexism and racism, as power dynamics, operate within the organisational structure of a particular institution. Hoodfar, a Muslim Iranian feminist, writes about the sudden reduction in student resistance to her pedagogy, informed by third world politics, after she invites a white feminist colleague with "very acceptable" scholarly credentials to give a guest lecture on women in Uganda. Both Ng and Hoodfar faced barriers to teaching that similarly employed white women and men do not face and in both cases instructor social location shaped student response.

Taking social location seriously, I attempt to include the experiences of students and faculty who represent the diversity, limited as it may be, of teacher candidates at Northmount. Classifying student response according to some aspect of student or instructor identity, however, is problematic in that we are all multiply positioned in terms of gender, race, class, age, sexual preference, ethnicity, nationality, language, and (dis)ability, and are simultaneously subordinated by some structures and privileged by others. Also the world we live in is too complex to be explained by a single hierarchy of power and privilege. Beyond the fact that human beings cannot easily be divided into those who are subordinated and
those who are not, classifying student resistance by level of subordination seems to be in conflict with the non-deterministic nature of resistance. While acknowledging that power and resources flow inequitably through these social structures, the notion of resistance suggests that we all have some degree of agency allowing us to decide how we will take up the structures that inscribe us.

Combining the literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy with my own experience, I have hypothesised a number of factors which may shape student response to critical social foundational issues in teacher education. The larger teacher education program (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1990; Grant; 1993; Haberman 1988; 1991; Jones, 1998; Kirk, 1986; Liston & Zeichner, 1987; Pool & Isaacs, 1993; Shultz et al., 1996; Zeichner et al., 1996), students’ personal experiences and beliefs (Acker, 1988; Blackmore & Kenway, 1995; Montecinos & Rios; 1999; Osajima, 1991; Pohan & Mathison, 1999; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 1996; Wiggins & Follow, 1999), student and faculty social positioning in North American society (Collins, 1991; Eyre, 1993; Giroux, 1983a; 1983b; Gore, 1993; Hoodfar, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lewis, 1990; Magnusson, 1998; Manicom, 1992; Ng, 1993; Nugent et al., 1996; Orr, 1993; Roman & Stanley, 1997; Skelton & Hanson, 1989; Sleeter, 1992; Tatum, 1992; Trent, 1990), and instructor pedagogy (Bourne & Gonick, 1995/1996; Cockrell et al., 1999; Giroux, 1988; Haig-Brown, 1997; Simon, 1992a; 1992b; Sleeter, 1995a; 1995b; Tatum, 1992) have been found to contribute to student response to equity issues in social foundations coursework.

Some teacher education students speak from positions of relative privilege and may actively or passively resist critical course content. Others may react against educational theory they see as incompatible with their practicum experience. Others who identify with relatively marginalised positions may resent requirements to repeat lessons life has already taught them. Some students may feel comfortable identifying publicly with marginalised positions, while others may resent the requirement to be anti-oppression spokespeople simply because of the body they occupy. Some students may engage in discussion and reflective writing only if they perceive the classroom to be a comfortable space to do this. Others may go along with the curriculum while in a teacher education program but teach the way they wish upon graduation. Some students may not see their instructors’ efforts as sufficiently critical. Others may require longer than ten months to engage with these ideas. Some may
initially resist, but then transform their beliefs as they become exposed to the social context of education in their own classes. Others may be comfortable with concepts from earlier coursework. Some may not want to give up their privilege and offer meritocratic rationalisations to justify their choices. Others may resist equity education localised in social foundations classes but not supported by other courses in their teacher education program. Others still, with varying levels of comfort, may begin to see the systemic biases within education during the course of their pre-service program. After being decentred, they may re-evaluate their beliefs. Some may stop participating for fear that their own racism, sexism, or classism will be revealed. Others, depending on the context, may negotiate among multiple positions of marginalisation and privilege as they engage in and resist ideas that challenge them. Others still may go through the program without appraising its worth.

I generated these categories at the proposal stage of my thesis as a way to brainstorm possible responses to equity education but did not intend to inscribe individuals in any particular one. With the understanding that teacher education students may resonate with none, one or many of the categories simultaneously or across their programs, I intended to use student and faculty interviews to refine the ways these categories manifest themselves as students encounter social foundations coursework.

Because many of my proposed categories of student response were variations of the more general category of student resistance, and because student resistance is implicit in the ways we conceptualise initial teacher education, I believed the notion of resistance would provide a useful lens through which to study the program. Before thinking much about my conceptual framework, I looked at the teacher education literature and generated hypotheses about the factors that had been found to influence student response. Since the student resistance literature addressed the very factors that the teacher education literature cited as being relevant to students’ experiences with social foundational coursework, I felt confident that my conceptual framework would help me clarify my exploration.
Chapter Two: Methodology

Qualitative Researching

After emphasising the great range of research strategies and techniques that have been included under the umbrella term “qualitative research,” Mason (1996) suggests some common elements of this work. Qualitative research is:

concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced...based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced...[and] based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context (p.4).

I chose to do a qualitative study in part to challenge myself and in part to help me see, interpret, and describe phenomena that would have been otherwise unavailable to me had I set out to explore general trends in teacher education. While I personally find it easier to deal with numbers and causality than people and uncertainty, I knew I would limit the potential depth of this thesis if I were to use inferential statistics to prove some initial hypothesis about teacher education. As it turned out, my hypotheses did not become explicit to me until I began to analyse my data from a reflexive perspective. I began the project with an understanding that complete objectivity was impossible and became more clear about the nature of my biases after I reflected on my role in the interview process. Only qualitative methodologies could have permitted me the flexibility to perform this reflexive analysis.

Through qualitative interviews and interpretivist analysis, I was able to learn a great deal about equity-oriented teacher education that I would have missed had I used a positivist approach. The very nature of equity-oriented teacher education requires attention to diversity and the importance of social context. To see individual variation or variation of social context as a type of “error” is to miss the point of equity education. In addition to the personal challenge element, my reason for choosing interpretivist qualitative methodologies lay in the limited individual impact I expected to have on the larger body of teacher education research. As a student working in an area I was only beginning to be familiar with, I could not have contributed much through a large-scale exploration of trends in teacher education. At best, I might have been able to replicate some portion of the research in this area. While I intended to analyse only the interview data, I found myself yearning for numbers part way through the process, so when certain questions arose from my interpretivist
analysis, I allowed myself the comfort of quantitative analysis. I allowed the mathematician in me to surface when I felt pressed for time, and when I felt that a quantitative analysis would enrich my understanding of the interview data in a way that my newly developing interpretivist skills would not. Aside from these brief forays into quantitative analysis, my inquiry is largely based on methodologies that conform loosely to Mason’s (1996) definition of qualitative research.

I used qualitative methodologies to explore how students responded to equity issues in social foundations coursework within the context of a single teacher education program and attended to the individual, pedagogical, programmatic and other factors that influenced their responses. Additionally, I used the “student resistance” literature and the interpretations, understandings, and experiences of students and faculty involved in the program to guide data generation and analysis. Open-ended, semi-structured interview questions helped me generate social context-sensitive data, and themes that emerged helped me refine ideas and categories well documented in the literature. This multiple case study approach allowed me to investigate the phenomenon of student response to critical teacher education in some depth. It resulted in a more informed set of research questions and stronger hypotheses about the important factors contributing to how some subset of students experience equity issues in teacher education.
Site Selection

The teacher education classroom is a salient instance of learning, and while all people continue to learn throughout their lives, teacher candidates are in the unique institutional position of being learners and teachers simultaneously. I chose the “Social Foundations” classroom at Northmount as a place to study student response to equity issues because it was the only site readily accessible to me that was consonant with my research questions and conceptual framework. In terms of my research questions, this course deals explicitly with social foundational issues, and as such, is a good place to explore the ways students encounter the socio-political context of education. As a required course it allowed me, at least in theory, to sample students who were as diverse in terms of social location, previous experiences, beliefs and programmatic context as those in the larger teacher education program at Northmount. I say “in theory” because, as I quickly came to realise, students do not simply allow researchers to sample them. They must volunteer or at the very least consent to participation. Still the “Social Foundations” class, as the only required course to include an institutionally legitimated study of equity issues, offered me the opportunity to invite participants who represented the student body at Northmount. Additionally, there were enough sections of the course to allow me to speak to instructors in both elementary and secondary panels who taught from different social locations using a variety of critical pedagogical strategies. Beyond any practical or theoretical relevance, the “Social Foundations” class, as a site, held a great deal of personal relevance. It was in my required social foundations class that I first attended to issues of equity and diversity as they pertained to education.

Since it can be problematic to return as a researcher to a place of intense personal learning, it behoved me to consider the ways in which my proximity to the research question and the site facilitated and constrained my ability to conduct a rigorous study. Having been through a similar program two years before my participants, I may have been inclined to assume insider status, but unlike many other social categories, the category of preservice teacher education student is temporal; it terminates upon graduation. While I might have been in a position to understand the experiences of some other students, I could no longer claim insider status as a pre-service teacher education student. After a number of participants began their interviews by apologising to me for not having undergone a major change in
response to their “Social Foundations” course, I quickly became aware that my experience of transformation was not as widespread as I had initially imagined.

For an insider, the challenge is to get some distance on the subject at hand. For an outsider, the challenge of research is to establish relationships and ask appropriate questions in appropriate ways according to insider cultural norms. In my position along the border of inside and out, my challenges were many. While I was not an insider, I was once a student in a similar program and as such had to work to make the experience of teacher education “strange” (Greene, 1973). My past experience as a teacher education student did not ensure that I would understand the experiences of all students in the program or that I would have access to insider cultural norms. It did, however, help me frame and ground my research and interview questions.

Ultimately, I chose Northmount University’s faculty of education because it was readily accessible to me, but despite the practical reason for my choice, knowledge of the site helped me to quickly locate those spaces in the program structure where equity education was institutionally legitimated. Since I did not have this kind of access to other teacher education programs in Ontario and had limited time to do my research, my choice to use this particular faculty of education as a site was a reasonable one. Still, I knew before beginning to work on my thesis that I would have to open my eyes to experiences different from my own and make explicit the ways in which this teacher education program compared and contrasted with others across Ontario. I also knew I would have to account for possible differences between programs within a single institution. My own experience in an alternative program was one of relative programmatic coherence. Additionally, since students self-selected into this program, with one of its guiding images a valuing of equity and diversity, I suspect that resistance to equity education may have been more covert in this program than in other programmatic contexts. As I interviewed students and faculty, I tried to keep this hypothesis in mind and tried to open myself to the possibility that my experience did not uniformly fit and could not simply be applied to others. While generating data, I made some effort to consciously remind myself that my experience was only that of a particular student who responded to critical pedagogy in a program where equity and diversity were overtly valued.
Sampling and Access

In order to maximise the usefulness of my conceptual framework as an analytic lens, I chose to consider programmatic context, past experiences of students, instructor pedagogy, student and instructor social positioning, and level of student resistance in my sampling strategy. As I noted earlier, it is easier to choose a sampling strategy than to apply one. To account for programmatic context, I invited instructors teaching “Social Foundations” in both elementary and secondary panels. I expected that my choice to focus on the “Social Foundations” class would help me meet my sampling needs since all students were required to take it. As such, I expected my participants’ experiences, beliefs and social locations to vary in a way that paralleled the variation in the program more broadly. What I found out, of course, was that variation in the class did not ensure variation in my sample.

In terms of instructor pedagogy, I chose to invite those instructors who taught “Social Foundations” from a “critical” perspective through a variety of pedagogical approaches. By speaking to those instructors with a dedication to equity education, I expected to have an easier time maintaining my focus on equity oriented teacher education. I ran into a problem, however, when I tried to define the term “critical” since it has been used in the literature and by practitioners to describe such a large range of teaching approaches that it has lost much of its explanatory function. In the end, I consulted with the “Social Foundations” co-ordinator and asked her to help me identify those instructors who, relative to others, chose to focus explicitly on equity education in their “Social Foundations” courses. Where possible, I narrowed this group by inviting participants who represented the gender and racial diversity of instructors in the program.

Of all my sampling strategies the final one provided me with the most personal and emotional difficulty. In terms of gender and age, I was able to meet my sampling guidelines, but in terms of race and ethnicity, I faced an ethical dilemma. After attending a conference on race and ethnocultural equity, and specifically a presentation entitled The Politics and Ethics of Research: Taking it Seriously (Adefarakan, 2000), I became nervous about my selection strategy. I was troubled that I as a white researcher\(^7\) would be colonising and

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\(^7\) This category of “whiteness” is not quite right as it seems to be a historical construction. While I do experience white privilege because of my skin colour, I know how impermanent the category can be. As a Jew, I would not have been considered “white” in Germany during the Holocaust or at other historical or
oppressing people of colour by asking anyone not white to participate in an interview. I
reached a point of partial paralysis and wanted to stop working on my thesis and leave
graduate school altogether so that my place might be taken by a person more marginalised
than myself. The idea of sampling based on race confused me because while I understood
Adefarakan’s point, I thought it would be racist and ethnocentric to limit my sample to white
students. Here is a segment of a personal reflection I sent to my thesis advisors an hour after
the conference:

I am feeling really uncomfortable about interviewing any non-white students
or instructors. I feel very strongly that what I would be doing, would be
continuing to other the “Other.” I don’t have a right to examine people of
colour as a white researcher, regardless of how “anti-racist” my intentions
might be. At the same time it is problematic to include only white students
when Ng, Hoodfar and others have clearly stated that race is an important
dimension of how students have responded to them. Also, I can’t interview
only white students. That would be preventing students of colour from having
a voice in my work, but just by including them, I am not necessarily giving
them a voice. I am having a lot of trouble trying to resolve this…If you could
say anything to help me I’d appreciate it. I’ll be meeting with my thesis group
on Monday afternoon and will talk with them about the issue, but it just
occurred to me that it is also not their responsibility to educate me about this
issue….Not sure what to do. Just because my research passed an ethics
review doesn’t mean that it is ethical. How can I conduct ethical research?
How do I know when my research is ethical? (email communication, spring
2000).

After taking a few breaths, listening to my advisors’ suggestions, and reading a bit
about ethical sampling strategies, I made a decision to speak to those people who were
willing to speak. I decided not to go out of my way to sample for racial diversity and to
reflect on how my social positioning affected who was willing to speak to me. After reading
a paper written by Montecinos (1995) I decided to include both white and non-white
volunteers. Her position is that, by including only white participants in studies of critical
multicultural teacher education, we contribute to maintaining the invisibility and dominance
that white European culture has had in teacher education by continuing to construct white
people as ethnicless. Just because teacher educators continue to face a largely white student
body, this fact alone should not translate into privileging the needs of white teachers in

contemporary moments. Still, in my life I have not really felt a great deal of marginalisation by race or
ethnicity and must take Adefarakan’s comments seriously.
courses that also enrol teachers of colour. I continue to be uneasy about my decision but am glad that I made it since I would never have realised how ethnocentric my research questions were had I interviewed only those who were similarly socially positioned to me. For all people who agreed to speak to me, I tried to understand what they were saying, confirm my understanding with them and reflect on how my social location was biasing my understanding.

In terms of my social location biasing my sampling strategy, I found it interesting that a disproportionate number of the people who had volunteered to participate in an interview were, like me, Jewish women. One instructor out of three and four students out of twelve were Jewish women. As I will outline shortly, my research design included a selection of three students and one instructor from each of three classes. In the end, my selection strategy was followed closely for only one of the three classes. In this class, I was able to select from a long list of volunteers those students who varied in terms of their response to equity education. I spoke with three students and an instructor from that class, two students and an instructor from another class, and four students and an instructor from a third. I also spoke with three additional students in the program. As it turned out, the only class without Jewish participants was the one in which I was able to closely follow my initial sampling strategy. In the other two classes, I did not have many volunteers so I called all students who volunteered and spoke with any who were still willing to be interviewed. My hypothesis about the large Jewish representation in the more volunteer-based groups is that women who knew me, or knew of me through the Jewish community volunteered to do me a favour by participating in an interview. Two women recognised me from elementary school and summer camp and approached me before I introduced my project to their respective classes. Both signed a list I passed around after I described my project. Another, with whom I had no previous contact ran into me a number of times throughout the year and asked what I was doing at Northmount. After I told her about my thesis she asked if she could participate. The fourth student heard through my brother that I was doing this project and agreed to do a telephone interview. In the case of the instructor, I was not sure she was Jewish until I began interviewing her students. My sampling strategy for instructors closely followed my proposed one and as such was less voluntary than my sampling strategy for students.
Ethically, I worry that my being Jewish may have placed increased pressure on Jewish students to "volunteer." I did however make it clear to all participants that they could withdraw all or part of their participation from my project at any time. I offered to mail all participants a copy of their interview transcripts before I began my analysis and gave each the opportunity to add to or omit any part of our conversation. After completing the interviews, I noticed that the degree of resistance, transformation and advocacy in terms of student response seemed not to be appreciably greater or less within this group than between this group and the remainder of the participants.

After completing the formal ethical review process and thinking about the ethical dilemmas that were not a part of the institutionally mandated review process, I selected instructors by consulting with the co-ordinator of the "Social Foundations" course at Northmount. We identified six instructors in elementary and secondary programs who dedicated some portion of their class to equity issues, either by framing their course in a way that infused equity issues, or by taking up equity matters in a particular segment of the course. I sent a cover letter describing my project (see appendix A) to three instructors, two of whom agreed to participate in an interview. I then sent a letter to a fourth who also agreed to participate. Greg, a tenured professor and instructor in the elementary program, Heena, a tenure-track professor and instructor in the secondary program and Nancy, a contract instructor in the secondary program were all kind enough to participate in my project.

When it came time to sample students, I had a difficult time following through with my proposed strategy. Since the instructors had greater insight than I did into class dynamics, I asked each one to help me identify a student who had resisted the class, another who had advocated for equity issues and a third who had transformed with respect to some equity issue. The instructors, however, had different ideas about how I should approach student selection in their respective classes. Even had I been able to follow my selection strategy, things would not have worked out as neatly as I had intended since people are more complicated than my categories permit.

Heena invited me to observe her class, then suggested we have a conversation after class about which students to select. When I got to class, she introduced me as a graduate student who would be joining them for the day and who would like to talk to her and to some of them about their experiences with diversity issues in teacher education. I spent four hours
with the class and was able to speak informally to a number of students. As people were leaving, I passed around a piece of paper and asked students who were interested in speaking to me to sign their names. The following class, Heena passed the sheet around again to those who had left before I had a chance to speak to them. Stapled to the sign-up sheet was a description of my project. About half of the students in the class signed the sheet. After class, Heena and I had a discussion about which students I might speak to. I was surprised to find that after my observation of just one class, we seemed to agree on which students would best help me think about my research questions. After only one class, I did not have a good sense about which students had “transformed,” but I was able to identify one resistant student, one vocal advocate of equity education and one student suggested by Heena because she “doesn’t necessarily believe what I want her to believe.” I contacted them by phone or email depending on their preferred method of contact and all three were willing to participate in an interview. In order to ensure minimal risk to participants, I waited until after the course requirements and course evaluations had been completed before conducting any interviews.

My student selection process was more voluntary in Greg’s and Nancy’s classes than it was in Heena’s. After I sent him my cover letter, Greg told me he was reluctant to identify students who had responded differently to his course and instead asked that I come to his last class, give a brief presentation about my project and pass around a consent form to invite volunteers. I cannot be sure why Greg was reluctant to identify students from his class but, since his suggested method was less expedient than mine, I suspect his reluctance was in some way related to his comfort level with my suggestion. After analysing his and his students’ interview transcripts, I characterised his teaching as “defensive teaching for classroom control” (McNeil, 1988). Given this pattern, which I will discuss in greater depth in chapter four, Greg’s choice to place the burden of identification for participation on his students, makes sense.

I approached Nancy after having spoken to Greg and Heena and gave her the option to follow my proposed selection method, use the method suggested by Greg, or generate her own ideas about selection. She chose Greg’s method. With a small number of volunteers in both Greg’s and Nancy’s classes, I invited all students who signed my list, to participate in an interview. Four out of eight from Nancy’s class and two out of four from Greg’s class agreed to participate. Greg predicted my selection strategy would elicit participation from students.
who were more favourable to equity issues than their peers. For this reason, among others, I was careful about generalising my analysis of interviews from students in his class to students in elementary programs more broadly.

In addition to the two students in Greg’s class, three in Heena’s class and four in Nancy’s class, I spoke with three students in three different “Social Foundations” classes at Northmount. I connected with each of these students through informal conversations about my thesis. When I described the concept of transformation, one of my peers recommended that I speak to her partner who had experienced something similar. Another student, with whom I had crossed paths many times during the year and who I would consider to be an advocate of equity education, volunteered to participate after I described my project. Knowing that I was only able to speak to two students in the elementary panel and nine in the secondary panel, my brother, without my knowledge, asked a student teacher at his school if she would be interested in participating in an interview. He was not responsible for her evaluation. In the case of the two referrals, I called and spoke personally to the students, described my project and left them the option to refuse participation. Both were willing to participate.
Data generation

My primary method of data generation came from semi-structured interviews. I conducted individual interviews with three instructors of “Social Foundations” across two programmatic panels, and twelve students who demonstrated varied responses to equity issues within “Social Foundations” coursework. Since I was interested in exploring participants’ understandings, experiences and feelings about student response to equity issues in “Social Foundations” courses, I chose to gain access to their accounts and articulations through open-ended interview questions. While this was my intent, I noticed that I was more rigid about keeping to my interview schedule with some participants than with others. I tended to return to a structured protocol when I felt personally awkward (see appendix B for interview protocols).

After speaking to the co-ordinator of the “Social Foundations” course, I invited instructors who met my sampling criteria to participate in my project. I asked those who agreed to participate for a copy of their course outlines and assignment directions, then arranged a time in April or May to speak to them in a location and at a time that was convenient to them. My interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to two hours depending on the time each participant had available, and the extent to which they chose to elaborate on each question. In all cases participants gave me permission, and seemed comfortable with my use of an audio-tape to record the interviews. To accommodate possible technical failure, and to remind myself to return to points I would have liked instructors to elaborate on, I chose to record participants’ responses by hand as well. Greg worked closely with his teaching assistant for the course and asked if she might join us during the interview. She was willing to participate, so I interviewed the two of them together. Before we met I gave those who were interested a list of themes I planned to pursue during the interview. These themes included:

The instructor’s professional history, particularly teaching “Social Foundations” courses in pre-service teacher education; her/his understanding of critical or equitable teacher education and links to pedagogy; the instructor’s perception of student response to her/his course and hypotheses about underlying reasons for such responses; and the instructor’s perception of barriers and facilitators to critical instruction of “Social Foundations” (See appendix B, for a more complete list of questions).
Between late April and early June, I arranged a time to speak with twelve students who agreed to participate in an interview. The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to an hour and a half. In all cases but one, students gave me permission to use an audio recorder. The one student who did not feel comfortable with this kind of recording device asked that I just take notes. I arranged to meet with students at a time and place that was convenient for them. After having struggled through my transcription of a pilot interview conducted at a fairly loud bar, I chose relatively quiet locations when given the opportunity. Interviews took place in restaurants, dessert places, parks, students' homes, internship placements, and in one case over the telephone. Before we met I gave those who were interested a list of the themes I planned to pursue during the interview. These themes included:

The student’s reason for choosing to enrol in teacher education; her/his formative learning experiences and plans about what to do upon graduation; perception of her/his “Social Foundations” class; response to salient social foundational ideas and perceived reasons for such responses; perceptions of how her/his responses compared with those of her/his peers; and other significant learning experiences within and beyond the program (See appendix B for a more complete list of questions).

Following each interview, I invited students to share any assignments they had produced linking ideas from their “Social Foundations” course to their practica. Only one chose to share her paper with me. Unlike interviews, in which respondents and I generated data in relation to the questions and one another, praxis papers were written for instructors and as such students might have omitted those issues they felt would result in a poor grade. I expected these assignments to be a useful dialogic tool to help me gain access to the accounts of students who express themselves more elaborately in written than oral form. Since I knew I would have felt more comfortable submitting written work than participating in an interview, I assumed participants would feel the same way. As it turned out, however, participants who were happy to participate in an interview responded less enthusiastically to my request for written work. Some students forgot to bring their papers to the interview but seemed willing to send them to me by email while others told me they had lost their papers. After the first five interviews, with only one student actually sending me her paper, I stopped asking students to participate in this way. Perhaps they forgot or found it to be too much of a burden to send me their papers. Perhaps they thought their written work would contradict
their spoken comments, but whatever the reason, my data collection was limited to semi-structured interviews and course syllabus collection.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews and course related documents, one instructor, Heena, invited me to observe her class. I was not planning to use this observation directly to generate data but found it useful as it enriched my understanding of classroom dynamics and gave me a sense of the learning community in her class. It also helped me connect with students and build some level of trust with them.

After hearing every participant speak of the racially homogeneous white student body at Northmount, I made an appointment to speak with a representative from the registrars’ office to help me understand the admission and selection process. I also made an appointment with a representative from the Student Services department to learn about opportunities for extra-curricular equity education. In both cases, the people I spoke with provided me with valuable information as they helped me understand something about the institutional context at Northmount. I took notes during our conversations and collected quantitative data regarding student admissions and student response to co-curricular programs.
**Data Analysis**

I transcribed interview sessions in one column on the left side of a page and used the right side of the page for reflections, codes and questions. I included the time and place of the interview as well as a set of notes on any conversations leading up to the interview. I gave all participants the opportunity to view their transcripts and make changes, clarifications or omissions to their statements. Half of the participants asked for a copy of their transcribed interview, two asked me to omit something they had said, and one clarified one of her statements. Once I completed these minimal changes, I went through each interview twice, once looking for any themes that emerged, and once looking for themes linked specifically to my conceptual framework. After doing this for two interview transcripts, I established 26 codes, which I then sorted into four broad categories. With these broad categories and sub-themes in mind, I analysed the remainder of the transcripts adding new codes as they emerged and returning to previous transcripts with these codes in mind.

For each participant, I organised the descriptive and analytic concepts by emergent sub-themes in a way that provided a holistic picture of each participant’s response. This allowed me to include those factors as relevant that did not appear across all interviews but did seem to factor into the response of a particular individual. I used cross-sectional coding as well to gain something more coherent than twelve idiosyncratic responses to equity oriented teacher education. I chose to use both forms of indexing to take advantage of the richness of data that each participant and the participants as a group were able to offer through their interviews. After completing a summary sheet for each participant in a particular class, I wrote a single case analysis for the class combining this information with what I learned from the course and assignment guidelines. After doing this for each of the three classes, I compared similarities and differences across the classes and generated a cross-case analysis. I then analysed the three additional interviews using the same coding scheme. For each emergent category, I tried to discover which factors and intersections among factors seem to be relevant to student response. I used both descriptive and interpretive codes for all fifteen interviews, and used reflexive codes for the final six. The three levels of coding allowed me to account for what was said, how I understood what was said and what I believed to be my role in shaping what was said. I would have returned to the first nine interviews to code them reflexively but was short on time and found that with
each additional interview coded in this way, I learned successively less about my role in the process.

Part way through my analysis it became increasingly apparent to me that my research questions and my research design caused me to miss large thematic groupings that emerged from the data. For example, my research design and questions accounted for some student responses to critical pedagogy (overt resistance and transformation) but not others (extension and complacency) and for some factors linked to student response (instructor pedagogy and social location of instructors/students) but not others (agency/structure, theory/practice, challenge/support). I looked at the emergent and imposed categories and generated research questions about student response to equity education in a more focussed and informed way, then used these new questions to structure my writing.
**Researcher Reflexivity**

Having discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of being intimately connected with my research questions, I found it necessary to think of ways to increase my distance from my data in the case that my proximity clouded rather than improved my understanding. One way I did this was to turn my analytic lens on my own experiences and my role as researcher. Along these lines, Mason (1997) outlines the importance of "critical self-scrutiny" and "active reflexivity" in research. "Researchers should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their 'data’" (p.5-6).

In the spirit of researcher reflexivity, I tried to understand my role in each step of the process by making explicit those assumptions that focussed my vision. After each interview, I attempted to separate my observations from the questions and reflections that arose from these observations. I found in practice that this was tiring and difficult work and that it was much more difficult for me to be explicit about my role in the process than it might have been to analyse another researcher’s role in his/her data generation. It was not possible for me to stand far enough out of my understandings and beliefs to gain a clear view of what those beliefs were. I have some hypotheses about the nature of my biases but cannot truly know them. Like all people, I necessarily construct knowledge and work with a set of assumptions about how the world functions. At the same time, I did make a fairly deliberate effort to call my assumptions into question, make them explicit and separate them to the extent possible from the participants’ words and actions.

Since the majority of my reflections are imbedded in the body of this thesis, I will not detail them here, but will highlight one major influence that shaped my analysis. My experiences in three graduate sociology classes, but most saliently in one, shaped my understanding of education in elementary and secondary schools in a way that increased my conceptual distance from many teacher candidates. I have some memory of my own limited consciousness around social contextual issues upon entering teacher education. Perhaps it was my undergraduate preparation in cognitive psychology and mathematics, or perhaps it was my relative position of privilege, but I was convinced that I, a woman who had understood mathematics and physics in school, faced no boundaries in education or in society. This made me particularly sceptical of feminists, who I understood to be women
involved in the ridiculous game of rationalising their lack of skill with numbers. It is possible that my recent experience of transformation has magnified my remembered level of resistance, but I recall being frustrated that I was required to take a social foundations course as part of my teacher training. I certainly was not an advocate of equity education.

Since that time, I have had a major bimodal learning curve. In my teacher education year, I learned about educational inequities. I also learned that I was socially positioned and that I was marginalised in some ways. In my graduate sociology courses and at the "Race and Ethnocultural Equity Conference" I attended in the spring of 2000, I learned that I was not only marginalised along some dimensions but also privileged along others. I learned that my privileges led me to marginalise those around me, sometimes unconsciousl y. I have some sense that the first lesson prepared me to learn the second. Each educational experience left me emotionally troubled in different ways, but each challenged me to think carefully about the world around me. Each experience was uncomfortable, but each eventually led to a freedom I had neither anticipated nor experienced in my life. I had been living my life according to a set of rules about gender, race, sexuality, social class and education in a fairly unconscious way. Once I learned these rules had a basis in societal power structures and could be pushed against, I felt more free take responsibility for my life and my interactions with others. I learned a number of things that made my daily living more difficult but, at the same time as I was paralysed by the barrage of inequities I was seeing around me, I experienced an amazing freedom. I was open and ready to be changed by what I was learning and in the end, I believe this greatly facilitated my transformation. I understand quite clearly now that I wrote this thesis in part to figure out what had factored into my salient learning experience.

Since I analysed interviews through my current theoretical understandings, it is relevant to this report that I no longer see the world through the same lens as I did when I entered the faculty of education in September 1997. I do not mean to suggest any sort of linear progress but I do see the world differently. At the time I analysed the transcripts, I found it amazing that the students I interviewed, many of who were more aware of structurally imbedded inequities than I expect to be in my lifetime, had an amazing faith in teacher agency. At first I looked judgementally at their understandings, thinking that their belief in teacher agency uncovered their ignorance about the oppressive structure of
schooling, but after a conversation with a friend, I realised that other possibilities exist. While my privilege gives me the choice to act as an agent or give up on the system completely, those who teach or have children in schools, who are marginalised by the socio-political climate, do not have the privilege to ignore the problems in the current education system.

I spoke to two students of colour who told me of the systemic racism in education and continued colonisation of students in one breath then shared their belief in teacher agency in the second. They chose their programs aware of the conservative political climate and inequities in the current education system and were interested in advocating for those more marginalised than themselves in this problematic system. When one participant shared his interest in helping students at risk build a support network within a racist system, I realised that he was not naive about social contextual issues. He was dedicated to fighting inequities from within the education system and required a belief in teacher agency to do this kind of work.

While my research design privileged the role of instructor pedagogy as a factor affecting student response, my personal bias privileged the role of social location. This bias continued right through to my conclusions. At first I felt like I was being unduly judgmental, critical or harsh, but in time I found my bias to be a useful one. I say this after encountering sociologists who distance themselves from schooling, and teacher education researchers who analyse their data from something other than an anti-oppression standpoint. My bias shaped my analysis in a way that is uncommon in the teacher education and resistance to critical pedagogy bodies of literature and as such has the potential to add something to the discourse on equity oriented teacher education.

But enough about me…
Chapter Three: Student Response and Instructors' Theories about Student Transformation and Resistance: Is there a Relation?

In this chapter I introduce three instructors and one teaching assistant with a description of what I understand to be their theories of student transformation around issues of equity and diversity in teacher education. In each case I compare instructors’ theories with what I learned from students’ responses to equity issues raised in the “Social Foundations” curriculum.

**Greg and Ellen: Major Transformation is Unlikely in such a Short Period of Time.**

Greg, a tenured faculty member, has spent many years working in the initial teacher education program and the graduate sociology department at Northmount University. In the late 80s and early 90s, he taught an elective course on cross-cultural education which had similar content to the current “Social Foundations” course. Since that time, he has been teaching the social foundational component of an elementary teacher education program as one of a six-member team. While the team members work together in a coherent program, Greg has been primarily responsible for delivering the “Social Foundations” coursework. The content of his graduate courses focus on educational change and sociological perspectives on instruction. He attributed his appreciation for cultural and linguistic issues in matters relating to diversity to his formal education in anthropology and sociology, his multilingualism and his years of overseas experiences in different contexts. In the late 80s, he played a role in writing and researching policies related to multiculturalism and race relations to be implemented in local school boards.

Ellen, the teaching assistant for the program, was a doctoral student in the sociology department who completed her own teacher education in the province. She had experience working in multicultural local schools and had a strong research interest in equity oriented teacher education. Together, Greg and Ellen planned and taught a “Social Foundations” course to sixty teacher education candidates, for the second consecutive year, in one of the elementary programs at Northmount. Both instructors are white.

Greg valued an explicit linking of the relationship between school and society in the preparation of teachers and understood “Social Foundations” to be a course delivered in the context of a particular policy setting for teacher education. As a teacher educator in Ontario who was aware of the policy context, he saw his role as one of working within and perhaps
sometimes against the policy context, or helping to shape it. He understood the purpose of his course as one of “consciousness engagement” and wanted his students to understand reasons behind diversity in the classroom and the effects of their responses to that diversity as they teach.

There’s the demographic version of society, the political version of society and the economic version of society and teaching is simply not independent of that, so it’s trying to bring some consciousness to those who don’t have it and allowing those who already have it to explore it and challenge their ideas in greater depth about the kinds of connections between school and the society that comes into it, that surrounds it and shapes it. (t-abc-9)

Ellen moved away from this policy context toward an understanding of the individual within societal and institutional power dynamics. She saw the purpose of the course as an opportunity for students to look at the historical power dynamics involved in education and curriculum development.

If I have a child in my classroom, I can’t just take the curriculum and place it on the child and expect the child to develop in all ways, so I see “Social Foundations” as an opportunity for people to see historically how the curriculum or schooling evolved...I think of “Social Foundations” as being a critical analysis or an opportunity for students to reflect on the bigger picture...to see how the ideas have evolved and to see who the people in power are...You know education is not just neutral. (t-ta-4.5)

During the interview, Greg and Ellen supported one another’s assertions and worked together to describe their students’ responses to the course. They found that students tended to either advocate for equity education, overtly or passively resist it or begin to see new things in class which they then found overwhelming during their practica. Consistent with the literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy (Eyre, 1993; Hoodfar, 1992; Lewis, 1990; Manicom, 1992; Ng, 1993), Ellen believed that the majority of the overt resisters were white male students. In terms of passive resistance, Greg spoke about a certain proportion of students who resisted by hijacking what he perceived to be the author’s intent in the readings he assigned to his class. These students interpreted the empirical evidence on student outcomes or learning experiences from a meritocratic view. According to Greg, this group of students read class, race, and gender based discrepancies in student achievement as an accurate reflection of student ability, rather than as proof of an inequitable education system. For students in any of these categories, but particularly for those on the extremes, Greg and
Ellen felt that major transformation over the ten-month teacher education program was unlikely to occur.

They've basically got a meritocratic view of the world, so the kinds of things we want to raise questions around are not things they're seeing as problematic. Those kinds of students, just like our advocates are not likely to not become advocates over the course of the year, even in the face of resistance in schools, so their ideas, those who are really less open to equity or trying to create greater equity in the system are not likely to change by virtue of our input in the short time that we've got. (t-abc-38).

At the same time, when Greg read through the links students made in their portfolio entries between theory taught in class and something they had tried or witnessed during their practica, he learned that minor transformation was possible. Ellen suggested emotional challenge as an important factor in transformation and Greg agreed that the program should push on issues students are uncomfortable with rather than provide something they would likely teach themselves anyway. According to both Greg and Ellen, the factors working with these facilitators but constraining minor transformation were the short time frame of the course, a very conservative provincial political climate, students' preference for practical implications over philosophical discussion and a lack of readiness on the part of some students. Ellen characterised this lack of readiness as a form of latent learning. She predicted that those students who became overwhelmed by their new learning during the course of the year might not have been ready to challenge themselves around these issues during their practica. She was hopeful that they would store these lessons, and be ready to apply them after some event in their teaching triggered a memory of a particular class discussion.

I spoke to two students in Greg's class, Adam and Beth. Adam is a white middle class male who grew up in a homogeneous white Protestant community. He had a great deal of experience working with and guiding students in independent boys' schools, has taken leadership roles at a camp for children with special needs and has travelled independently between educational degrees. He was working toward his Junior/ Intermediate certification. Beth is a white, Jewish, middle class female who grew up in a suburb surrounding

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8 An assignment worth 40% of the students' grade in all their courses for which they were expected to provide 25 to 30 entries and reflections on their development over the year in relation to the core values of the program. It was intended to push an idea-practice connection.
Northmount where she attended public school in a largely homogeneous Jewish community. She had some experience developing and implementing health-related curriculum in schools. Like Adam, she also spent a number of summers in leadership roles at children’s summer camps. She was working toward her Primary/Junior certification.

Adam and Beth told different stories about student response, making it difficult for me to form a clear image of what happened in their class. Adam suggested there was some variation in class response and found that individuals involved in debates were very strong in their opinions. They saw the world as “black and white with no shades of grey” (t-a-6). Beth was less consistent in her response. She told me her peers responded the same way as she did but later suggested that some students in the class felt that equity issues were inadequately addressed. She believed this critique came from students who had simply missed the subtle infusion of equity issues in all aspects of the program. She did help me understand the discrepancy between her response and Adam’s by suggesting that students, or people more generally, did not always show their “true colours” in class. This fact alone, in a class of sixty students, might have made it difficult for students or instructors to gain a clear understanding of student response.

To some extent, both students found instrumental value in equity education without necessarily taking into account the issue of power. Adam said he learned how to be tactful about dealing with these issues and Beth found equity education primarily useful to help teachers enter the job market, prepare them for what they would encounter while there and give them the tools to deal with student diversity. Neither spoke explicitly about barriers to promoting equity in schools, though both recounted stories in which they had experienced such barriers. Adam, as a teacher in an independent boys’ school, chose to discipline a student who had made an anti-Semitic comment and was forced to deal with the bureaucracy at the school. Beth, as a student in a college program, had been asked to write an exam on a Jewish holiday. Adam was told by the administration at the school that, because he had reported the incident a day late, he was no longer “able” to discipline the student. Beth stood up for her right to freedom of religion by reporting the incident to the administration of the college. Beth felt her experience helped her recognise people’s values and what was important to them. She advocated for an additive approach to equity education through her
choice to “celebrate all the holidays, and make sure everyone felt welcome and included as part of the class” (t-b-9).

Harper (1997) speaks of a similar response in Ontario’s educational history as “inviting difference” and “celebrating diversity” which developed in Ontario schools out of a resurgence of ethnic consciousness after World War II. It accompanied a Canadian search for national identity distinct from that of Britain and the United States. Those in power saw Canada as a “mosaic,” a nation inclusive of and tolerant toward difference. Schools supported multicultural education through cultural celebrations additional to those of the Anglo-Saxon majority. While the approach of celebrating difference may be a more attentive approach to diversity education than an approach of encouraging assimilation, it does not address power relations and reproduction of inequality in the school system. Beth grew up in Northmount while this “celebrating diversity” approach was being implemented, so multicultural education was not a new concept for her. Her response to equity education in her “Social Foundations” class might have been to replicate the one she learned during her own elementary education. Familiar with the language of “multiculturalism” and some associated practices, she did not feel she was learning about equity for the first time.

Adam identified his white male privilege, but did not speak of the ways in which his privilege might have constrained his understanding of equity issues. He felt that naming his privilege was sufficient to make him inclusive in his teaching. When I asked him what equity issues might arise in the private boys’ school where he had completed his internship, he listed sexism, homophobia and a poor climate for “special needs” students. He mentioned generally positive attitudes to racial minority students but did not raise the issue of socio-economic class-based inequities. He spoke of his practica in terms of “good” and “bad” schools. The “good” school served an upper middle class population and had a great deal of parental involvement, while the “bad” school with “good” kids served a working class population and had less parental involvement.

Dehli questions the notion of “good” and “bad” forms of parental involvement through her critique of a Royal Commission recommendation for parental and community involvement published in 1995. She asks what “love” has to do with parental involvement in schools and suggests that it is used by the commission as an “ideological ruse to invite people to consent to inequality” (p. 23). If this is the case, Adam’s description of the “good” school
as a place where parents help teachers through lunchtime supervision takes up this invitation and constrains his opportunities to critique systemic inequities. Among other issues, Dehli addresses the language of the Commission’s recommendations on parenting as one that is gender neutral and does not address socio-economic inequities.

While some women are able to employ domestics or nannies to carry out much of their parenting work, others work long hours, many in casual and low-paid jobs to support their children. Such conditions influence how women can be ‘involved’ in children’s schooling. (p. 23)

Adam described his approach to gender equity during his practica as being “conscious of whether it was males or females he was speaking to” (t-a-5). He also described his intervention in response to a student’s whispered Anti-Semitic comment. In both cases he consciously acted in a way that was consistent with his understanding of social justice. By attending additionally to socio-economic inequities, he might have had an easier time understanding the complex relationship between himself, his students, school and society.

Neither Beth nor Adam found their strongest learning to be in the area of equity education. Beth felt she already knew it was important to value these ideas, and thus did not find the “Social Foundations” course to be particularly challenging. Neither Adam nor Beth seemed to transform in response to Greg’s “Social Foundations” class. The small size and homogeneity of my sample, the disagreement between students about their peers’ responses and my own conceptual lens that may have unfairly simplified students’ approaches to equity after a single interview make me hesitant to simply assert that transformation did not occur in Greg’s class. My understanding of what happened in his class is ambiguous and unclear at best.
Nancy: Education for Peace can Open Doors: Most Students Will Grow in Their Learning

Nancy was in her first year of teaching “Social Foundations” on contract at Northmount University but had taught a course on the psychological foundations of education at another local university. She taught for a number of years at a public school attended by her own children, and has worked recently in other educational fields. She felt she had gained insights into education by taking her children through the school system. She is a white woman whose research interests involve gender and peace education.

Nancy understood her role in teaching “Social Foundations” as one of pushing people beyond the boundaries of their own prejudice.

I think it’s an extremely important course because it addresses a lot of issues, like why teach, where you walk into teaching, what is your purpose here in situating yourself in classrooms? What is your noble goal in coming to the classroom to teach?... Teachers have enormous power over the lives of their students and they need awareness of how each sentence that comes out of their mouth has an effect. It can have an effect for the better and it can have an effect for the worse. It can help change the world. You can open students’ eyes to situations, to ways of thinking, to experience things that are beyond their own family and experiential world... there is such a moral tone to it. Teachers have to be made aware of the whole realm of morality before they begin. They have to know who they are as people. They have to think about issues. They have to see their own prejudice. Discourse around these issues is so much around seeing your own prejudice. (t-xyz-3)

She focuses her course by asking what education that does not lead to war would look like and focuses on the nobility of teaching. While she understands that her question may seem utopian, she believes it is one that can work towards opening doors. After warning us not to romanticise dreams, since the basis of what many people view as a “better tomorrow” sometimes includes unjust and oppressive disparagement or control over others, Simon (1992a) tells us that “dreams can be a lens through which we glimpse possibility; that which is not yet but could be if we engage in the simultaneous struggle to change both our circumstances and ourselves” (p.150). I understand Nancy’s conception of peace education as her pedagogy of possibility. In her critique of “critical pedagogy,” Ellsworth (1992) reminds us that inequitable power dynamics in society place only some of us in the position to define utopian projects. When teacher educators and teacher education students define utopian projects, they do so in a way that may but does not necessarily meet the needs and interests of all their students. I do not suggest that teachers stop dreaming for a better world
or education system, only warn that this dream is predicated in the interest of those with some level of institutional power.

Transformation is not only possible but also quite common, according to Nancy. She estimated that at least half the students in her course opened up to equity issues over the year and that those who came in already sensitive to these issues took it further. However, she believed that students who openly resisted the opportunity to reflect on their prejudices were unlikely to open up at all. Beyond their personal resistance, she found that a few students limited what the rest of the class could accomplish. "There were students who weren't interested in getting it and their prejudices were unfortunately out there in the classroom." (t-xyz-5)

According to Nancy, facilitators to transformation included student maturity, willingness to connect their experiential to their emotional side, life experience and a desire to be good teachers. After listening to her speak about the enormous power teachers have over their students, it didn't surprise me that she found instructional climate and pedagogy to be important factors in transformation. Through relationship building, combining the philosophical with the practical, assigning poor grades for work that did not meet her standards and interactive and alternative assignments, she believed she helped students challenge themselves around issues of equity. Beyond her own influence as a teacher, she felt that the social context of living in such a multicultural city facilitated student learning around these issues. According to her, constraints to transformation included the high-pressure situation of reflecting on demand in the course of a semester, and the presence of overtly resistant students who were vocally intolerant of their peers. Nancy seemed to choose pedagogical strategies that would allow her to reach the majority of her students.

On a whole group level, she found that social class issues, more so than any other dimension of privilege, helped students move along a continuum in their learning. She attributed this movement to the minimal experience most students had about the issue as well as to the leadership and advocacy around the issue by a student in the class who was well respected by his peers.

She felt that prior knowledge and sensitivity to a topic could either facilitate open discussion, as had happened in the class discussion on race, or create a sense of complacency and resistance to additional learning, as had happened in the class discussion on gender. She
implied that she would not have been able to articulate this after the class on gender but, by combining anonymous student feedback with verbal reports about sexual harassment in the schools, she was able to come to this conclusion. One student understood the class to be a short course on feminism instead of a "Social Foundations" course. He did not mention this during the class but waited until the final course evaluations to bring it up. Magnusson (1998) describes a similar situation in which a number of male students used the evaluation process as an expression of resistance to curricula that challenged them. The fact that they used a written evaluation to express resistance to a course taught by a female instructor using feminist strategies leads me to believe that Nancy’s experience is not unique. I imagine that social location of both Nancy and the student upset by the content of her course, along with Nancy’s feminist pedagogical approach, factored into this student’s response. I would characterise Nancy’s teaching around issues of gender as more critical than her teaching around issues of race. If this was indeed the case, her different approach to the two topics might have contributed to the differences she observed in student response. Indirect resistance on course evaluations, student comments on the day of the "gender" class about already understanding the issue and reports of sexual harassment during practice experienced by female students helped Nancy understand student response to gender issues as one of complacency and passive resistance. Sensitive responses and salient stories shared by students around the issue of race and multiculturalism led her to believe that students’ knowledge of these issues was deeply felt. She attributed their positive responses to their own education in multicultural schools in a multicultural city where she felt these issues had been well addressed, but a comment made by one of her students who experienced subtle racism in Nancy’s class led me to believe students were no less complacent about racism than they were about sexism.

Unlike my experience with Greg’s class, I found that all four students in Nancy’s class shared a similar understanding of student response to the course. They each personally responded in distinct ways but described the whole class response in a way that allowed me to construct a more coherent picture.

Wendy is a middle class woman of Chinese origin, raised in a multicultural suburb of Northmount who came to the faculty of education directly after completing an undergraduate degree in physical education at Northmount University. She worked at a summer camp as a
co-ordinator and instructor of athletic programs. While she felt supported through her elementary and secondary schooling, she experienced racism during her undergraduate education and found that it was less pronounced but present during her year at the faculty of education. Her teaching subjects were physical education and science.

Chris is a white, middle class, Francophone woman. She was educated in public and Catholic, co-ed and single-sex schools and was a strong supporter of Catholic education. One salient experience she recounted was that of having been the only student in her class who did not speak English. During her undergraduate education, she was involved in an anti-racist drama production through which she learned a powerful lesson about her white privilege. After completing her undergraduate education, she worked and travelled. Her teaching subjects were French and drama.

Jamie is a white, Jewish, middle class woman who experienced school as a place that reproduced societal inequities. She did not have good experiences with most teachers and found that her label of “learning disabled” rather than the actual (dis)ability led to her social exclusion. She took courses during her undergraduate education on feminist theory and spent time between her undergraduate and teacher education years studying furniture making at a local college. Her teaching subjects were history and art.

Karen is a white, middle class mother of two children. She spent twenty years away from her own schooling but augmented the art program in her daughters’ elementary school classes. She worked in her own business for years but, after recovering from a serious illness and speaking to her husband and friends about her life, she decided to apply to the faculty of education. In the year leading up to her teacher education year, she taught herself to use a computer and worked as an occasional teacher in a multicultural high school. Her teaching subjects were art and Italian.

All four students described the majority of their classmates as people who were open to discussing equity issues, but when it came to a social dimension along which they had been personally marginalised, they became increasingly sensitive to inequities in their learning environment. Chris found her peers to be open to all issues other than religious education. Wendy found her peers to be open to discussing issues of race, gender and class yet noticed that they occasionally called her by the name of the other Chinese-Canadian student in the group. Karen found it ironic that students twenty years younger than her might
be less open to issues of social injustice, and Jamie found that the physical environment of
the room and the timing of the course worked better for some students than for others. These
comments reinforced my initial hypothesis that social positioning makes a difference by
sensitising students to issues around which they have experienced discrimination or
inequitable treatment. Like was the case with Beth, they found it easier to see inequities in
dimensions along which they had been marginalised than in those along which they had been
privileged.

Chris empathised with Nancy by saying that it must have been a challenge for her to
teach “Social Foundations” to a group of white students who had not themselves experienced
inequitable treatment. All four women found their peers to be generally open to equity issues
but noticed subtle inequities around specific ideas. They also each described two resistant
students who took up a noticeable amount of class time being publicly intolerant of their
peers and making overtly racist, sexist, and homophobic comments in class. They admitted
that the majority of their peers, themselves included, did not read all of the literature Nancy
provided but found what they did read to be useful. Most also described a small number of
students who were deeply reflexive and thoughtful about issues raised in class.

Wendy was the only one to mention more passive forms of resistance. Like Beth, she
observed inconsistency between some of her peers’ participation in class and their beliefs and
practices in more informal settings. She was not likely to call her peers on these behaviours
though. She told me that she was concerned about hurting white people’s feelings and was
upset with instructors who dealt with race in what she perceived to be an antagonistic,
“attacking white people” way. After students called her by the wrong name, she would
watch them become increasingly nervous, then relieve them of their guilt by telling them that
it was “OK,” but she also told me that she had never mixed up the names of her white
friends. Nancy’s comment that race was an issue around which students in her class were
depthly sensitive did not align with Wendy’s experiences.

While all four students valued the opportunity to discuss issues of inequity in the
education system, most did not experience their learning as transformative and suggested that
the majority of their peers also found the ideas introduced in class to be familiar and in some
cases redundant. All but Karen said they had done their most intense learning of social
issues in a forum outside their “Social Foundations” class prior to their teacher education
year. Karen understood her life prior to teacher education as one of being in a cocoon. She saw her teacher education year as a move away from her sheltered existence. I understood her metaphor of emerging from a cocoon and experiencing a significant growth curve to be one of transformation. The other three students appreciated the space to talk about equity issues and found Nancy to be both approachable and helpful in her facilitation, but had some difficulties with their implementation in schools. Chris said that she was open to discussing issues of gender equitable and multicultural curriculum but found it difficult to implement in schools because of the limited time, support and resources. After studying radical politics, Jamie found that actions inspired by radical politics did not work as well when communicating with people in the “real world.” While she wanted the world to be a fair and utopian place, she was unsure about what to do in the meantime with the discrimination and racism she saw around her. Wendy said that she always responded to equity issues in a concerned way but found it to be emotionally overwhelming and draining work and worried that it would wear on her after a number of years of teaching.

Despite their concerns and understanding of barriers to inequity, three women in Nancy’s class told stories that suggest they worked towards equity during their practica. Chris brought in a video of Martin Luther King’s I have a dream speech when she was teaching her students about monologues and brought in poems about homelessness written by a famous working class Parisian as part of her lesson on French grammar. Jaime, who felt she needed more than a month to establish trust and relationships with students, gave extra attention to a student who had been called an “idiot” during class by her associate teacher. Wendy received a great deal of positive feedback from her students after she adapted the curriculum, called them at home to ensure they attended class, built relationships with them and brought in poetry she felt would be relevant to their lives. Her students thanked her through their improved attendance, kind words and greeting cards.

While the four students in her class did not feel they transformed to the extent Nancy predicted, they seemed to engage in discussions around issues of equity and take issues of discrimination to heart. Wendy, Chris, Jamie and Karen all discussed equity issues in class and made some attempt to practice teaching equitably during their practica. All four women referred to two overtly resistant peers, a few reflexive and thoughtful ones and a large majority of others who were open to equity issues but not in a way that was satisfactory to
those who had experienced marginalisation along a particular dimension. The concept of inequity was discussed at the same time as inequitable behaviour was subtly reproduced in class. Members of the class were differentially attuned to these inequitable behaviours depending on their own social location and experiences with discrimination. Like Beth and Adam, the four students I spoke with in Nancy’s class were volunteers and as such I suspect they were more dedicated to equity education than their peers. They all, however, told stories about peer response that converged, and as such helped me construct a more clear and complete picture than I was able to do for Greg’s class.

At the time of our interview Heena, a tenure track professor, had been teaching for eighteen years, the last five years full time in universities. She had taught social foundations courses at other faculties of education but was in her first year of teaching at Northmount. Leading up to her teaching, she did extensive work in diversity training. She taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in Canada and the United States around the issues of gender and multicultural education. At Northmount this past year, she taught the required "Social Foundations" course and an elective course focussing on gender equity in the pre-service teacher education program. With her focus on multicultural education and educational policy, she was in the midst of work on a number of international research projects. Heena is a woman of South Asian origin, raised and educated in Canada. Her family raised her in a “culture of peace,” a fact that I might have known just by attending to our interactions. She seemed to embody peace and was somehow able to make me feel at ease even as she blurred the categories that drove my interview questions.

She described her “Social Foundations” course as being “framed within education for peace, but for me that encompasses what I think of as education for democratic citizenship as well because it’s about finding ways of understanding and living together and dealing productively with conflict and difference” (t-123-2). To a greater extent than Greg, Ellen and Nancy, she spoke about her philosophy of education and pedagogical choices as “her” rather than “an” approach to teacher education. Since she believed our North American tradition of binaries blocked us from understanding and working well with diversity and difference, she tried to help her students think about things as “neither/both” rather than “either/or.” She believed the purpose of the “Social Foundations” course was to help students who often enter teacher education thinking very atomistically to think:

more broadly about themselves within a school and that school within a larger context…to give them that sense of school in the larger social context. Right now, the particular kind of focus I took on the course has to do with diversity because I think that’s a large part of life in school, particularly in the larger centres in Canada, for everybody living in Canada. I’m tempted to say anywhere in the world these days. (t-123-1)

Over the years, she observed similar responses to her and to her course despite slight national differences. During this time, she found that while the difficult issues to talk about
in the United States were around race, the tougher issues to talk about in Canada have been around gender. Overall she found student responses to be more similar from year to year, nation to nation than different. She spoke about students in terms of their entering orientations to required social foundational courses and did not identify specific categories of student response. She told me that some students entered with their "backs up" and others were really excited. "The trick is to keep the ones who are excited, excited and bring the others around." (t-123,12) For those who came in with no preconceived notions about what the course would entail, she attempted to keep them involved and interested. Her language suggested an attempt to motivate or engage students rather than to transfer knowledge to them. While Greg spoke about "bringing consciousness to those who don’t have it and allowing those who already have it to explore it" (t-abc-9), Heena spoke about "keeping the ones who are excited, excited and bringing the rest around" (t-123-12): her teaching seemed to be more about facilitation than transmission.

Heena did not find "transformation" or "resistance" useful explanatory categories for student response to her course. She did not view her students’ experiences as ones of change or transformation, but rather as understanding and bringing out a part of themselves that already existed. She seemed to understand student learning more as a process of engagement than as a process of change.

A lot of it is seeing what’s important. I believe that a lot of these teachers, come into a pre-service program because they really want to do what’s best for kids…at the point when they realise this is all about the kids and being there for them and their families, they realise that you've got to be open. (t-123-14)

In terms of resistance, she understood all emotions as "gifts of energy" rather than forces to work against.

A student in one of my classes on critical democracy did a presentation on Aikido as a metaphor for democracy. He said that seeing the world through this lens was like seeing the emotion as a gift of energy. In Aikido, you are working in conversation with a person rather than competing with or working against a person. Any guilt or frustration that may be felt is energy. It adds to the passion involved in work. All of this emotion translates into some kind of passion. It is seen as a positive. Resistance can be the same. (t-123-17)
Heena’s notion of resistance allowed even those students who were resisting to be simultaneously engaged in their education and allowed them to move beyond their temporary, oppositional behaviour.

Heena saw relationship building and instructor openness as the major facilitators to student engagement in learning about diversity and equity issues. She suggested that students were able to engage because of a number of undefined things that tended to happen when groups formed into communities. She also found that their age, experience, heritage, and race made a difference to how they responded. While she believed that confronting students has worked well for some of her colleagues, she found that it has not worked well for her in the past. She understood her teaching as challenging and found that students were more likely to engage if she challenged them without threatening them. As one example of this, I observed her extend time to challenge students in a way that was compatible with their learning. She intentionally assigned a “critical incident” reflection paper to students as a two step process. She asked each student to hand in a draft, then commented to the class about the drafts. She told them that the assignments were good but that many of them did not do what she had asked since she had meant the critical incident to be linked to diversity issues. Rather than giving students a failing grade or accusing them of resisting her assignment, she complimented their writing then clarified her own instructions. She wrote comments and questions on students' papers as a way to challenge them to link their reflections to at least one diversity issue. By including a second step in the process, Heena was able to give students a second chance to challenge themselves before she graded their papers. In my mind, her pedagogical strategy was a challenging but relatively unthreatening one.

Heena understood the importance of emotion in student learning and found that within a Western context it was easier to deal with intellectually than emotionally challenging concepts.

I think the message they’ve heard in the past has been distorted through these different veils of emotion that they have had around it [challenging privilege] because they have felt under attack. This is for the students in dominant groups. Students who are in subordinate groups often have felt like they were being asked to either take on a victim role or to attack their colleagues and they didn’t want to do that and so this creates different sets of emotions, I think, that distort the message. When you can break through some of those and create some other kinds of emotion that connect with the message, I think it’s good. (t-123-15)
In her writing about “engaged pedagogy” and “teaching to transgress,” hooks (1994) places similar value on the notion of teaching with rather than against or without passion and emotion. She, like Heena, notes that a denial of passion is rooted in a Western metaphysical dualism that privileges the intellectual over the affective.

Trained in the philosophical context of metaphysical dualism, many of us have accepted the notion that there is a split between the body and mind. To call attention to the body is to betray the legacy of the repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professional elders, who have been usually white and male. (p.191)

Heena’s description of the marginalised student response seems to echo with Wendy’s discomfort about attacking white people around issues of race. While I see the value and even the need for white students to learn about white privilege through personal discomfort, Heena’s comment helped me think about how lessons on white racism in a mixed race class might simultaneously place certain emotional responsibilities on students of colour. She has also opened my mind to the possibility that teaching is not required to be confrontational and threatening in order to be challenging. It is important to note that “confrontational” and “threatening” are relative terms. What is understood as “confrontational and threatening” for one student may be understood as “honest and direct” for another. Still, any time I have seen her facilitate group discussion, she has done so in a way that has opened rather than restricted contribution from participants.9

Unlike my selection strategy for Greg’s and Nancy’s class, where I was dependent on volunteers and spoke to all students interested in participating, I was actually able to invite students in Heena’s class to participate after observing her class. I intentionally contacted students who I felt had responded differently to the course. After a few conversations with Frank, I mentally categorised him as a resistant student with a meritocratic belief system; Lisa seemed to complete all class activities but did so in a way that differed from what I...

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9 I should note that of the three instructors, I have resonated most strongly with Heena’s pedagogy and philosophy and as such may be less able to critique her approach then I have been able to do with Greg’s and Nancy’s. Part of my resonance may be linked to the fact that I give more legitimacy to those instructors teaching about equity issues who have themselves been marginalised, and part may be linked to the similarity between her teaching style and that of my own social foundations instructor who was able to greatly impact my learning. I have a difficult time describing what she did except to say that she was able to be consistent and strong and challenging without taking on an essentialist position. She was somehow able to fall between ideological extremes without choosing the geometric, possibly liberal, centre that might exist along a straight line drawn between extremes.
understood to be Heena’s intent; and Troy enthusiastically participated in all classroom discussions and raised challenging issues about race, gender, sexuality, and systems of oppression during class.

Frank is a white male student in his early thirties who grew up in a homogeneous, white middle class community. After completing his Bachelor of Arts, he taught English overseas then worked in a financial institution. His strong beliefs about capitalism seemed to form the lens through which he interpreted all data. His discourse of school improvement revolved around raising standards and opening the school system to parental choice. Through his conceptual lens, he seemed to carefully analyse all information in recreational, school and family contexts. He spoke about his desire to learn from people who were in some way different from him and chose to go to Northmount University in part because he expected it to be a racially diverse program. Heena taught both his “Social Foundations” course and his chosen elective course on gender equity in education. His teaching subjects were history and political science.

Lisa began her teacher education program directly after her undergraduate coursework at Northmount. She immigrated to Canada from Egypt during her teenage years and attended a multicultural school in a suburb surrounding Northmount. Her strong faith in Coptic Orthodox Christianity and her science training seemed to form the lens through which she interpreted her observations. She had done a great deal of volunteer work with youth in schools and through her church. As we were speaking, I noticed that she was the only student to speak a language different than the discourse used most frequently in teacher education. Each time she used a term she had learned during the year, she prefaced it with “they call it,” making me think that she was conscious of a particular “teacher education discourse” that was distinct from her own. Her teaching subjects were science and French.

Troy worked for years in the clinical chemistry industry before beginning his teacher education. He is a black, middle class father of three in his forties who did his elementary, secondary and undergraduate education in Jamaica. He had spent some time reading the educational research literature and worked collaboratively with his family to write an anti-racist, science curriculum document in story form prior to his year at Northmount. The racial and class-based inequity in the current system encouraged him to work for a board of education just outside of Northmount. He dedicated this time to thinking about how to infuse
the curriculum with issues of race and ethnocultural equity. He was motivated by a sense of advocacy and planned to teach and inform policy at his local board of education. His teaching subjects were science and computer science.

All three students I spoke with seemed to be affected by Heena’s class. They all described equity education in a way that made sense for them rather than by using Heena’s discourse, and they all engaged with the course, even if it was to disagree with their peers. Lisa found that the whole class was open to discussing issues but says people were not willing to change their beliefs. To illustrate her point, she told me she was open to discussing homosexuality but “if you believe it you believe it, if you don’t you don’t. Nobody is going to change your mind.” (t-2-10) I imagine that she did engage with the issue of sexuality to some extent though, because later in the interview she spoke about her younger brother’s homophobia then said it was wrong of him to hurt people even if done inadvertently. Frank found an inconsistency between what people said and did in class and what he felt they actually were able to do in the secondary school classroom. Troy occasionally observed tension and emotional outbursts but felt that rather than denying racism his peers made an attempt to understand where others were coming from.

All three participants agreed that Heena’s class was better attended than the other core courses because students enjoyed it and found it useful. One exception to this high attendance and level of enjoyment in one of Heena’s courses was Frank’s observation that a few male students stopped attending the gender elective class she taught since they did not appreciate the criticism. It seems that despite what both Heena and I perceived to be her “non-confrontational” approach, at least a few male students in her class found the experience to be threatening. Frank observed student response to the gender course through a lens of gender and age. He found that older men and women in the class responded positively to gender and sexuality issues, but that younger men responded with resistance. In his practicum, he found that older men and most women responded with resistance to equity initiatives around these same issues. His observation of resistance in his peers and associate teachers and his analysis of peer response based on the intersection of gender and age led me to believe that he was somewhat sensitive to gender issues. His sensitivity may not have been apparent to those in the course, however, because his overt response was one of resistance. Heena told me that Frank had asked, near the end of an elective course explicitly
focussing on gender issues, why gender had to pervade all class conversations. In the class I observed, Frank responded to Heena’s lesson on Ghandi’s teachings by mumbling under his breath that it was a short course on communism.

After my interview with Frank, I changed my opinion about his response. Despite his overt resistance in class and continued mention of standards and the benefits of free market education during our interview, his comments were sensitive and thoughtful and I felt he had done a great deal of learning during the course of the year about inequitable power dynamics in society. He told me that Heena did a good job covering issues of equity and diversity in the education system. He understood his own learning as a small transformation. He acknowledged his initial resistance when he attributed his terrible first practicum to his mind not being all that open at the time and acknowledged his transformation when he told me he had changed over the course of the year. He understood his change as incomplete\textsuperscript{10}, but believed he had become more open minded from the beginning to the end of the year. During the course of the year, he observed many inequities in the education system around race, gender, sexuality, and social class. He saw gender as a salient issue in his recreational co-ed athletic team, tried to be proactive with his family after they made sexist comments, and addressed gender and sexuality in a way that indicated understanding of systemic sexism, not only essential gender differences. He also seemed to understand white middle class privilege as he attributed difficulty during his first practicum to having been raised in an upper middle class neighbourhood that did not adequately prepare him for an inner city teaching experience. He was aware of his gender, race and class privileges but did not feel he was more proactive. Like some of Nancy’s students, Frank noted that the pressures of teaching, the chilly climate around issues of gender, race and sexuality in schools and his limited power as a student teacher constrained his ability to be proactive. He struggled between two options. He was not interested in condoning the racism and sexism he witnessed amongst teachers in the staff room but perceived the alternative of confronting them to be frightening and unproductive. His compromise was to address these issues as best he could in the classroom and avoid socialising with these teachers in the staff room.

\textsuperscript{10}Change can never be complete as we all continue to learn and change throughout our lives, but I thought it was important to reflect Frank’s consciousness about his process. Unlike Adam and Beth who felt their learning about multicultural education was complete, Frank knew he had more to learn about equity and diversity and as such may have been more open to this kind of learning through the course of the year.
Lisa understood her own learning in a way that paralleled Heena’s blurring of my “transformation” category. She said that Heena made them become their true selves. She noticed homophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment during her practica but was unsure of how to deal with the students. She did, however, give additional attention to students who were having difficulty and she generated class activities that required students to share air time. Lisa felt that her experience as an immigrant to Canada helped her engage in “Social Foundations” class discussions and helped her understand that students were not necessarily happy or accepted by their peers even when they were smiling.

Troy entered the class as an advocate who extended his learning during the course of the year. Being a person of colour and experiencing the effects of marginalisation caused him throughout his life to be increasingly appreciative of race and ethnocultural equity initiatives. He found that Heena’s readings in combination with what he learned in an elective course on community, family and school relations resonated with his personal experience and entering philosophy of education. For his internship\textsuperscript{11} he did a quantitative needs assessment for students at risk in elementary and secondary schools at his local board of education. Despite my expectations that a person who had been marginalised along a particular social dimension would resent having to educate his peers, Troy was happy to help his peers work through instances of racial inequity during their practica. He seemed enthusiastic about the possibility that his peers were interested in anti-racist education, and told me of a peer who had approached him to ask for detailed help about how to deal with a specific racial incident during his practicum.

These three student responses lead me to believe that Heena accomplished her goal of “keeping the ones who were excited, excited and bringing the others around.” All three students seemed involved and interested though they did admit that most of their peers, themselves included, did not read all the articles Heena assigned. This seems to have been the case in all three instructors’ classes regardless of pedagogical approach or orientation to the course. In the next chapter I will describe the group dynamics in each class and outline the specific pedagogical approaches used by each instructor.

\textsuperscript{11} All teacher candidates enrolled in the preservice teacher education program were required to complete a 6-week internship after finishing their coursework. They could choose to work in schools like they did for their practica, or they could arrange to work in other educational contexts during this time. They were not paid for their work.
Chapter Four: Pedagogy, Class Dynamics & Other Dimensions of the Course

Instructors make many pedagogical decisions each day. Whether or not their strategies are deliberate, they will have some effect on classroom dynamics. Instructors’ theories about student response work together with many other factors to influence their pedagogical decisions. For each class, I compare the instructor’s understanding of pedagogy and classroom dynamics with their students’ understandings of the same events. Additionally, I detail each case with other relevant dimensions of the course. I conclude the chapter with a brief cross case analysis and my hypothesis about the salience of instructor pedagogy as a factor influencing student response.

Greg and Ellen: Teacher Education within a Coherent Programmatic Context

Greg and Ellen worked in the context of an elementary option with a great deal of program structure and coherence. The program boasted a team teaching approach with common goals for education. Greg viewed these goals as outcomes for teacher education programs that aim to provide a holistic view of what professional teachers ought to do and think about in the course of their careers. The key goals of the program included; diversity, curriculum, legal/ethical responsibilities, inquiry/reflection, collaboration and personal philosophy of teaching. Some of the features of his program included “school-university partnerships”12, a team teaching approach and a shared set of explicitly stated outcomes for teacher education. The structure and program vision, as dictated by much of the teacher education literature on “effective” programming, were in place before students arrived and, other than choosing their assignment topics and their elective courses, students had limited choice in this program.

The fact that the program was in partnership with schools in an urban context, at least in theory, permitted some degree of resonance between university courses and school based practica. A group of five or more students were placed in a school with each group forming

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12 “School-University Partnerships” was the phrase used to describe the arrangement some programs had with practicum schools. For the majority of programs at Northmount, a central practicum office found placements for students. It is my understanding that all schools accepting Northmount Students had some sort of partnership with the university but it seemed that this term was reserved for those cases where program coordinators arranged students’ placements independently of the larger program. It was Greg’s understanding that
a school cohort. These cohorts facilitated faculty supervision and instruction. Partnerships with specially selected schools led by administrators who resonated with, or at the very least tolerated, program values were meant to increase "collaborative resonance" (Cochran-Smith, 1991) between students' practice teaching experiences and their university based teacher education program. Cochran-Smith describes the underlying logic for this type of school-university partnership.

Unlike programs intended to provoke dissonance, programs based on resonance simultaneously aim to capitalise on the potency of teaching cultures to alter students' perspectives by creating or tapping into contexts that support ongoing learning by student teachers in the company of experienced teachers who are themselves actively engaged in efforts to reform, research or transform teaching. (p. 283)

Ideally students are paired with a host teacher who has an interest in issues of diversity, or a school climate that supports such work, but since the program had limited control over the ways in which host teachers take up issues of equity and diversity, Greg found that each year there were always some exciting opportunities and some disappointments.

In their recommendations for social reconstructivist teacher education reform, Liston and Zeichner (1990) call for "better linkages with those individuals within the public schools who are working for the kinds of democratic changes that would give more people a greater voice in the determination of school policies and more students access to a better education" (p.204). While in theory these partnerships can be useful, Greg and his colleagues had a difficult time finding enough teachers at any one site who worked toward democratic education. In addition to other barriers, collaborative resonance between practice teaching climate and faculty instruction assumes that all teacher educators, administrators and teachers share an understanding of what it means to teach equitably. Since, typically, "people in positions of authority within the education system are not people who suffered debilitatingly from the effects of systemic violence in their own education" (Epp, 1996, p.4), even if an agreement could be reached between teacher educators and co-operating teachers, it would not necessarily lead to anti-oppression education. Despite these words of caution, there are administrators of school partners to his program shared a vision of teacher education with his teaching team to a greater extent than did administrators from the larger body of practicum schools.
some advantages to exposing new teachers to those in the field who support their equitable initiatives, and this state of affairs would be more likely to happen in a program that deliberately chooses co-operating teachers interested in equity education (Cochran-Smith, 1991)\textsuperscript{13}.

During faculty instruction, Greg's elementary program focussed on co-operative learning activities and assignments related to the six key program values. While the students were required to take and be graded for the same courses as students in other elementary options at Northmount, the content offered in this particular program was not delivered through discrete courses. Rather, students received a calendar throughout the year indicating the topic they would be dealing with on particular days along with the instructor responsible for teaching it. By telling me they did not have a discrete "Social Foundations" course, both Beth and Adam demonstrated explicit knowledge of the program structure as one of holistic program coherence. Both, however, were able to describe some parameter of this undefined course later in the interview. Adam's comment that Greg's course was the one dealing with "isms" told me not only that he recognised the course to be discrete but also that other courses in the program neglected to deal with "isms." Beth's comment that Greg's course was often taught as a cohort of sixty while other courses were occasionally taught as two groups of thirty told me that she also noticed a distinction between courses within the program. Despite learning the program rhetoric of "no separate Social Foundations course," both students were able to articulate some framing feature of Greg's course.

The program calendar and organisation of a coherent program with individual topics linked to particular instructors may have functioned in some students' minds as a barrier separating instructors from their course material. I say this because Beth told me Greg's part of the program was "boring" but it was not his fault since he had been given the "boring material" to cover\textsuperscript{14}. She found him to be much more effective as a practicum supervisor.

During her twenty years of teaching, hooks (1994) has "witnessed grave dis-ease among professors (irrespective of their politics) when students have wanted to see them as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply as seekers of

\textsuperscript{13} Equity education did not seem to be the central focus of Greg's program.

\textsuperscript{14} I further discuss this issue of perceived lack of ownership over course material in chapter five.
compartmentalised bits of information.” (p.15) Whether it was a function of the program or his style, Beth’s comment gave me the impression that Greg adhered to the model hooks has witnessed in the academy.

To establish and reinforce the program’s dedication to team teaching, all assignments were set and assessed by all six instructors with each instructor responsible for co-ordinating one assignment. For a portfolio assignment, students were asked to choose significant moments of their learning experience over the course of the year and reflect on them in relation to the six key program values. In a seminar assignment, students were asked to choose a contemporary educational issue relevant to them then present their findings about the issue in relation to policy, theories and philosophy underlying policy and what was happening in local schools. They had an action research assignment for which they were required to choose something to implement in the classroom and study the results of their implementation. Another assignment required that they observe three students in their class performing at, above, and below “grade level” and link their observations to the theories of traditional and non-traditional developmental theorists. One stipulation was that at least one of the three students had to be from a cultural or racially minoritised group.

As I understood the situation, each of these assignments provided a space but not a requirement to learn about inequitable power dynamics. Students had little choice in terms of program or assignment structure but had a great deal of choice when it came to choosing an issue to study for their portfolio, mini-seminar and action research assignments. The psychological assignment was most structured and was, according to Ellen, intended to help students realise that simplistic developmental models do not work, but there was nothing to prevent teacher candidates from analysing their observations through a meritocratic lens or attributing the notion of fixed ability to each of the students who were performing at, above, or below grade level. Beth believed this assignment was intended to help her and her peers learn that diversity among learners exists in the education system and that there are students who are different. She did not find it particularly challenging. She also, according to Greg, was one of the “top students in the program, academically and professionally.” If even the “top student” did not understand the purpose of the assignment as the instructors intended it,

15 Greg’s description of Beth as one of his top students led me to believe that he was using some criteria other “level of sensitivity to equity issues” to assess her.
I wonder about the extent to which Greg's students engaged in challenging work while completing their assignments. Assignments can be designed with a particular purpose in mind but instructor intent does not have a one to one correspondence with student response.

Perhaps the level of student choice through assignments allowed the team to compensate for the limited choice within the structural frame of the program. After speaking to Adam and Beth, it occurred to me that they did not experience the program structure as confining. They had more “choice” than was immediately apparent. They were, to some extent, consumers of teacher education. “As a class, we challenged our professors quite a lot. If we felt like we were not given enough of something we demanded it and instructors were often responsive to our requests.” (t-a-3)

Pressured criticality did not seem to be a consistent feature of the program but was used at a fairly stressful time for students, during their practica. Supervising instructors ensured that there was evidence of some modification to the students’ lesson planning by challenging those students who did not make such modifications or in some way account for diversity in their teaching. This took pressure off the instructors and placed it on the students who, as first time teachers, could easily be overwhelmed by the complexities of the workplace. Additionally, because of the way the instructors divided the marking and supervisory responsibilities, some students might not have even encountered this pressure during their practica. Each student had only one instructor responsible for assessing her/his portfolio and supervising her/his practica. If not all of the instructors on the team were dedicated to equity education, this division of labour would mean that some proportion of the students would miss an opportunity for pressured criticality or equity work.

One new component to the program this year was the addition of an elective course for students in all elementary and secondary programs. Greg understood this addition to limit the program since it addressed student “interests” rather than “needs.” It also, I may add, introduced change into this fairly stable program. He told me he would much prefer the program to push students beyond their comfort zones and believed that if students were given a choice, they would choose something they were interested in rather than something that would challenge them. At first his concern made little sense to me. I assumed that the elective course would give students an additional opportunity to challenge themselves around equity issues if they chose a course with social foundational content. Even if they did not
choose such a course, I reasoned that they would continue to take the required social foundational component that had been part of the program in the past. After learning about the allocation of time in the program; however, I learned that this was not necessarily the case. The presence of an elective course could actually reduce rather than supplement student’s equity education since, according to Greg, the thirty-six hours dedicated to the elective program came out of his “Social Foundations” allotted time. When I asked him why this was the case he said, “because it’s related studies” (t-abc-34). Since not all “related studies” courses were necessarily related to “Social Foundations,” this distribution of time seemed unjustified. It also served as another indication that this “integrated” program with its “team” of instructors was actually more subdivided and less co-operative than it seemed. In a program without discrete courses, it would have been impossible to take time from one course.

Beth confirmed Greg’s hypothesis that students would not choose to challenge themselves around equity issues by choosing a course with familiar content, but some of the other students I spoke with challenged Greg’s hypothesis by choosing courses that challenged them. Frank, for instance, chose a course on gender issues. After going to the registrar’s office to test Greg’s hypothesis on a larger scale, I found that forty-five percent of students chose an elective course with some degree of equity related content. From this information, I feel comfortable saying that a substantial number of students did in fact elect to take a course that might challenge them along some equity-related issue. I cannot say how many of those students were in Greg’s elementary program.

Within the context of this fairly structured program, Greg and Ellen made certain pedagogical choices. They worked with sixty students at a time, occasionally breaking them into two groups of thirty. When they did separate students, they used pre-existing institutional divisions. They placed those preparing to teach primary and junior grades in one group and those preparing to teach junior and intermediate grades in another. Since they found that a few vocal students tended to dominate discussions when the whole class came together, and since the students were required to be in class for six consecutive hours, they

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16 Using the titles of the elective courses I worked with the co-ordinator of “Social Foundations” to identify those courses we understood to have at least a potential for critical equity related content. I then tabulated the enrolment for each course and divided the number by the total number of students enrolled in teacher education this year.
chose to do many small group activities. Quite often, they broke students into base support groups and other configurations including school cohorts. The base support groups were set up to reflect the diversity of the program, where possible creating microcosms of the class. In my estimation, ensuring diversity in student groups does not prevent the white male student within each group from being coddled by his peers or the South Asian female from being asked to educate her peers on issues of racism. What it does ensure is that students who make up the majority of the class will also make up the majority of each group. It also increases the probability that issues raised in large group discussion will already have been dealt with by each of the groups.

Greg's and Ellen's assigned grouping strategy did not mesh with Adam's and Beth's explanation of student grouping. Both described "favourable" groupings within the class as though students had selected the groups but it is possible they were referring to friendship groups that developed outside of formal class time. When students are asked to choose groups, those who prefer to speak to people with similar values and experiences may form what Ellsworth (1992) refers to as "affinity groups." If base groups, school cohort groups, and mini-seminar assignment groups in Greg's class were assigned by the instructors, there might have been little opportunity for students to form affinity groups. Affinity groups may give students the safe space needed to challenge their values or may have the opposite effects and protect students from challenging their values. According to Ellsworth (1992):

Affinity groups were necessary for working against the way current historical configurations of oppressions were reproduced in the class. They provided some participants with safer home bases from which they gained support, important understandings, and a language for entering the larger classroom interactions each week. Once we acknowledged the existence, necessity, and value of these affinity groups, we began to see our task not as one of building democratic dialogue between free and equal individuals, but of building a coalition among the multiple, shifting, intersecting, and sometimes contradictory groups carrying unequal weights of legitimacy within the culture of the classroom. (p.109)

Following from Ellsworth's point, with an increased level of safety in groups students might have been more willing to bring a greater diversity of views to the large group discussion with sixty of their peers. In this case the instructors' role could become an increasingly challenging one of active facilitation. Alternatively, affinity grouping might have prevented students from challenging their values. Where possible, Beth chose to
surround herself with people who had the same values or who, at the very least, understood where she was coming from. With this sort of grouping, she felt there was less pressure to challenge or defend her ideas and values. For her, affinity groups seemed to provide the function of sheltering her privilege:

Surrounding yourself with people who share the same values as you makes it easier and when you're with people whose values are different, it makes it more difficult, because sometimes you have to defend your own ideas and possibly think about why you feel that way or value certain things (t-b-9).

Whatever the grouping strategies, both students understood the focus of the program to be about group work and co-operative learning. They discussed instructional techniques taken from a text written by the co-ordinator of the program such as "jigsaws, think-pair-share, four-corners, and place-mats," but did not say how these activities challenged them to think about equity issues. Even these group activities seemed to be informed by the larger program vision of legislated "co-operative education," and the larger program vision seemed to be more heavily shaped by the co-ordinator of the program than by the other team members. As hooks (1994) suggests, it is not uncommon to find teachers who are willing to use different teaching material but who still retain the "politics of domination" in their classroom. Using these co-operative teaching strategies can, but does not necessarily, challenge dominant power structures.

Even without the structure of the surrounding program, Greg’s instructional style seemed to be fairly structured. Beyond the six key programmatic values, he asked five broad questions as course organisers. For each question he encouraged students to think about four dimensions; theory/ideology; policy/practice; history/change; and outcomes/equity.

1. What should be the purposes of education and how should they be decided?

2. How should student diversity be reflected in education policies, practices, and outcomes?

3. What role should parents and other members of the community play in schools?

4. What shapes the nature of teacher’s work inside and outside the classroom?
5. How does educational change relate to trends in the broader social, political and economic context? (course outline, abc-2)

These questions asked students to address what education should be like and encouraged students to look at the bigger picture but did not seem to encourage students to reflect on their own practice or to challenge their own categories of privilege. They spoke to links between school and society but not to links between the individual, school and society. To account for their biography as teachers, the portfolio assignment provided a space for students to personally reflect on a specific theory-practice link in their own teaching. Greg hoped to see evidence of student learning around issues of diversity and equity, but admitted that the assignments were fairly self-directed. In order to increase the probability that students would reflect on these issues, Greg and Ellen provided experiences for students in the classroom to give them the tools to do this work.

Greg and Ellen organised around a different issue each week. On occasion they spent two classes on a topic. "‘Social Foundations’ is more of a potpourri course, a topic here and a topic there within a broader context.” (t-abc-38) They understood the trade off between breadth and depth and leaned towards breadth. Even so, they did not get around to addressing the issue of social class this year. Between Greg’s observation that his students seemed “sold on business in schools,” and Adam’s limited social class analysis of his internship placement in a private boys’ school, it seemed to me social class would have been a particularly challenging and useful concept to have raised with them.

Greg was concerned that he did not have a chance to address “student outcomes” in depth this year but accounted for this omission by sighting the paucity of Canadian research on the issue.

If you bring outcome data it’s from the United States, so Jeannie Oakes’ work on tracking for example, or Jean Anyon’s work in schools with different socio-economic backgrounds in terms of student learning experiences, outcomes in the variations that there are for students from minority groups or from lower socioeconomic levels. We don’t have good Canadian data on that. (t-abc-42)

Greg knew that these same patterns did materialise in Canadian schools, but without the support of local research data, he chose not to address the issues. I found that many of the students I spoke with described their two practice teaching placements as “good” schools and “bad” schools as they articulated the different educational opportunities available to
elementary school students. Teacher education students' descriptions of their practicum experiences could have provided current, grounded Canadian data, supporting Oakes' (1986a; 1996b) and Anyon's (1981) assertions. Perhaps the students in Greg's program who were more likely than other students at Northmount to have two similar school placements were less likely to observe the contrast in the quality of public education available to groups of students with different social locations. Still, many practicum placements in this program were in inner city schools that likely differed from the educational experiences teacher candidates had themselves growing up in Northmount. This information, along with Adam's understanding of "good" and "bad" schools, might have helped Greg link student's knowledge of the current context of Canadian schools to the American research literature on streaming within and between schools.

Greg and Ellen chose literature together even when only one of them was planning to teach. This year they changed their reading list in response to what they found useful for students in the previous year. They selected research reports clearly demonstrating people's lack of awareness about their biases in order to alert students to the possibility that they may unintentionally be doing the same. They chose articles that touched on theory and connected it to practice because, as Greg suggested, his students were only willing to engage in philosophical discussion for a limited period of time before they asked for more practical work. Despite Greg's understanding that inequities in the Canadian education system paralleled many inequities in the American system, he made a conscious effort to chose Canadian literature because of his expectation that students believed the two systems were incomparable. Even if it had resulted in greater student engagement, this practice would have simultaneously reinforced students' assumptions about the superiority of the Canadian education system.

Greg invited a number of guest lecturers into his class. He invited the faculty co-ordinator of student services to do a session with the class on anti-racist education to supplement his videos, workshop materials and readings on the topic. During this session, students were asked to anonymously write about instances of racism or discrimination they had witnessed or heard about in their schools and during faculty classes over the course of

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17 See Roman and Stanley (1997) for a good discussion of the myths and prevailing discourses about Canadian nationalism.
the year. These comments formed the text for the following class. Greg suggested that, in his experience, this kind of session has elicited more emotional response from students than sessions on teaching strategies shown to promote inter group tolerance or understanding. “They get emotional when you get into their practice, where the things that they’ve done and experienced with kids or with other teachers in the school or things they perceive as very closely connected to who they are and what they do as teachers.” (t-abc-16) Ellen described this kind of emotional link as a requirement or at least facilitator for deep learning while Greg seemed uncomfortable with students’ emotional outbursts in class. In the past he had conducted a simulation game and found that students became really emotionally charged when he brought in implications of power in the different groups to the classroom. He eventually stopped using the activity because he realised he did not have the personal skill to carry it beyond the powerful experience students had while engaging in it. He had seen this game used effectively within a ten week anti-racism school development series, but did not have the time in his course to provide a similar frame for his students.

Greg invited speakers from within the class to form an “immigrant panel.” He identified students in the class who had immigrated to Canada and asked them to participate on a panel. He then invited their peers to ask questions about the panellists’ experiences as immigrant students. He had used this particular activity in the past and found it to be powerful for many students. He suggested that connecting with individuals in a “safe” context and being able to ask them anything they wanted factored into the salience of this experience. I can only imagine that this context was more “safe” for the Canadian born students than for the panellists whose status of “other” gave them authority to speak about discrimination in schools. For students who have experienced discrimination and systemic violence in the school system it may be painful, uncomfortable or redundant to recount those stories in front of sixty of their peers. If particular experiences are truly transformative for the “majority,” instructors might want to reflect on the cost of this transformation. The costs of transformation in students who are privileged along some dimension may lie on the shoulders of those who are marginalised along that dimension. Perhaps Greg chose to use an “immigrant panel” to give voice to the experiences, perceptions and aspirations of marginalised teachers who participated in his “Social Foundations” course but it seemed like an exercise in tokenising to me.
After listening carefully to many students of colour in my sociology classes tell me that they were not interested in doing my learning for me, I began to generalise their views to all students I encountered after this point whom I perceived to be marginalised along any dimension. I was sensitised to my generalising tendencies after speaking to Sarah, who I will introduce in chapter five, and Troy. Both seemed interested in teaching their peers about dimensions along which they had personally experienced discrimination. They taught me that some students who have been marginalised along a dimension may welcome the opportunity to educate their peers and give voice to their experiences, perceptions and aspirations in a structured, instructor moderated environment. After asking Troy whether he minded playing "race educator," I was challenged by his insistence that he was honoured to play this role, not only in an instructor moderated environment but also outside of class in response to his peers’ requests for help.

Still, while some students may want to play this role, my feeling is that they should at the very least be given the opportunity to volunteer for it without feeling like they are being tokenised. hooks (1994) might disagree with me as she believes it is sometimes necessary for her to elicit the voices of marginalised students to help them overcome their resistance to talking in class. Giving students the opportunity to speak, however, is different than structuring a class around a panel in which students who have immigrated to the country are expected to share their experiences of marginalisation with their Canadian born peers. Both Ellen and Greg seemed sensitive to the problematic nature of this activity, but despite their concerns about asking marginalised students to take on a role of expert, they used a pedagogical tool that required students to do just that. This activity, like the pressured practicum supervision, took the pressure off the instructors and places it on some proportion of the students.

Ellen and Greg modelled the strategy of marginalised person as authority in their own teaching since Ellen, rather than Greg, was the "gender expert."

We identified that gender was an interest to Ellen. That's not an area in which I claim expertise but that's an area in which I'm expected to do something, so I was thankful that she was here and she was interested and took leadership in that area. I used some of her material in my graduate class....The first year we taught and planned the gender class together but the second year, I just opened it up so that she could take more responsibility in there because as a
part of a teaching assistantship she needs that, but we do plan together. (t-abc-27)

It was honest and reflective of Greg to suggest that he did not claim expertise on gender and as such provided his class with a more in depth learning experience through Ellen. At the same time, the overt curriculum of “gender issues” as a topic was reinforced by the hidden curriculum of a female teaching assistant teaching a class on gender. The students in Greg’s class this year might not have been aware that he taught a gender component in his class on cross cultural education when he taught alone. They might have seen a woman teaching about gender and been sent the message that gender education was the responsibility of women. They might then have generalised this message to issues of race, social class, sexuality and other categories of privilege.

From what I could tell, Greg did not include much instructor-facilitated time for pressured criticality. He asked students to consider why certain trends existed, such as computers in the classroom and standardised testing and asked them to look at the bigger picture of global accountability, but he did not ask how these trends act as inequitable barriers to learning. To be fair, it is possible that he did ask these questions and that I simply missed them by speaking to such a small and unrepresentative sample of students in his class, but as I briefly described in chapter two, Greg’s teaching seemed to parallel McNeil’s (1998) concept of “defensive teaching for classroom control.” McNeil has found that while “teachers can be characterised by a wide range of political and philosophical values, across these diversities, the techniques the teachers chose for controlling the classroom behaviour through approaches to course content were unexpectedly similar” (p.166). These were:

- fragmentation or the reduction of a topic to fragments or disjointed pieces of information; mystification or surrounding a controversial or complex topic with mystery in order to close off discussion of it; omission of controversial issues or controversial sides of issues; and defensive simplification or getting students to co-operate without resisting by promising that the study of this topic will require no commitment of effort and little time on their part (167-175).

With the help of his structured program, Greg fragmented the course by introducing it on a calendar as a series of disconnected topics. He tended not to use mystification but did omit discussion of social class and streaming since he was unaware of any current Canadian research on the issue. I do not believe he used simplification but did notice that he delegated
a great deal of his teaching about emotionally challenging issues to others. To discuss race, he invited the co-ordinator of student services to do a session with students. To cover the "immigrant experience," he asked his students who had immigrated to Canada to inform their peers about the inequities they faced in the school system and for the issues of gender and sexuality, he gave major responsibility to his teaching assistant. He also omitted a discussion of social class despite his awareness that many of his students seemed to be sold on the idea of business in schools. I am sure that he taught and facilitated lessons on social foundational issues, but I got the impression from speaking to two of his students that his facilitation was rather passive, allowing few students on the extremes to dominate during whole class discussion.

hooks (1994) suggests that teaching to transgress dominant structures is extremely difficult if not impossible when instructors refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks. Rather than take risks with the potential to lose control during large group facilitation, Greg seemed to choose strategies that were less personally challenging. He carefully selected literature each year to challenge students, but the consensus among the twelve students I spoke with was that, unlike assignments, readings were tacitly understood to be "optional." It would have been difficult for Greg to challenge his students through literature if they did not read it.

It would be unfair to outline Greg’s pedagogical strategies without speaking of the contextual factors that worked to constrain his choices and perhaps subvert his intentions. Those that I am aware of include: the increasingly conservative political climate resulting in the removal of equity policies he had used in the past to support his teaching; the large size of the class; the highly structured program within which he was required to teach a non-course; many students’ faith in the current education system; limited time and resources; students’ experiences living in a multicultural city without having been marginalised; and an apparent lack of attention to equity issues elsewhere in the program. Without his honesty about his teaching, I would not have had the information to construct this story. During our conversation, he seemed genuinely interested in helping prepare his students to consider equity as they worked through their teacher education programs. He did have a strong understanding and background in the sociology of education and was self-conscious enough
about his perceived weaknesses to invite others to his classroom to enrich the experience of his students.

The most salient feature of Greg's course was the fact that it was embedded in an extremely structured program somewhat resistant to change. While these were not among the six core values around which the program was structured, Adam and Beth both described the main focus of the program to be some combination of literacy and co-operative education. A program with a focus that is technical in nature is not necessarily consonant with equity education and may make it difficult for one member of a "team" to challenge his students about attending to structural inequities imbedded in the education system.

Each year Greg's students are socialised into a program with its own parameters and visions about how education should be. They are given choices about what to focus on in their assignments, but are taught and could easily be influenced by the discourse of the program as they learn to teach. hooks (1994) suggests that this method is not likely to lead to student engagement.

We communicate best by choosing a way of speaking that is informed by the particularity and uniqueness of whom we are speaking to and with ...the engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself. (p.11)

Between a fairly structured program, and Greg's pedagogical preference for structured classroom interactions, it seems unlikely that students in his program would have had much of an opportunity to engage in a dynamic or emotional way with issues of equity and diversity in teacher education.
Nancy: Religious Conflict within a Framework of Education for Peace

Unlike Greg's class in which a new group of students met an established team of instructors, in Nancy's and Heena's classes a new instructor met a cohort of students who already had been working together for a semester. For the first time, all secondary programs at Northmount University were organised around a core of three educational foundations courses. A group of students arranged by geography and the alphabetical order of their last names were placed with twenty-nine others into groups. Together they took a full-year teacher education seminar, a half-year psychological foundations course and a half-year social foundations course. They separated for two curriculum and instruction classes in their teaching subjects and one elective class. Both Nancy and Heena taught courses during second semester, unlike Greg who taught his course across the two terms.

Not only did the entire group of students in Nancy's class have a semester long history together, but a subset of them had been peers for four years in a physical education program prior to their initial teacher education year. They seemed to shape and dominate much classroom discussion as they began their "Social Foundations" course. Nancy was aware of the established group dynamic and was, to some extent, aware that her physical education students were among the most vocal, but she was not privy to the fact that they had a four-year history together prior to entering the faculty of education.

I had many students in phys. ed. in my class and I can't make any generalisations because some were phenomenal... but some students came in with certain preconceptions. I would almost characterise them as macho, even though they weren't. There was not much difference between the girls and the guys, who I would consider very cut and dry, pretty inflexible, winning and losing, and who weren't quite as willing to entertain shades of grey. (t-xyz-6)

Wendy, a graduate from the faculty of physical education at Northmount, was the one to inform me that ninety percent of students in her physical education curriculum and instruction class had been in her undergraduate program at Northmount.¹⁸ She also told me that six of the thirty students in her "Social Foundations" class came from the same program. She included herself in this group of people who were among the most outspoken in the class and who affected social dynamics in and outside of the class. For all of first term and the
beginning of second term, these students sat together in class and socialised with one another outside of class. After Nancy changed their seating arrangement on their third meeting, the social group expanded beyond the group of six. They used email as a medium for planning social events, but unlike a full class computer conference, not all students were included on this list. As such, the email list simultaneously became a medium for gossip and social exclusion.

Connell (1996) tells us that “gender is constructed within institutional and cultural contexts that produce multiple forms of masculinity. Normally one form is hegemonic over others” (p.206). Richer and more complex than a male-female dichotomy, Connell informs us gender is a socially constructed ideal. The way I understand it, this socially constructed ideal played a role in shaping the dynamics in Nancy’s class. Those physical education students, both men and women, who understood the world in a dichotomous way took up hegemonic masculinity consistent with Western societal norms. This dominant gender hierarchy in turn influenced the peer culture of the group.

While most students appreciated the class, they agreed that it was not always a pleasant place to be. Wendy reported a great deal of eye rolling and disagreement among peers who she characterised as a group of talkative, strong-headed people. Jamie and Karen experienced class discussions to be extremely polarised with the assertive people on the left and right political extremes having more air time than the students who understood the world to be more complex. Karen found the level of conflict to be uncomfortable at times and suggested that while some conflict was important to help her think about new issues, extreme conflict was not useful. Wendy said she preferred discussing to debating but she liked the intensity of the course. Chris believed her peers responded positively to the course because Nancy moderated it more than other instructors, while Karen found her peers responded better to their teacher education seminar since that instructor was better able to diffuse emotional responses. Despite their disagreement on who had greater classroom control, both students preferred to be in a class where group dynamics were moderated to some extent

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18 I have no idea how accurate this 90% estimate is since she later used the same figure to describe the number of her classmates who enjoyed a recreational activity. I have some idea that to her, “90%” means “many” and is not an accurate estimation of the proportion of students who fit a particular description.
since they felt that a "free for all" created lively discussion but simultaneously generated negativity.

By the time she met them in January, Nancy observed that her students had been used to being very intolerant of a few class members. Wendy described one level of intolerance that evaded others I spoke to. Despite the fact that the group spoke about racism many times in two of the three core classes, her peers still thought that she and the other female student of Chinese origin were best friends, or in some cases, one person. She did not believe most students would admit to their racism but felt like she had lost her individuality as her name was suddenly not her name any more. In terms of more overt intolerance, a couple of students rolled their eyes and made discouraging vocal mannerisms in response to a few of their peers' comments. Before attending the first class, one student spoke to the program co-ordinator about changing sections of "Social Foundations" in order to avoid her cohort. Another student stopped attending class in order to avoid his peers' intolerant behaviour.

Nancy reached out to both students on a personal level and brought them back to class, but a third student, who was herself overtly intolerant of others, became increasingly isolated from the group as the year progressed. Nancy was warm and approachable to all students in her class, but this one student was not a recipient of kindness from anybody in the class. All participants I interviewed described this student as an intolerant person who was overtly resistant to discussions around racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious education. She was consistently described as a "problem."

For the ones that were problems, they would have been problems wherever they sat. In some cases the groups just stepped away from the person. It was like a process. This one person seemed to be so embedded in that group, and I was beginning to see the whole group through her eyes. Gradually the group just realised that they didn't feel the way she did, or they changed or they saw the light or I don't know what happened, but they very consciously wanted to tell me not to lump them with her just because they sat at her table, that they weren't her best friends and she became a sort of standing alone person. I don't know if she got a job but she didn't get the interviews she expected to get and then she got very sick at the end of the term. (t-xyz-15).

The social exclusion of this student seemed extreme but Nancy's students as a group seemed to direct hostility toward all three students who did not fit into class norms. The fact that many students in the class worked co-operatively on their psychology assignments by dividing the workload meant that social exclusion was punitive on an academic as well as a
personal level. Students who were ostracised experienced intolerance from their peers during class, were excluded from social events after class and were required to complete their teacher education workload independently.

Aside from reaching out to some of the ostracised students, Nancy actively worked to ensure that her students would not carry on with their intolerant behaviours in class. She did not understand how she could cultivate discussions on issues of race, class and gender with students who were not even tolerant of a classmate whose life experience was slightly different than their own. She addressed the class as a whole on email and in person, describing their behaviours that were intolerant and telling them that this intolerance was the least attractive attribute of the class. On the third week, when she was completely fed up with their eye-rolling, she decided to put them in different groups and give them an activity. She asked them to enter into discussion with their assigned partners about their proudest moment and other positive experiences. Of the four women I spoke to, only Karen mentioned the activity, but all four mentioned that they appreciated Nancy’s email message and re-grouping strategy. It was after this activity that the group of physical education students expanded their circle of friends. Through her intervention, Nancy was able to affect group dynamics outside of class.

In response to this disciplining of the class, things settled down to some extent, but the one female student continued to dominate group discussions and resist equity education. The way I understand it, this student with social skills that did not mesh with those of her peers interrupted the flow of their discussion. I somehow doubt that it was her privilege alone that encouraged her to resist equity education, but hypothesise that it had something to do with her social positioning and set of social norms that differed from those of her peers. I know very little about this student but recognise descriptions of her in Willis’ (1977) *Learning to labour*, in which white, male, working class, secondary school students actively resisted the middle class education culture. “Two other groups [in addition to the middle class students and staff] against whom ‘the lads’ exclusively defined, and through which their own sense of superiority was enacted, were girls and ethnic minority groups” (p 43).

Perhaps Nancy’s overtly resistant student valued behaviour consistent with her beliefs over the behaviour some of her peers displayed of “appearing tolerant.” Her resistance might have been as much to the liberalism of her peers as to critical equity education. What I found
interesting is that Nancy described discussions around the issue of "social class" to be very thought provoking for her students and understood it as the dimension along which the whole class moved or transformed in their understanding. Either this resistant student did move in her understanding or Nancy was excluding her response from those of "the class." Two of the students I spoke to suggested a similar separation of the resistant student and the class by telling me that she had ruined the class. Without her they would have been able to speak more about equity issues. The irony is that without her, there would have been less diversity in the class. She resisted a "critical incident" assignment in which she was expected to describe an episode of her teaching experience that related to her response to diversity. Nancy gave her an alternative assignment that the student completed by describing an episode of her teaching as though it had been flawless. After reading the assignment with the impression that its author was "a walking critical incident every second of the day" (t-xyz-23), Nancy concluded that the student was not self-aware. This is one possibility. Another possibility is that she was self-aware but was not interested in reporting her difficult teaching experiences in a class paper. To me, there seems to be a functional purpose to constructing oneself as a confident and skilled teacher while trying to survive a challenging practice teaching session.

Three of the four students I spoke with, who were Catholic, defined religious education as the most salient, heated and often-discussed issue in their "Social Foundations" class\(^{19}\). Chris was the most vocal about her beliefs and framed religious education, particularly within the context of the Catholic board of education as a forgotten equity issue. She felt that program-wide, instructors and students at Northmount ignored three out of four publicly funded school systems. It is the case that English public schools receive more attention than the English Catholic, French Catholic and French public schools in the province. She became angry that the history of Catholic and French schools were not addressed in her teacher education program. After reading Bannerji's (2000) The Dark Side of the Nation, I see Canadian history as one of

\(^{19}\) It is relevant to my construction of the episode I am about to describe that I am Jewish and understand the longstanding constitutionally embedded public funding of Catholic schools (but not other religious schools) in the province to be an inequitable state of affairs. That being said, I will make an attempt to describe the following incident in as multifaceted a way as possible. I will necessarily miss some of the story.
two invading European nations—the French and the English—which might have produced two colonial nation states in this part of North America. But...instead of producing two settler colonial countries like Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and South Africa, they held a relationship of conquest and domination with each other. (p.91)

English Protestant Canada is in a position of relative dominance over French Catholic Canada, but to focus only on the power relations between these two groups of people is to exclude many Canadians.

These then are the two solitudes, the protagonists who, to a great extent, shape the ideological parameters of Canadian constitutional debates, and whose 'survival' and relations are continually deliberated. And this preoccupation is such a 'natural' of Canadian politics that all other inhabitants are only a minor part of the problematic of 'national' identity. (p.92)

I can only imagine that Chris is speaking of a different version or time period in Canadian history when she discusses Northmount University's exclusion of Catholic education from the curriculum. Northmount offers practicum placements to students in the English Catholic board of education and offers a course to students in "religious education," which is actually a course in Catholic religious education. Northmount does not offer practicum placements or religious education courses to any other religious or cultural group. Chris and I understand this religious inequity in different ways. She accepts the current state of affairs of Ontario's public school system and finds Northmount's preference of one board to be inequitable, while I find the current state of affairs of Ontario's public school system to be inequitable. Wendy, who is also Catholic but unwilling to teach in Catholic schools because she does not completely "believe," described the class debate as one between Jewish students and Catholic students. She described Nancy as the only Jewish person in the class who did not put down Catholicism. She made no distinction between putting down Catholicism as a religion and critiquing public funding of Catholic schools, but she did suggest that debates on religious education were frustrating for her since they were repetitive and rarely progressed beyond dichotomous disagreement. These kinds of positional debates seemed to reify antagonism in the class and construct those students who were neither Catholic nor Jewish as non-participants.

Karen found that the issue of religion brought out the worst in everyone. She identified herself as a Catholic woman who had always been a big proponent of religious education but was less extreme in her beliefs than Chris or Wendy. She understood the
disagreement in class to be about religious education, rather than one of anti-Catholic sentiment by Jewish students. Jamie, a Jewish student who was placed for one practicum in a Catholic school, was the only one not to mention the debate. She did, however, describe an intense and uncomfortable tension over some unnamed issue. She was well aware that she would not be hired by the Catholic board because of her religion but did not seem bothered by this fact\textsuperscript{20}. She enjoyed her placement and appreciated the overarching message at the school to “be nice to people.” When she told students and the principal that she was Jewish, both found it strange that she had been placed in the school, but both welcomed her as a student teacher.

After reading over the interviews and puzzling over this issue, I asked Nancy to help me clarify her version of what had happened. I shared my personal position, asked whether the class debate had been around Catholicism or public funding of Catholic schools, and asked how her position as a Jewish instructor influenced her teaching. Despite the intensity of my message, Nancy was very calm, thoughtful and composed in her response. She helped me understand that my question about how her social location affected her pedagogical choices made an assumption that it did in fact have an effect.

I understand your difficulty with positioning yourself in this debate, but think also of the ironies of asking a Jewish instructor to take on this marginalisation. Unlike you, I do not feel that the Catholics are unduly privileged and I did sympathise with the student who felt so strongly that the Catholic system was positioned in a second-class relation to the non-Catholic. I simply accept the terms of the BNA Act for all that they may be unfair to so many...Forty percent of Northmount students are in the Catholic options and they don’t want to feel lesser. So I think efforts are going to continue to be made to address these uncomfortable feelings. Nevertheless, the “Social Foundations” course is the right forum for entertaining these issues and attempting to make them better. Even now, I am recalling memories of the kind of which you wrote, which I find very disturbing. I will be far more sensitive to this kind of polarisation next year. The Jewish students were very articulate at the same time and willing to voice their opinions whereas others might have remained silent because they were unwilling to enter such a fraught arena. I will think about this one for sure. Thanks for sharing your insights with me. (email communication, 2000-08-18)

\textsuperscript{20}Lisa, despite having completed the Catholic religious education course at the faculty, also felt that she would not be able to find work in the Catholic board of education since she was “only half-Catholic.”
After a student emailed her some concerns around Catholic education, Nancy chose to address the issue of religion in schools during class. She chose to take this on because it was of concern to the student who emailed her and because she understood many student responses around religion in her class to be a perfect example of lack of respect. Since she did not think it would help to take it on directly, she took the Christian gospel values used heavily in Catholic education, covered the heading, handed it out to groups then asked students to imagine a better school keeping in mind the value framework on the handout. After students admitted that this was a good place to begin, she uncovered the top of the sheet. She told them that when fellow students in the separate stream spoke about the role of religion in class, and when they think of Sweet’s article (an article about placing G-d back in the classroom), they should be aware that all people have these things in common. She was pleased with her strategy since she was not hitting students over the head and found it to be very “natural.” While I appreciate her respect and thoughtfulness toward student proponents of Catholic education, I would suggest that the only reason the strategy seemed “natural” is that we live in a part of the world where Christianity is constructed as natural. The gospel values are as natural to me as having a paid holiday on December 25th every year. I am sure that my experiences, social positioning, and beliefs obstruct my ability to describe this in a truly multifaceted way but since religious education was a factor raised by so many participants, I felt it would be important to address.21

Within this intensely heated class, Nancy made pedagogical choices that were to some extent similar to Greg’s choices. She taught a different equity issue each week and used a combination of research literature, large and small group discussion, co-operative group work, independent and collaborative assignments, videos and group presentations. She addressed the purpose of education, diversity and education, race, culture, ethnicity, social class, poverty, gender, sexuality, ethics, philosophy, post-modern thought and peace education. To a greater extent than with Greg’s class, she dedicated the majority of class time to group discussions and debates about research articles. The four students I spoke with told me she led by example and was consistent in her expectations. She based student

21 It is likely that my feelings of discomfort about Nancy’s choice to deal with conflicts around religious education by taking advantage of Christianity’s dominance in Canadian society informed my analysis of her other pedagogical choices.
evaluation on a variety of course requirements; weekly discussion questions about the ways in which students were personally responding to readings, a “critical incident” assignment asking students to observe and write about something that occurred during their practicum experience relating to diversity, and an artistic group assignment about how to build schools that met Virginia Woolf’s objective to end war.

According to Wendy, Nancy facilitated large group discussions by allowing a free for all then “capping a time limit” on an issue to bring down the heat. Wendy found that this approach frustrated some students but allowed Nancy to move along on her agenda while still giving students the opportunity to state what was on their minds. Stating what was on their minds, however, by a fairly white, middle class group meant that class discussions were not always able to progress beyond a superficial level. Some students’ privileges and personal experiences limited their desire to talk about racism, sexism, classism and homophobia in depth during class. Jamie and Wendy shared this opinion. Chris found the course to be enjoyable and appreciated Nancy’s attention to Catholic, peace and gender education, and Karen found the experience to be a transformative one.

Students discussed many important issues in small and large groups. Nancy offered students the flexibility to choose their own seating arrangement each class but they continued to work in fixed groups. Initially they chose friendship groups; then, after the third class, they chose Nancy’s rearranged groups. Jamie found small group discussion more productive than large group discussion, while Chris and Wendy found large group discussion more stimulating. Karen enjoyed both but found small group discussions difficult since her group included the overtly resistant student who had received so much attention in the five interviews. Large groups accommodated those on the political extremes, those who liked intense instructor facilitated debate and those who were able to think quickly and assert their right to speak. Jamie, however, found that class discussions were not the best forum for learning about the complexity of equity issues. Those on the extremes tended to dominate discussion and repeat biographical stories “ad nauseam.” Wendy and Chris found small group discussion to be a waste of time, but Jamie found that it sheltered her from class judgement and allowed her more opportunity to speak about things in greater depth. The factors she understood to facilitate productive small group discussion were; increased air-time, increased level of trust and her peers’ level of familiarity with equity issues. As weeks
passed, she noticed with regret that larger chunks of time were dedicated to class discussion than small group work. Perhaps those who were able to assert their right to speak were also able to influence the division of class time. Unlike Jamie, Wendy was frustrated with the amount of time "wasted" in small group discussions. She felt that this time could have been better used to help the class move beyond polarised debates. Regardless of their preferences for large or small group format, however, all students I spoke with preferred multifaceted discussion to dichotomous debate\(^{22}\).

Two areas in which Nancy's approach differed from Greg's were her attention to relationship building and her use of computer conferencing.

I think you really have to care about students. No matter whether you're teaching here or whether you're teaching in a kindergarten or you're teaching grade 11, but what I know as a teacher is that everything depends on the relationships that I establish with my students. That's how I teach. (t-xyz-17)

Other than the one student who she found difficult to care for, Nancy did offer personal support to those students who would accept it. All four students I spoke with found her to be approachable. She supported a student who had been struggling to attend teacher education full time and take care of her family, listened to female students who described the sexual harassment and gender inequitable climates they experienced during their practica, connected with a student of German origin who had a profound need to talk across what she perceived as the barriers between herself and a Jewish instructor, and called a student at home, spoke with him after class and advocated on his behalf when other instructors were considering failing him from the program.

She established and nurtured these relationships with students through many media, including email. Three of the four students I spoke with found Nancy's use of email and computer conferencing to be more effective than that of any other instructor. She truly infused the use of this technology into her teaching. By asking students to respond to readings each week she was able to get a sense of whether or not they were reading at the

\(^{22}\) Students' preferences for non-polarised classroom discussions might have indicated their resistance or their interest in avoiding topics that generated emotional response. Alternatively it might have indicated their desire for more multifaceted discussion. Taking the middle ground does not always indicate indecision or liberalism. It can indicate a desire to learn about issues in a way that acknowledges conflicting views in existence. I understood it at the time I was interviewing as an expression of their desire to challenge themselves around issues that were raised in class in a way that would allow everyone in class to be involved in responding to important and difficult issues.
same time as she built relationships with them through personal weekly contact. In this way she felt she was able to get to know many students relatively well. Jamie and Chris found that Nancy’s use of email allowed her to teach increasingly student-centred lessons, afforded anonymity among peers and allowed for a less painful form of assessment than a final paper worth 100% of the students’ marks. Nancy began each class with a series of student comments because she wanted their voices rather than hers to be at the centre of the class. Her institutional role as instructor, however, ensured that while she may have been sensitive to individual student needs and concerns, her choices were always at the centre of the curriculum. Among other things, she had the power to choose her conceptual framework for the course, assign readings, create and assess student assignments, choose which student comments to present in class and what order to present them, facilitate discussion and structure class time.

Electronic communication allowed Nancy to address the whole class simultaneously about their intolerant behaviour without raising her voice. It increased her level of accessibility to many students and permitted her a level of openness and immediacy that facilitated her teaching. Ultimately, it met a variety of communication needs through the course of the term. Her relationship building and encouragement of feedback through e-mail allowed students to collectively raise an issue “off the record” in a way that she understood to be reasonable and legitimate.

Despite its versatility, I do not believe email is the panacea of teacher education. As I alluded to earlier, some students used email as a medium for social exclusion and gossip while others found it to be inequitably accessible. Karen was the only one of the four who did not address Nancy’s use of email. Since she had been away from school for twenty years, and had not used technology to run her business, she was still working on becoming computer literate. As it was, she was not completely comfortable with this form of communication. Ultimately email was not equitably accessible to all students. While Northmount did provide a free email address to all education students, there were those students who did not have internet access at home or who were not yet comfortable with this form of communication. Others found it to be impersonal and thus not amenable to relationship building.
Beyond Nancy’s control were a set of contextual factors constraining and facilitating her pedagogical choices. The social foundations cohort offered her the structural possibility to work co-operatively with two other instructors teaching the same class, but one instructor who was no longer working with the class did not return her email messages and another responded only when Nancy initiated contact. Still, the second instructor was able to share difficult experiences and dialogue with her about group dynamics. Other “Social Foundations” instructors and the co-ordinator of the “Social Foundations” course were able to offer her some support, guidance and critical feedback about her teaching. Since the course was offered in second semester, many students were tired and under a great deal of pressure to complete assignments and take on additional teaching responsibility and had less time and energy to reflect on their experiences. They understood any factors with the potential to increase the complexity of their practica to be either superfluous, or important but difficult to deal with. In schools where classroom control was understood to be a necessary pre-requisite for student engagement, associate teachers who were responsible for student evaluation may have had more power to influence student behaviour than did university-based instructors. The four-hour classes were too long for some, not long enough for others and reasonable for others still.

One of the most salient factors that I believe influenced student engagement, or perhaps transformation, was the peer culture in the class. Students who were accepted and respected by their peers were encouraged to challenge themselves around their privileges and beliefs and were supported in their efforts. Students who were excluded were given little support from their peers to work through the same issues. Within this context, Nancy saw her role as one of reaching out to, supporting and challenging as many students as possible.

When I first contacted Wendy, she was frustrated by the fact that she and her peers were only able to brush the surface of the deep and needy issues of gender, race and socioeconomic status. When I spoke to her one month later she had changed her mind. At the end of the interview, she told me she appreciated Nancy’s approach and found the class to be the most stimulating one at Northmount in terms of controversial issues. Upon
reflection, she appreciated Nancy's determination and instruction in raising important issues to a population that would be dealing with and teaching about them as front line educators.\footnote{If Wendy's change of heart upon further reflection was not unique, I have reason to believe that the often negative student evaluations of teaching on the last day of class may not be the most accurate or robust forms of feedback instructors receive from their students.}
**Heena: Challenge Without Threat through Respectful Disagreement**

While I understood program context in Greg's case and peer dynamics in Nancy's case to be the dominant factors shaping student response to their respective courses, I learned from Heena's students that it was something about her presence and approach that most profoundly affected their responses. Just like in Nancy's class, students came in on the first day of second term exhausted, lethargic and less than motivated to begin a course called "Social Foundations".

Heena did not mention student exhaustion but Lisa described her peers' attitudes in the following way.

When we first went into Heena's class, we didn't know her. We said 'we're just going to warn you, everybody in this class is extremely tired, no motivation whatsoever, we have no reason to be here and we're extremely tired.' She said, 'Okay, what do you want me to do? How can I help you?' and I said to her, 'honestly, it's not fair to you, but we don't know how to help ourselves.' And so she was very good about it and she tried to bring in a lot of interesting stuff. She gave us breaks. She was quite understanding. She told us 'it's normal to go through this. It's the time of the year,' and everybody pulled the energy up as time passed. (t-2-16)

All three students described Heena as a "people person" who was understanding, open and dynamic enough to help them engage in the ideas of the course. They described her as an alive, energetic and enthusiastic person who helped them make sense of what they were doing. They compared her to their psychology instructor who was knowledgeable but failed to maintain class interest through her monotone, Socratic lessons24. I believe that something about Heena's enthusiasm, experiences, social location and skilled facilitation helped students engage in her course. Troy was the only one to mention Heena's experience as a woman of colour. He suggested that her understanding of what it meant to be marginalised on the basis of race helped inform her lessons in a really important way. Frank, who was more conservative in his praise about any aspect of his program, told me that Heena covered the issues well, and Lisa described Heena as the most engaging instructor she had met in the program.

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24 In this context it seems that Lisa used the term "Socratic lessons" pejoratively to describe traditional teacher-centred instruction. She did not seem to be referring to Socrates’ question-answer style of teaching.
After observing her class, I noticed that Heena was very playful with her students. She seemed able to expose the “hidden curriculum” of her pedagogical choices and of student dynamics in a way that did not seem to hurt anyone. She gently mocked herself and others. Students seemed to follow her example by continuing this playful banter on their own. She told one student that his name meant “the king” after he facilitated a discussion without having been asked to do so, and referred to another popular male student as her “golden boy.” The way I understood the situation, her comments created a space for gender dynamics and sex-role stereotyping to be gently challenged. Ginsburg and Clift (1990) argue that the “hidden curriculum” of teacher education programs, the ways in which teacher educators act with their students and with one another, stands at the core of teacher socialisation. My understanding of Heena’s “presence” as the most salient factor affecting student response resonates with their argument.

Lisa found Heena’s demonstration of openness through her ‘cultural bag’ lesson to be the primary factor preventing others from being prejudiced. She believed that Heena’s willingness to “exploit” herself in front of the class helped others open up to the challenging ideas in an open-minded way. Heena described the activity and her intentions behind it:

In the first session of my class, I always do an activity called “cultural bag”... it’s a way of telling a selective story about yourself using props. So I have my little bag, I pull out the props. I talk about things that are important to me. The way I do that in terms of this course, all of my courses really, is to structure it so that I’m talking about why the subject matter is important to me and how I came to think about all of these different issues. I tell them it’s for several reasons. One is that I want them to understand who I am and how I think so that they’re better able to challenge me. I also want them to understand that these are not just intellectual issues, that there are real people attached to them, so you know emotion is very much a part of the learning around these things. (t-123-3)

Behind her “presence” as experienced by students was Heena’s explicit focus on community building. She did this by building relationships with all of her students. Following her “cultural bag” lesson, she invited students to tell their own stories more privately through journals. Troy was happy to do it but Lisa and Frank did not enjoy all of

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25 Heena’s choice to gently challenge power dynamics through humour seems consistent with her choice to “challenge students without threatening them.”
the reflecting they were asked to do.\textsuperscript{26} They did, however, see the point of it. Lisa suggested that her ideas became real when she wrote them down and as long as she was encouraged to think about why she did things in a certain way rather than recount what she had done wrong she valued the process of reflecting. She felt that when her other instructors asked her to reflect, they were actually asking her to describe to them what she already knew she had done poorly. As Beyer (1991) contends, reflective teaching has lost its descriptive value since it no longer refers to a particular phenomenon. Just like any other process that has been popularised in educational research, generic reflection does not on its own transform students or teacher education.

Reflective teaching as at least some sort of ideal seems to have attracted a sizeable number of adherents in the recent past, promising an alternative that moves beyond the mainstream of teacher preparation....[but] it is not always clear that people who use the term 'reflective teaching' have the same idea or concept in mind, share an understanding of how reflective teaching is to proceed, or agree on how teaching or teacher education would change if this idea were made central to the preparation of teachers. (p. 113)

Heena used journal entries in order to build relationships with her students. Whether it was the entries themselves or some combination of other factors that helped her build strong relationships, I cannot say, but she did seem to have good relationships with her students. On the day I observed her class, students appeared to be engaged in active community building. I watched with amazement as she greeted each of them by name and personally handed them their assignments when they entered her classroom. She did this for all students in the same tone of voice, whether they arrived before class began or an hour into the lesson. All but one student arrived on time. Heena found that the relationships she built with her students through their journals gave class discussions, activities, readings and assignments a richer meaning for herself and for them. Perhaps her attention to every individual in her class made it possible for her to address conflict in the class without making people angry\textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{26} Many students described their teacher education programs in terms of their level of "enjoyment" of various components. Troy's language was notably different in that he spoke about components of the program as being more or less "useful."

\textsuperscript{27} From speaking to Heena I got the sense that she understood student anger and emotion to be appropriate learning tools in many cases. At the same time I noticed that anger was not a student response she seemed to elicit.
Heena did not use email as extensively as Nancy but was accessible by email to all students who found this form of contact useful. She checked her email before class in order to ensure that she had read any urgent messages before she began teaching. Lisa told me that everybody felt free to speak and did speak during class. She attributed this phenomenon to Heena’s use of discussion rather than debate. I attributed it, in part, to Heena’s disbelief in the idea of "student resistance." She treated even those students who entered with their "backs up" as learners. This approach gave students who might have resisted the opportunity to challenge their privilege the time and the freedom to define their learning in a way that worked for them without trapping themselves in the role of “resistant student.” Obidah (2000) used a similar approach in her teaching of an elective “Culture in Education” class. While many students responded positively to her class, she was shocked to find out that at least one of her students of colour felt neglected:

She almost ignored me and other African American students in the class. Then she would push and cradle her white students. I learned that she knew and understood we were different and pushed us in various and unique ways, but it hurt. I hated her for pushing me like she did. It hurt me and at the time I hated it. (p. 1056)

As she began to teach her class, Obidah’s expectations of who would feel empowered to speak affected her pedagogical choices. As a professor she felt responsible for all her students and did not want to silence them by making them feel uncomfortable since she believed silencing students would be antithetical to critical multiculturalist pedagogy. At the same time, at least one of her students of colour who registered for the class expected “an opportunity to finally tell her white counterparts all that she had ever felt about white people, power and privilege in society. She also felt that the discomfort of the white students was ‘their problem’”(p. 1056). Obidah expected that African American students would feel empowered by the presence of an African American professor and would participate more actively in discussions as a result. I expected that my challenge would be to create spaces in the classroom dynamics where the voices of European American students could become empowered. These expectations did not occur as I had predicted, and I was forced to make adjustments throughout the course in my endeavor to legitimise students’ experiences as integral to the teaching and learning that took place (p. 1057).
Reading Obidah’s article confirmed my suspicion that a “safe” classroom for all was an unattainable goal. In a class where people are differently positioned along some dimension of privilege overtly being discussed in class, someone will necessarily experience discomfort.

The way I understand their approaches, both Obidah and Heena taught in ways that demonstrated a need to teach even the most resistant of their students. Heena’s disbelief in characterising her students as “resistant” affected her treatment of them. During one of our initial conversations she told me that she did not believe any of her students were resistant, but if she were to use the concept to understand any student response she would use it for Frank. Still she told me she respected him for “sticking it out” in two of her courses. Two weeks later she showed me his final assignment with pride. His project demonstrated to me that he had worked through diversity in an artistic way, an assignment he had opposed, both in form and content, throughout the year.

Frank told me that he had almost dropped out of the program because of the social dynamics in his political science class in which two vocal male students on the extreme political right and left dominated class time and bifurcated the group by establishing two sets of followers. Community support and what he described to be “good chemistry” in his teacher education seminar and “Social Foundations” class kept him in the program. The fact that he did not include the psychology class he took with the same group leads me to believe that something about the two instructors’ approaches facilitated these positive social dynamics.

Lisa told me that her teacher education seminar instructor set class dynamics in first term by inviting students to share their beliefs and social positioning during a structured activity. She found that he helped facilitate discussion and positive dynamics to a greater extent than did their psychology instructor in whose class students did not speak or “twitch a muscle.” Troy agreed that people were less engaged in one of the three educational foundations classes but suggested that social dynamics between students were good in all three. In addition to the emotional support, Frank found the networking and distribution of information about the program to be a lifeline. His peers were able to inform one another about upcoming events, help one another prepare for the employment preparation conference and work together to determine which assignments were “really” mandatory.
I witnessed a great deal of support firsthand, as I saw students help their peers through a discussion of each issue that arose. Those who raised alternate views were welcome to do so providing their precise point had not yet been addressed. All three students described a relaxed atmosphere in which they felt comfortable speaking about challenging issues. They found that there was often disagreement but it was always accompanied by respect. On the day I observed the class, I did see a bit of eye-rolling directed at a student who suggested that homosexuality was a political "lightening rod" but found students to embrace other comments made by this same student. I also watched two groups of students continue to discuss class issues even after the end of scheduled class time. Whether or not this was linked to Heena's community building effort I cannot say, but Lisa told me that all students who were interested were invited to get together on the day they returned from their internship.

Heena taught "Social Foundations" both first and second term and found the cohort structure to be helpful in both cases.

In the "Social Foundations" course, students were a kind of mini-cohort and they already knew each other, or at least in the second term class they already knew each other. In the first term class there was a sense that this group was going to stay together throughout the year and there was that sense of a community that went beyond just my class. They spent more time together than just my class, which I think really facilitated the whole process...community building...That's I think a part of what creates the learning in the class. As much as anything else, they learn from each other.

(t-123-13)

Despite her support and strong class dynamics, however, some students did engage in class discussion to a greater extent than others. Heena told me that she was least successful at bringing some of the quiet students of colour into class discussions. She found them to engage in journal writing and in the ideas of the course, but not in large group discussions. She found that students of colour in her class tended to be among the most and least vocal and she formed a set of hypotheses about this phenomenon. She believed the vocal students of colour wanted to be teachers as role models or had a desire for acceptance and used their voice to gain acceptance for issues of race. I believe Troy, one of the most vocal students in the class, added support to her hypothesis. As a vocal student of colour, he spoke about his need to model anti-racist education to his students and peers.
Heena found the more quiet students of colour were younger and believed they either did not want to be “hammered” by their peers or had so much experience being silenced that they remained quiet. Either way, students of colour told her they would never confront her in a public forum even if they disagreed with her approach or something she said. Combining Heena’s experience that students of colour would not confront her in a public forum even if they disagreed with her and Obidah’s (2000) experience with a an African American student who was upset that her African American instructor cradled her white students, I have generated a hypothesis. It is possible that the quiet students of colour disagreed with Heena’s approach of engaging even her most resistant white students but did not want to disagree with a woman of colour teaching in a public mixed-race forum.

hooks (1994) argues that educators can help students from non-materiially privileged backgrounds overcome their resistance to talking in classrooms by eliciting their contributions, promoting dialogue, and developing an atmosphere that acknowledges and honours “difference.” From what I observed, Heena was able to develop an atmosphere that acknowledged and honoured difference, but did not necessarily elicit contributions of two quiet students of colour in her class. I did, however, notice that both of these students spoke freely during a small group activity. Perhaps they had built trust with her through their journals and with a subset of their peers through small group interactions but had not yet done so on a whole class basis in their very white middle class cohort.

For both large group discussions and small group work, I noticed a seating arrangement informed heavily by gender. Any person walking into the class would have known that I was the one who had not yet learned group norms since I was the only woman on the men’s side of the room. Those men and women who broke gender role stereotypes during class sat near the middle-left of the arc. The students’ chosen seating arrangement highlighted the fact that there were three times as many women as men in the room. I caught myself wondering where a transgendered person might have sat, and realised that the gender continuum which formed in the place of two possible dichotomous groups would have afforded every/body a place to sit. Frank sat to Heena’s far left, Lisa to her far right, and Troy near the middle left. I came to class early, placed my bag to Heena’s left and noticed that two women had occupied their seats to Heena’s right. As I watched people filter into the classroom I saw that all of the men sat to Heena’s left and all of the women to her right. My
accidental geographical positioning proved fortunate as it allowed me to hear Frank’s mumbled comments and later engage him in a discussion about them. I asked Heena if students always sat this way and she said that they always sat according to sex, but women were not always to her right and men were not always to her left.

Heena’s students seemed to make use of this gendered seating arrangement. They made their choices explicit by teasing one another about their gender-stereotyped behaviours. At one point a woman in the room asked the men why they always sat together. A man returned the question. Heena said that the students commented on their chosen seating arrangement three or four times a year. The gender continuum in the classroom provided an interesting frame from which to talk about gender issues. It also gave students the opportunity to explicitly choose a non-stereotyped gender group. Troy was the only man in the class to sit outside the all-male group during a small group activity. No women chose to sit with the men’s group, but the men did warmly welcome me as I briefly joined their group. Both Troy and Frank told me that the all-male group increased their comfort level when speaking about challenging issues. When I asked Troy why he chose to sit with the women, he laughed and told me that he liked to challenge himself and learn from all of his peers. I noticed when I joined the all-male group that their increased comfort level allowed them to disagree about the issue at hand. In fact, I observed a similar level of disagreement about the issue in an all-female group. In addition to providing a relatively sheltered space for discussion, students’ chosen seating arrangements helped Frank ground his reading by providing a link between theory and practice. When he noticed that the seating arrangement described in an academic article about gender was replicated in some of his classes, the message behind the reading became more powerful for him.

While the idea of an affinity group composed of mainly white men seems like a frightening prospect to me, I was pleasantly surprised by what I observed. This group seemed to afford men the space to talk about their privilege; something they might not have been able to do in a mixed gender group. They said nothing derogatory about women and challenged one another on comments they found to be inequitable. They teased the member with the most feminist views but warmly invited his contributions. My presence as a female participant observer may have inhibited them from speaking their minds, but since I did not hear an abrupt end to conversation as I approached or left, I had the impression that I did not
greatly interrupt their flow of speech or ideas. As Ellsworth observed in her own teaching, "affinity groups" are:

necessary for working against the way current historical configurations of oppressions were reproduced in the class. They provide some participants with safer home bases from which they gain support, important understandings and a language for entering the larger classroom interactions. (p.109)

While Ellsworth’s comments about affinity groups makes sense to me, an affinity group of white men seems to be an unnecessary redundancy in North American society. Still, a class that includes white male students and an established arrangement of affinity groups with people who are marginalised along a particular dimension necessitates the formation of such a group. Whether or not an all male affinity group would be advisable, I am not sure that it even provides a supportive space for men to challenge their privilege. During my brief observation of such a group in Heena’s class, I did find group members to support each other as they challenged some of their privileges, but another “Social Foundations” instructor described a case that showed otherwise. He told me about a male student in his class who was only able to talk about male bias in a group without his other male peers. The way I understand this situation, some students who are still uncomfortable challenging their privilege among others who share this privilege may appreciate the opportunity to challenge themselves in groups they feel would be more supportive of their efforts. As for student grouping strategies, like I have found to be the case with all other pedagogical techniques, there does not seem to be one “appropriate” or failsafe way to form discussion groups.

Unlike the state of affairs in Frank’s curriculum classes and Nancy’s and Greg’s “Social Foundations” classes, discussion in Heena’s class moved beyond an extreme positional debate.28 Since I was unable to observe Nancy’s and Greg’s classes, I am making this assertion only from the data I collected and constructed during interviews with the instructors and a handful of students in each class. It is possible I would have observed more complex classroom discussion in their classes as well had I had the opportunity to visit. I attribute the complexity of group discussions in Heena’s class in part to her strong facilitation

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28 After observing four hours of Heena’s class, I defined her class discussions to be something other than extreme positional debates. A sample of classroom discussion follows in the next few pages.
skills. Lisa found that Heena gave students a chance to speak out and state opinions whereas other instructors wanted them to participate but were not interested in their opinions. Troy found Heena to be a good listener who used a systematic approach to bring out important issues. She used her life and theirs to bring out major themes of the course. She attended to the non-verbal cues of students and invited them to disagree with her and she listened and responded to their comments after filtering them through a democratic lens. She redirected their energy and frustration with constraints in the school system in a way that encouraged them to think about productive action they could take. In addition to these pedagogical strategies that I was able to observe, were a number of others that I have been unable to adequately describe. I watched with amazement as the group had discussions where they disagreed without becoming angry with one another.

For all issues discussed in class I observed a similar pattern. First I heard from the extremes; then, after a comment or two from Heena, I heard from those who took the middle ground. After a question or two I heard students raise barriers to equitable teaching and after a gentle push from Heena, I heard discussion around agency and action. For some issues more facilitation was required, for others less, but in all cases discussion progressed. Here is an example:

Heena: What are some things that work against a culture of peace?

White male: Well, you need competition. How can you play elimination games without competition? What's the point in smacking someone on the head if you can’t eliminate them?

White female: Maybe we don’t need to play elimination games.

White male: (Laugh) But then what’s the point?

Heena: It depends on how you play. When I used to play Trivial Pursuit with my younger brother, who along with me was raised in a culture of cooperation, we would just take turns with the cards and everybody would give the person clues until they got the answer or didn’t want to guess anymore. My older sister and brother didn’t know what to think. (laughter in the room)

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29 I say in part because it is also the case that the instructor for this cohort’s teacher education seminar worked with them to establish a strong community of learners.
30 I have included only the verbal interactions in the class but am unable to adequately describe the aura of class dynamics. There was a cohesive and engaging presence in Heena’s class that I have had a difficult time replicating in written form.
White male: Standardised testing works against a culture of peace. It brings competition into the classroom and models it for students.

White female: Yes. That’s true. It increases the level of competition.

Frank: I disagree. In the current system nothing is getting taught. Schools that cater to poor students drop their standards for everyone. Competition is good. It is better than the current system.

Heena: I disagree that in the current system nothing is getting taught...It doesn’t have to be one or the other. We don’t have to remove competition completely but we can think more carefully about how we can use co-operation.

Lisa: competition is part of nature.

White female: A culture of competition is not natural. Our culture is not equivalent to human nature. It is part of North American culture.

Troy: It is possible to engage in sport but not be competitive. We can separate ambition and competitiveness. The way we handle competitiveness can be aggressive and violent. In some ways it’s all around us but we can approach education differently if it’s education for peace.

Heena: What could we do to promote peace in the curriculum?

White female: when teaching history we could teach peace as well as war. My associate teacher told a student who was flicking the light to “stop breaking my balls cause I’ll break yours!”

Heena: Sexism, racism and classism work against a culture of peace. I just feel a need to say that. (laughter in the room)

White female: History should not just target white males.

Troy: That might open up the issue. It won’t let people sweep these issues under the carpet in teaching. We’ve had good discussions in this “Social Foundations” course about race, gender and sexuality, which is a good first step.

Heena: yes.

White female: The light was just a ridiculous thing to fight about. Punishment works against a culture of peace.

Heena: the readings got you to look at some Native customs. Healing circles rely on reparation rather than punishment.
White female: There is this mythology or grand narrative being built that kids are problems.

Heena: They are vilified. Accepting responsibility is equivalent to accepting blame and nobody wants to do that. It's grim but there is a way out. (class laughter)

White female: If students don't see school as a safe place to talk about conflict then where can they do that?

Heena: Yes, exactly, giving these schools a new approach.

White female: When we vilify kids it ends up being a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Heena: We have to start with ourselves and our own approach. I tend to start with Ghandi. I'll tell you as quickly as this works. (lesson on some of Ghandi's teachings) (obs-123-37-39)

Many students had the opportunity to speak during this exchange. There was little repetition and little agreement, but all students respectfully listened to their peers as the conversation progressed. Most students followed Heena's lead by moving from description to ideas for action. Like Greg and Nancy, Heena assigned readings that focussed on one equity issue each week but she also wove other issues into discussion. In this class she focussed explicitly on education for peace, but brought up issues of racism, sexism, homophobia and classism. Learning in her class was a process. She was explicit about pedagogical choice, used stories from her life to introduce cognitive dissonance in students' minds, included non-Western influences, was explicit about her pedagogical choices as she made them and chose what to challenge and what to leave to student discretion.

Heena gave students a great deal of choice when it came to procedural issues but challenged them when they did or said something to perpetuate social inequity. Her approach differed from Greg's who seemed to choose procedures and equity related curriculum while allowing students to choose the extent to which they would challenge themselves around these issues. Troy recalled Heena's teaching as challenging. "She did not put up with racism or denial of racism. She was firm and challenging while still supportive." (t-3-9) When she did challenge students, she did it in a way that did not seem threatening or moralistic. She began the class I observed by reading a Christian parable with a twist. I did not recognise the story but saw recognition and surprise in the faces of some of Heena's students. She told a story about "the lion and the unicorn" with a changed ending. When I
asked her about her choice she said that she had never read the original story but "for students who know it, it adds a twist to a familiar lesson, to love somebody because they are different and not in spite of it. For those who don't know it, it's a nice story." (personal communication, summer 2000) Unlike Nancy's strategy of promoting gospel values, Heena gently challenged a Christian source while using it to introduce her lesson.

Like the other instructors, Heena focussed on an equity issue each week and used a combination of research literature, poetry, large and small group discussion, co-operative group work, independent and collaborative assignments and student presentations. She also used a great deal of story telling. She addressed educational goals and the roles of teachers, approaches to diversity and education, race, culture, ethnicity, First Nations, social class, gender, sexuality, and peace education. She seemed to evenly split class time between large and small group discussion, teacher-centred presentation and co-operative activities. She evaluated students through weekly reflective journals, a 'critical incident' assignment requiring students to reflect on something that happened in their practicum relating to diversity and two group papers centred around "building better schools." For the group assignment, she expected each group to produce two papers, one exploring different ideas about education and teaching as a means to discuss their philosophies of education and another discussing their approach and contrasting approaches to diversity. Each student in the group was then expected to make an artistic object representing what he/she was planning to do to create this better approach to education. Heena built process into her assignments. For the "critical incident" assignment, she increased the likelihood that students would include some critical reference to diversity upon completion of the paper by asking them all to hand in a draft. When she returned the drafts with individual comments she told the class as a whole that their papers were good but not exactly what the assignment was asking. Again, she did not accept a notion of student resistance but rather treated student written response as a draft of work in progress. She gave them the benefit of the doubt and the space to learn.

Students seemed really engaged in the course but worried that the discussion they were having in class did not mesh with the conservative and inequitable reality they witnessed in schools. Frank in particular had a difficult time making this transition. He made some attempts but received little in the way of support from his associates. Lisa made
some minor modifications but did not feel comfortable acting in a way that was completely equitable. Troy felt comfortable working towards equity but found some of the teachers working at one of his practicum schools to be “unprofessional.” He did not tell me about the nature of the problem but my hypothesis is that it revolved around racism. In his study at a Canadian faculty of education, Solomon (2000) found that associate teachers at many practicum schools gave preferential treatment to white students involved in cross-race dyads.

All students who participated in an interview with me experienced two of Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann’s (1985) “pitfalls” of experience in teacher education. The “two-worlds pitfall” arises from the fact that teacher education goes on in two distinct settings between which connections cannot be easily made, while the “cross-purposes pitfall” arises from the fact that classrooms are not set up for teaching teachers. While I did notice Heena ground her class discussions in students’ practicum experiences, she could not facilitate their learning or protect them from discrimination when they were away from her class.

Other than an occasional exception like Greg’s program, most programs at Northmount did not have school partnerships. For each cohort Heena taught, she might theoretically have to travel to thirty schools in the area within and surrounding a large metropolitan city just to visit each student once. Even if this were physically possible, sustained supervision for all students would be unlikely to happen. Some students were visited once by their curriculum instructors, but no student in the secondary program was supervised in a sustained way by any faculty advisor. Students were supervised and evaluated by their associate teachers. Students with an interest in public school teaching understood that it was associate teacher evaluations rather than “Social Foundations” grades that would “really matter” as they were looking for work.

In addition to the rather inequitable state of affairs observed by student teachers as they entered the school system, Heena, like the other instructors, was constrained by the limited time available to work with students around issues related to equity and diversity. Like Nancy, Heena was constrained by her students’ level of exhaustion during second term. While Lisa reported an increase in student energy in response to Heena’s dynamic approach, she also found that her peers were exhausted and under a great deal of strain during this time of year. Another constraint experienced by Heena and confirmed by students in her class was that not all “Social Foundations” instructors addressed issues of equity and diversity as
an integral part of their courses. This could have potentially sent students the message that while “Social Foundations” was a required course, equity and diversity education was not a required component of their program.

Heena found that some combination of the cognitive dissonance and resonance students experienced as they compared her course to others actually facilitated her teaching. Students experienced cognitive dissonance between her course and many of their curriculum classes since these classes, in some cases, paid less overt attention to equity. Once students were able to see the world through a feminist, anti-racist or some other critical lens, they began to notice this omission of equity issues in their other courses and this omission helped them appreciate Heena’s course. What it did not do was help them infuse anti-oppression education into the curriculum as they began their practica. It can be a challenge to convince new teachers of the importance of teaching equitably, but without the support from curriculum instructors it can be difficult for students to enact these lessons in the classroom. Troy raised the importance of professional development for curriculum instructors who were uncomfortable with equity issues. He told me it was often easier for prospective teachers to teach a subject equitably if they had seen it modelled this way by teacher educators.

One factor that facilitated Heena’s work with this particular cohort was the resonance students experienced between her course and their teacher education seminar. Through a relatively consistent though different approach to equity education, she and the instructor of the other foundational course were able to support each others’ work without actually planning lessons together. Since core classes were taught separately, students in Heena’s class reported the same repetition of autobiographical stories between courses that Jaime described in Nancy’s class.

From what I observed and heard from her students, Heena’s pedagogical approach was one of dynamic and critical instruction. She was able to challenge her students without threatening them. With the support of another instructor teaching her cohort, she was also able to maintain and extend strong group dynamics through active community building. “In Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, hooks urges educators to transgress conventional educational norms and practices, and to create strategies for making the teaching/learning process more dynamic, exciting and meaningful to students.” (Namulundah, 1998, p.100) I understand Heena’s teaching to be one of transgressing
conventional norms and practices through her dynamic, exciting and critical approach to "Social Foundations."
Cross case analysis

Since I incorporated some comparison into my individual case studies, I have chosen to only briefly compare pedagogical strategies used by the three instructors and reflect on the similarities and differences in student responses to each course. I focus on four of the many possible dimensions along which this comparison can be made: level of pedagogical control, gender and the use of relationship building, extent to which connections were encouraged between the individual, school and society and strategies used to deal with resistant students.

Relative to other "Social Foundations" instructors at Northmount, the three instructors I spoke with all shared some level of commitment to equity education. All three chose to teach their "Social Foundations" course by paying overt attention to issues of equity and diversity in teacher education. They all taught the required course in the same one year undergraduate pre-service program and they all employed a similar variety of pedagogical strategies. They had different levels of energy, different kinds of experiences and different depths of understanding around the issues, but they addressed many of the same concepts through an "issue of the week" approach. All used some combination of educational research and student practicum experience in their teaching and all, in their own ways, were attentive to student feedback throughout the course of the term. Despite some subtle differences that I have accentuated in each of the case descriptions so that I might tell different stories, the three instructors seemed more similar than different in their pedagogical approach.

One obvious structural difference was that between elementary and secondary panels. Greg taught in the elementary panel while Nancy and Heena taught in the secondary panel. From Beth's and Adam's descriptions of their particular elementary program, I got the feeling that "Social Foundations" was peripheral to the literacy education core. In the secondary panel, Northmount's program structure privileged the "Social Foundations" course by assigning it as one of three core components. After interviewing a student from a different elementary option at Northmount, however, I realised that many of the structural differences between panels also occurred within panels. As such, I do not feel justified in attributing the difference in instructor approach to the panel in which their students were preparing to teach. I have reason to believe that the differences between these three
instructors’ approaches had more to do with the level of structure and co-operation employed by instructors of any one cohort than with the panel.

Greg taught a “non-course” to sixty students over the course of the year, whereas a student I spoke with in another elementary program at Northmount took a specific “Social Foundations” course with thirty of her peers and experienced little program coherence or team teaching between her instructors. Her experiences were more similar to those of students in Nancy’s and Heena’s classes. Another reason I do not feel justified in making this distinction based on panel is that Heena and Nancy shared similar course outlines that were not necessarily shared by “Social Foundations” instructors of other secondary cohorts. So, while it is possible to make distinctions between panels, I do not have adequate information with which to do this.

In terms of pedagogical control, I found that the level of control students perceived each instructor to have in the classroom paralleled the level of control I experienced each instructor to have in her/his interview with me. I had a difficult time asking Greg questions that diverged from my interview schedule and felt somewhat more intimidated to ask him to elaborate on various points. Looking at his outlines, listening to him speak and speaking to his students, I believe he attempted to control student response more so than did Nancy or Heena, but my comparison is not a fair one since sixty students as a group demand more structure than thirty. He arranged student groups, structured his own lessons around six key values and five central questions and used student-neutral outlines. While Ellen told me that emotional responses facilitated transformation, Greg seemed to go out of his way to avoid situations that might lead to emotional outbursts.

My interview with Nancy was a conversation directed by me as the interviewer. I could easily ask questions as they occurred to me and she seemed willing to answer them as best she could. In the classroom she seemed to use a similar approach with her students. Through weekly emailed responses, she dedicated some portion of each class to her students’ concerns in relation to the readings. Between Wendy’s description of classroom discussion as a “free for all” and all four students’ description of the heated nature of discussions that ensued, I believe that Nancy had less classroom control than Greg or Heena. My interview with Heena was an ongoing dialogue. She invited me to her class and suggested we meet several times over the course of a few months. I was able to ask questions as they occurred
to me and choose the setting of our interview. My conversations with her were a dialogue in which we both had some say and some level of control. In her classroom she chose the readings, facilitated discussions and planned classroom activities but gave students some option with regards to break times and the ways in which they might use their practicum or life experiences to discuss the issues she focussed on each day. She was very much present as a facilitator and moderated the direction of each discussion to ensure progress was made along a particular issue, but asked open questions and was willing to follow the students’ lead in terms of content. As I was able to observe in Heena’s class, some combination of instructor control and emotional student response, when balanced, seemed to lead to increased student engagement.

In terms of gender, Greg’s, Nancy’s and Heena’s approaches seemed consistent with those described in the literature. In a thorough review of gender and teachers work, Acker (1995-96) cites the work of Carol Gilligan, Mary Belenky, Nona Lyons and Nel Noddings as she outlines the historical expectation for teachers, particularly female teachers to care about and build relationships with their students. These women were:

- disturbed at the privileging of men’s experiences in studies of ethical decision making, identity development, and modes of learning, and began to study ‘women’s ways’ in order to put women’s words and worlds at the centre of the analysis. An emphasis on an ethic of care and a preference for connectedness (relationships) is said by such writers to be more characteristic of women than men. This work has not gone uncriticised, especially on grounds of tendencies toward essentialism and the difficulties of dealing with diversity among women (or men) and with change. There are also arguments that women’s propensity to care is a survival strategy that stems from their subordinate position. (p.120)

Nancy and Heena, more so than Greg, used relationships with students as a central strategy for building a classroom community and teaching social foundational issues. All three instructors built relationships with their students but Greg did it with a team of others through a fairly rigid program structure. Heena and Nancy built relationships through personal connections with their individual students. With such a small sample, I cannot say conclusively that the instructors used relationship building strategies to a different extent on the basis of their gender, but the fact that all three taught in a relatively gender typical way is at the very least interesting. My reading and experience leads me to believe that this gender effect is due less to an essential difference between male and female instructors and more to
societal expectations around the availability of male and female instructors. In their day to day lives, as they teach a social foundational course, their students may have different expectations of them in terms of support. Heena, Nancy and Greg did not blindly follow gender role stereotypes but did live with the reality that increased commitment in the form of "caring" was expected of female instructors to a greater extent than it was of male instructors. Relationship building does not have to be a form of oppression cast upon female teachers. From what I observed, a sense of community and strong relationships among students and between students and instructors affected classroom dynamics in a way that facilitated large group discussion. Both Nancy and Heena noticed this and described relationship building as a useful way to help them establish a sense of community. Utility alone, however, does not prevent this additional work from exhausting those who are expected to do it.

Another difference I noticed between the two secondary and one elementary instructors linked to their understanding of the role of the "individual" in their respective courses. In one framing question for his course, Greg asked his students how student diversity should be reflected in educational policies, practices and outcomes. Heena and Nancy asked their students to speak about how they were responding to issues of equity and diversity, where their responses were coming from, why the information was important to them as students/teachers and how it influenced their ideas about education. Greg’s course was about helping students make the link between school and society, while Heena’s and Nancy’s courses focussed on helping students make the link between themselves as teachers in school and society. Greg did not completely ignore the role of individuals in the school system but did not focus on this centrally in his course.

Apple (1986) argues in favour of a biographical-institutional-societal analysis as a way to frame discussion around gender, race, and class dynamics in the classroom. If Greg’s assumption holds true that my selection strategy resulted in participants who were among the most committed to equity issues in his class, then I would be inclined to agree with Apple’s assertion. Heena’s and Nancy’s seven students, to a greater extent than Adam and Beth, seemed to respond to issues of equity and diversity in a way that addressed their social positioning, beliefs about education and role as teachers. They were also more likely to understand their identities to be some hybrid of teacher and learner, whereas Adam and Beth
seemed to understand their role as that of a teacher preparing for certification. This generality did not hold true in all cases, as Frank, one of Heena’s students, identified himself as teacher more so than learner. In any case, the students who identified as teachers only seemed less likely to see potential transformation as a goal in teacher education.

Until this point, I have made comparisons between Greg’s class and Heena’s and Nancy’s classes, but in terms of their theories of transformation and resistance informing their pedagogical choices, I have chosen a different grouping. Greg and Nancy seemed to believe resistant students were unlikely to transform, while Heena saw all of her students as potential learners. One thing that distinguished group dynamics in Nancy’s and Greg’s class from those in Heena’s was that Heena worked toward Ghandi’s teachings for “sarvodaya” or the “uplift of all,” while Nancy and Greg taught in a way that reached as many of their students as possible. Heena asked that we include in our community the one who is left behind. Frank’s response to this lesson was to speak disparagingly under his breath about her “communist” lesson but he was able to disagree with her and still be part of the class community. The one thing I find interesting about Frank’s response is that, without her approach, he might have been the one left behind. In order to transgress through our teaching, hooks, (1994) in her own words, suggests a similar strategy of sarvodaya.

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognising one another’s presence... There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes... Seeing the classroom always as a learning communal place enhances the likelihood of collective effort in creating and sustaining a learning community. (p.8)

Perhaps as a result of her approach and perhaps facilitated by a supportive instructor who also taught the cohort, Heena to a greater extent than Greg or Nancy was a member and leader of a cohesive and diverse learning community. Despite differences in their approach, however, student response to their courses varied almost as much within each class as it did between them. While instructor pedagogy seemed to be a contributing factor to classroom

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31 Heena shared her approach to peace education with her class on the day she invited me to observe and included an explicit lesson on Ghandi’s concept of sarvodaya.
dynamics and student learning, it was constrained and facilitated by other important factors, some of which will be detailed in the following chapter.32

32 Chapters four and five follow my coding methodology. While chapter four focussed more on my descriptive indexing through three holistic cases, chapter five focuses more on analytic indexing through a cross-sectional comparison of student response.
Chapter Five: Analysis of Emerging/Imposed Themes

I initially structured this study to compare student responses in three different "Social Foundations" classes within one institutional setting. Implicit in my organising strategy was a privileging of the role of instructor pedagogy and classroom dynamics as salient factors influencing student response and potential transformation. What I actually found from speaking with fifteen people involved in the teacher education program at Northmount in one particular year was that many analytic categories emerged which were at least as prominent as instructor pedagogy. I could have written a chapter on each of these but limited time, resources and a less intentional focus on these issues convinced me to touch only briefly on them.

Before I describe four themes that have emerged from, or that I have imposed on, the data, I will introduce the reader briefly to students who were not members of the three classes I detailed in the previous two chapters, but who agreed to participate in an interview.

Danielle is a young, white, middle class, Jewish female student raised and educated in another province. She was preparing to be a primary/junior teacher in one of the elementary options at Northmount. When I asked her to describe her "Social Foundations" class, she immediately told me that her peers were collectively upset about the work load in the course and tended to protest by skipping class. Despite the heavy workload, she did find the course to be useful. She came directly from her undergraduate degree in sociology and found her teacher education program to be far less difficult than her undergraduate program. One of her major criticisms of the program at Northmount was the "ridiculously high" grading scheme. During one of her practica she focussed on poverty and food programs in her school, but had difficulty imagining what students were experiencing since she knew poverty was not something she had personally experienced. Still, her concern upon noticing that some of the small children in her grade 1/2 class were not wearing socks in the winter allowed her to see the need for the program with which she became involved.

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33 From her other comments I noticed that Danielle used final grades to indicate the level of difficulty of a course. She described "Social Foundations" as a course with a high workload and thought provoking discussions but also described it as a course that was not difficult. I imagine that by "more difficult" she meant coursework with a Western cognitive over affective approach that upon completion was awarded a grade in a lower range.
Rick is a young white male who was raised in a homogenous, white, middle class neighbourhood in a medium sized town in southwestern Ontario and had never really analysed his life in terms of race, gender, class or sexuality until he came to the faculty of education. I asked him to participate in an interview since he and I both understood his experience in an elective course entitled “Minority groups and equity in education” to be one of transformation. He did not find his “Social Foundations” course to be particularly stimulating, but changed his way of looking at the world after he was introduced to the concept of white privilege in his elective course. His work experience included camp counselling and camp supervision. He was in the secondary program and had science and “Individual & Society” as his teaching subjects.

Sarah was an advocate of equity education before beginning her program at Northmount and had taught, led drama activities and counselled people in a variety of educational contexts. She is a white, middle class Jewish woman. She taught drama classes to groups of children with vastly different life experiences and while working on her Master’s degree in English at Northmount she volunteered as a peer counsellor at the sexual education centre. After becoming increasingly disenchanted with academia, she chose to do something more tangible. She applied for two alternative, thematically based secondary education programs at Northmount and, after being admitted to both, chose the one that resonated more with her personal philosophy of education. With three of her peers, she prepared and led a class session on sexuality and heterosexism as one component of her “Social Foundations” course. Her teaching subjects were English and drama.

Danielle, Rick and Sarah helped me better understand and analyse the experiences and responses of students in Greg’s, Nancy’s and Heena’s classes. In addition to giving me voices beyond the three case studies, they also functioned as response foils. I came into contact with each of them as I was working on my thesis. When I described my thesis to a friend from one of my classes, she told me that she recognised a similar transformation around equity issues in her partner and suggested I speak with him. I asked him to participate and used him as my “transformation” foil. In the proposal stage of my thesis, I had intended to ask one “advocate,” one “resister” and one “transformer” from each class to participate in an interview. But since volunteers in each of the classes did not fit neatly into these categories, I asked students from other classes whose responses I believed fit more
neatly to participate in an interview. My selection strategy was not random. Rick was my foil transformer and Sarah was my foil advocate but I did not run into a foil resister interested in speaking to me. I did, however, speak to Danielle who, by virtue of having been in an elementary program other than Greg's, helped me compare the three classes. Since her own elementary program had been more similar in structure to some of the secondary programs than to Greg's, she helped me make more careful comparisons by reducing the likelihood that I would generalise my understanding of what happened in Greg's program to all programs in the elementary panel.

The four analytic categories that helped me better understand student response came from my conceptual framework and my understanding of participant interview data. The four categories all appear as binary oppositions, not because the world as I see it fits into these extreme positions but because the spaces between the extremes have created useful places for me to analyse the complexity of students' responses to equity education. These categories include marginalisation and dominance, agency within structure, theory and practice, and challenging support.
Marginalisation and Dominance

The comment I heard most frequently from participants was that the program at Northmount was very “homogenous,” unlike practicum schools that were very “diverse.” While it is true that teachers are a homogeneous group, students who used this word were not explicit about the kind of homogeneity. The language of “homogeneity” and “diversity” interested me because what participants were actually referring to when they described a “homogenous” program and a “diverse” classroom was a homogeneously white teacher education program, and a homogeneously non-white classroom. They consistently used the words “minority” and “majority” in a similar way. Even Greg and Ellen, who problematised the term, continued to use it apologetically. “Visible minorities,” or “minorities,” regardless of the proportion of people in any particular group were terms used to describe people of African, Caribbean, South Asian or Asian origin, whose skin colour was not “white.” Most participants in this study used the term in the same ethnocentric way as the white teacher quoted in Sleeter’s (1992) study, who described a school with a 95% black student body as being the highest “minority” school she had taught in.

Despite the ethnocentric use of language, students did have a point when they identified the disparity between groups of students represented in teacher education as compared with those represented in Northmount’s elementary and secondary schools. Teachers continue to be socially located in more privileged positions than their students, so, regardless of the language used, the inequity described by students is a real phenomenon that needs to be addressed. In terms of my research question about student response to equity education, the fact that all students commented on this disparity indicated to me that it was something they were responding to in their programs. Many students told me, in their own ways, that teacher education faculties were playing a role in the continued perpetuation of inequity. Some students were bothered by the inconsistency between what was taught in their “Social Foundations” classes and what was practised on an institutional level; others were upset with the actual inequity; and others still noticed but simply accepted the disparity at face value. With these concerns in hand, I made an appointment to speak to Tom, an administrator at the registrar’s office at Northmount. I introduced myself, described my thesis and asked if I could see some raw numbers in terms of selection. As somebody with
an interest in quantitative analysis, I answered my questions through my own set of calculations with the raw numbers provided by Tom. The most accurate were those on sex and age of students since it was mandatory for all applicants to indicate these two pieces of information on their forms. As has been documented in the literature (Ladson-Billing, 1995; Zeichner & Hoef, 1995), the majority of the students in the Northmount teacher education program in the 1999/2000 year were women in their twenties. The gender difference decreased as the panels moved from primary/junior (87% women), to junior/intermediate (73% women), to intermediate/senior (68% women). The only program for which the sex ratio was reversed was the intermediate/senior technological studies program (80% men). Of those students in their thirties and forties, proportionally more were male than female.

Tom described the Northmount admissions process as one involving two independent stages. All applicants who met the minimum academic requirements (a B range average) and had a profile indicating a high “teacherness” quotient were passed to the next stage. When I asked him what he meant by “teacherness” he was extremely vague, which led me to believe that it was a subjective measure up to the discretion of the faculty involved in screening the applications. Once students passed both screening processes, they were placed in a “pool” and were offered admission on the basis of a number of possible “ladders.” Ladders included: a “great” profile, “outstanding” academic performance, an identified subject speciality or membership to a “target” group on Northmount’s admission policy statement. On the basis of these four requirements, applicants from the pool were offered admission. All applicants were given the admission policy and the option to identify themselves as one or more of the following categories: Differently abled, Francophone, Native or visible minority.

I outline the selection process in detail because it is relevant in terms of equitable hiring practices that the admission statement was not considered until after applicants were screened.

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34 For gender and age, I used the percentages directly from the report I was given. For race and ethnicity, I divided the number of offers by the number of applications and multiplied by 100%. I did this for the raw numbers I had been given for all students and for students who had checked the “visible minority” or “Native” categories on their applications. For % of ethically or racially minoritised groups, I determined the number of offers for people who had checked one of the two identified categories and divided this by the number of offers for all students, then multiplied this number by 100%. The math itself was not complex, but these particular questions were not the ones that were asked or calculated for the equity report produced by the registrar’s office.
for academic and experiential acceptability. When I asked a question about this, Tom spoke disparagingly of other faculties of education that use a different yardstick for "visible minorities" than for other students. He understood selection from a point of equal opportunity rather than equitable outcomes\(^{36}\). At Northmount's program, he boasted that nobody would receive "special treatment" and that everyone who was accepted deserved to be in the program. Since everyone in the pool "deserved" to be in the program, he felt justified in using "target groups" as one of the possible ladders. With the racism and other structural inequities embedded in the education system, barriers exist to the academic and experiential screens before students even apply for teacher education. I am not under the impression that it is giving anybody special treatment to account for this systemic inequity through an admission policy that begins with the first step of the selection process.

For my calculations, I included only those who checked VM (visible minority) or N (Native) since I believe that students who spoke to me about the "homogeneity" of the teacher education program were referring to its white homogeneity. Tom did not tell me how he defined "visible minority" but did tell me that cultural groups such as people from the Middle East, Portugal, or Italy were not included. In response to my questions, I found that gay and lesbian students, single mothers, people from working class backgrounds, and those from marginalised religions were also not offered a "ladder."

In the 1999/2000 year, thirteen percent of those accepted checked VM/N and fourteen percent of those who registered checked VM/N. This indicated to me that the proportion of people accepted into the program who identified as a "visible minority" or "Native" closely approximated that in the program. I did a similar set of calculations for each of the past five years and found that in every case, regardless of the political climate or the number of applications, thirteen percent of those accepted into the program checked VM/N. There was no appreciable increase or decrease in the percentage of applicants who checked VM/N over this time. I also found that in times of increased applications (linked to a strong labour market for teachers), the equity policy made more difference than it did in times of fewer applications. In a year where few applicants were accepted to the program, 25% of all

\(^{35}\) An undergraduate degree in French, mathematics, or science for elementary candidates and physics, chemistry, computer science or mathematics for secondary candidates.

\(^{36}\) See Streitmatter, 1994 for a good description of equal and equitable approaches to teaching with respect to gender.
applicants were accepted, while 40% of those checking VM/N were accepted. In a year where the majority of applicants were admitted to the program, 70% of all applicants were admitted; whereas 71% of those checking VM/N were admitted. In both of these years the proportion of those accepted checking VM/N remained at thirteen percent.

Taking these pieces of data together with the raw number of applicants and offers of admission, I observed that during times of increased applications to the program, the rate of increase was greater for all students (including VM/N) than for only those who checked VM/N. What I learned from this observation was that an equity oriented admissions policy was not enough to ensure equity of outcomes. The program did not meet its selection aim of admitting qualified candidates who reflect the ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the city in which Northmount was located. The equity policy works in tandem with the raw number of applications from people checking VM/N on their application package so that without a large number of applications from people who identify themselves as “visible minority” or “Native,” the admission policy will not work as well as it should. In an education system with embedded inequities, I do not imagine that teaching is a desirable career for those who have been marginalised in the system. Looking at this data has convinced me that the significant discrepancy between the social location of teacher education students and students in public schools reported by my participants reflects the reality of the program this year. My calculations for the past five years demonstrate that this year was not an unusual one.

After a detailed look at the Northmount teacher education selection process, I have come to the conclusion that the two greatest barriers to admission of minoritised students are the withholding of the equity policy until after the first two steps in the screening process have been completed, and the relatively small number of applications in any given year from minoritised people.

In the year 2000/2001, an additional hidden inequity was added. According to Tom, one hundred percent of those in “target groups” were taken from the pool in the first round of admissions while sixty percent of all applicants were taken from the pool during the same round. While I appreciated the fact that the equity policy worked for those in the pool, I also noted that students from only the “non-identified” groups were eligible for selection on the second and third rounds of admissions. For the year 2000/2001, the provincial government granted additional spaces for teacher education after the first round of admissions had been
completed. What this meant for the Northmount teacher education program was that the additional provincial funding aided only those students in non-identified groups. Students outside the “pool” were not considered for this additional funding.

Beyond a quantitative analysis of admission policies at the school, I was interested in learning how the social makeup of the program related to student response. As I analysed interview transcripts, I found that experience living in a multicultural city in a relatively marginalised body, experience living in a multicultural city in a relatively privileged body and experience living in a homogeneously white city in a relatively privileged body correlated with different kinds of responses to equity education. After creating table 5.1 to help illustrate my analysis, I tried to locate myself in the table and immediately realised that my inscription of students into four categories was necessarily inadequate. Someone who did not know my history might look at me and see a white, middle class woman who grew up in a multicultural city. This person might then slot me into the category of people who have experienced diversity without marginalisation and expect me to be complacent about equity education. I, however, understand my response as one of transformation rather than complacency and understand my social location and identity as more complicated than the category “white middle class woman” would suggest. It is possible that my table provides a poor explanatory function for student response. Another possibility is that my more hidden forms of marginalisation helped me connect with equity education in a way that was less available to other white middle class women in my program.

The students I spoke with also likely had more complex identities than I was able to ascertain after speaking with them for an hour. The depth to which I was able to probe people on their histories and locations might have depended on the understandings they had about the purpose of my thesis and their assumptions about the parts of our identities that we shared. Beth, who knew my face from childhood, might have shared her comments with me about “minorities” having a better chance of finding work in local boards of education with the expectation that I would share her belief that employment equity was not fair. She might have made a more concerted effort in class to align her vocabulary and views with those outlined in Greg’s course than she would have done in conversation with me. Had Wendy known I was Jewish, she might not have told me she attributed anti-Catholic sentiment to the Jewish students in her class. Had Greg known my parents, aunt, uncle and grandparents were
immigrants to Canada, he might not have told me about his "immigrant panel." I did not announce my social location in an explicit way during the interviews but know that my body and language give off particular cues that are differentially available to people. In the above cases, my predictions about how people located me and responded to me are based on speculation. It was Danielle who added grist to my speculations by prefacing her description of a heated debate in her "Social Foundations" class about Holocaust denial and freedom of speech with, "Oh, you will appreciate this one." The story she chose to tell me about class dynamics was one she selected based on our shared ethnicity.

Returning to my analysis of student response based on marginalisation and experience with diversity, I feel that my chart can provide a useful explanatory function as long as it is not applied in a causal, predictive or essential manner. While I acknowledge my gross oversimplification of student response, I have chosen to include table 5.1 in my analysis because it helped me understand something about the general trend in student response to equity education.

**Table 5.1**

**Student Response to Equity Education as related to experience with Diversity and experience having been Marginalised.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience having been Marginalised</th>
<th>Experience with Diversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Complacent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential transformation /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the students advocating for equity education within teacher education, I included Troy, Wendy, and Sarah. Among those complacent to equity education, I included Adam, Beth and perhaps Chris. And among those who seemed to transform I included Frank, Karen and Rick. When I looked to see what these students had in common, I realised that the advocates had been marginalised at some point in their lives along at least one dimension. These were students who took time to educate or in some cases relieve the guilt of their peers and simultaneously worked in their practica toward equitable teaching practices. Troy said that as a person of colour he had real life experiences being
marginalised and was interested in helping those more disadvantaged than him in the system. He also worked to help his peers deal with anti-racist education. When a student in his class asked him for help with something that had happened around racism in his practicum, Troy was happy to offer guidance. Wendy was not an advocate of what she perceived to be antagonistic equity education. She felt that this sort of teaching ran the empowerment of one culture against another and was both unproductive and hurtful, but she did discuss the importance of exploring deep and needy issues of race, gender and socioeconomic status.

She experienced sustained racism in her four year undergraduate program when people who were new to the city in which the university was located came to Northmount and made her, a person who had been born and raised in the city, feel like she did not belong. Her peers in teacher education continued this in a more subtle way by confusing her name with that of the other woman of Asian origin. During her practicum she worked with a group of marginalised students and from her description was able to engage them in learning.

Sarah found that people in her class saw her as the “sexuality girl.” In response to the marriage of two peers in her cohort, she experienced heterosexism if not homophobia. She described to me how she became the class authority on sexuality.

People started to ask questions and I was getting really frustrated by it. Then someone in the class organised a potluck where we’d all chip in money to get them [the newly married couple] stuff and I felt like once again in my life being held captive to compulsory heterosexuality. I didn’t even really know these people. They weren’t my friends really. I liked them and they were in my class but to be all of a sudden getting them a gift just because they were getting married...and it felt like people didn’t understand heterosexism, not that I expected them to since we hadn’t covered a class on it yet. So it was actually a difficult time for me because I felt very unsafe in that class for a while because I had challenged the marriage or people’s assumptions around heterosexuality and I think people didn’t feel comfortable around me for a while...I didn’t challenge it in an open forum but among a group of people. I really made an effort to stay part of the group and not alienate myself because of that, because I felt tempted to just withdraw from the whole thing, but if I withdraw from all of those debates or challenges, you’re not going to make any changes, you know? Not everyone in the classroom is really going to agree with you so it was really a growing experience for me to sit with my own discomfort and negotiate other people’s views on the issue, but I became the person who questioned sexuality. (t-xfs-20-21)

Despite feeling marginalised by some of her peers, Sarah made an attempt to remain a part of the group and in conjunction with four peers, her teaching assistant and instructor,
became involved in planning and leading a class on sexuality. They did a presentation, planned activities, facilitated discussion and invited guest speakers from an advocacy group to speak to the class. Like Troy’s experience as the “anti-racist man,” Sarah’s role of “sexuality girl” was rewarding in some ways. One of her peers who had never thought about these issues began to look critically at a performance attended by the cohort. Sarah was really touched because, after seeing the performance through a new lens, this peer shared her critical observation and transformation with Sarah. It seems that in addition to instructor pedagogy, the cost, responsibility and joys of facilitating transformation in students who are privileged along some dimension may lie on the shoulders of those who are marginalised along that dimension. The students I spoke to did not seem to mind doing this work, but again, I only spoke to three students who were volunteers and very enthusiastic advocates of equity education. They seemed to enjoy working as agents of change on a different level: that of educating peers in and outside of structured classroom interaction.

Sometimes personal experience with diversity without ever having been marginalised can be a barrier to learning about equity education. Students whose “best friends” are black, Chinese, gay, working class, differently abled, or who work at summer camps with marginalised youth, or who travel to “third world” countries without being conscious of their own privileged bodies may feel like they already know all there is to know about equity education. What they do not always realise is that social location and geographical location are distinct. It is possible to alter one’s geographical location without altering one’s social location or position of power. This is increasingly true for white North American English speakers in the current, global postmodern world. Students who I found to be more complacent to equity education had experienced multiculturalism and diversity in their work, school or home environments but had not in any significant way been marginalised. Some had social characteristics that might be considered subordinate in Canadian society, but other dimensions of privilege along with having grown up in a fairly homogeneous setting in which they were part of a numeric majority seemed to shelter them from severe marginalisation.

Having lived in a multicultural city and grown up with the superficial “celebrating festivals” version of institutionally embedded multiculturalism, Adam, Beth and Chris did not believe they were sheltered from inequity. Maybe their assumption that they already
knew about multiculturalism caused Adam and Beth to experience their “Social Foundations” class as “review” or “boring.” Adam lived in an “international” house during university, grew up with parents who valued a liberal version of multiculturalism, worked as a counsellor and supervisor at a summer camp for children with “special needs” and independently travelled the world. Since he felt he already knew the issues, he did not do his strongest learning in equity education. Chris travelled to “third world” countries and participated in an anti-racist drama troupe and felt that she also did not do her greatest learning in this area. She constructed herself as marginalised in terms of Catholic education but, from what I understood from her peers, she had a great deal of power in the classroom. She did make several modifications to her teaching but did not understand why her students of colour giggled when she presented a video on Martin Luther King during her lesson on monologues. She was angry with them for not understanding what this man had done for “them.”

Beth, a Jewish woman who had grown up in a homogeneously white upper middle class Jewish neighbourhood, had never really experienced anti-Semitism until her adulthood when she was able to fight against it. When a college instructor asked her to write a test on a Jewish holiday, she was able to use her knowledge of her rights and freedoms as listed in policy documents at that institution to discipline the instructor. She felt she knew about diversity and that equity education was “obvious,” but at the same time she described her only classroom modification to be that of celebrating all the holidays with the children in her class. She may have developed a strong belief in agency as a result of her own experiences with sheltered marginalisation. I in no way want to suggest that being Jewish is a non-marginalised position. In many parts of the world, including many areas surrounding Northmount, anti-Semitism is a prevalent lived experience. I want only to say that when someone is privileged along many dimensions and sheltered to some extent from potential marginalisation, she may be complacent about challenging her privileges. As a Jewish person, Beth could be marginalised along the dimension of religion, but growing up with a critical mass of people who were also Jewish and in positions of power could have sheltered her from experiencing that marginalisation in a direct and salient way. If her growing up experience included lessons about the continuous history of Jewish oppression, she might have identified as a marginalised person and might have felt that all those who were
marginalised along some dimension were in a similar position to fight against it. In the end, I found that those who had been exposed to diversity, though not severely or explicitly marginalised, seemed to do less reflecting about their sheltered positions than similarly socially positioned people who had limited experience with diversity.

Those who seemed to be transformed by ideas of equity in education apparently had grown up and worked in very white homogeneous environments and had been neither marginalised nor exposed to much social diversity. Frank grew up in a homogenous white middle class neighbourhood and attributed his difficulty during his first practicum to this level of inexperience with diversity or marginalisation. He became very aware of his gender and racial privileges and used his new conceptual lens in combination with his strong capitalist conceptual lens to view the world around him. He was aware of having begun to change over the course of the year and understood his current state as one of continued learning. Karen described her experience prior to teacher education as one of being in a cocoon. She lived in a white middle class neighbourhood, worked from home with clients who found her through word of mouth in the community, and spent a great deal of time with her children in similarly homogenous settings. She understood her whole experience a year prior to and during teacher education as one of transformation and learning.

Rick also grew up in a white middle class neighbourhood and found his experience in an elective class to be transformative.

I really don’t think I had any blatant experiences with equity apart from, well I say blatant because I don’t know if I was aware of any experiences that where happening. I was probably affecting equity somehow...from what I’ve learned about white privilege, I was obviously impacting other people, but I wasn’t aware of it until I learned about it this year...I think with the racial issues, those are probably the ones I responded to the strongest and some of them just blew me away because I’d never thought about them before. I think the fact that I never thought about them before is one of the points. I’ve never had to think about them, right, so it just amazes me to think that I’m twenty five and I’ve never had to think about these things. There are people that always think about them because they have to. So that affected me. Since I’ve learned more about equity issues my eyes have been opened and now when I watch TV or when I read the paper or look around me, I see things happening that I never would have noticed before. It’s hard for it not to effect me because it’s so inequitable. (t-xms-7)

All three students who understood their experiences to be transformative were white, middle class and had grown up in homogeneously white middle class neighbourhoods, but
unlike the last group of students, all were open to challenging their privileges. In the literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy, students who might find themselves in this section of my matrix have been characterised as “resistant.” My hypothesis about why I did not necessarily find this to be the case with my participants is linked to my selection strategy. I imagine that those who were truly resistant to challenging their privileges would not have volunteered to participate in an interview on student response to equity issues in education. Additionally, as I have learned from observing and speaking with Heena, “resistance” might be some combination of privilege and negative emotion to perceived antagonistic pedagogy. Since none of the three instructors I spoke with used an approach I might classify as antagonistic, I cannot say much about student response to this type of approach. Further research or conversations among “Social Foundations” instructors around this question would be useful.

I did not speak to anyone who might have fit into the fourth category on my matrix and I attribute this to the fact that all students in the program who had been marginalised in Canadian society had been marginalised by those who were in some way different from them. As such, they had all experienced and lived amongst diversity. Marginalised people are not often afforded the “privilege” of living in a homogeneous community. Even when their neighbours are similarly socially located, larger systemic social inequities often ensure that their doctors and teachers and others who they may come into contact with are differently socially located than them.

Lisa, Jamie and Danielle did not seem to find a place in my simplistic matrix. All three of these women had been marginalised in some way by the education system. Lisa had experienced some level of social exclusion after immigrating to Canada, and all three had found academic schooling to be more of a struggle than they expected to be true of their peers in teacher education. They had grown up critiquing the education system during their “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) as students. Lisa was able to observe the inequities in school and her classroom but, other than working with individual students to help them with self esteem issues, she had a difficult time moderating racist, homophobic and anti-immigrant remarks in her classroom. Through her reading of feminist politics, Jamie

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37 It is important to keep in mind that pedagogy seen as threatening or antagonistic by some students may be seen as explicit and affirming by others.
learned to appreciate the ideology and descriptive function it offered but did not find the resultant antagonism to work when communicating with people in the world.

For these students, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann's (1985) "familiarity pitfall" was not such a pitfall. Their experiences with less than perfect classrooms facilitated their learning about educational inequities. In terms of their response to equity education, all three valued the opportunity to learn about these issues, all had a difficult time advocating for equity education during their practica. As an immigrant to the country who experienced difficulties adjusting to high school, Lisa cared about those students who were having a difficult time but was unsure of how to approach the subject with her "really smart but not a people person" associate teacher. Her religious beliefs also made it difficult for her to approach the issue of homophobia. Jaime wanted to advocate for her students who were having a difficult time in school but told me she needed more than one month to build relationships with them. Like Lisa, she worked with an associate teacher who was unsupportive of equity initiatives and actually referred to a student as an "idiot." Danielle spoke about the importance of working with children living in poverty and followed up by participating in a meal program at the school, but seemed interested in balancing her work for others with her own personal comfort. I imagine that Lisa, Jaime and Danielle would have been unlikely to fight the system but might have been willing to work towards equitable outcomes for their students had they had the administrative and curriculum support to do so.

I did not concentrate on the issue of social positioning of teacher educators in terms of student response because I found that only two students and one instructor spoke about this factor. When I asked the interview questions, "Do you think there is anything about you that influenced the way students responded to your curriculum?" and "Besides how your instructor teaches, do you think there are other factors that make it easy or difficult for you to value these ideas?" I was expecting participants to report something about the social positioning of their instructors; however, only two participants responded in this way. Adam called Ellen the "gender expert" and Troy told me that Heena's experience of having been marginalised facilitated her teaching. According to both of these students, some dimension along which the instructor was marginalised afforded a level of authority to the instructor's teaching.
Greg predicted that students would see Ellen as the “gender expert” and him as the “multicultural, anti-racist” expert by virtue of each of them having made a presentation on the subject but this was not the case, according to two of his students. After speaking to Adam, I found out that marginalised social positioning along the dimension in question was required before students would accept an instructor as an “expert” on a given topic, regardless of the number of presentations s/he had given. Beth completely dissociated Greg from any of the topics he taught by suggesting that it was not his fault the topics were “boring” since, according to her, he had simply been assigned to teach them. I am not sure how wide spread Beth’s belief was among her peers but would find it troubling if many of them shared her impression that Greg lacked ownership of the curriculum.

When I asked Nancy to clarify her role as a Jewish instructor during the sustained classroom debate about religious education between the Jewish and Catholic students, she asked me to consider the ironies of asking a Jewish instructor to take on a position of marginalisation. What I learned from these interviews was that many of my participants were either uncomfortable talking with me about social location as a factor in their responses, or they did not see social location to be as salient a factor as I did. Aside from the fact that it is difficult if not impossible to disaggregate the factors responsible for student response, students preparing to be teachers who would like to have some impact on their students’ learning might need to believe they have a degree of agency. The students I spoke with had varying degrees of faith that within their socially positioned bodies they would be able to make choices and affect learning.

Despite participants’ lack of discussion of instructor social positioning as a factor in their response, Hoodfar’s (1992) and Ng’s (1993) accounts of student response to their marginalised bodies provide convincing arguments for continued attention to the effects of instructor social positioning on student response. After looking at student ratings of presentations from an employment preparation conference which all preservice students at Northmount were required to attend, I noticed that of those sessions most highly rated, 80% of presenters were men and 20% were women. Of those sessions most poorly rated, 92% of the presenters were women and only 8% were men. While I did not run inferential tests on my findings, I am positive that with hundreds of student raters and seventy-three sessions, the
sample population would have been high enough to yield a statistically significant gender result.

Nancy was discouraged by a gendered comment on one of her student evaluations of teaching in which a student used a derogatory tone to describe her "Social Foundations" class as a short course on feminism. In a term paper I wrote entitled "Student Evaluations of University Teaching: A Gender Analysis," I conducted a gender analysis of the psychometric literature on sex-bias in student evaluations of teaching and found that evaluations of teaching seemed in one way or another to be related to the instructors' sex. One particularly salient case study, which explored the ways in which students can use the evaluation procedure as an expression of resistance to curricula that challenges them, described a situation in which four male students negatively evaluated their female, feminist instructor (Magnusson, 1998). None of the students in my limited sample mentioned sex or gender of their instructor as a facilitator or constraint to their learning. Two possible reasons for this are a lack of consciousness on the part of participants that instructors' sex or gender were things they were responding to and a lack of comfort attributing their responses to instructors' sex or gender in an interview forum.

To return my analysis of marginalisation and dominance, the fact that at least three students were able to blur the boundaries of my matrix raises an issue about simplistic models. My matrix is not likely to fit even those students who I placed in each of the categories. To begin with, most people can not answer the question, "are you marginalised?" in the absolute affirmative or the absolute negative. Our education system is such that anyone who is truly marginalised along every dimension would not have likely found her/his way into the university classroom (Collins, 1991). At the same time, even those who I may understand to be privileged may have at some point in their lives been at a structural disadvantage. We are all multiply positioned, but when we document the social characteristics of the majority of teacher education candidates we create images of white, female, heterosexual middle class clones. To the extent that teacher educators teach with such clones in mind, they may miss the complexity of their students' experiences. It is true that there are inequitable power dynamics in Canadian society and it is true that some students are more marginalised than others, but students will not necessarily recognise themselves in caricatures of privilege. When students read articles describing all teacher
education candidates as white, middle class, heterosexual, unduly privileged female clones, they may not take ownership for challenging their privileges. Whether it is the authors of articles who actually label students this way or defensive students (myself included) who construct the readings in this way, student responses to the literature need to be dealt with somehow in the “Social Foundations” class.

At the same time, if we talk about all students as being multiply socially positioned, we run the risk of ignoring the real structural inequities that exist in schools and society. Instructors are left with a dilemma. To understand students as complex beings who are all multiply positioned takes away from an important systemic critique, but to impose simplistic categories on students may reduce the chance that they will recognise themselves in a caricature of privilege. Between these extremes exist choices for teacher educators dedicated to equity education about the extent to which they will challenge and support students who are differently socially positioned in Canadian society. As imperfect as it is, my matrix serves an analytic and explanatory function that may help instructors approach these choices in their own classrooms. I have attempted to document some possible choices more concretely in chapters three and four through descriptions of Greg’s, Ellen’s, Nancy’s, and Heena’s chosen pedagogical strategies.
AGENCY within Structure

When I initially set up my proposal, I predicted that students who had been marginalised by the education system and those who had been transformed by a powerful experience in their teacher education year would see schools as places of structured oppression. I was surprised to find out in my conversations with Troy and Wendy, however, that despite clear awareness of the racism imbedded in the system, they believed strongly that teacher agency was a realistic possibility. In comparison to the racism she experienced in university, Wendy experienced high school to be a somewhat liberating experience and attributed this in part to her teachers. She was frustrated with union pressures, government politics, staff peer pressure and administrative rigidity during her practica but took these existing structures as they were and chose to expend her energy negotiating through the system and doing what she could to reach her students. She told me that she had initially not wanted to become a teacher because of the imposing forces on education, but when she realised that she could work around these structures and teach students, she changed her mind. By working around structures that form the sociopolitical context of education, Wendy demonstrated her belief in teacher agency. Within a system that marginalises people on the basis of race and ethnicity, Troy believed there were spaces to build networks and supports for students at risk. Despite a deep knowledge of the current inequities, he was a true believer in the transformative potential of education. He made his choice to become a teacher with an awareness of the conservative political climate surrounding education.

I found that all participants, with the exception of Frank, believed some degree of agency was possible. They believed teachers could work to reduce the inequities in education or at least facilitate student learning in some way. I have a feeling that the level of exhaustion experienced by many students in second term related to their emotionally difficult, pressure filled practicum experiences. At the time of the interviews they had completed two practica and some portion of their internship and were tired but still convinced that some degree of teacher agency was possible. Speaking to them was inspirational for me since I had almost completely accepted Bowles and Gintis' (1976) notion of schools as machines that reproduce and maintain social inequities. I was unsure that teacher agency was possible. Amidst the tension between observed structure during
practica and believed agency in their hearts and minds were students' experiences in teacher education.

As I focused on ideas of agency and structure in my interview data, I found Chris, Lisa, Karen and Beth to believe most strongly that teachers were agents. Troy, Wendy, Rick, Jamie, Adam and Danielle viewed teachers as agents within a constraining or facilitating structure and Frank viewed teachers as people with minimal control working in an imposing school structure. Sarah understood structure and agency differently as she moved between her roles of student and teacher.

Chris saw teachers as role models. She said that students were either positively or negatively affected by everything she did during her practica. She understood teachers to have a great deal of influence over their students and as such was careful and reflexive about her actions and behaviours. The choices she made during her practica reflected this belief. After observing the high proportion of students of colour in her classroom and the high proportion of white teachers and administrators in the school, she invited one of her instructors to visit her class so that students at the school could see a person of colour who was an administrator and faculty member. Lisa understood teachers to be "sculptors" who could mould the pieces of "clay" who were their students. Her position was the most extreme in terms of teachers as agents. During her practica she observed various inequities, but, in terms of her action in the classroom, she worked most closely with those students who needed boosts to their self-esteem. As I understand it, these students were the easiest to shape. As a student, Sarah wanted to be the clay. She wanted and needed to be shaped, challenged and transformed by education. If she did not feel she was being shaped, she told me she would immediately disengage or look elsewhere for a learning experience. Teaching for her seemed to be a vehicle to learn more about the people and cultures in the world since she felt teaching would afford her the opportunity to live and work, not only travel, in various countries.

Karen and Beth both saw their teaching role as that of a firm yet nurturing parent. When I first walked into Greg's class, Beth approached me and immediately wanted to introduce me to the co-ordinator of the program. While I interviewed her in the staffroom of her school she told one of her colleagues who was sniffling to go home and take care of herself. Karen described her experience as a mother to be the most salient factor informing
her teaching. She was involved in every aspect of school life from teaching her classes to making costumes for the school fashion show to volunteering for an “out of the cold” program after her internship was over. Like a mother, her personal commitments extended well beyond the expectations set out in the practicum guidelines. In the end, women who saw their roles as ones of relative agency all made some attempt to reach out to students or peers during their practica in ways that accommodated their beliefs.

On the other end of the continuum were Frank and Sarah who understood the school system as a rigid and looming place for teachers to work. During her practicum, in the role of teacher, Sarah viewed education in a more structured way than she had done when she described her role as student. After she saw how embedded streaming was in her school, she found it difficult to practice certain equity ideals that she had discussed in class. While destreaming seemed to be a more equitable way of doing things, she found secondary schools to be so heavily streamed that she did not know where to begin. Also, she felt herself appreciating the convenience of having students working toward a similar level in each of her classes. The largeness of the institution and the presence of the government, the administration and the unions all made her feel like she had limited individual effectiveness in the system. At the same time, as a student she expected to be transformed by education. This disparity was troubling and exhausting for her.

Frank was bothered by the ease with which people would discuss equity initiatives in his “Social Foundations” class because he believed that such initiatives would be difficult if not impossible to implement in schools when issues of power, age, experience and seniority constrained the efforts of student teachers. His very emphasis on “implementation” as oppose to enacting or living equity education seemed to be an expression of a certain additive stance not uncommon among the teacher candidates I spoke with, many of whom wanted technical support for their practica. In his class Frank seemed to be the one who espoused the most conservative values, but, while his vocabulary of “parental choice” and “standards” echoed expressions of the political right, I believe his desire to implement equity education placed him closer to his classmates than they might like to admit. In my opinion, Frank provided his peers with an interesting foil. Students who espoused more liberal views and thought of themselves as open-minded to equity education could compare themselves to him and feel that they were doing well. Perhaps the student in Nancy’s class who I did not
interview but who was described by her peers and by Nancy as intolerant and resistant to equity education provided her peers with a similar foil.

Frank did not want to increase tension or conflict in the workplace and as such did not intervene when teachers in the staffroom made racist remarks. He was surprised to find that neither his male nor female associate teachers supported him in his attempts at gender and anti-homophobia education during his practica. Without administrative and peer support, he did not feel secure doing much in the way of equity education. He observed that certain schools existed as a repository for students who were pushed out of their home schools and was frustrated by the disparity between schools serving differently privileged populations. It upset him that differently positioned groups of students within schools did not receive equal treatment, but among his greatest disappointments was his realisation that the state of education had not substantially changed in the decade and a half since he had attended high school. All of these structural constraints seemed insurmountable to him without administrative and peer support for equity initiatives in the school. With the possible exception of Troy, who I suspect would have taught equitably regardless of the level of administrative support, I believe all students I spoke with would have benefited from increased administrative and peer support for equity initiatives in schools.

Between the two extremes were those who saw teachers as agents constrained and facilitated by the structures that surround them. Troy, Wendy, Rick and Jamie all saw teachers as advocates who protected students from the surrounding inequitable structures, while Adam saw his role as an advocate who protected and disciplined students with the help of surrounding structures. Troy chose to focus his energy on helping students at risk, specifically students of colour, make their way through the systemically racist school system. He worked on a needs assessment for his internship to determine which schools in his local board could make the most use of additional resources. On an individual level he worked with students more marginalised than himself to motivate them and help them build networks and supports for their own education. Wendy similarly saw her position as an advocate for students "at risk" since she believed the other students would learn despite her efforts. She called them at their homes, brought in engaging curriculum and made personal connections

\[38\] Troy would also have benefited from administrative support but I do not believe that such support was required for him to teach equitably.
with each of the students in her class. She tried to work around the administrative, union and peer influences in order to reach her students. She continued to look for and occupy spaces for teacher agency in the larger struggle between the provincial government and teacher unions.

Rick worked as an advocate for students whose first language was not English since he knew these students were not given the same educational opportunities as students who spoke English as a first language. He spent his second practicum giving increased attention to these students and spent his internship working at an ESL and equity leadership camp. Jaime did not feel she had enough time during her practica to form trusting relationships with students but had aspirations to model the pedagogical strategies of her second associate. She was amazed with his ability to engage students in learning, pair them up in a way that facilitated communication and have a deep knowledge of the mandatory and not so mandatory school rules. She understood him to be an agent skilled at negotiating the system.

Adam, unlike the four students mentioned above, saw himself as a professional working within a reasonably just education system. He used the existing bureaucracy and school hierarchy to discipline a student who had made an Anti-Semitic slur during a dramatic production of Fiddler on the Roof. Since Adam knew these kinds of comments were more pervasive than a one-time slip, he spoke to the student who had made the slur. Knowing that his power as an intern was limited, he used the existing hierarchy and then learned a lesson about school bureaucracy. The day after the incident, he told his associate, who then told the vice-principal about the student’s slur. Since Adam had delayed even a day in passing the comment on, the vice-principal suggested that there was nothing he could do. The reason for the principal’s inaction was unclear to me but what was clear was that Adam learned a lesson about the level of administrative support for equity education at his school when action was not taken because of little details that did not meet bureaucratic guidelines. Adam seemed willing to advocate for anti-discrimination education up to a point but was not willing to risk his future employment at a school with minimal administrative support for his efforts. As was the case with many students I spoke with, Adam learned that challenging his privilege had limits.

Danielle was difficult to place on a continuum of agency to structure since she did not see teaching as a calling to transform or nurture students. Rather, she understood teaching to
be one form of work. As a teacher she believed she would be hired to do some form of work within an existing structure. She was thinking of becoming a marine biologist, a social worker or a teacher and chose teaching because of the benefits, working conditions, availability of jobs and set of skills she would be required to perform. She did not feel called to teaching and did not describe it as a noble undertaking, but this did not prevent her from working hard on her assignments for “Social Foundations,” taking part in classroom discussions about equity education, noticing that children in her class were not wearing socks during the winter, or becoming heavily involved with the food programs at her school. What it did do was ensure that she took care of herself as well as her students. As an interesting aside, she was the only person I spoke with who I found to be neither emotionally nor physically exhausted at the time of the interview.

Regardless of their position on the agency structure continuum, all students listed some combination of the following constraints and facilitators to equity education. The level of racism, sexism and homophobia in the classroom and staff room taught students something about the particular school climate as it pertained to equity and either facilitated or constrained their efforts to combat systemic inequity during their practica. Associate teachers' expectations around the level and quality of classroom management helped students balance unilateral control with equity initiatives in their associates' classrooms. Depending on students' choices, they saw external forces such as the teacher unions, government policies and ministry guidelines as constraints or facilitators for their teaching efforts. Students found attitudes, behaviours and level of support from associate teachers and school administrators to either facilitate or constrain their ability to challenge themselves and take risks. Embedded structures, programs, bureaucracy, available time and resources and larger school issues gave students clues about the spaces and opportunities for possible equity work.

One additional constraint to equity education, experienced by a couple of students, was a resentment on the part of some school teachers and administrators of what they perceived to be the comfortable and ungrounded theoretical knowledge of university professors involved in teacher education. Student teachers seemed to be caught between the often contradictory and opposing messages of university based faculty and school based associate teachers. While it is difficult to co-operate or associate with a person who you resent, it is more difficult for students who are trying to learn something about education to
exist within this oppositional space, particularly when people on both ends are evaluating their work. Even in the case, as with Greg’s program, that school-university partnerships are formed between people with similar educational values, support for equity initiatives in the classroom are not consistently present. In the next section, I elaborate on the issue of theoretical practice and practical theory in student response to critical teacher education.
Theory and PRACTICE

"OK, so our schools are racist, sexist, classist, homophobic institutions: now what?"

This type of question, asked more explicitly by some participants than others, preceded a request for "Social Foundations" to address more "practical" issues. Among other things, what many students were looking for during their teacher education year was some guidance about the sort of educational tools they could use to implement equity during their practica. They were interested in learning through a technical model of teaching but were frustrated by the fact that their instructors often "refused" to give them solutions or rules to help them solve complex problems. Chocran-Smith and Lytle (1992) and Montecinos (1995), among others, argue that teacher educators who posit monolithic solutions to complex social problems contradict the concept of diversity. On the other extreme, say these researchers, those who use research-produced knowledge as the only authoritative voice, rather than as one of many, make it difficult for new teachers to make sense of the particular school context in which research-based generalisations may not hold or may not be immediately visible to them.

Entwistle (1996) accounts for the theory practice gap by attributing responsibility to both researcher and practitioner:

On the one hand, from the side of the practitioner, I believe it often follows from a misunderstanding of what theory is....On the other hand I am also convinced that a gap between theory and practice frequently exists because theory is quite often inadequate (p. 20).

If teacher education students try to apply theories without understanding that general theories are not by their nature applicable to specific situations in specific social contexts, they may quickly become frustrated with the theories. If their misunderstanding of the nature of theory is compounded with the problem of poorly constructed theories, reading about such theories in a "Social Foundations" class is unlikely to help them during their practica. One suggestion Entwistle (1996) makes is for teacher educators to explicitly teach about the strengths and limits of theoretical knowledge. Theory offers students a different way to see things but does not provide them with a vehicle for arriving at a particular destination.

Students enter teacher education programs with something on their minds. They have attitudes and beliefs about education, and when they read the literature these attitudes and beliefs function as personally grounded theoretical lenses. Also, what each of them
understands to be practical or useful depends on her/his entering theories of education. Since teachers’ perspectives, attitudes and beliefs, even in my sample of fifteen, were not uniform, I decided to explore their theories of education as a way to complexify Bolster’s generally valid argument and to conclude with a sample of strategies instructors have used to deal with the question of theoretically informed practice.

As Liston and Zeichner (1990) suggest, the practice of examining teaching and the social context of schools through various conceptual frameworks help us see new issues, reformulate old issues, question our accepted image of society and look at ourselves in a new light. These lenses do not provide us with a technical application of theory but rather help us alter our ordinary ways of understanding. This pedagogical strategy of introducing students to a multiplicity of lenses is useful, but it is not necessarily an easy process or even one within the absolute control of the instructor or the student. Adopting new lenses requires students to acknowledge that in fact they are already viewing the world through some present lens. While it was relatively easy for me to sit back and describe the conceptual lenses used by my participants, it would be considerably more difficult for them to describe their own or for me to be explicit about what lens allows me to see what I do in their responses. Things that might have been immediately apparent to my “Social Foundations” instructor about the ways in which I was viewing the world were less apparent to me at the time of my own teacher education; and even after three years trying to understand my implicit lenses, I am less able to do so than someone who lives outside of my body. Ultimately it seems like a difficult task to take Liston and Zeichner up on their suggestion. What follows is my understanding of each student’s conceptual lens. On a personally reflective note, graduate courses in sociology, various bodies of educational literature, my own social positioning and my recent experience as a teacher education student are among the influences that have factored into my theoretical lens.

The most prevalent belief, shared by Chris, Adam, and Karen combined Christian teachings with an understanding of Canada “the good.” One variation on this belief was Lisa’s belief in Christianity without the accompanying enthusiasm about Canadian nationalism. Chris, Karen and Lisa all taught in the Catholic school system and Adam had Christian clergy in his family. It is relevant that Chris, Karen and Adam are all white and Canadian born. Frank and Beth shared a belief grounded in North American possibility.
Frank saw the education system through a capitalist lens while Beth saw it through a meritocratic lens. Troy and Sarah were largely critical of dominant Western ideology. Troy was most heavily influenced by a theory of community that combined anti-colonial and anti-racist theory and Sarah was most heavily influenced by a version of critical theory characteristic of that taught in Western educational institutions. I have not been able to ascertain Jamie’s, Danielle’s, Rick’s, or Wendy’s entering theories of education, but all four seemed open to learning new conceptual frames during their teacher education year.

Christian religious education in the form of gospel values and an implicit valuing of non-judgement opened up a space for equity education for Lisa, Chris, Karen, and Adam, but also set limits on their approaches to anti-oppression education. Around the issue of homosexuality, all students were willing to discuss it but, to different extents, they did so within a frame of “loving the sinner and hating the sin.” They were unlikely to be overtly homophobic as they did not believe it was a good idea to hurt people even if done inadvertently, but they had a difficult time understanding their words and actions as heterosexist. The idea that discrimination hurts us all since we are really all the same and share the same red blood seemed to reduce their overt sexism, racism, classism and homophobia, but might have constrained their efforts to see and challenge their own privileges. They had a difficult time understanding that even if it were possible for them to love all of their students equally, this “love” was not enough to eliminate inequitable power relations. In the case of Chris, Karen and Adam, but not Lisa, this approach was combined with a belief in “multicultural Canada.” I have made sense of Lisa’s reduced faith in Canadian nationalism by attributing it to her social exclusion in Canadian schools after immigrating to Canada during her teenage years.

Roman and Stanley (1997) found that middle school students in Western Canada echoed two notions of “Candianess:” an “emergent” vision of Canada as a multicultural society that celebrates diversity and a “residual” version of national invasion in which ethnic differences are perceived as alien to Canada. They also found a pervasive Anglo-Canadian discourse constructing Canada as the non-racist antithesis of the United States. Chris, Karen and Adam constructed Canada similarly as a place where racism did exist, but as a place generally more tolerant of difference and more peaceful than the United States. They did not exude anti-immigrant sentiment during their sixty minutes with me, but the fact that Wendy
experienced subtle racism in her class makes me believe that all three of Roman and Stanley's findings were present in the beliefs of some teacher education students. While I do not attribute their beliefs in Canadian multiculturalism solely to their social positioning, I do believe that their white privilege was a salient factor. Wendy, for one, would never have bought into this notion of peaceful multiculturalism. She found it interesting that she was always pushed to be with the students of Chinese origin in her undergraduate physical education program by people who had been raised further from Northmount than she had. “They didn’t know I was dating someone white and have a white grandfather, but even if they didn’t know all those touches of white in my life, what difference does it make, because I’m still Canadian!” (t-w-14)

In her essay on the construction of “Canada” as a social and cultural form of national identity, Banneji (2000) shares an understanding of multiculturalism that accounts for rather than dismisses power.

The discourse of multiculturalism, as distinct from its administrative, practical relations and forms of ruling, serves as a culmination for the ideological construction of “Canada.” This places us, on whose actual lives the ideology is evoked, in a peculiar situation. On the one hand, by our shear presence we provide a central part of the distinct pluralist unity of Canadian nationhood; on the other hand, this centrality is dependent on our “difference,” which denotes the power of definition that “Canadians” have over “others.” In the ideology of multicultural nationhood, however, this difference is read in a power-neutral manner rather than as organised through class, gender, and race. Thus at the same moment that difference is ideologically evoked it is also neutralised, as though the issue of difference were the same as that of diversity of cultures and identities, rather than of racism and colonial ethnocentrism—as though our cultures were on par or could negotiate with the two dominant ones! (p.96)

In my conversations with teacher education students over the past three years, I have found the non-materialist discourse of “Canada the good” to be more prevalent than Banneji’s anti-oppression discourse of “Canada the doubly colonised country.” A critical mass of students believing in the first discourse may have contributed to a general resistance to American research and a general preference for a multicultural over an anti-racist approach to race and ethnocultural equity. In the case of issues like streaming and social class, for which strong Canadian research is difficult to find, the belief in an extreme disparity between Canadian and American education may limit pedagogical possibilities for
instructors, like Greg, who choose not to use research conducted in American schools. It simultaneously makes a materialist critique of Canadian schools quite difficult. A liberal view of Canadian society was not limited to the students. Nancy also articulated this version of “Canada the good.” Her belief shaped her pedagogical choices particularly where literature from the United States was concerned. Greg did not buy into this version of Canada himself, having lived in both Canada and the United States, but did allow what he understood to be his student’s beliefs about Canadian and American education shape his literature choices in a similar way.

Frank and Beth viewed Canadian education through a more conservative lens than the other participants in my research. I learned from Greg that these two students were not alone among their peers. He described a certain proportion of his students who “hijacked” what he saw to be the purpose of the research by reading the articles he provided through a meritocratic lens. I found that Beth used a liberal multicultural view of education when describing her students but a meritocratic view of “difference” when describing employment equity policies at the school board level. In her class she tried to make sure all students felt welcome and tried to celebrate all holidays, but when I asked her whether or not she had a job for next year, she made some comment about not being a “visible minority.” Given her comment, I find it highly unlikely that she would have seen systemic racism in an article demonstrating empirical inequities.

Frank saw racial, gendered and class-based inequities but understood capitalism as a force that could explain all of his observations. His solution to all educational ills was to increase standards and open public schools to parental choice. Based on his observation that parental choice was currently happening in schools and was only accessible to wealthy parents, he told me that free market and parental choice for all parents was one way to make schools more egalitarian. I noticed that Frank carefully analysed data from his surroundings and was extremely observant, but he was seemingly unable or unwilling to replace his capitalist conceptual lens. He liked most of his instructors but understood their articulated worries about the short duration of the program as an appeal for increased resources and funding, rather than as a genuine request for more instructional and processing time.

39 Having the ability to rationalise ones observations does not suggest that all explanations are equally conducive to equitable teaching.
Given his beliefs, I was absolutely amazed that Frank attributed his difficulties during his first practicum to his sheltered and privileged upbringing. He told me that, as a white middle class male, it was sometimes hard for him to see issues on gender, ethnicity and class. I was also amazed that he recognised his own behaviour and that of his classmates in an article written about gendered seating arrangements: “We had this article written by this man who spoke about gender dynamics in the classroom. He said that older women would be in the front, younger women and older men in between, and young males in the back corner. This described our gender class to a T” (t-1-8). He easily saw through the local school board’s equity policy: “We spoke about diversity, homosexuality, gender, ethnic diversity, you name it in Heena’s class. Schools have an official policy that you are supposed to combat these issues. Unfortunately it doesn’t happen” (t-1-5). He found the staffroom to be depressing because of the sexist and racist comments of the teachers. He also seemed to work very seriously toward practicing equity education in schools in a way that demonstrated systemic understanding of sexism, racism and homophobia: In his history class he taught students about the hidden gender biases in turn of the century unions, that women’s pay would go directly to their fathers if they were not married and to their husbands if they were married. He asked students to deconstruct sexist and racist media images in popular television shows. He also gave his students an article about a gay student in high school and asked them questions he thought would encourage them to empathise with the author of the article. His associate was absent for that class due to a lack of comfort with the topic, but that did not prevent Frank from discussing it with students. I attribute his efforts in part to his own perseverance and in part to the learning community honouring respectful disagreement that Heena was able to nurture in her class. I did not understand his capitalist understanding of the world to be an insurmountable barrier to his learning. In fact, he seemed no more constrained by his beliefs than did his more liberal minded peers.

Troy and Sarah were the only students whom I understood to view the world through a critical, anti-oppression lens. In both cases, their beliefs seemed to interact with their social positioning. Troy used his research, some of the critical anti-racist education literature and his personal experiences with marginalisation as evidence to ground his personal theory. He understood colonisation to be a current issue in Canadian schools and was frightened by the education minister’s suggestion that public schools re-legislate a prayer for the Queen of
England. As a person of colour whose fore-parents experienced colonisation in the West Indies, he immediately connected with one of Heena’s lessons on colonialism. The salience of this particular class was increased as he understood this discussion on the colonisation of Native people in Canada through his own anti-colonial lens. He also found lessons on issues that required him to challenge his privilege to be particularly salient. As a heterosexual, married man with children, he found lessons on sexuality to be particularly powerful.

Like Troy, Sarah found lessons to be most powerful when they interacted with her most marginalised and most privileged social characteristics. Discussions around sexuality, social class and streaming were most powerful for her as an upper middle class, queer woman who had always excelled in school and had always been placed in the “advanced” stream. It is likely that Troy’s and Sarah’s general openness to personal challenge also contributed to their engagement in equity issues raised in the context of their “Social Foundations” classes. Jamie, Danielle and Rick whose entering orientations to equity issues were not clear to me did have in common with Troy and Sarah this love of learning and an openness to personal challenge. All five seemed to extend their learning about these issues during the course of the year.

Some combination of their “Social Foundations” classes, their other classes at the faculty and their practicum experiences helped students link educational theory to practice. In terms of “Social Foundations,” all three instructors were seen to exert some influence on their students’ understandings of a theory practice link in education. Lisa and Troy found Heena’s class to be practical and concrete since she used real examples from their practica as one of the informing texts for the class and helped them make sense of what they were doing. Another factor that might have aided their understanding was Heena’s practice of rendering explicit and justifying each of her pedagogical decisions as she was making them. Greg and Nancy chose literature with a theory-practice link in part as a response to student demand, and in part to help students make the link between the research they were reading and their experiences in schools. All three instructors used praxis papers of some kind to facilitate students’ linking of theory and practice. As much as students found the forced reflection required of them in every one of their classes to be somewhat redundant, most said at the time of the interview that they were beginning to value this work.
In some cases, students chose elective classes that reinforced the ideas they learned in “Social Foundations” and helped them link these ideas to their practice teaching. Rick found this “double dose” to be useful. The instructor of his elective course inspired him to practice what he learned in her class in part because of her enthusiasm for the subject she was teaching and in part because of her personal commitment to equity work in the local school system. Her modelling of theories in class and in life helped motivate him to do the same. Readings from Heena’s class and an overt focus on community school connections in his elective class, helped Troy connect his own experientially grounded philosophy of education to Friere’s theoretical discourse around transformational learning. With this learning in hand, he felt increasingly confident practising his theory in schools. Sarah was the only one I spoke with who found that one of her curriculum courses helped support her learning in her “Social Foundations” course. Her drama instructor, who had done a great deal of work around race, class and gender issues in her own research, consistently brought this into the discussion as she challenged students around these issues. Sarah found that equity issues came up in a more applied and specified way in her drama class than in her core classes. She felt better prepared to deal with equity issues in this particular subject area than she did in her second subject area. In all three cases, students found the consistency between their instructor’s theory and practice to be motivating factors in their own application of educational theory to practice.

All students I spoke with valued their practicum experiences even though they were not always happy with their performance or their associate teachers’ level of support. Most felt their practicum, supported by coursework was a good learning experience and a good place to practice theory. “It was exciting to me, because whereas before I was just thinking of theory as theory and practice as practice, I could feel in my practicum like I was maybe bringing the two together.” (t-xs-16) One thing constraining most students from linking what they learned in class to their practice, however, was the discrepancy between the ease with which they could discuss issues in their “Social Foundations” classes and the difficult practice of teaching equitably in schools. In the socially complex, pressured, and often inequitable school setting, some students found they either threw the theories out the window or applied them haphazardly. They found it difficult to negotiate what they were learning with what they were able to do in the classroom. Again, students seemed to conceive of
theory as something to be implemented, applied or delivered rather than lived, but even when they tried to live rather than implement equity education, the inequitable social context of schools drained them and placed real restrictions on their efforts. Sarah found her temporal proximity to the faculty helped her teach in a way that attended to structural inequities but she was worried that in ten years this support would decrease because of the limited number of incentives for equity education built into the system.

One factor that has been theorised to help students practice teaching equitably is "collaborative resonance" between the school setting and what is being taught in the faculty (Cochran-Smith, 1991). On a program level, Greg tried to select co-operating teachers who would provide some level of resonance with the program. In the cases where this worked well, his efforts might have helped reduce the size of the chasm between what students observed in schools and what they read in the educational literature. In order to work well, this collaborative resonance between school setting and faculty classes would have to have been supported by teacher educators and associate teachers in their respective classrooms. The next section outlines some of the other challenges and supports available to students as they set out to practice equitable teaching.
Challenging Support

Liston and Zeichner, (1991) tell us that when teachers are seen as dullards, dullness is likely to prevail, and when they are construed as reflective and knowledgeable agents, change is more likely to occur. While none of the students or instructors I spoke with used Liston’s and Zeichner’s terminology, most did convey the message that challenge was an important factor in teacher education. Not all of them however, understood challenge in the same way. When I asked what issues students found challenging in their “Social Foundations” courses, I heard many answers including racism, homophobia, religious education, affirmative action, fluid and fixed abilities, colonialism, social class, tracking, white privilege and nothing. What I found interesting was that almost all of them were able to identify the most salient or challenging equity issue facing teachers today. Perhaps it was the way I phrased my question, but not a single student suggested “power” as the most challenging issue, yet all of their answers represented ways in which inequitable power dynamics in Canadian society could be played out. Perhaps the reason that I did not find a consensus in response relates back to the notion of social positioning. Those who have been marginalised or privileged along a particular dimension will likely respond differently to challenging questions around that dimension than their differently positioned peers. Another possibility is that the word “challenging” connotes different meanings for different people.

Both Greg and Nancy suggested to me that some proportion of their students were not interested in being challenged, and many students admitted that some proportion of their peers did not like being challenged, but none of the students I spoke with described their faculty courses in teacher education as being too challenging. Perhaps this finding links back to my selection strategy, but I have a hypothesis that there is something more to their responses. In a culture where people are measured by their imagined “Intelligence Quotient (IQ),” it is unlikely that individuals will criticise something as being too challenging, especially when it is challenging in a way that would be undetectable through IQ testing. The discrepancy between instructors’ and students’ views of the level of challenge within teacher education may lie in each of their understandings and North American cultural norms about the sorts of tasks, concepts or problems that can be classified as challenging. Adam,
Beth and Danielle found that teacher education was not intellectually challenging\textsuperscript{40} enough, while Troy and Wendy defined intellectually and emotionally challenging education more broadly and used the available spaces within the program to challenge themselves in these ways. The remainder of the students I spoke with found structured challenge within a context of personal safety to be the optimal condition for their learning.

All three instructors made some comment about students preferring intellectual to emotional challenge. Heena further contextualised this response to challenge as being a Western one. Adam found ideas related to equity not to be earth shattering and as such did not feel he did his strongest learning in these areas. He attributed his limited learning around these issues to his entering sensitivity to them and the lack of depth and practicality with which they were introduced. Beth responded to all of my questions with some variation of "well, of course!" and both Beth and Danielle found the grading scheme at Northmount to be "ridiculously high." Both understood student rewards for challenging work to come in the form of grades and credits. They were aware of the low failure rate at faculties of education and, as such, knew they would complete the program. Also, since both understood their high grades to be markers of success, neither felt the program had been sufficiently challenging.

Danielle did challenge herself around a number of equity related issues, but did not understand the program as a whole to be sufficiently challenging. As an example of the minimal challenge she faced in the program, Beth shared with me her grade of "A+" on every assignment in her elective course. Greg himself described her as one of the program's top students both academically and professionally yet, from speaking to her, I did not get the sense that she challenged her multiple positions of privilege. It is possible to be a "good student" who receives high grades without ever challenging oneself around issues of equity. In fact the very position of "good student" in the context of institutionalised education is one of relative privilege.

On a structural note, these three students were all preparing to teach in elementary schools and as such shared an institutional bond at Northmount. I know very little about Danielle's program requirements but do know something about Adam's and Beth's. While Greg and his team seemed not seem to take up many spaces for pressured criticality within

\textsuperscript{40} I am not sure exactly what they meant by "not challenging" but they all referred to their familiarity with multicultural education from prior learning experiences and the very high grading curve at Northmount.
the program, they did provide opportunities for students to challenge themselves in nearly every assignment. His team provided enough in the way of student choice that those who took up these spaces in a critical way would have had multiple opportunities to challenge themselves. Adam and Beth did not seem to take these opportunities and their instructors did not seem to challenge them to do so.

In terms of motivation by grade, Nancy found that a student in her class began to work harder and engage with the issues after she had given him a less than stellar grade on his first assignment. She felt that this grade, in combination with other factors like pressure from his more liberal minded peers and his belief that he was “better than that,” motivated him to push himself further than he might otherwise have done. Despite being a person with a history in the militia he began, near the end of the course, to entertain the idea of peace education.

Neither Troy nor Wendy mentioned grades or credits in her/his discussion of challenging issues in teacher education. Both appreciated opportunities for challenge imbedded in the program and both took the responsibility upon themselves to seek out additional challenge when they thought it might lead to learning. After two successful practicum experiences in two different school settings, Wendy chose as her internship placement a school geared to students with learning disabilities who had been pushed out of their local schools. Troy chose to do a research project for his internship. In conjunction with a faculty member at Northmount, he worked on a “needs assessment” of elementary and secondary schools in his board and focused on “at risk” students. One of his aims was to help the board more equitably distribute resources on the basis of need. Troy and Wendy, in addition to a number of other students, took up existing spaces in their program to direct their learning.

While other students I spoke with appreciated intellectual and emotional challenge, they preferred this challenge to be structured and set within a context of personal safety. Many extended their learning beyond the expectations of their instructors, but unlike the previous group, what this group shared was a desire for instructor moderated challenge. Perhaps their experiences with marginalisation led Wendy and Troy to give up on the Utopian vision of a “safe space,” or perhaps something else factored into their response, but neither seemed to require instructor moderation as a necessary pre-requisite for action. Rick
described the professor of his elective class as a skilled facilitator who was able to structure each class in a way that promoted challenge and learning.

My elective class did not seem to get off topic and I mostly attribute that to the professor. She was more vocal and more involved to bring us back on track. She was never rude about it, but she was able to do that because she could. She had a good way of taking what someone said and relating it to the topic that we were supposed to be talking about, whereas in the [Social Foundations] class it was sort of a free for all. To some extent that's good because it gets people talking but if it happens every class and always comes back to the same thing, it gets old. (t-xms-5)

In addition to structured challenge, Rick, Frank, Jamie, Sarah and Chris found they got the most out of classroom discussions in which they were made to feel uncomfortable but knew they were not going to be damaged by the experience. Sarah describes her “Social Foundations” instructor’s approach to this kind of supported challenge. Like students in Heena’s class, she described something about the presence of her instructor that helped her and her peers challenge themselves around equity issues.

Her role as an instructor was interesting because she has a presence about her that does not always make you feel totally easy or comfortable. She’s got this presence about her that’s challenging and she’s able to lead discussions so that she’s always presenting different points of view. I think that’s frustrating to some people because they want her to come down on one side and know exactly where she stands on things, but I think she was very careful not to let things happen in that easy way, that she’s always trying to complexify the conversation. I think that frustrates people because they want the black and white and she’s giving the grey. She’s not this touchy feely instructor but I think that challenges people. She’s also not someone who attacks in any way at all. There’s still a comfort with her even though she’s challenging. I liked when we got together with her to talk because I felt it was always going to be a conversation that pushed, but I don’t think everybody was ready or wanted that⁴¹. (t-xfs-7)

This last group of students found that while some conflict was seen to create a level of discomfort that facilitated learning, too much discomfort could lead to paralysis. According to a few students, too much instructor control resulted in a lack of engagement on the part of most students and a certain, “politically correct” dishonesty during classroom discussions. As Beth informed me, people did not always show their “true colours” in class.
As I learned from a few participants, those students in highly controlled classroom environments or even those students who perceived their environments to be too highly controlled quietly resisted the concept of equity education and used spaces and affinity groups outside of class to communicate their feelings.

While opportunities for challenge may not have been taken up by these quiet resisters, Northmount offered a number of minimally publicised spaces to support the work of students and instructors who chose to do critical equity work. One such space was the student services department. I spoke with one of the co-ordinators of this department and found that student programming existed in the forms of both student-organised and student services-organised initiatives. Programs in the latter category included conferences, workshops and discussion groups. Both a “safe schools” conference and a gender and sexuality focussed conference were co-sponsored by the department. They ran and assessed workshops on English as a Second Language, general power dynamics in schools, gender equity and stress management. They also co-ordinated discussion and support groups led by faculty members for teacher candidates whose race, sexual orientation, or years away from school placed them in a minoritised position in the broader program. The person I spoke with suggested that while the majority of these programs were not well attended in comparison to the number of pre-service students registered at Northmount, those who did participate provided consistently positive feedback.

Those events organised by students in the program through the department of student services included dramatic performances around educational issues, mentorship programs like a “future teacher’s club” encouraging high school students from populations underrepresented in the teaching force to consider teaching, and more general funding and organisational support for student-initiated projects. One such project was initiated this year by seven committee members of an equity-oriented branch of the student teacher’s union’s. To meet the requirements of their internship placements, they co-ordinated and contributed to a publication which was then distributed to all teacher candidates on the day they returned.

Sarah’s perception that many of her peers were not ready for her instructors’ challenging discussions combined with many student reports of the excessive reading load in “Social Foundations” classes provides evidence that contradicts Beth's and Danielle’s perception of an “unchallenging” program.
from their internships. This publication consisted of a collection of information, activities and resources for teachers hoping to incorporate equity into their teaching.

While there were a number of spaces in Northmount's teacher education program for students who chose to challenge themselves around issues of equity education, I found that opportunities for pressured criticality were limited. One space for institutionally legitimated criticality was the "Social Foundations" course, but again, not all instructors took up this challenge in their teaching. Instructors were provided with a general set of expectations but were given a fair amount of flexibility to approach the topic in ways that fit with who they were and what they did. The co-ordinator of the "Social Foundations" course suggested a range of issues to be included in the course and encouraged instructors to deal with the issues critically and creatively as best they could. This strategy for instructors reminded me of Heena's approach of encouraging students to take ownership for their ideas.

Both Heena and Nancy commented on the support they received in meetings for "Social Foundations" instructors. These meetings were co-ordinated by a faculty member at Northmount who was, herself, a "Social Foundations" instructor. Both instructors would have liked more guidance in terms of mechanical matters such as amount of reading to assign and the proportion of student grade to be assigned to various forms of participation, but both enjoyed the freedom to choose their conceptual framework and pedagogical strategies. Nancy appreciated the opportunity to network with her peers and learn how they were dealing with issues, while Heena appreciated the co-ordinator's encouragement for instructors to challenge themselves and make changes to their program each year. In fact, she saw her participation in this study as one way to get critical feedback about her course. To some extent, these meetings challenged and supported instructors as they challenged and supported their students. It seemed to function as a sort of "meta-Social Foundations" course. An additional potential function for this group might be as a space to get feedback from colleagues on how others have interpreted student response to a particular instructor's approach. As a socially and politically situated instructor with a particular philosophy of education, certain student responses may surprise them. Greg did not mention these meetings during his interview and I later discovered that he chose not to attend the meetings. I am not clear why he made this choice but within his structured program I imagine that his
whole team would have had to attend in order for the meetings to have had much effect on his program.

To return to the theme of challenging support, one challenge for each instructor was to determine the balance point between challenge and support for each student in her/his class. Since classes were located within an institution, and institutions within a broader society, factors other than instructor approach helped students reach a useful balance.

Institutional facilitators for critical teaching included programs provided through the Student Services department, related studies courses, the cohort as a learning community, an institutional climate that encouraged creative and critical work, and meetings for “Social Foundations” instructors. Constraints included a lack of parity between “Social Foundations” courses with only some proportion of instructors focussing on critical diversity education, a relatively short program, and pressure to implement a “ridiculously high” grading scheme.

Facilitators external to the program included the location of Northmount University in a multicultural city and family and friends involved in critical education or at least willing to discuss issues brought up in class. External constraints included a relatively conservative provincial political climate resulting in a reduction of institutionalised equity policies, a notion of teacher unions as unilateral unyielding powers, board level inequities and family and friends who responded angrily to their children’s, siblings’, partners’ or best friends’ challenges. Amid these personal, pedagogical, institutional and social facilitators and constraints, “Social Foundations” instructors and their students found themselves living and learning as they negotiated through their teacher education year.
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Implications

Resistance and Complacency

According to much of the critical teacher education literature, student resistance is a common and stable response to instruction that challenges students' beliefs and privileges. This body of literature lends support and legitimacy to a question I have often heard and been disturbed by: "what do you do with a resistant student?" In my mind the question is asked as though "the resistant student" is a monolithic character whose response remains constant. My understanding, however, is that student resistance looks and sounds different in different social and programmatic contexts. It leaves critical teacher educators, who are also not members of a monolithic group, with a more complex task than would be the case if student response was fixed. What happens when the resistant student characterised in the literature is not the greatest challenge faced by teacher educators working for social justice? What happens when the resistant student can no longer be easily recognised? What happens when the question "what can we do with those resistant students?" obscures teacher educators' views? Because my study took place at a particular time in a particular program context, it can help inform our notion of student response without treating teacher education candidates and teacher education programs as uniform entities.

Between my volunteer-based selection strategy and my overt focus on equity education, it did not surprise me that those in my small sample of participants were unlikely to behave in overtly resistant ways. What did surprise me was their perception that most of their peers were also not resistant to equity education. Since classification of resistance is relative and depends in a large part on how the classifiers see the world, I have to be careful about generalising students' observations. I am not sure how they understood the category of resistance, but have some sense that the four students I spoke with from Nancy's class saw resistance personified in a particular student who exhibited intolerance to her peers by frequently interrupting class discussion with racist, sexist and homophobic comments. The fact that this student seemed to be actively rather than passively resistant affected the way her peers responded to her. She was ostracised, excluded from social events and received little help on collaborative class assignments. From this student, I learned that it is not always an enviable position to be overtly resistant to issues of equity and diversity in a classroom where overt racism, sexism and classism are not tolerated.
Just like Willis' (1977) working class lads who resisted middle class formal schooling structures, students who overtly resist diversity education are not acting in ways that necessarily support or promote themselves within the education system. It is relatively easy for instructors and students to socially exclude those students who overtly oppose group norms. One instructor’s approach of understanding all her students as potential learners seemed to reduce the potential resistance from even the student I initially understood to be overtly resistant. By understanding their behaviour as temporarily oppositional and by giving them a chance to open up to equity education, Heena seemed to reduce the incidence of resistance in her class and even to reduce the likelihood that resistant students would be ostracised by their peers. She constructed them as part of the learning community rather than as barriers to equity education. I am not trying to suggest that resistant students are unproblematic figments of instructors’ imaginations or discredit the body of literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy. Rather, I am suggesting that how students are characterised with respect to resistance, affects an instructor’s treatment of these students.

After speaking to Frank, who I had initially understood to be resistant, and Beth who I had been told was a “top student,” I found support for my belief that resistance was more flexible and less rigid a category than I had read about in the literature. I learned from Frank that oppositional behaviour in class does not necessarily correlate with a lack openness to challenging one’s privileges and I learned from Beth that students who actively engage in classroom discussion about equity issues do not necessarily take these issues to heart.

Beth’s form of unconscious resistance, or complacency seemed to be quite prevalent among participants and their peers. Students who responded with complacency tended to be those who had been exposed to diversity without marginalisation. They had either grown up in a multicultural environment, worked with marginalised youth, or travelled outside of North America but they had not themselves, experienced marginalisation. The language of multiculturalism and diversity education was not new to them. Their feelings of familiarity with the issues addressed in “Social Foundations” seemed to constrain their interest in learning about educational inequity.

The majority of students complacent to equity education were white students who had been at least moderately successful in the traditional education system and seemed to believe in the transformative potential of education for all. They also believed that an additive
approach to multicultural education was a useful way to take up issues of diversity. What they were missing in their analysis was an understanding of inequitable power relations in the schools they believed to be largely democratic. While I do not attribute their beliefs in additive approaches to multiculturalism solely to their social positioning, I do believe that their multiple privileges were a salient factor in their complacency. They seemed to view themselves as teachers or professionals working within a reasonably just education system. Since they were willing to discuss equity issues in class, to complete assignments and display social skills acceptable for classrooms, their resistance to an anti-oppression discourse was less detectable to many of those in the class. These students did not seem to be impacted greatly by instructor pedagogy and seemed unlikely to take up existing supports within the larger teacher education program for this kind of work. I classify student complacency as resistance because, from what I learned in my interaction with teacher educators and teacher candidates, those who responded in this way seemed least likely to challenge their own privileges. They were willing to acknowledge racism in broader society but seemed less likely to acknowledge inequitable power dynamics within the education system.

From informal conversations with teacher educators dedicated to social justice, I have learned that this student response, often referred to as liberalism, is well known. In his discussion of the challenges critical educators face in their teaching, Portelli (1996) raises the issue of the "soft liberal position."

When taken to an extreme, as I am claiming it has been done in some educational circles, this position leads to the illusion that freedom has no limits, that individual choice ought not to be influenced by other individual choices, that individual choices do not influence others, that somehow there is the possibility of making choices in a neutral context, and that any individual choice is acceptable. It is exactly this kind of view that leads to extreme relativism or extreme scepticism or an anything goes mentality: open-mindedness becomes empty-mindedness; objectives or plans become unacceptable because they limit the students' choice; suggestions from teachers become non-natural since they do not arise from the students' choice; student participation becomes student domination; sharing on the part of the students turns into control by the dominant few in the group. Any intervention or correction on the part of the teacher is seen as an imposition of the views of the teacher, or to use the latest catch-phrase, to intervene is to be

42 I have some difficulty with the term “liberalism” since I believe it allows those who construct their own identities in opposition to Liberals to judge and fix student complacency but I am aware that the term has been helpful for some as they make sense of student response.
judgmental. The assumption here is that any judgement is necessarily judgmental or demeaning (p.64).

While I believe that liberalism can help us understand student response to critical teacher education, only Beth seemed to have taken on this position in a consistent way throughout her interview with me. When this position is taken to an extreme, it can be troubling and problematic but the students who participated in interviews, who took this position in response to one of my questions, did not do so consistently and did not do so to an extreme. Individual quotes included in my thesis can more easily be classified as exuding liberalism than can student responses as a whole. To illustrate my point I will try to give a more holistic description of one student response.

Like a number of other participants, Lisa seemed to have responded in conservative, liberal and even radical ways throughout her interview. At one point she felt justified in telling me that her religion saw fault with homosexuality, but earlier in the interview she told me that she had scolded her brother after he made a homophobic comment. She made direct links between teacher privilege and inequitable teaching and although she worked with students as individuals, she also acknowledged the systemic racism she witnessed in the staff room and in the streaming of her science classes. The fact that Lisa’s comments seemed to reflect such a wide range of underlying beliefs about equity education leads me to believe that her response in class was anything but unified.

While I have classified each student response as resistance, complacency, transformation or extension, all students showed a range of responses during their interviews with me. Neither “complacent” nor “liberal” adequately describes any student response. I agree that the ideology of liberalism can help us better understand student response to equity education but in my estimation the term carries a great deal of baggage with it that is unproductive if social action is to be an important outcome of teacher education. When people talk about an extreme liberal position, they are often referring to one of two characterisations. Those on one end of the political spectrum may construct this group of students, who enter into discussion about issues of equity and diversity, as “bleeding heart Liberals.” Those on the other end may construct them as “naïve, comfortable Liberals who have blind faith in policy.” Either way the term “Liberal,” which positions students at the midpoint of a straight line between left and right, is fairly pejorative and unproductive. While referring to someone’s ideology as liberalism is not the same as calling a person a
Liberal, both practices seem to fix student response. My sense is that social action in a world where people position themselves, and often are positioned along a political spectrum requires that we listen to one another and make attempts to understand each others’ responses without restricting agency. In some ways I prefer the term “liberalism” to the term “complacency” since the first acknowledges the political nature of student response in an institution that is often structured around liberalism. In other ways I prefer the term “complacency” in that it names a potentially temporary response in students who can not yet see systemic inequities in society but who may begin to do so at some point in their lives.

Regardless of the language used, any way of conceptualising student response to equity education that gives critical teacher educators a place to begin their work can be useful.

As a reflective note, my difficulty with the term liberalism, and more broadly with the criticism of teachers, is linked to my recent experience teaching math at a local secondary school. After one semester of daily tears and upset stomachs, I resigned from my position. I feel in many ways that I abandoned my students because I could not emotionally or physically deal with the inequities they had to face in the current education system. My students did not have the privilege to make such a choice. They are legislated to be in schools, and while many of them may agree that we should restructure the education system, they, unlike those of us who have graduated, must attend school daily until this happens. I have a great deal of respect for teacher candidates who are willing to enter schools, in their current inequitable state, and educate students in a way that acknowledges inequity. I believe teachers should be both challenged and supported as they work to understand what it means to teach for social justice.

At the same time as we allow teacher candidates some time to process ideas that may be new to them, we should ensure that they are exposed to critical social foundational education before they begin teaching. If teachers begin their work as educators unaware of the systemic nature of inequity, students with a different set of social locations and life experiences will not be better off than they were before multicultural food fairs were introduced. In my study, teacher candidates who recognised past educational practices as racist but found multicultural education, as it has been laid out in formal educational policy, to be fair seemed to be more prevalent in this time and place than students who made overtly racist or sexist comments in class. Yet reports in the literature of the second group far
outnumber reports of the first. I believe the first group of students, who I have classified throughout this thesis as being complacent to equity education, are identifiable to teacher educators dedicated to social justice, but discussion around ways to work with this group of students is still in its infancy. Teacher educators dedicated to social justice who encounter complacent students in their classes have begun generating strategies to work with these students, but their work has not been well documented in the literature. Also their work may not be supported by some of their peers who might themselves be complacent to equity education.

The majority of students in my study were not only white, heterosexual, female, middle-class and able-bodied; they were also people who grew up in a multicultural city with a “celebrating diversity” additive approach to education. They had more experience with multiculturalism than beginning teachers did two decades ago but were not necessarily more likely to challenge their privileges. I began my research with the assumption that resistance was more complicated than the response described in some of the critical feminist literature. As is often the case with assumptions, I seem to have inadvertently structured my study to support this hypothesis. What I can see now, after speaking to participants who did not always support my assumptions, is that whether resistance is a fixed or fluid entity, it continues to act as a barrier to equity education. After working in an inequitable education system for a brief period of time, I greatly value the work of critical teacher educators. At the same time, I believe that everyone, including teacher educators, must be open to challenging the way they encounter the people they work with.

As such, it is my position that teacher educators and teacher education programs take their students’ changing experiences into account. Without doing this, transformation seems unlikely for those who experienced additive approaches to multicultural education in their own schooling without really having been marginalised. If teacher educators do not acknowledge their students’ changing competencies and experiences, those students favouring an additive multicultural approach to education may be less likely to see themselves as resistant or as candidates for transformation. It is important that teacher education research, exploring what it means to teach social foundational courses in this time and place, document the changing nature of student response and acknowledge that teacher candidates have certain understandings and competencies that earlier studies did not account
for. This may be accomplished through longitudinal studies or comparisons across multiple cross-sectional studies.
Transformation?

My initial motivation for this project was to better understand how transformation around issues of equity education worked, what factors contributed to this type of response and how learning about the process could help instructors increase its likelihood across students, particularly students resistant to equity education. At the time, I had a fairly specific idea about what transformation could be. For me, it was the way I defined my experience in teacher education. All students learn during their teacher education year, but for me, learning about the inequities in schools and society changed the way I saw everything in the world. I could not stop seeing inequity around me and was amazed that I had ever missed such blatant forms of discrimination. I did not think of transformation as a process that would take me from one specific place to another, or as something that might happen to different degrees in different people. I thought of it only as a salient learning experience capable of permanently changing my conceptual lens. What I learned after speaking to fifteen people who experienced teacher education was that transformation, as I understood it, was a fairly infrequent occurrence. In cases where it did occur, factors leading to its occurrence were not necessarily generalisable to others. Transformation, as I experienced it in my own teacher education year, requires that students enter their teacher education programs as relative neophytes to equity and diversity education. Those who have been marginalised within the education system can certainly extend their learning about equity education, but cannot be “blown away,” as one student suggested, by the fact that inequity within the current education system is a reality.

I realised, after conducting a few interviews and reflecting on the social positioning of students who understood their teacher education experiences to be transformative, that transformation around equity issues was a luxury of the privileged. It was my privilege that allowed me to propose my own salient and transformative learning experience as a model to enhance critical teacher education for others, particularly those others who were socially positioned in ways that would have introduced them to inequity and marginalisation long
before their teacher education years. For students who have no choice but to learn about societal inequities, transformation is elementary\textsuperscript{43}.

All three students who understood their experiences to be transformative were white and middle class and had grown up in homogeneously white middle class neighbourhoods. But, to a greater extent than those students I identified as complacent, these students were open to asking questions about who they were, what understandings they brought with them into the classroom, and how such understandings might impact their relationships with students from experiential backgrounds and social locations different than their own. In short, they were more open to challenging their privileges. In the literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy, students with these social characteristics and experiences might be considered good candidates for resistance. What I found was that some subset of this group were also good candidates for transformation and salient learning. As is implied by the term “transformation,” this group of students seemed to be most visibly affected by their teacher education experiences. For these students, pressured criticality was more useful than optional spaces for equity education because they needed the initial structure and motivation to learn that social inequity was indeed an issue in schools.

These students, for the most part, appreciated intellectual and emotional challenge within a structured environment as long as it was introduced within a context of personal safety. As I have mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, safety is a relative state. For this group, a safe environment seemed to be one in which all students in the class were valued as contributors to class discussions. These students knew they had some learning to do and, while at least two of them appreciated the opportunity to be pushed beyond their initial comfort zones, they wanted their instructors and peers to have some patience with them as they learned. It also seemed important to them that the class discussions have some structure through which overt discrimination was not tolerated. They were not interested in “free for alls” in which all contributions were equally valued. Large group facilitation by dynamic instructors who were able to keep the discussion moving and tie students’ comments back to a central theme seemed to facilitate learning in students who responded this way. For this

\textsuperscript{43} While I believe that students who have experienced marginalisation in their lives do not have to attend class in order to learn that some forms of discrimination exist, one instructor of “Social Foundations” reminded me that even among this group of students transformation is not inevitable.
group, instructor pedagogy seemed to be the most salient factor in students’ response, a factor possibly privileged by my research design.
**Extension**

From speaking to students and teacher educators I got the impression that the majority of teacher education students, while willing to discuss diversity and equity issues, were relatively complacent when it came to challenging systemic inequity. A few others were either overtly resistant to discussion of equity issues or interested in challenging themselves around these issues. While the concepts of resistance and transformation were immediately obvious to me, one possibility I had not thought much about was the notion of extension.

For those few students who brought with them a grounding of equity education, resistance and transformation were less common responses. The three I spoke with were both interested in and able to extend their learning about equity issues and dedication to social justice. Social foundational instructors might want to think about how to approach their courses with the knowledge that some students will not have to be convinced of the systemic inequity in schools. What can be done to extend the learning of these students while at the same time acknowledging that many students will enter their classrooms believing education to be neutral? Troy and Sarah, and to some extent, Wendy were asked by their peers and occasionally their instructors to act as authorities or surrogate teachers. A critical mass of their peers who were still trying to understand these issues along with, in at least one case, an instructor who did not probe deeply about these issues meant that these students were rarely given other opportunities to extend their own learning around the issues they knew well. They were, however, able to extend their learning around dimensions of privilege they had not thought much about and were able to seek out opportunities within the larger program context to challenge themselves around issues they understood more deeply. Troy, Sarah and Wendy taught me that while major transformation was unlikely to occur for students who entered with an understanding of educational inequity, salient learning experiences were not beyond the realm of possibility.

Students who extended their learning of equity issues were ones who had experienced some form of marginalisation in a conscious way and were interested in working against the inequity that was not new to them. They found lessons to be most powerful in those cases when discussions focussed on equity issues along which they felt either most marginalised or most privileged. They tended to see the world through a critical anti-oppression lens, but at
the same time believed there was space within the education system for teacher agency. Unlike the students who responded with complacency, these students were more likely to work as direct advocates for their students than to utilise established hierarchical structures to advocate for marginalised students. They focussed their energy on helping marginalised students make their way through an inequitable education system by helping them build networks and supports for their own learning. For these students, as well as for the majority of the students who transformed, the practicum was an additional space to challenge themselves to incorporate equity initiatives into their teaching. In the case of these students, however, equity was infused, not only additional. As well as supplementing the curriculum with materials that had something other than a Eurocentric focus, they enlisted the help of students as they critiqued the formal curriculum and made even the most mundane administrative decisions with equity in mind. Their practica demanded intense work and occasionally resulted in emotional exhaustion, but they understood their efforts to fight inequity as part of, rather than separate from, their pedagogy.

Like students who responded in a transformative way, this group seemed to take great joy in the process of learning. They were happy to challenge themselves within the context of safety and were more likely than any other group of students to challenge themselves along equity issues even in situations of minimal personal safety. Perhaps their experiences with marginalisation led them to give up on the utopian notion of a safe space, or perhaps something else factored into their response, but this group of students, particularly Troy, did not seem to require instructor moderation as a necessary pre-requisite for action. Troy was able to make conceptual and practical links across his courses, the research literature, his personal philosophy of education and his internship project. With this preparation in hand, he extended his learning around issues of equity and diversity in a multifaceted way that accounted for complexity.

Students who extended their learning appreciated challenge embedded within the program including that provided through “Social Foundations” and took responsibility upon themselves to seek out additional challenge when they thought it might lead to deeper learning. More than any other group of students, they took up existing spaces within the broader program to direct their learning.
**Considering my Conceptual Framework**

Combining the literature on student resistance to critical pedagogy with my experiences as a teacher education candidate, I hypothesised a number of factors I expected to shape student response to equity and diversity issues in teacher education. These were the larger teacher education program, students’ personal experiences and beliefs, student and faculty social positioning in North American society and instructor pedagogy. Through my conversations with teacher educators and teacher candidates, I was able to learn something about the interaction of these factors.

While the balance point for each student was unique, I found that students’ experiences with diversity, but even more specifically with personal marginalisation, helped them understand the presence of inequity in the current education system. The same seemed true of instructors. Having social characteristics that were marginalised in broader Canadian society without having ever experienced marginalisation on a personal level, or living in a multicultural city in a relatively privileged body, seemed to contribute to a familiarity with diversity without a deep understanding of the systemic power dynamics at play. Experiences with additive multicultural education in schools seemed to contribute to a level of complacency greater than that experienced by students who were privileged along all dimensions and were not exposed to multiculturalism.

The way I understood it, some combination of marginalised social positioning and experience feeling marginalised sensitised students to the inequities in the education system. This combination seemed to inform students’ beliefs about equity education and facilitate their opportunities to engage in discussions around equity issues in their “Social Foundations” class. Most students, regardless of social positioning, seemed to have a belief in teacher agency within the school system, a finding that was not surprising to me when I considered the practical nature of their chosen educational program. Amidst the tension between observed structure and believed agency were students’ experiences in teacher education.

In terms of instructor pedagogy, students entering the program with differing orientations and motivations to equity education seemed to get the most out of classes where the instructor was able to structure challenge within a context of personal safety. They did not necessarily enjoy the discomfort that often accompanied an emotional challenge but the
majority of students with whom I spoke did seem to push their learning to the greatest extent in such a classroom environment. Since discomfort and safety are relative terms, this pedagogical strategy of structuring challenge within a context of personal safety was less straightforward than it may seem.

Keeping the diversity among students in mind, those instructors who were able to help build a supportive learning community in which racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of symbolic violence were not tolerated, yet where people were free to disagree with their peers in a respectful\textsuperscript{44} way, helped support a climate of safety for many. This required that instructors be aware of the power dynamics in their class and recognise subtle forms of discrimination. Rather than any particular pedagogical tool, this supportive classroom community seemed to build trust in the class. One thing I found to be quite useful in this effort was skilled facilitation on the part of instructors. Instructors who could facilitate discussions around equity issues with strategies in place to work through any arising conflicts were, in my opinion, most able to engage the class.

Greg seemed to structure class interactions to reduce the likelihood of controversial discussion, but he invited guest speakers and gave assignments encouraging students to engage in discussion on a computer conference around social foundational issues. He used these alternative spaces to give his students an opportunity to engage in heated discussion around equity issues. Nancy raised controversial issues in class and then used personal relationships with her students, changes to the seating plan, computer conferencing and time limits to bring down the heat. She seemed more successful facilitating discussion for some diversity issues than for others. Heena introduced topics, allowed her students to raise controversial ideas, then told stories and asked open questions to move the discussion forward and allow students to discover the discrimination in their own comments.

Instructors who allowed students some level of freedom to speak from their hearts but moderated this freedom in structured ways seemed most likely to build a safe and challenging environment for many students. Since safety for many does not account for the one who may be left behind, an attention to all students seemed useful in building a

\textsuperscript{44} By respectful, I mean in a way that acknowledges each participant as having a story not necessarily known by others in the class. Some level of diversity in teacher education classes assures that students will come with different levels of experiences with marginalisation or privilege but just by looking at a classmate or listening to one comment made at one point in time, these experiences are not necessarily self evident.
supportive, though not always safe, learning community. This was particularly true for those who might have been socially excluded from the group without some form of active facilitation. Instructors' theories about student transformation, resistance and learning affected their pedagogical choices and their ability to see learning potential in all students, but did not necessarily affect student response in a direct way.

In addition to these other factors, elements within the larger programmatic context such as discussion groups for students and instructors, internship placements, program structure, elective courses, Student Service-supported conferences and institutional climate provided spaces for those who were already engaged with these issues to extend their learning. Beyond my four hypothesised factors, I found political climate and student networks external to the program to influence students' experiences within the program.
Implications for Teacher Educators

My recommendations and suggestions for teacher educators are based on my analysis of student response to equity and diversity issues raised in three “Social Foundations” classes at a particular institution. My suggestions are by no means exhaustive or conclusive, but are an entry point for dialogue among teacher educators. I have not intended them to be prescriptive. Just as there are no “ready to apply” tools to help teacher candidates teach equitably when they enter schools, there are no specific techniques that will work for all teacher educators teaching social foundational courses. Instructors have a diverse array of pedagogical approaches, occupy a range of social locations and encounter different student responses to their teaching in a variety of institutional and political contexts. Still, teacher educators responsible for teaching required social foundational courses at faculties of education have enough in common with the three instructors who participated in this project for my suggestions and recommendations to be of some use.

I begin by considering how teacher educators might approach their students, continue by discussing how they can implicate themselves in their teaching and conclude by suggesting programmatic factors that they might want to consider. Since my suggestions in this section are directed toward teacher educators of courses similar to “Social Foundations,” any second person references are meant for this audience.

The hypothesis informing my research and guiding my interview questions was that teacher education candidates respond to critical, equity-oriented teacher education in a variety of ways. Despite the fact that the majority of students are white, female, heterosexual and middle class, they occupy a greater diversity of social locations than this description might suggest. Begin your course recognising that your students are not all the same and that even those who may seem to fit this description at first glance have a set of life experiences that factor into their responses. If you listen carefully and prepare yourself to be surprised by their responses you may give them the freedom and opportunity to respond differently over the course of the term. This way, even those students who initially resist challenging their privileges will have the opportunity to respond differently over the course of the term.

Many students in Northmount’s teacher education program were familiar with the terms “diversity” and “multiculturalism.” If you enter your classroom with the assumption that many students have encountered “diversity” but have not necessarily understood the
power dynamics involved, you may have a better chance of challenging students who grew up in schools where additive approaches to multicultural education were implemented. Inviting students to articulate their understandings of these terms in a classroom discussion, journal entry or some other form of personal communication may help you learn something about the knowledge they each bring with them into their teacher education programs.

Once you have a better idea of where students are coming from, you may want to think about what it means to have a "safe" classroom. Consider the extent to which this is possible and make some attempt to nurture structured challenge for students in a way that considers your and their notions of safety. One way to do this in large class discussion might be to move beyond oppositional debates between a numeric minority of participants. In Nancy's class, where students with views on two political extremes shared the majority of the air time, the discussion seemed less likely to progress beyond oppositional debate than in Heena's class where many students, from across the political spectrum, participated in discussion. In Nancy's class but not in Heena's, a group of students began "Social Foundations" with a history of having been intolerant of some of their peers, leading me to believe that something in addition to instructor pedagogy factored into safety levels in the class. Nancy's students appreciated her sensitivity to class dynamics and her intervention to shake up dominant groups throughout the year. Her rearranged seating plan seemed to facilitate increasingly positive classroom interactions. If you think not only about what safety means for individuals in your class but consider as well the classroom dynamics, you might be better able to build a learning community. One way to do this, that may or may not be feasible as you are teaching, is to spend some time observing student interactions in your class and think about how they interact as a group and how you interact with them.

Consider how much time you have available to dedicate to students outside of class and reflect on the amount of time students expect you to dedicate to them. Think about how you can be accessible without overextending yourself. Students found Nancy's use of email to be effective in this regard as it increased her level of accessibility to many students and permitted her a level of openness and immediacy that facilitated her teaching. Email, as a medium, met communication needs during the year for many students, but was not equitably accessible to all students and in some cases facilitated social exclusion among students. If
the technology is available to you, reflect on the strengths, weaknesses and relative safety of using electronic conference lists.

It is my belief, that a safe classroom cannot exist in an inequitable society if participants of a learning community do not challenging their privileges. Whether through classroom discussion, written assignments, activities or some other teaching strategy, dedicate some portion of the class to mandatory challenge. Since required challenge cannot be legislated in students, air time can be dedicated to those who choose to take it up and others can learn by listening. When you choose to ask students to be self conscious about their privileges, try to support them in their efforts by introducing these opportunities at a time when they are not under great pressure to do other things. At the same time, give yourself an opportunity for pressured criticality in a way that reaches a balance between safety and challenge.

Apple (1986) suggests one way to challenge students. He argues in favour of a biographical-institutional-societal analysis as a way to frame discussion around gender, race, and class dynamics in the classroom. The way I understand his point is that it is important but not enough to ask students to acknowledge that schools mirror the inequities in society. Beyond asking students to account for why this relationship between schools and society might exist, encourage them to think of their own practice as socially located teachers in schools and society. When discussing articles, remind students to be self conscious that they are socially located people who will be working in educational institutions. If teaching in Canada, one way to challenge students' assumptions might be to debunk the mythology of "Canada the good." Try to engender an understanding of Canadian multiculturalism that accounts for rather than dismisses power. If students understand that they are not just consumers or critics of literature, they may begin to implicate themselves in their teaching and may be less likely to search for general tools without regard to the specific social and institutional settings in which they will be working. Accept the possibility that as hard as you may work to convince students of the fallibility of specific tools for equity education, they may continue to request tools and techniques as they begin teaching.

Help students become self-conscious about their theoretical lenses. Introducing them to a multiplicity of lenses through the literature can be useful but it will not necessarily be easy for them to adopt or try on these lenses. Application of new lenses requires that students
acknowledge their current biases. Some may be resistant to accepting that they do in fact view the world through some experientially grounded lens. Give students time and support to explore their own biases and gently\(^45\) challenge them when their assumptions become apparent to you. One way to help students acknowledge their biases, is to model this self-consciousness for them. Think about what it would mean for you to acknowledge some part of your own lens in a public way and how you might feel if students gently challenge you when some experience informing your assumptions becomes apparent to them.

Lisa found it easy to speak in Heena’s class because Heena “exploited” herself on the first day. Heena began her class by telling students why the subject matter of the class was important to her. She happened to use a story and props to accomplish her goal but many other pedagogical strategies are possible. She chose this sort of introductory exercise so that her students would be better able to challenge her by understanding something about who she was and where she was coming from.

Think about the understandings you bring into the classroom. If you are not comfortable facilitating discussions around issues of equity and diversity, take responsibility for your own professional development. If particular issues are more difficult for you to discuss than others, think about why they are difficult for you personally. Greg worked around this difficulty by inviting colleagues and other guest speakers to his class to support his teaching. Whether or not you feel comfortable facilitating emotional and challenging discussions, it can be useful to take advantage of the supports offered within the institution.

Since pedagogical strategies vary among instructors, a good place to begin is to consider your approach. Whether you choose to focus on an issue each week or infuse multiple issues into each class, consider your choices. Even if readings each week reflect an “issue of the week” approach, consider infusing lessons with related themes from past weeks to help students make connections between ideas. In the only class I observed, I watched Heena infuse her lesson on “Peace education” with comments about race, gender, class, sexuality and power dynamics more generally. Having a conceptual framework for her course seemed to lend a certain thematic cohesiveness to group interactions while it allowed her to focus on

\(^45\) By gently, I do not mean to exclude explicit challenges that may not be seen by the recipient as gentle. Rather, I intended my comment to be a reminder that the person being challenged is a person who is deserves to be treated with consideration.
particular social foundational issues through assigned readings. Another “Social Foundations” instructor created a sense of continuity in her teaching by introducing students to a conceptual framework constructed by feminist researchers as a way to frame students’ learning about other issues. The well grounded and heavily researched work on gender helped her students think about other issues related to power in a way that built upon their past skills and experiences in her class. By doing this she could prepare students, with varied levels of experience in the social sciences, to read the articles she provided.

As one pedagogical note, it might be useful to challenge students in some way other than by discussing research articles, since even those students who engaged in their “Social Foundations” course, did not do all of the readings. Reflect on some strategies other than direct surveillance of students’ reading habits to encourage them to read. One student found her “Social Foundations” instructor’s habit of collecting binders to check that students had highlighted the readings to be patronising. She also said that she did not feel it made students any more likely to read. Perhaps dedicating some portion of each class to an in-depth discussion of the issues included in the articles, with air time opened to only those comments directly linked to the readings, may encourage students to read, and to read carefully.

Before you assign readings you might want to introduce students, in an explicit way, to the limits and strengths of educational theories for practitioners. Entwistle (1996) offers one suggestion for this sort of introduction when he suggests that well constructed theories offer teachers a different way to see the world of education rather than providing them with a vehicle for arriving at a particular destination. If teacher candidates are aware of this, they might be less inclined to ask technical implementation questions about the theories presented in class. They also might be more likely to personalise and extend the theories through their practicum experiences as they attempt to teach equitably.

Try to make some explicit link between theory and practice within the “Social Foundations” class. Providing literature based on research in schools, using students’ practicum experiences as one of a number of texts in the class, using case studies, making explicit and justifying pedagogical choices as they are made and assigning praxis papers were among the strategies used by Greg, Nancy and Heena. One of Rick’s instructors inspired him to practice what he learned in her class in part because of her enthusiasm for the subject she was teaching and in part because of her personal commitment to equity work in
the local school system. He felt that her modelling of theories in class and in life motivated him to do the same. If you have written or researched something linked to the course, and feel comfortable doing so, consider including this text as a course reading.

To meet some of the practicalities of classroom management, experiment with mixing up student groups, occasionally allowing students to chose groups and occasionally assigning students to groups strategically. See what effect this has on class dynamics. You can take advantage of “teachable moments” by using yours and students’ observations of classroom dynamics as a text to discuss classroom events as they occur.

In terms of evaluation and assessment, think about your grading scheme. If you believe it is important to give all students grades that fall within a high and fairly narrow range, make this choice explicit to students as they begin the course. You could take advantage of the fact that you are teaching teachers by using your considerations with respect to evaluation as an entry point into discussion of equity issues related to traditional, normative forms of evaluation and assessment. Supplement grades with critical comments and questions, and think about asking students to resubmit assignments if they have not dealt with important aspects of the course. You might consider a discussion of programmatic constraints and expectations as you alert students to the fact that their uniformly high grades might be an indication of something other than an unchallenging program. One possibility is to raise this issue while discussing streaming. You could suggest that it is possible to be a “good student,” who receives high grades, without ever challenging oneself around equity issues. If nothing else works, consider modifying your grade range.

Teacher education candidates learn a number of things during the year in addition to what they take away from your class. Think about how to incorporate their learning into your course. If you are able to communicate with their other instructors or even work as a team on occasion, think about what it would mean to do this productively in a way that complements all instructor’s approaches. What other educational experiences are students having while they take your course? They may be thinking about, preparing for and worrying about their practica. Their learning about equity issues may be supported and constrained by other elective, foundational or curriculum courses, family, friends and support networks, Student Services programming, the institutional climate at the faculty of education, the political climate in schools and society and salient life events. Think about how to use the existing
program structure to your advantage as you address these other forums for learning. Seek ways to support your work by communicating with other teacher educators working in the same or other institutions, speaking to friends who have an understanding and a respect for what you are doing, and taking up other formal or informal opportunities for professional development.

One way to bring students' practica into your class is to address the "hidden curriculum" of schools in an explicit way. While I did not address students' observations about the staff room through my analytical categories, a number of participants described it as a place where they observed overt resistance to equity initiatives. This location of the school tended not to be under much administrative surveillance and perhaps as a result of this, discrimination, racism and sexism seemed to flourish more there than elsewhere in the school. "Political correctness" seemed to vanish as the hidden curriculum became increasingly overt. In a class like "Social Foundations" where overt discrimination of this form is less likely to surface, the distance of speaking about other teachers in the staff room might raise the issues in a grounded way for students. Their observations of staff room dynamics could be used as a text for larger class discussion. As educators with limited institutional power, students may then think about how they can address the issues of racism, sexism and other forms of symbolic violence in the staff room and more broadly throughout the school.

While I have included both general suggestions and specific examples that might work for some teacher educators in some contexts, these suggestions cannot be a recipe for "successful” or "effective” teacher education. Use those pedagogical strategies that make you most comfortable, while understanding that a technique on its own is neither effective nor ineffective. Without giving in to the demands of the most vocal students, make some attempt to learn which strategies are most effective for which students. You might choose to begin with strategies that make you comfortable; then, once you have built a level of trust with the class, try to experiment with some approaches that personally challenge you.
Implications for Teacher Education Programs

To an even greater extent than for teacher educators, I need to tread carefully as I make suggestions and recommendations for teacher education programs. While I spoke to three “Social Foundations” instructors and students from six different “Social Foundations” classes, I generated all of my data from within the context of a single faculty of education. I will leave it up to the people who read this thesis to use their good judgement about the level of resonance across institutional contexts. Any second person reference in this section is directed to an audience of administrators involved in organising, planning and structuring teacher education programs.

As I mentioned in my literature review, Feiman-Nemser (1990) has outlined five concurrent and overlapping conceptual orientations to teacher education, academic, practical, technological, personal, and social/critical. All of my suggestions are made with the assumption that administrators who may resonate with a plurality of these orientations, explicitly value a social/critical approach to teacher education. I begin with a look at the admissions and hiring process, continue by making suggestions to guide internal program evaluation and conclude with a few ideas for professional development.

Since only one or two percent of Northmount’s teacher education candidates fail in any given year and only two or three percent drop out, students who accept Northmount’s offers of admission are, by and large, the same group who are certified as teachers. If the faculty of education with which you are involved has a similar record, a serious and careful look at the selection practices of the institution would be helpful. Be aware that equity-oriented admissions policies do not ensure equity of outcomes. If your program does not reflect the ethnic, racial, gender and class makeup of schools, look for the barriers behind this disparity. Think about the external reputation of the institution and the extent to which underrepresented groups in the teaching profession might be attracted to the prospect of teaching in general, or more specifically, to learning to teach at your faculty of education.

Pay attention to the institutional context beyond the preservice teacher education department and listen to the University administrators’ public comments about equity and hiring. In the case of Northmount, the equity policy at the faculty of education worked in tandem with the raw number of applications from people who volunteered information about their “visible minority” status. After a look at the Northmount teacher education selection process, I came
to the conclusion that the two greatest barriers to admission of minoritised students were the withholding of the equity policy until after the first two steps in the screening process and the relatively small number of applications in any given year from minoritised people. Also, students of colour who are not sure whether checking off the voluntary box about “visible minority” status will help or hinder their chances of being admitted may not even identify themselves during the application process. You might try to get some feedback from the applicants who have been admitted and those who have not been admitted about what they experienced in terms of barriers and facilitators to the application process. Another group of people to speak to might be those who are involved in community and social justice advocacy work who have chosen not to apply to your faculty of education. Whatever method of feedback you choose, make some attempt to understand the barriers and facilitators to equity within your particular institution.

One space for institutionally legitimated criticality at Northmount was “Social Foundations” coursework, but not all instructors took up this challenge in their teaching. When hiring new social foundational instructors, select candidates who have some level of commitment to and comfort with teaching equitably. Consider equity issues in the selection of curriculum and instruction instructors as well. For those instructors already on faculty who do not have this background, arrange for professional development opportunities. Without doing this, injustice is likely to be reproduced in other classes at the faculty. If there are certain groups of people who continue to be underrepresented among your teaching staff, think about why this is the case and what message this sends to teacher candidates. Beyond a game of body politics, make an active attempt to recruit, not only faculty based-teacher educators who are supportive of equity education but also associate teachers in practicum schools who teach with social justice in mind.

For tenured faculty or others who are relatively secure in their positions at the institution, you might try to encourage teams of instructors to shake themselves up every few years. I imagine that Greg would have received additional support to challenge himself in his teaching had he had the opportunity to teach in a program context with a less technical focus. While imposing a split between faculty teams may result in some level of resistance among members of the team, some other method of supporting change may help instructors become more self-conscious about their teaching. Instructors who continue to work in teams can still
continue their educational growth by making explicit changes to some aspect of their courses, or by doing something that they believe will increase their flexibility to the changing social context and the varied needs of their students and their students' students.

When looking for ways to make decisions about promotion, probationary periods, tenure and other staffing related concerns, think carefully about using student evaluations of faculty teaching. Students evaluated their instructors in a specific time, place and emotional context and as such these evaluations may reflect something other than or in addition to instructor effectiveness. One of the students I spoke with, and one of Nancy's students with whom I did not have the opportunity to speak, seemed to validate Magnusson's (1998) finding that student evaluations of teaching can reflect student resistance to critical pedagogy as much as anything else. One student told me that some combination of fatigue and anger about a class event informed her evaluation. The day after Nancy rearranged student's seating plans, a number of students were angry with her but by the time of the interview, all four students from her class told me that this strategy improved classroom dynamics over time. Student evaluations of teaching may indicate instructor popularity more so than instructor effectiveness and as such should be read carefully.

Conduct an ongoing internal evaluation of the program by reflecting on some of the institutional facilitators and constraints to equitable teacher education. In terms of institutional facilitators, Northmount students and faculty spoke about the programs provided through the Student Services department, elective courses, the cohort as a learning community, an institutional climate that encouraged creative and critical work, and meetings for "Social Foundations" instructors. Constraints included; a lack of parity between "Social Foundations" instructors, a relatively short program, and a "ridiculously high" grading scheme. If you find any of these factors to facilitate or constrain equitable teacher education in your institution, you might want to consider them while you think about the feasibility of restructuring the program from within.

Cohort structures can be useful or constraining depending on the learning community established in each class. Scheduling social, psychological and other foundational courses

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46 Only some proportion of instructors focussed on diversity education from a critical perspective.
47 Students who were not truant could expect to complete the year with an A or B average and obtain certification.
together in a mini-cohort may privilege the status of these subjects by making them core to the students’ program. If you choose to organise the program in mini-cohorts, give instructors who work with the same group of students the opportunity to collaborate by scheduling optional meeting times for them and giving them the name and contact information for other instructors teaching in their cohort. If instructors do choose to communicate with one another they can support each other’s teaching while they learn something about the group dynamics of the class. They may also spread student’s assignments out in a way that allows students to breathe more easily during this challenging and potentially labour intensive year.

Since students enter teacher education programs with differing educational and experiential backgrounds in social foundational issues, an introductory class may not be the best way to meet all of their needs. The three students I spoke with who took up opportunities for co-curricular equity work were the same ones who entered their teacher education programs with relatively deep knowledge of educational inequity and interests in extending their learning. If these students were not alone, it might be an idea to offer elective courses geared to students with a strong grounding in these issues. One possibility is to open graduate sociology courses to teacher education students. Elective courses were offered to students at the graduate level at Northmount but were not popular with fewer than one percent of pre-service students choosing to take them. I believe the low popularity of these courses was linked to their limited accessibility. With graduate courses offered at times outside of the preservice day and continuing through students’ practica, it might have been difficult for students to commit to or schedule these courses. If students were offered graduate courses following the teacher education rhythm or preservice elective courses geared to a critical analysis of various dimensions of privilege, those who enter dedicated to teaching for social justice would have an opportunity to extend their learning beyond what would be possible in an introductory class. Since students in elective courses self-select, they may be more motivated to learn about the issues. The instructor can then spend less time convincing students that schools are not neutral and more time working through the issues. Many of the elective courses at Northmount fit into this second category and the one student I spoke with who registered for such a course found it to be a transformational experience.
Moving beyond the university-based courses and program structure, consider evaluating partnerships with practicum schools. Most students found that associate teachers who did not support their attempts at equity initiatives constrained their ability to practice what they were learning. Student teachers may be caught between the occasionally contradictory and opposing messages of university-based faculty and school-based associate teachers both of whom are evaluating their work. If it is not possible to arrange for placements with associate teachers who teach equitably, try to find teachers who at least support their students' efforts to teach this way. Solomon (2000) explored cross race dyad partnerships in learning to teach and found both benefits and risks for students. During his three-year study, he uncovered an institutional culture that interpreted racial difference as deficit and limited the potential benefits for students involved in these partnerships. Perhaps, given the inequitable state of education, it might be useful to rethink the function of the practicum in the program. To remove it entirely would complicate students' transition between teacher education and their first year of teaching, but to continue to offer it as an unproblematic and in fact central component of teacher education may do more harm than good.

If it is difficult to find a sufficient number of associate teachers who model equitable teaching and are willing to supervise students, think about providing a professional development day or week just prior to the start of school. This time could be highly structured and take the form of a meta-social foundations class or it could be an informal gathering to initiate contact and dialogue between associate teachers and teacher education faculty. In either forum teacher educators in school and university contexts could raise issues and concerns and discuss their responsibilities before the densely packed school year begins.

Once the school year does begin, continue to provide internal professional development opportunities and institutional support to social foundations instructors. At Northmount, meetings co-ordinated by a faculty member who was herself a "Social Foundations" instructor seemed to facilitate some level of support and challenge for instructors. These sorts of meetings may give instructors the opportunity to network with colleagues, learn how others are dealing with similar issues, challenge themselves and encourage one another to make changes to their program each year. As socially and politically situated people with particular philosophies of education, some student responses may come as a surprise to
instructors. Perhaps colleagues can use this forum to help each other understand these responses within their own learning community.

Teacher education can be a short, emotionally and intellectually exhausting program. Consider offering in-service teacher education courses during the summer to support equitable teaching of those teachers already in the system. A few years after graduates of your program have begun teaching, they might feel less pressure to survive in the classroom and might benefit from this revisiting of issues taught in their social foundations classes. Advocate for recognition of such courses at the local board of education, teacher federation and governing body.

Finally, since classes are located within an institution and institutions within a broader society, factors other than instructor approach may help students reach a useful balance between challenge and support. Publicise and allocate adequate resources to any spaces in the broader program that support equity work.
Chapter Seven: Significance and Limitations

While a number of researchers have already conducted individual case studies documenting student resistance to critical pedagogy, these studies are often limited in scope. Instructors reflect on individual episodes of overt student resistance to their critical pedagogy and teach us a great deal about the social context of individual episodes but they also tend to mute individual variation in student response. At the other end of the spectrum, large-scale survey research on teacher education also results in muted student variation. Often student input in these reports takes the form of mean global effectiveness ratings on student evaluations of teaching. By averaging student ratings taken at one point in time, researchers place a great deal of faith in a single contextualised moment of student response. Additionally, the very practice of averaging scores means that any divergence from this average is ignored. My study was limited in that it only included a snapshot of the responses of twelve students and three instructors, but it was one way to contribute to the knowledge base in teacher education with a small-scale study that attempted to account for rather than mute variation.

One of my greatest challenges was to see through the eyes of other people given the intensity of my own learning experience. Fortunately, my reflection was aided by the fact that I did not find what I expected to find. Despite a deliberate selection strategy to locate students who had transformed in response to equity education, I found very few people who understood their learning in this way. My selection strategy along with my descriptive, interpretive and reflexive analyses of student and instructor interviews helped me learn about student response to social foundational instruction without being at a great distance from my object of study. In the end, my proximity served to motivate me as I conducted my research.

Due to my limited sample, time and research experience, I was not able to explore all dimensions of equity-oriented teacher education in this thesis, but I believe I was able to contribute to our conceptual understanding of student response to equity issues in teacher education. I expanded the notion of resistance and transformation while adding a conceptual category to help describe the experiences of those students who make up the minority of teacher candidates, those who have in some way been marginalised through the education system.
While my hypothesised links between particular student responses and student characteristics, instructor pedagogy and broader program structures do not represent causal relationships, they do give me direction to aid in expanding upon the characterisation of student response currently documented in the literature. Beyond an expansion of possible student responses to critical pedagogy, I explored hypotheses in the literature about the variety of factors potentially contributing to the learning and teaching conditions of teacher educators and their students in the social foundations component of teacher education.

My choice to do a case study in place of survey research meant that I compromised breadth of analysis for depth but, given my limited resources and the abundance of large-scale evaluation studies of teacher education, I believe that my compromise was a reasonable one.

As I analysed data and generated explanations, I attempted to tie my explanations to my sampling strategy. Since I did not interview a representative sample of teacher education students but rather a group of students who were willing to talk with me about issues linked to equity education, I cannot generalise these results to the program as a whole or to other teacher education programs. I can, however, report implications based on these student responses that may to varying degrees resonate with the experiences of teacher educators and teacher education candidates. To the extent this resonance exists, it will provide grist for my hypotheses and instructive value to teacher educators and teacher education program administrators dedicated to equity oriented teacher education.

Useful areas for further exploration include but are not limited to the teacher education admission processes, factors contributing to student advocacy for equity education and student response to elective courses with an explicit focus on equity, diversity and social justice.
Appendix A- Consent Forms

Covering Letter for Instructors

Cindy Rottmann (phone number, office number & email) (student researcher)
Dr. Nina Bascia (phone number, office number & email) (faculty supervisor)

Dear (name of participant),

My name is Cindy Rottmann and I am a graduate student in the department of theory and policy studies at OISE/UT. I am presently conducting a study for my master's thesis entitled “Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance,” that explores how students encounter equity issues in their social foundations coursework. I graduated from the (name of institution) faculty of education in June of 1998 and have a strong interest in teacher education.

Your contributions will provide me with important information about how people involved in these programs understand the complexity of student response to equity issues. I would appreciate it if you could take part in a brief (30 to 60 minute) interview focusing on critical teacher education and links to pedagogy, your perception of student response to equity issues in your course, and your thoughts about the factors contributing to these responses. With your permission, the interview will be taped to ensure accuracy. I would like to conduct the interview at (name of institution) or a nearby coffee shop or restaurant, in April (or early May) at a time convenient to you and would be interested in seeing a copy of your course outline and assignment guidelines at this time. I am happy to provide you with a copy of my proposed interview questions before we meet.

Additionally, without asking for the particular equity stance of individual students, I would appreciate it if, at the end of the interview, you could identify nine students in your class whose stances on equity differ. If possible, please identify students who represent a range in gender and racial diversity as well. I would like to interview three of these students after the “Social Foundations” course is over and student evaluations of teaching have been completed. I have no intention to evaluate students, instructors, courses or programs, but rather intend to explore the complexity of student response to equity issues in social foundational courses in teacher education.

I assure you that all information will be kept confidential. No individual person or institution will be identified and only I will have access to the research data which I will store in a locked file cabinet for five years after which I will dispose of it. I will shred all hard copies of data in five years and will erase the tapes once they have been transcribed. The final report will not be made available until after grade reports and student evaluations of teaching have been completed. You will have access to this report, which will be located in the OISE/UT thesis collection in the R.W.B. Jackson library. If you would like additional feedback, I will mail you a brief summary of results upon completion of the project.

If you are willing to participate please reply by email and suggest a few times in the next three or four weeks that are convenient for you to meet. I will bring and ask you to fill out the attached consent form at that time. Please do not hesitate to call me at (-----) or email me at (-------) if you have any questions or concerns about my project. Thank you for taking the time to review my request.

Sincerely,

Cindy Rottmann

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Covering Letter for Students

Cindy Rottmann (phone number, office number and email) (student researcher)
Dr. Nina Bascia (phone number, office number and email) (faculty supervisor)

Dear (name of participant),

My name is Cindy Rottmann and I am a graduate student in the department of theory and policy studies at OISE/UT. I am presently conducting a study for my master's thesis entitled “Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance,” that explores how students encounter equity issues in social foundations coursework. I graduated from the (name of institution) faculty of education in June of 1998 and have a strong interest in teacher education.

Your contributions will provide me with important information about how people involved in these programs understand the complexity of student response to equity issues. I would appreciate it if you could take part in a brief (30 to 60 minute) interview focusing on your responses to equity issues as they were presented in your “Social Foundations” class, the factors that led to your responses, and your perception of other significant learning experiences within and beyond the program. I am happy to provide you with a copy of my proposed interview questions before we meet. With your permission, the interview will be taped to ensure accuracy. If possible, I would also like to make a copy of an assignment you completed using ideas from your school and society class to understand your practice teaching. [Note for ethics review—For students who did not complete this kind of 'praxis' paper, I will use the instructor's assignment guidelines to choose an assignment that will best help me address my research question].

I have no intention to evaluate students, instructors, courses or programs, but rather intend to explore the complexity of student response to equity issues in social foundational courses in teacher education. If you agree to participate, I will wait until the “Social Foundations” class is over and student evaluations of teaching have been completed. In May or early June, at a time that is convenient to you, I would like to interview you at (name of institution) or a nearby coffee shop or restaurant.

I assure you that all information will be kept confidential. No individual person or institution will be identified and only I will have access to the research data which I will store in a locked file cabinet for five years after which I will dispose of it. I will shred all hard copies of data in five years and will erase the tapes once they have been transcribed. The final report will not be made available until after grade reports and student evaluations of teaching have been completed. You will have access to this report, which will be located in the OISE/UT thesis collection in the R.W.B. Jackson library. If you would like additional feedback, I will mail you a brief summary of results upon completion of the project.

If you are willing to participate please reply by email and suggest a few times in the next three or four weeks that are convenient for you to meet. Please also write a short (two or three sentences will do) description of your stance on equity issues. I will bring and ask you to fill out the attached consent form when we meet. Please do not hesitate to call me at (-------) or email me at (-------) if you have any questions or concerns about my project. Thank you for taking the time to review my request.

Sincerely,

Cindy Rottmann
Covering letter for Associate Dean

Cindy Rottmann (phone number, office number and email) (student researcher)
Dr. Nina Bascia (phone number, office number and email) (faculty supervisor)

Dear (name of Associate Dean responsible for pre-service teacher education),

My name is Cindy Rottmann and I am a graduate student in the department of theory and policy studies at OISE/UT. I am interested in conducting a study for my master's thesis entitled "Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance," that explores how students encounter equity issues in their social foundations coursework within the context of teacher education. The single case study approach that I plan to use will allow me to account for rather than mute variation in student response to equity issues, and will result in stronger hypotheses about important factors contributing to these responses. I graduated from the (name of institution) faculty of education in June of 1998 and have a strong interest in teacher education.

With yours and their permission, I would like to interview three school and society instructors and nine to twelve pre-service students between April and June of this year, to gain access to their accounts of student response to equity issues in a required social foundations course. With the help of the "Social Foundations" course co-ordinator, I will select instructors in the elementary and secondary program who dedicate some portion of their course to equity issues, who vary in terms of pedagogical approach and represent a range in gender and racial diversity. I will then ask instructors to help me select students in their classes who they believe have different stances on equity and who represent a range in gender and racial diversity. Participation involves minimal time commitment from fully consenting adults well informed about the aims of the project and of their opportunity to withdraw at any time.

I assure you that all information will be kept confidential. No individual person or institution will be identified and only I will have access to the research data which I will store in a locked file cabinet for five years after which I will dispose of it. I will shred all hard copies of data in five years and will erase the tapes once they have been transcribed. The final report will not be made available until after grade reports and student evaluations of teaching have been completed. You will have access to this report, which will be located in the OISE/UT thesis collection in the R.W.B. Jackson library. If you would like additional feedback, I will mail you a brief summary of results upon completion of the project.

I am writing to ask your permission to explore my research question at (name of institution). Please do not hesitate to call me at (-----) or email me at (--------) if you have any questions or concerns about my project. If you feel comfortable doing so, please fill out the enclosed consent form and place it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided and if possible please share your decision with me by email as well so that I can begin making arrangements for interviews. Thank you for taking the time to review my request.

Sincerely,

Cindy Rottmann
Dear Cindy,

I would like to confirm that I am willing to take part in your research project entitled "Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance." I am aware that the interview will be recorded to ensure accuracy and understand that my involvement in this research is voluntary. I accept the conditions of confidentiality suggested by you and understand that I may withdraw at any time.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Telephone #: _______________________

Administrative Consent Form

Dear Cindy,

I would like to confirm that I have given you permission to conduct your research project entitled "Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance" at (name of institution). I am aware that you will interview three faculty members and nine to twelve students at (name of institution), and that each participant will participate on a voluntary basis, will have the opportunity to withdraw at any time and will provide individual informed consent. I accept the conditions of confidentiality suggested by you.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Telephone #: _______________________

Informed consent form for interviews (to follow each cover letter)

Cindy Rottmann (phone number, office number, email address) (student researcher)
Dr. Nina Bascia (phone number, office number, email address) (faculty supervisor)

Dear Cindy,

I would like to confirm that I am willing to take part in your research project entitled "Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance." I am aware that the interview will be recorded to ensure accuracy and understand that my involvement in this research is voluntary. I accept the conditions of confidentiality suggested by you and understand that I may withdraw at any time.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Telephone #: _______________________

Administrative Consent Form

Cindy Rottmann (phone number, office number, email address) (student researcher)
Dr. Nina Bascia (phone number, office number, email address) faculty supervisor)

Dear Cindy,

I would like to confirm that I have given you permission to conduct your research project entitled "Student response to equity issues in teacher education: Pushing the boundaries of resistance" at (name of institution). I am aware that you will interview three faculty members and nine to twelve students at (name of institution), and that each participant will participate on a voluntary basis, will have the opportunity to withdraw at any time and will provide individual informed consent. I accept the conditions of confidentiality suggested by you.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Telephone #: _______________________

Informed consent form for interviews (to follow each cover letter)
Appendix B- Interview Protocols

Protocol for Interview with “Social Foundations” Instructors

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. If you prefer not to answer any of my questions or if you would like clarification on a question, please let me know. I will use the result of our interview for my master’s thesis and will not record your name anywhere.

1. What is the purpose of “Social Foundations” in teacher education?
   • What is the place of school and society in new teachers’ development as learners?
   • How would you describe your conceptual framework? (what are your overarching themes?)

2. In your experience are there certain ideas that students find more challenging than others?
   Probes:
   • How do you know this is the case?
   • Intellectually & emotionally challenging (whichever was not addressed above)?

3. What can you do in your classroom to affect students’ learning about equity issues?
   • Literature choices for course readings? (what does useful literature look like?)
   • Pedagogical strategies (seating arrangement, class activities)?
   • Assignments?

4. Which of these strategies have been most and least effective?
   • How do you know?
   • How do you deal with possible negative reactions?

5. Can you characterise the ways students have responded to your class this year?

6. Why do you think they responded in these ways? (If already addressed- “let’s talk about possible reasons why students respond as they do”)
   Probes:
   • Who were your students? Did that have any impact on how they encountered the material? Personal experiences before this year?
   • Do you think there is anything about you that influenced the way students responded to your curriculum?
   • What else in their teacher education program might have helped them or constrained their opportunities to encounter these ideas?
7. How do you think these student responses compare with others you've observed over the years?

- In other compulsory or elective courses?
- In undergraduate and graduate program?

8. Were there students in your class who opened up to equity issues over the course of the year?

Probes:
- How many students in any given group respond in this way?
- How would you characterise them?
- Similarities and differences between this group and group of students who were more resistant to equity issues

9. What are some barriers and facilitators to teaching 'Social Foundations' critically at (name of institution)?

10. Would you like to add any comments?

Thank you for helping me understand more about student response to your course. If you would like me to review the transcripts of this interview with you before I analyse them for my study, I would be happy to arrange a time to meet with you.
Protocol for Interview with Teacher Candidates.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. If you prefer not to answer any of my questions or if you would like clarification on a question, please let me know. I will use the result of our interview for my master's thesis and will not record your name anywhere.

1. Why did you choose to do your teacher education at (name of institution)?
2. What kind of relevant experiences, learning and understanding did you bring with you into this program?
3. Tell me about your “Social Foundations” class.
   Probes:
   • teaching strategies
   • Social interactions with peers and between instructor and peers
   • Ideas that stick with you
4. How did you respond to these ideas?
5. Was there some variation in the class or did most people respond as you did?
   Probes:
   • How do you know people felt a certain way? What did they say or do?
   • How do you understand the similarities and differences between your response and theirs?
   • How is this similar or different to the ways this group responds in other classes?
   • Why do you think some people see equity and other social foundational issues as more or less important?
6. Besides how your instructor teaches, do you think there are other factors that make it easy or difficult for you to value these ideas?
7. Tell me about the other things that happened this year that you thought were significant.
   • C&I courses
   • Practicum
   • Personal experiences
8. Have your family/friends/social networks played any role in your learning?
9. What do you expect to do after graduation?
10. Would you like to add any further comments?
Thank you for helping me understand your thoughts about your social foundations course. If you would like me to review the transcripts of this interview with you before I analyse them for my study, I would be happy to arrange a time to meet with you.
References


